



In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.

- Aristotle

Annual Report



2015 - 2016

Get Outside. Get Healthy. Hike.

Hike Ontario

Annual Report 2015-2016

www.hikeontario.com

Trails provide meaningful and satisfying outdoor experiences for many users. These experiences reaffirm a sense of connection with the natural environment and provide opportunities for an appreciation of Ontario's natural heritage. With a trails system that traverses many of Ontario's natural regions, trails play an important role in supporting environmental education and building a public commitment to environmental conservation.

Active2010: Ontario Trails Strategy, 2005

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HIKE ONTARIO GOVERNANCE

Throughout the years Hike Ontario has had one goal – to encourage walking, hiking and trail development in Ontario.

Established in 1974, Hike Ontario is a non-profit, charitable organization governed and operated by volunteers. We are the sole provider of province-wide hiking information and services. Hike Ontario is also unique amongst Canada's provinces and territories in many of the services it provides to this province's hiking associations and citizens. Eighty-five percent of Canadians walk for leisure and recreation. Thus, Hike Ontario acts as the voice for over 10 million hikers and walkers in Ontario.

Hike Ontario recognizes and supports trails throughout Ontario and appreciates that every trail is unique. Every trail can't be all things to all people but all trails can play beneficial roles. Trails play roles in the economy, play roles in the environment and perhaps most importantly, play roles in our health.

While Hike Ontario recognizes the diversity of trails and trail uses, our focus is on the representation and promotion of pedestrian based trails and their benefits, focusing specifically on connectivity, economics, education, environmental, health, heritage, recreation and transportation.

Hike Ontario does not make or maintain trails, nor does it offer organized hiking/walking events, except through its member associations. Hike Ontario is the umbrella organization that provides these province-wide associations with resources and services to build on these long-established local and regional initiatives in a way in which complements and enhances them.

Our Core Objectives:

- To encourage walking for recreation, transportation and health
- To encourage and facilitate trail development for walking and hiking
- To encourage exemplary trail maintenance, hiking and hike leadership practices and the enhancement of walking experiences through courses and the provision of resources
- To encourage and facilitate the development of trail building hiking clubs in Ontario
- To act as an advocate for a club or clubs when requested or when an initiative is deemed necessary
- To encourage education and research into the health benefits and other aspects of recreational walking
- To encourage conservation and appreciation of the natural environment
- To maintain and disseminate information on hiking and hiking trails

Our Core Programs:

- Advocacy and Government Relations
- Ambassador Program
- Best Practices for Increasing Trail Usage by Hikers and Walkers
- Hike Leader Certification Program
- Insurance Provision and Risk Management
- Young Hikers Program
- Safe Hikers Program
- Long Distance Awards Program
- Annual Hike Ontario Summit
- Sponsor of Ontario Hiking Week
- Partnerships and Linkages

Program Descriptions

Advocacy and Government Relations: Hike Ontario is an active voice and resource to our government partners in the Ontario trails community. We play a lead role in promoting, educating about and advocating pedestrian trail experiences through an active presence at local, regional, provincial and national trail events. We do this through strategic planning processes, active communications, conference and workshop participation, information distribution, special events and educational campaigns.

Ambassador Program: Hike Ontario Ambassadors provide information on hiking and hiking trails across Ontario by promoting Hike Ontario and our member clubs to new and novice hikers across the province. As the number one source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking and pedestrian based trail development and management in Ontario, our Ambassadors provide this resource by doing presentations to clubs and community groups, training individuals and providing materials.

Best Practices for Increasing Trail Usage by Hikers and Walkers: Hike Ontario engaged in researching and collecting data on the strategies, methods and opportunities for increasing use of trails by walkers and hikers and was able to then publish a comprehensive manual of Best Practices. This manual is most useful for Hiking and Walking organizations, Parks and Recreation staff, Conservation Area & Parks staff, Municipalities and a broad range of Special Interest groups (Health Units, Resorts, private landowners, trail builders etc.)

Hike Leader Certification Program: Hike Ontario has developed standards and training programs for Hike Leaders that are used by our member clubs, community colleges, universities, activity clubs and outdoor training organizations for course delivery. Currently, Hike Ontario offers Certified Hike Leader, Wilderness Day Hike Leader, and Map & Compass certification courses.

Insurance Provision and Risk Management: Hike Ontario works diligently with its trail partners and insurance providers to provide the best possible policy conditions to suit the needs of its trail clubs. This in turn is working towards managing for safe and sustainable trails systems throughout Ontario for the pleasure of walkers and hikers. Hike Ontario plays a key role in risk management through our dedication to pursuing best practices, sound advice and proactively engaging in and encouraging safe practices and education.

Young Hikers Program: The Young Hikers Program aspires to introduce youth to the joys and benefits of hiking, through a variety of mediums such as Activity Resource Kit, Provincial Youth Advisory Committee, Youth Hike Leader Certification, Youth Risk Management Training and youth volunteer opportunities.

Safe Hikers Program: This one day course introduces the new or novice hiker to the joys and benefits of hiking, walking and the trails of Ontario. Special focus is placed on safety, sustainability and enjoyment. Upon completion, participants are armed with the knowledge necessary to keep themselves safe while hiking; how to ensure their hikes are environmentally and socially sustainable and will help them develop the confidence necessary to join hiking groups and/or go on their own hikes.

Long Distance Awards Program: Hike Ontario has a mandate to encourage hiking for all ages and all athletic levels throughout Ontario. The Long Distance Hiker Awards celebrate dedicated hikers who have logged long distances on multiple Ontario trails. Hike Ontario offers three long distance hiking awards; the Red Pine Award for 550 kms, the Trillium Award for 950 kms and the Tamarack Award for 1500 kms.

Annual Hike Ontario Summit: Held annually in October, our Summit is a weekend long event that features timely workshops, presentations, award presentations, guest speakers, and a full schedule of invigorating hikes.

Sponsor of Ontario Hiking Week: Every year from October 1-7, Hike Ontario sponsors Ontario Hiking Week, encouraging people of all ages to get out and hike the many trails of this beautiful province. Ontario Hiking Week demonstrates the many faces of hiking and walking - as a recreational activity that's low impact, affordable to all, and promotes environmental sustainability and ecological awareness.

Partnerships and Linkages: Hike Ontario has formed and sustains strong ties with both government and nongovernmental partners related to pedestrian trails. We strive to represent the interests of all hikers and walkers, trail clubs and all pedestrian based trail interests throughout Ontario. Hike Ontario represents the interests of hikers and walkers on the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) Board of Directors and the through a nominated representative to the Hike Canada En Marche Board of Directors.

Mission

To encourage walking, hiking and trail development in Ontario.

Vision

Hike Ontario seeks to maintain and develop its unique position as the number one source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking and pedestrian based trail development and management in Ontario.

Governance Structure

Hike Ontario is governed by a board of directors that meets four times per year at various locations across Ontario. Our board consists of approx. 35 people.

80% of the board members are appointed to represent their member club (i.e. the Bruce Trail) with the remaining members being elected at our Annual General Meetings.

The executive committee of the board additionally meets once a month. The executive consists of President, Vice President, Past President, Treasurer and Secretary. Additionally, the Chairs of each standing committee hold a position on the executive committee.

Executive Committee 2015 -2016

Tom Friesen	President
VACANT	Vice President
Roma Juneja	Treasurer
Sharen Yaworski	Secretary
Bill Mungall	Ontario Trails Council Representative
Michael Fleischmann	Hike Canada Representative

Standing Committees 2015-2016

Lewis Williams	Certification Committee
VACANT	Public Education Committee
Bill Mungall	Issues, Policy & Advocacy Committee
Raymond Soucy	Fundraising Committee
Frieda Baldwin	Planning and Development Committee

Board Members – as appointed by our Member Clubs

Bernard Goward	Avon Trail
Ray Letheren	Bayfield River Valley Trail
Ron Knight	Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)
Mike Shaw	Bruce Trail Association
Wendy Stevens	Durham Outdoors Club
D.J. Smale	Elgin Hiking Trail Club
Raymond Soucy	Elora Cataract Trailway Association
Bill Gray	Friends of the Trail Inc (Quinte)
Frieda Baldwin	Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association
Charles Whitlock	Grand Valley Trails Association
Mike Curtis	Guelph Hiking Trail Club
Roland Gatti	Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association
Klaus Keunecke	Lambton Shores Nature Trails
Allison Stoecker	Maitland Trail Association
Peter Schaefer	Oak Ridges Trail Association
Sean Leon	Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club
Sharen Yaworski	Rideau Trail Association
Ian Bailey	Thames Valley Trail Association
Hilda Postenka	Thunder Bay Hiking Association
Carole Blaquiére	Voyageur Trail Association
Raymond Ramshaw	Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club

COMPASS 2015

Hike Ontario is the province's most valuable support resource for hiking and walking groups and users.

Strategic Themes

The strategic plan outlines the strategic goals and objectives that will guide Hike Ontario from 2010 to 2015 and prioritizes them as follows:

1. Build a sustainable organization
2. Promote hiking and walking, and pedestrian trails
3. a. Create value for members and non-members alike
b. Develop and deliver programs for all stakeholders
4. Develop an effective organization and systems.

Products and Services

Hike Ontario offers the following products and services:

Hike leader certification* Advocacy

Insurance program* Annual summit

Risk management program* Best practices report

Safe hiking program* Long distance awards

Website* Young hikers program

**Services identified as most important to member associations and clubs*

Goals and Objectives

Compass 2015 goals and objectives are two-tiered:

- i) Achieve short to medium-term goals related to strategic theme No. 1 between 2010 and 2012 (prepares for issues 2, 3a, 3b and 4.
- ii) Develop a road map that addresses all of the strategic themes and provides guidance on where Hike Ontario will be in 2015 and how it will get there.

Strategy and Action Plan

Short-term strategy and goals:

1. BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

Short-term goals:

- Get paid staff
 - Define a job description for the paid staff person
 - Estimate hours and funding requirements
- Focus on improving the delivery of priority services
 - Concerted and planned rollout of services

- Improve volunteer development and recognition activities
 - Develop a volunteer manual
 - Develop volunteer-recognition policies
 - Enhance recognition activities.

Long-term strategies and goals:

2. PROMOTE HIKING AND WALKING AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

3A. CREATE VALUE FOR MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS ALIKE

B. DEVELOP AND DELIVER PROGRAMS FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

4. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEMS.

EXPERIENCE IT...ONE STEP AT A TIME...



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Tom Friesen

There has been a busy year. The passage of Bill 100 after years of consultation and the challenges brought by misinformation put out by opponents, necessitated a great number of meetings, submissions, letters to the editor and contacts with Trail Associations, the Ontario Trails Council and media organizations. The bill was modified so that it was passed with overwhelming support from all three parties with 92 votes in favour and only a three votes against. It has recently been proclaimed into law. Nevertheless, a few trail closures have resulted and this has been sad to see. Bill Mungall has had a major role in being a voice for the pedestrian trail users plus our clubs and trail associations on several fronts. He has also represented us very well at the Ontario Trails Council.

Our Senior's Hike Initiative Project ended on March 31st and up to this time, there were a number of courses for Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leaders offered. It was disappointing that we did not maximize the use of the grant. There was an opportunity to add to the membership numbers of hiking clubs and trail associations through this grant and some groups offered good support by offering trial memberships to new hikers who took a course. We owe some instructors and groups our appreciation for their efforts. Our Fund Raising Chair, Raymond Soucy worked to get the grant and produce the final report to the government. We only used 40 % of the grant capacity and accordingly will have to return money to the government. This support has been crucial in maintaining the viability of a paid employee staff position.

The Mood Walks Project Part II for Youth in Transition is currently fully operational. Unlike the first Mood Walks project where we gave a great deal of direct service in training and leading hikes, this project focused on training Safe Hiker Instructors from within the project groups and equipping them with the resources to offer our Safe Hiker course. A side benefit of the project has been a developing partnership with Coleman Canada and their "Get Outside" promotion and Ontario Parks and their "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" Day on July 15. We need to thank hike leaders who led hikes in Provincial Parks on this day.

Under the leadership of Lewis Williams our Certification Program has increased the number of courses and added new Wilderness Day and Wilderness Trip Leader courses. We have trained a good number of Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader Instructors across a wide geographic range. These courses are an important service and a way to stay active with our paid (part-time) staff person.

We continue to insure Trail Associations and Hiking Clubs for their hikes and trail maintenance operations as well as some special events. The ownership of our insurance company has changed but this does not seem to have affected premium levels or service. Frieda Baldwin has been doing a great job of overseeing this program with the assistance of D.J Smale and our staff person David Rosenblun-Bourdieu.

David has also been very active in putting out monthly newsletters to our contacts. We have had some individuals volunteer for the Public Education role and then step back so a lot of work has fallen on David to maintain contact with our members and to update the website.

Glenda Collings has taken on a leadership role with the Young Hikers' and the reanimation of this program is an important feature of our efforts to encourage hiking among all age groups.

The 2016 Summit has been planned by an enthusiastic committee under the leadership of Hike Ontario Secretary Sharen Yaworski and Jack Tannett working from Perth. The program looks interesting and is worthy of support.

I have really enjoyed the opportunity to work with our treasurer Roma Juneja. She is always up to date and responsive to the needs to pay bills, keep accounts and remind me of unpaid invoices.

Our accountant discovered that our two accounts have not been properly reconciled with the Canada Revenue Agency. Our Trust Account has status with the CRA as a Charitable Tax Exempt instrument of Hike Ontario but our Current Account has no such standing. Therefore, on the advice of a lawyer we will be seeking a vote to reform the organization and gain this standing for both accounts. That will allow us to issue charitable tax receipts for donations. We are also asking for a vote to revise our membership fees which have not changed in over ten years to increase them by removing the assessed 25 cent fee on members of clubs when their numbers exceed 400. This will only affect our larger trail associations.

Additionally, we are going to revise our constitution so that our board size is reduced. Currently every member of Hike Ontario gets one vote at the board and when reps do not attend, we could have difficulty getting a quorum. These changes will be voted on at the next board meeting on November 6.

On a personal note, I have been president of Hike Ontario since 2008. I became a very active Past President from 2010 until 2012 and resumed the role of President then up to the present day. It is not really healthy for one person to have this responsibility for so long either for the organization or the individual. Therefore, I will be returning to the role of Past President following the Annual Meeting. I will still be active but feel that it is critical to renew Hike Ontario at this position with a new President. Working with the executive team at Hike Ontario is a pleasure and one that I intend to continue to engage in.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Certification Committee

Submitted by Lewis Williams

1. Courses: Hike Ontario continues to offer the full range of hiking courses, with a focus on hike leadership in the non-wilderness and wilderness fields. Our 4 courses are: Safe Hiker, Certified Hike Leader, Wilderness Day Hike Leader and Wilderness Trip Hike Leader. Recently the agenda and the written test of the Certified Hike Leader course were altered to reflect input from the Steering Cttee. In addition, we have added to the course online registration form a space for course registrants to record a listing of the 5 prerequisite hikes.
2. Instructors: Hike Ontario focuses on growing our pool of instructors of all our courses. Recently we have increased the number of Safe Hike, Certified Hike Leader and Wilderness Day Hike Leader instructors. We encourage course instructors to invite outstanding course participants to consider training to become instructors. To date, I am the sole Wilderness Trip Hike leader instructor.
3. Website: Providing info on the website in the Instructor Area that is clear and easily accessible continues to be a priority. To that end several changes have occurred lately including a re-structuring of the contents of the Instructors' menu page, the revision of the Admin Manual, a simplification of the roles of instructors vis-à-vis the Programs Cttee, the addition of a new section on the steps to become an instructor, a clear statement of the course refund policy, an outline of the procedures of the new EventBrite online course registration system, an outline of how to run a course, and the renewal process for hike leaders and the instructors. These items had been discussed with the Steering Cttee of the Programs Cttee and recently those items have been added to the website. I invite all Board members to visit our website.
4. Community: I continue to connect with members of the hiking community concerning a variety of issues including those who wish to become instructors and those who have hiking experience and want prior learning assessment so that they can take a course appropriate to their level of experience, skills and knowledge.
5. New Business: Hike Ontario placed a high priority on reaching out to members of both hike clubs and the general public in Ontario so that more people become trained hikers and hike leaders. We are searching for a relatively simple and inexpensive method whereby Hike Ontario can remind hike leaders and instructors when their renewal and payment is due. Your suggestions are invited. Other new ventures worth pursuing include adding a photo section to our website of participants engaged in learning in our courses, including with permission our instructors' names on our internal section of the website and also obtaining Tshirts for our instructors.

Issues, Policy and Advocacy Committee

Submitted by Bill Mungall

Three initiatives of the Ontario Government, namely the new trails act, the review of Escarpment, Oak Ridges Moraine and Green Belt plans, and the Ontario Trail Strategy's "3 Year Action Plan" dominated the committee's work in 2015-16.

Bill 100 – An Act Supporting Ontario Trails

The Bill was introduced into the Ontario Legislature by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport in the over the winter, was put out for review under the Environmental Bill of Rights, received 10 hours of debate in the Ontario Legislature, was referred to committee for four hours of public hearings, was reintroduced to the Legislature with 2 minor amendments of clarification, and was passed with support by all parties (with only 2 votes against it), and was proclaimed and in effect by late summer.

For all that expenditure of time and process, the Act's effect on trail development and management on the ground is expected by HO to be minor. Trail clubs have been given the ability to acquire trail easements, but at their own expense. (That said, the BTC, a land trust, has already found this provision to be of more use than they had expected it to be.) The Act will create a process to formally designate "trails of distinction" which may make marketing more effective and increase use of such designated trails. A voluntary program of signage standards will be created. And the Minister will submit an annual report on progress on the Ontario Trails Strategy, beginning in 2017. Despite these modest aims of the Act, HO will seek out opportunities to engage with MTCS on the implementation of the Act as well as on the overall Ontario Trails Strategy, and will keep clubs in the loop as to any forthcoming initiatives that they may find useful.

HO, BTC, Avon, and the OTC were invited to the Ontario Legislature in May to make presentations on the Act to the MPP's committee hearings. (Copies of our written submissions are available at HO's display.) HO used the hearings to support the Bill and the easement provision, but especially to make the case for property tax incentives for private landowners. Our easy-to-understand argument was that our clubs' footpaths provide health benefits for the populace. Given that these are public benefits in the form of lower health care costs, that such recognition warranted public support, at a cost we estimated as being \$222,000 annually. This idea was well received by the committee, and several opposition members approached me after our presentation to thank us for this simple insight.

Finally, it is most regrettable that MTCS did not anticipate that the Act would provoke a campaign by the Ontario Landowners Association to stanch the easements provision of the legislation. The OLA, acting on an erroneous interpretation of outdated legal advice, issued incorrect media information beginning in February that existing trails would automatically become easements once the legislation was passed...and this provoked the closure of many snowmobile and ATV trails in cottage country and beyond, and a few sections of HO club trails. HO, the clubs, the OTC, and the Minister all worked quickly to

correct the disinformation, but much work still remains to be done to turn around public opinion that is indisposed to many initiatives by the Province in rural areas.

Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, Green Belt, Greater Golden Horseshoe Plans – 5 Year Review

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs bundled up the 4 plans for their 5-year review and set up 17 public consultation sessions around the region, convened by a panel headed by former Toronto Mayor David Crombie. Many clubs, their members and HO participated. HO made a formal submission to MMA that stressed the need for reinstatement of the provincial share of the Niagara Escarpment land acquisition program, for other public land acquisition of open space by municipalities, and for a program of support to municipalities to complete their trail systems (i.e. an end to the “trails to nowhere” syndrome). The Province’s response to the review panel has been to issue detailed statements of its vision for new and existing urban and rural communities, with many references to open space and trails, but without a vision of how these trails will come to pass. Late this month, HO will file a final submission centred on the theme that “trails don’t “just happen” that will make the case for more municipal and CA leadership and support, and for private landowner incentives for trails.

3 Year Action Plan – Ontario Trails Strategy

In December 2015, MTCS rolled out a plan that ends March 31, 2018 listing intended initiatives over a 15-month period per the original 2005 Strategy. HO responded by meeting with MTCS policy and trail program staff to lobby for an earlier start-up of a planned study of potential landowner initiatives, which has been stated as a cornerstone in the 2005 Strategy.

Other items that HO found of interest were:

- An annual meeting of provincial and regional non-profit groups on the priorities under the Strategy
- Support to the Regional Tourism Organizations for workshops on trails and tourism
- Work on a wide-ranging Trail User Code of Ethics, to be completed by March 2017
- Support for the establishment of Regional Trail Committees, to be led by the “trails sector”
- An expert workshop on insurance issues and costs by March 2017.

Lyme Disease

The Ministry of Health responded to an HO letter of inquiry as to when a long-promised Ontario strategy on Lyme disease would be announced. We were told by late spring 2016; this has not happened. In June, a national 2-day conference on Lyme was convened by the federal government in Ottawa. It was monitored by Andrea Stuart of Ottawa, who took 2 days off work to attend this on behalf of HO. Andrea also interviewed Chronic Lyme victim Dr. Robert Groves of Lanark and took notes of his difficult experience in obtaining treatment. Similarly, I witnessed a presentation of a similar experience by a Guelph victim of Chronic Lyme who acquired the initial infection while hiking in France.

There is a broad coalition of groups advocating for change to government policy on diagnosis and treatment protocols and HO’s participation has been welcomed by other

groups. Governments appear to be moving, albeit quite slowly, in the right direction. In the meantime, the best approach by HO and clubs appears to be ongoing information to their members that increases awareness and practical preventative measures.

In the year ahead, we look forward to getting out in front of (i.e. to influence) the next “action plan” of MTCS that should begin in April 2018. Next year will also present an opportunity to make input to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs’ review of the Provincial Policy Statements and especially the excessively restrictive natural heritage policies that limit all forms of trail development in significant natural areas. And we expect to be supporting member clubs and coordinating with the Ontario Trails Council on ways and means of recovering trails on private land that were closed due to the misinformed reaction to the trails act.

Fundraising Committee

Submitted by Raymond Soucy

Two years ago we applied for and received a grant from the Ontario Government, Ministry of Sports and Recreation’s Communities Fund (OSRCF) to develop a Seniors’ Hike Initiative program. The goal of this program was to motivate seniors that are 55 + and not involved in walk or hike to improve their physical and mental health. The Seniors’ Hike Initiative’s program helped break down the barriers to getting seniors started on hiking and walking. Then at the end of the program, the objective was to leave a training (Train the Trainer and Certified Hike leaders) and support infrastructure (links to local hiking clubs) that ensures the program can continue beyond the “Seniors Hike Initiative”.

The Seniors Hike Initiative concluded in March 2016. The results of the program were somewhat surprising to us. We had expected the largest numbers of participants would go through the Safe Hikers training program. What is interesting in the final numbers is we trained more Certified Hike Leaders and future trainer’s than people who participated in the Safe Hiker program. At first we considered this a disappointment but then grew to realize the advantages of this approach for the long term sustainability of the program. We trained less Safe Hikers to go out right now although we trained a much higher than anticipated number of Hike leaders who can encourage future non hikers to take the Safe Hikers course. This also meant that a large portion of the funding was not used. Fortunately, we had left the Funds in an account earmarked for this program only so we will be able to repay whatever amount OSRCF requested back. A final report was submitted and the review is “in progress” at the time of this publishing.

This past year we talked to a few companies that wanted to offer Hike Ontario and its members products. Hike Ontario does not have the infrastructure nor the desire to take on financial risk by holding inventory. For this reason, most deals did not make sense. However, a company called “Urban Poling” which offers a series of Hiking Poles did offer value for Hike Ontario and its members. They have partnered with us to offer free training sessions and will be attending our Summit. They also offered discounts to those that want to be trained as Urban Poling instructors.

At the request of a few member clubs, we looked into the possibility of finding a group pricing deal for Membership Management Software, also referred to as Association Management Software (AMS). After contacting several companies and receiving estimated pricing, it was determined that there was not enough interested from clubs to continue the search.

Promoting the “Friends of Hike Ontario”, (i.e. Hike Ontario Trust) has been put on hold until after the new structure has been put in place.

Public Education Committee

Submitted by Tom Friesen

The Public Education committee is one of the important functions of Hike Ontario. It deals with the website, promotion and education of Hike Ontario programs, the Annual Summit, Volunteer Awards and the Young Hikers’ Program. This year we have been involved with co-promotions with the Canadian Mental Health Association (Ontario division), Parks Ontario, The Haliburton Hike Festival, The Oak Ridges Adventure Relay, The Camino de Rio Maitland, Coleman, Arc’Teryx and other groups. We have had a few volunteers step into the role of Chair but withdraw all too quickly. David Rosenblun-Bourdieu has taken on a lot of work to compensate for this, maintaining the website and producing monthly newsletters.

Glenda Collings has helped out by taking leadership of the Young Hikers’ section of the area and we are looking forward to a revitalization of this important part of our mission.

At this writing the position remains vacant and we would welcome a person to step in and help us by chairing and revitalizing the Public Education Committee.

Planning and Development Committee

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

The planning & development committee has been active in the past year to serve hiking clubs and trail associations across the province of Ontario. The focus has been on the Hike Ontario Insurance and Membership fees.

Insurance

The Hike Ontario Insurance Program has been a staple service to Hike Ontario clubs and associations seeking insurance coverage for both general liability as well as director’s & officer’s insurance. Through these two policies, pedestrian trail organizations are able to protect themselves from the potential liabilities arising from managing or owning a public hiking trail, and in some cases a shared use trail.

Sanctioned Activities include hiking, training events, sanctioned non-hiking events (such as cycling & paddling), trail building and maintenance, meetings, non-competitive events, etc. Coverage is not provided for the following: horseback riding, dog sledding, motorized vehicles, off road mountain biking, white water kayaking, rock climbing, etc.

Hike Ontario is offering the following:

- \$ 5 million with a \$1000 deductible Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance
- \$ 2 million for Director's & Officer's (D&O) insurance.
- 20 Organizations took out CGL at the same rate as in 2015, i.e. at a cost of \$3.06 (incl. 8% PST), and 15 organizations took D&O at a cost of \$208 per organization.

We also looked at the cost of our Hike Ontario staff person to administer the insurance program, and as a result increased the policy fee for CGL insurance from \$50 to \$75, so it would be more in line with the actual time and related cost to administer the program.

We have also looked into the issue of what represents a "member", as several organizations have "family memberships". Upon consultation with our insurance broker, and discussions at a Hike Ontario executive and board meetings, we established that for the purposes of CGL cost calculation, we need to **count members on a per person basis**, and that in the event of a claim, it is important to have names of all the individuals who are members and have been included in the "member count" for the insurance fee calculation. It is expected that since the actual membership count will be higher than currently reported, that this will increase the actual premium for the CGL insurance.

We therefore ask that all organizations who wish to participate in the Hike Ontario insurance start reporting member counts by individual. Names do not have to be submitted to Hike Ontario, but in the case of a claim, the organization needs to be able to confirm a certain person was a member at a specific time. This will insure that the organization is covered in the case of a claim.

Special Events insurance is available at an extra cost for events where a significant number of people other than members are present, as well as for competitive events, or for events when hiking is not a component.

More details on the program, as well as a Q&A document, see the Hike Ontario website.

<http://hikeontario.com/programs/program-insurance/>

Membership fees

We also had a look at our current membership fees, and concluded that to make the cost equitable amongst all clubs (as well as to raise a slightly higher revenue amount for Hike Ontario in support of our ongoing operations), that our member organizations should pay \$100 plus \$1 per member. In the past, the \$1 applied to the first 400 members, and dropped to \$0.25 for each additional member. A motion is being presented at the 2016 Annual General Meeting to remove the lower cost after the 400th member, so that every member pays \$1. This change obviously only affects large organizations that have more than 400 members.

Closing remark

I would like to thank D.J. Smale, as well as David Rosenblun-Bourdieu (Hike Ontario Program Manager) and Hike Ontario President Tom Friesen for their assistance with insurance related administration and planning.

HIKE ONTARIO MEMBER CLUB REPORTS

Hike Ontario's member clubs and associations fall into three categories:

Hiking Clubs: are predominantly urban and offer organized events and excursions to member trails, rail trails, Conservation Authority, Ontario Parks or municipal trails. Membership varies but can be quite large.

Trail Building Clubs: are associations who build and maintain recreational hiking trails in various parts of the province. They provide the full range of trail management services, including trail development, maps and guidebooks, maintenance, landowner relations, events, membership and newsletters, as well as promotion and publicity for their particular trails. There are approximately 3500 km of such trails in the province

Affiliate Members: are corporations, government agencies and organizations other than non-profit hiking or trail building organizations (commercial or non-profit) that support our mission, vision and values.

Avon Trail

Submitted by Bernard Goward, President

- Membership: 92
- Annual Budget: \$5,546
- Newsletter published three times per year
- Non-profit charitable status
- 6-person Board of Directors
- AGM: 3rd Tuesday of November, 7 pm, Kiwanis Centre, Stratford
- Members' Meetings: 3 per year with invited guest speakers
- 111 km single file footpath – St. Marys to Conestogo. 73% off-road (Private land/Conservation Area)
- Number of Landowners: 93

The Avon Trail has enjoyed another year of hiking, trail maintenance and social activities. The main projects this year included extending the Cedar Bush Boardwalk now nearing completion with over 450 feet of boardwalk, installing a 35-foot bridge to replace a shorter one prone to being washed out in spring floods, acquiring a second 'Bear Cat' to assist with grass and weed cutting, and significantly, adding four new landowners saving the possibility of several more kilometers of road-walking. Thanks to Landowner Relations Liaison, Terry Aitken for his effective. As president, I made a presentation in May to the Standing Committee of the Provincial Legislature considering Bill 100, An Act to Support the Ontario Trails Act. I urged the committee to consider amending the Bill to grant a tax credit for landowners who grant permission for trails to cross their land. While the bill was proclaimed law in early summer, this recognition has, unfortunately not yet been adopted.

Hiking is the reason we exist as a club. We offer a variety of hiking activities to suit differing levels of involvement. There is a regular Tuesday morning hike that attracts anywhere from one to two dozen hikers year round. Additionally, there were 25

scheduled hikes, mostly on Saturdays, three of which were Family or Kids hikes. We were especially pleased to cooperate with the local YMCA's Kids' Day Camp in a summer morning hike. We entered a float in the Canada Day and the Christmas parades, and we held two 'Go-to-Blazes' Days, spring and fall, as well as an on-site Trail Maintenance Workshop and Trail Building event in the Wellesley area. Three of our members took the Hike Leaders' Certification Course and are beginning to take an active role in hike leadership. A new venture this year will be a fundraiser - 'The Wildwood Challenge' - designed for the hiker looking for a test of endurance and pace. This 22 km hike around Wildwood Lake was followed by a social get-together at a local restaurant. Given the date – October 29 – Mother Nature may add a third element to the challenge.

The Avon Trail undertook a revision of its website this year; we greatly appreciate the expertise of Jamie Hember in that undertaking. We have a Facebook group with over 300 members, and are members of the local Tourism association, giving us greater web exposure. A Meetup site has not proved advantageous and will be discontinued.

Our goals for the coming year: to continue the effort to get more trail off road, and to continue the development and encouragement of a younger demographic to discover the enjoyment of hiking in the great outdoors. All this while continuing to maintain a first class trail and camaraderie amongst our membership.

We are grateful to our landowners, volunteers, board members and donors whose combined generosity, dedication and team work help to ensure the continued excellence of the Avon Trail.

Bayfield River Valley Trail Association

Submitted by Roger Lewington

The BRVTA is in its 10th year, and maintains 16 km of trails in and around the Bayfield area. Currently the BRVTA has 55 paid memberships

Events over the last year:

- ✓ Community Walk at Varna
- ✓ Participated in Family Day Hike and Soup's On
- ✓ Event on Family Day
- ✓ Hike Leader Training Day
- ✓ Community Hike at Mavis' Trail in Varna
- ✓ Earth Day Community Clean-up during the afternoon
- ✓ Evening showing of film 'This Changes Everything - The Leap Manifesto'
- ✓ Participated in the Bayfield Home & Garden Show
- ✓ Owl Prowl hike after dark on the Sawmill Trail
- ✓ Woodland Trail Spring Community Hike
- ✓ Fundraiser tree planting—Celebra-Tree-tree planting
- ✓ Hosted SW Ontario Camino Pilgrims
- ✓ New! mom and tots hike on our mobility trail

Issues

Bill 100...all of our landowner partners have expressed concerns and distrust of this government initiative. Nervousness is being fostered by opposition MPP, Lisa Thompson, and farm groups. We have agreements in place with our partners who allow them to discontinue their support with 7 days notice and they are still concerned!

The Emerald Ash Borer has created a disaster on the trails as we see this beautiful white ash trees being destroyed. Members are working diligently to eliminate trees impacted by the emerald ash borer. \$1500 has been raised to assist in the work.

We have 12 trained Hike Leaders and organized a series of bimonthly hikes on all BRVTA trails as well as other local trails including the Naftel's Creek, Bannockburn and Hullett Marsh. These have included snow shoeing and cross country skiing in the winter months. We also had special events, including a January Hike with a membership drive, Owl Prowl, Geocaching walk, tree identification etc. We were also pleased to host a walk with the Southwestern Ontario El Camino Pilgrims in July for the 4th year in a row.

The BRVTA is an active member of the Bayfield Blue Community Project supported and endorsed by 37 community groups, as a newly designated Blue Community, Bayfield joined towns and cities around the world in recognizing water as a human right and eliminating single use bottled water in the village. The Association helped provide over 1500 refillable bottles in a community of 900.

Several Special Events were also organized such as a spring litter walk in the village and Terry Fox Run and were very well received. Some 55 volunteers came out on Earth Day to pick up litter in the village.

We continue to sponsor the Terry Fox Run in September. The BRVTA has sponsored this event for the past 6 years, rising over \$24,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

For several years we have considered several ways to raise funds for the BRVTA. We organized a Fall Harvest Dinner and Dance in Bayfield as a new fundraiser. We sold 120 tickets and raised approximately \$2,000 for the Association. This has proven to be such a great fundraising venture that we have turned it into an annual event. The event gives us an opportunity to thank and recognize our landowner partners and the professional service providers who support us while the money raised covers much of our costs for the year: a win-win story.

As part of the trail's work, we have a tree planting committee "the Bayfield Tree Project" to begin the replanting of village trees as existing mature trees die out. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of trees have been planted over the past few years. This past year, the focus has been on Bayfield's Heritage Main Street.

The BRVTA has taken on an ambitious project to raise the funds to acquire almost 5 acres of land and pass the ownership to the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy (HTLTC). The BRVTA will then undertake a 10-year management agreement with the HTLTC to develop

and manage the property.

The BRVTA would like to thank the board of Hike Ontario for the dedication and commitment to promote hiking and outdoor experiences in Ontario. We would not be the organization we are without your amazing support!

Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)

Submitted by Ron Knight

The past year has been like most years; busy with trail maintenance, annual re-routes due to the ever-changing effects of the river in Spring and trying to control motorized vehicle use on our pedestrian-only trail.

We saw a significant increase in trail users this year and more family groups using the trail.

We moved part of the trail off one property owner's land over his concerns about the "Government taking my land because the trail is on it" uproar this Spring.

We are working with the local museum and conservation authority to install interpretive signage at some historical sites and promote the fact that John Muir worked and lived for a period of time at a spot on the trail.

Bruce Trail Conservancy

Submitted by Beth Gilhespy, CEO

Under the Bruce Trail Conservancy's 50th Anniversary Milestones Program, the theme of 2016 was "Lengthening Our Stride". Significant achievements as of our fiscal year end (June 30, 2016) included:

- 9 new nature reserves and 2 easements secured, for a total of 290 acres of land along the Niagara Escarpment and more than 3 km of the Bruce Trail protected (not including side trails that will be placed on one of the nature reserves)
- Governance initiatives to provide for more accountability, increase our effectiveness and bring us to current not-for-profit standards (by-law changes, board and staff restructuring, amongst other things)
- Third year of increased memberships, with a total of 9,358 at year end (up from 8,996 in June 2015), the highest in more than 30 years
- Increase in number of volunteers to 1,500, representing the equivalent of 75 full time jobs
- Relocation to a new Head Office that provides a more suitable work environment and space for staff, volunteers and other stakeholders to come together.

Challenges this year were shared by many other organizations with trails: the impact of misinformation regarding Bill 100. We are pleased at how trail organizations, under the leadership of Hike Ontario and the Ontario Trails Council, worked tirelessly to address the issues, as did we. The overall impact was the relocation of only about 4 km of Bruce Trail (which has now been placed on roadways) and we hope to be able to recover these handshake agreements in future.

We are also facing challenges over access to public lands (provincial, federal, and conservation authority land), and even to land we acquire expressly for the purposes of securing the Bruce Trail. The Species at Risk Act, while well-intended to protect species at risk, is stymying our very ability to secure support for the acquisition of conservation of lands through provision of our Bruce Trail across those lands. Despite our hard work in attending meetings, rallying our membership and creating a powerful submission, none of our recommendations to the Province's Coordinated Review were taken up, and in fact proposed changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan will make our work in conservation and footpath provision even more difficult to carry out. These are challenges we need to address strategically in the coming year.

Durham Outdoors Club

Submitted by Wendy Stevens, Secretary

Durham Outdoors Club (DOC) is a small non-profit member-driven organization, totally run by volunteers. The type, number and scope of activities are determined by the will of the members. The club sponsors and participates in various activities throughout the year, including, but not limited to: nature hikes, urban/neighbourhood walks, snowshoeing, day canoe trips and weekend canoe/camping trips, cycling day trips, ski days, weekend or snowshoe ski trips, and winter camping.

DOC has an elected executive committee and a number of activity coordinators for the various events. A key strength of DOC is the variety of activities offered by the members, resulting in a broader appeal and relevance to outdoor enthusiasts. There were 131 members at quarter-end. DOC membership includes family as well as individual membership.

The 2016-2017 Executive

President: Scott Nokelby
President: Deborah Corbett
Secretary: Wendy Stevens
Treasurer: Kaja Batinic
Membership: Jeannie Shanks
Website: Janet Hendersen
Newsletter: Chris Potvin

The 2015-2016 Event Coordinators

Canoeing and Camping: Mike Thomas
Hiking: Mary Perkins
Walks: Coral Petzoldt
Biking: Elinor Major
Urban Events: Ray Bartodziej

DOC total activities September 2015 to August 2016 were as follows:

- 76 wilderness and urban hikes
- 6 weekend trips
- 11 bicycle trips
- 20 urban events
- 4 executive committee meeting
- 10 general membership meetings

The newsletter is published 4 times a year at the start of each season of activities. It is available on www.durhamoutdoorsclub.ca and includes the list of upcoming events.

Monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month except December and July, when no meetings are held. These meetings are an opportunity to update members on club business and activities, as well as provide social time to swap stories. Most meetings also feature a guest speaker in a specialized area of interest such as canoeing or mapmaking.

Hikes can be urban or rural, and typically last from 2-4 hours. The length varies by difficulty, weather, and terrain and are run all year. We walk every Wednesday evening from April to August, many Friday mornings, and almost every weekend. We make good use of Durham Region conservation areas and parks and other such areas within reasonable driving of Oshawa.

Bicycle trips happen either Saturday or Sunday during cycling weather, with the length and difficulty increasing each week during the season.

There is a small but dedicated canoeing/kayaking contingent for day and weekend trips. Weekends are in Provincial Parks and day trips happen all over Southern Ontario within a 2-hour drive from Oshawa.

Winter activities became hiking events due to the weather.

Urban events include activities such as trips to museums, historic cemeteries and buildings, theatre, pool, golf and music festivals.

Elgin Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Cathy Johnstone

Our membership remains at our normal level of between 80 & 89 members. We are in the process of creating a new trail guide and maps.

45 8 foot sections of a new boardwalk were placed at the southern end of the trail near Port Stanley. The work was done by our maintenance crew and the #7 Royal Canadian Army Cadets. St. Thomas Parkside high school's shop class built all of the boardwalk sections under the guidance of shop teacher Mr. Haskell. Afterwards, a turkey and ham luncheon was served on site.

Our April 28 AGM at the St. Thomas library was very well attended by members and landowners. Our guest speakers talked about their adventures hiking the Amazon jungle and Machu Picchu Mountain.

Our annual Bluebell hike was very successful and we have now installed a bench at the site.

Our annual May 28 Go-to-Blazes maintenance blitz was very successful. We maintain the McKay barn and cut grass on the MNRF property in Paynes Mills, allowing our trail to pass through this lovely wooded property between Hwy 3 and Lyle Sideroad. We had a huge cleanup at the barn by removing a shed and several items out of the barn. Our trail maintenance director brought his tractor with forks and hay wagon making the cleanup easier. This was our first Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry audit of the property. We passed with flying colours by having everything on the checklist completed and the added bonus of the club, installing a fire extinguisher and 2 first aid kits. We found some interesting dates carved into areas of the barn that date back to the 1940's.

Trail Master Plan & 10 Year Implementation Strategy Meeting was held at the Municipality Building on Hwy 4 in St. Thomas. There were several organizations and council members invited to this August 10 planning meeting, including the Elgin Hiking Trail Club & the Trans Canada Trail Association. Central Elgin retained Trail planning specialists from WSP/MMM Group from Kitchener to work with municipality staff and local partners to develop a master plan. The goal of this study is to better understand and map existing trails and create an action plan for future development, operation and maintenance of trails throughout the entire Municipality of Central Elgin.

The wheels are already in motion with partnerships. We have been contacted by the Kettle Creek C.A. To help with a funding application to reopen a section of trail between Dan Patterson C.A. and Dalewood C.A. Our club led several hikes over the years and we miss hiking that trail since its closure. In turn the Kettle Creek C.A. did a really nice piece in our local community paper about the Master Plan and included mentioning our hiking trail club with our badge printed with the article.

As everyone knows, this summer has been a real scorcher! We are very proud of our hike leaders who led hikes because of extreme humidity in the 30's and 40's, including forecasts of severe thunderstorms. We did have a few hikes in much more stable weather for the hikers to enjoy. Canceled hikes will be rescheduled for the fall.

Elora Cataract Trailway Association

Submitted by Raymond Soucy

The Elora Cataract Trailway is a 47-km (29-mile) linear trail that links parks, watersheds and Communities in south-central Ontario. The trail is routed along the abandoned railway corridor of the 1879 Credit Valley Railway and runs from Elora to Cataract, passing through the Communities of Elora, Fergus, Belwood, Orton, Hillsburgh, Erin and Cataract. From there users can access the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park and join up to the Bruce Trail.

The Elora Cataract Trailway Association (ECTA) focuses on Promoting, Improving and Protecting the Elora Cataract Trailway. Below is a partial list of activities carried out in the past year.

It was a hard winter for the trail with the ice storm in late March. It closed sections of the trail for longer then we had hoped it would. Once the cleanup was completed, the trail reopened along its entire length.

This year we purchased an “Extractigator” which is used to remove invasive trees such as buckthorn. We have partnered with Communitrees on this initiative as they had an Extractigator already.

We continue to improve the signage through Fergus. This year the logos painted on the road were repainted. This along with the direction signs on the hydro poles from last year has made it much easier for people to find their way. Happily, this year it was no longer the number one complaint we received. We’ve actually had only one complaint about the route this year. That’s very encouraging.

A new undertaking this year is “The Founders Project”. This project will gather the stories of how the Trailway came about. Its being developed in 2016 including a taping session with Cogeco in the fall. In 2017, the ECTA will participate in Canada150 event at the Wellington County Museum and Archives with a display from May to November. This is a very big undertaking for a volunteer group but we are very excited to do it. We applied and received a grant to the Centre Wellington Community Foundation to help develop this project.

The Elora Cataract Trailway now joins the Trans Canada Trail to the west via the new Cottontail Road Trail from Elora to the Kissing Bridge Trail.

The 2016 AGM was held on Sunday March 20th at the Victoria Park Senior Centre in Fergus. Our guest speaker last year was Robert Messier, GRCA Ecologist who talked about the Belwood Lake Osprey Webcam Project. It was followed by a lively Q&A. The 2017 AGM is set for March 19th, 2017. Watch our website (www.trailway.org) for more details.

We are always on the lookout for individuals who would be interested in making a difference by joining our board. Anyone interested can email info@trailway.org for more details.

Friends of the Trail

Submitted by Bill Gray

This year has been fairly quiet with routine maintenance taking up the majority of our efforts and due to the extreme hot weather and drought conditions that was limited to half the normal mowing etc.

We have reviewed our policy for non-conforming use of the trail with an eye to improving risk management and standardizing the request procedures to that end we have designed a request form and waiver that must be approved by the board before

access is granted.

Membership and in particular the executive positions have continued to decrease with the majority of our members being well into their post 60's. This situation has caused us to take a hard look at our mandate and this coming year will see us review/validate our business plan.

Trail use continues to increase and we have joined with the city and other community organizations to add more connections to play and recreational areas. This fall will see the addition of a loop connection with the Batawa River Front Trail.

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

Description

The nine member clubs of the Association maintain the Ganaraska Hiking Trail from Port Hope on Lake Ontario to the Bruce Trail near Collingwood, with side trails to Wasaga Beach and Midland.

GTA distances by club	Kms
Pine Ridge	63.3
Kawartha	76.7
Wilderness	65
Orillia	69.2
Barrie	48.1
Mad River	50
Wasaga Beach	48.6
Oro Medonte	18.5
Midland	14
Tiny	13.3
TOTAL	466.7

The trail is maintained by volunteers, and the association is run by a Board of Volunteers drawn from the member clubs. Each club runs scheduled recreational activities in their local area.

Membership

As of August 31, 2016

Regular Paid Memberships – 511

Land Owners – 87

Life Memberships – 40

The GHTA membership structure consists of a family membership of \$25 per year. Life memberships are no longer available.

Activities

Annual Meetings: The GHTA holds 2 Board of Directors Meetings annually: a Spring

Director's Meeting and an Annual General Meeting in the fall. The meetings are held at Regent United Church in Orillia.

Hikes and individual Club Activities: The GHTA nine member clubs host numerous guided hikes throughout the year. Hikes are posted in our newsletter distributed in the Fall, Winter and Spring, as well as on our webpage (www.ganaraska-hiking-trail.ca/). Beside hikes, clubs also organize snowshoe and cross country ski outings, as well as biking, canoeing & kayaking, and camping events.

Risk Management & insurance

GHTA acknowledges that accidents and misadventures can and will happen; people can be injured, property can be damaged, and injured persons can launch a lawsuit against GHTA and/or its individual hiking clubs. To this end, the GHTA has developed a comprehensive Risk Management plan which was based off of the framework provided in Hike Ontario's document "The Key Elements of Risk Management for Ontario Hiking Clubs and Associations." The GHTA Risk Management Protocol was adopted at the 2012 AGM.

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association purchases its General Liability insurance through Ontario Nature.

Trail Management

Ganaraska Hiking Trail maintenance standards differ from those of e.g. the Bruce Trail, as it maintains a "minimum impact" trail, i.e. volunteers refresh the paint blazes annually, and trim away branches that obstruct the view of the blazes. There are very few man-made structures, such as bridges, boardwalks, etc. You will however find stiles over property fences.

Challenges

Vacant Positions: A few executive member positions remain vacant in the GHTA. We are looking for volunteers to fill the duties as Trail Director and Landowners Relations.

Mad River section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail

The Mad River club maintains a 50 km section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail. Since their membership has dwindled to a mere 5 members, adjacent clubs put in an effort in the fall of 2015 to maintain that 50 km trail. However, it should be noted that the 11.9 km section from County Road 90 to New Lowell Conservation Area, where the trail follows an abandoned railline is totally overgrown, and remains closed until further notice.

Cairn at Glen Huron

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail meets the Bruce Trail main trail as well as the BTC's Mad River Side Trail (blue blazes) high above Glen Huron (south of Collingwood) on Conc. 15-16. This location represents the most westerly terminus of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail, with a stone cairn. Over the years it had become totally overgrown, but thanks to the efforts of association president, Bob Bowles, and his volunteer assistant, the cairn has received a make over, and we are proud of its new look.

The eastern terminus cairn at Port Hope, 600 km further to the south east on Lake Ontario, also received a new plaque in 2015.

Wilderness section

One of the nine Ganaraska Hiking Trail sections is the Wilderness section, which crosses the Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands (east of Orillia, and more specifically from Sadowa to Moore's Falls). While this is an exceptionally beautiful section, it is also very rugged and very remote. Because of the challenges posed by this 65 km of wilderness terrain and the need to backpack multi-day hikes, the club organizes a limited number of hikes and one or two maintenance weekends each season. Please refer to the www.ganaraskawilderness.wikifoundry.com for the club's hike schedule as well as the latest notices and warnings.

End-to-End badges

Each hiker who completes the Ganaraska Hiking Trail End-to-End Challenge will – upon request - be presented with a Special End-to-End Badge and a Certificate of Completion with compliments of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association. Section Badges are also available. http://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=713

Grand Valley Trails Association

Submitted by Charles Whitlock

“Honouring and strengthening the GVTA’s trail system, programs and unique community while creating fresh opportunities for the next wave of hikers to get involved and enjoy the natural wonders of the Grand River Watershed”

The Grand Valley Trails Association is a volunteer organization committed to establishing footpaths within Ontario's Grand River Watershed in order to promote the protection and public enjoyment of the natural environment and human nature of this Canadian Heritage River. The Grand Valley Trail is a 280-kilometer marked footpath starting at the mouth of the Grand River in Haldimand County and ending in the Town of Alton, near Orangeville.

We are seeing a slight increase in membership and as of August 31, 2016 the memberships stands at 240. We are achieving this increase through publication of our walks on GVTA Meetup, a travel slide presentation held in February at a local library and a pub night. In order to raise GVTA profile to the public, the board approved a plan in November 2015 that two presentations per year are to take place in local libraries.

With the increase of members, we have also seen an increase in trail captains especially in the Carolinian Crest section, extending 71 km from Onondoga Townline Road to Glen Morris. Through the dedicated resources of our Volunteer and Membership Director, Heidi Harris, and the everlasting dedication of long-serving and hard-working Rob Carlton, Director Trail Maintenance, Carolinian Crest, GVTA has currently added an enthusiastic group of trail captains who will oversee the maintenance of 30 km of this section. This

represents approximately 40% of the Carolinian Crest section.

Urban encroachment can threaten the existence of the natural areas through which our trails runs. This is a common dilemma we share with other hiking associations. Although the GVTA Board continues to work hard at maintaining our footpath we often have little choice but to deal with development by rerouting our trail, at times along busy roadways. GVTA was very disappointed with the loss of a very popular portion of our trail that was located at Synder's Flat near Bloomingdale. GVTA had extended a big thank you to two very well known trail captains within the hiking community, Jen and Jaime Hember who worked so hard over the last 10 years in maintaining this segment of the trail. Their efforts enabled many people to enjoy a wonderful 5 km loop hike through a beautiful part of Waterloo Region. GVTA will continue to strive to maintain its footpath through pleasing countryside and trails, while recognizing that as cities grow, housing and commercial development will encroach on our trails.

The loss of this section of trail as well as other sections is related to the activates/ownership of aggregate mining companies. This may be a common area shared with other trail associations and perhaps Hike Ontario could assist in addressing this concern.

It is with sadness and good memories that we note the passing of Gail Vanderzee on October 1, 2015. A retired nurse and an avid outdoor woman, Gail served on the GVTA Board for many years including a term as President from 1997 to 2000. She was also active in the Bruce Trail club, having completed the Bruce Trail end-to-end.

GVTA is a proud supporter of Hike Ontario. We continue to encourage Hike Ontario to carry on with its mandate of representing hiker's interests in Ontario.

Guelph Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Mike Curtis

The Guelph Hiking Trail Club finished our year with a slightly reduced membership of 185 members, comprised of individuals or families. Our three main trails, the Guelph Radial Line Trail, the Speed River Trail, the Kissing Bridge Trailway, and their side trails are in good condition and are well used by our members and members of the general public.

As well as our usual hiking schedule, we also had special hikes this year, including our popular kids' hikes, a bridge to bridge hike, a magnificent magnolia bike ride, and a tweed tree ride! Our trek and tell shows, winter party and summer solstice party were popular with our members. A new activity in our hiking schedule includes a 'stretch and stride' programme which includes walking and yoga. This has proved quite popular. We have been using a 'meetup' site which has been well used by newer members.

Another very popular hike was our first bus hike featuring waterfalls and a winery tour!

Once again, we participated in the Ontario Trails Open on our Radial Line Trail Section One and had over a hundred people participate in a short interpretive walk.

Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association

Submitted by Roland Gatti, President

2016 has been a busy year for trail construction and improvement for both the Kleinburg and Bolton sections of the Humber Valley Trail. The Kleinburg section of the trail has 20 kilometers of new trails approved, and construction has already begun, over a three-year period, including three new bridges crossing the Humber River. In addition to the hiking trails, equestrian trails and multi use trails will also be constructed. We purchased six major trail head signs with a generous grant received from the Town of Caledon, allowing clearer access points to our trail.

The Bolton section of our trail is again fully open after having about 500 meters of trail closed for three years for the construction of a major arterial roadway going around west Bolton. Major trail reconstruction at the Humber Grove location has been undertaken by the TRCA to establish the link between Glasgow and Castlederg access points, which had been affected by this road construction.

Road construction will have a large impact on many parts of our trail in the near future as the development in and around the GTA squeezes all conservation lands within it. Our trail association has had positive input into road planning within our jurisdiction to minimize the the impact upon our natural areas. The planned construction of one major highway known as Hwy 413, which would have crossed the Nashville Conservation Reserve, has been suspended as a result of our lobbying.

We are experiencing more hikers participating in our planned hikes, typically 15 people, up from 10 to 12 in past years. We lead one or two hikes monthly on Saturdays ranging from 3 to 20 kilometers in length. Our total membership is 102 hikers, of which about 80% live locally and the remainder coming from Toronto. We are attracting new hikers with "Meetup" which is slowly gaining traction. Our goal is not only to attract new hikers, but to attract younger participants.

As a trail association, we are continually looking for new fund raising opportunities to allow us to make improvements to our trail, and hopefully new interpretive signs at significant areas along our trail. Our largest fund raiser is our participation in Kleinburg's Bindertwine Festival, which raises about \$2000 annually for our club. Our mission is to promote our trail to hikers and the general public to enjoy the benefits of the conservation areas, specifically the Humber Valley Trail.

Lambton Shores Nature Trails

Submitted by Klaus Keunecke

At this juncture LSNT maintains 30 km of hiking trails in six (6) environmentally sensitive

areas (ESA's) ranging in size from 69 to 570 acres. In partnership with landowners such as the County of Lambton, the Ausable-Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and local farmers, over 1200 acres of special lands are now well protected from further abuse by off-road motorized vehicles. All trails are located in beautiful natural settings including oak savannah, forested dune-lands, provincially significant wetlands and river valleys with steep forest ravines.

2016 Highlights include the following:

- Ongoing Trail Maintenance by LSNT Volunteers
- Hike Leadership Training by Tom Friesen (15 participants)
- Partnering with members of an area horseback-riding club to close miles of illegal side-trails in the Lambton County Heritage Forest
- Installation of a 5'x16' Floating Dock in the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area to permit canoeists & kayakers easy access to area nature trails via the Ausable River
- Official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of two(2) LSNT Projects (Wheelchair-Accessible Lookout Deck & Floating Dock)
- LSNT's 5-Year Anniversary Celebration
- Community Outreach: i) Open House of Central Ipperwash Community Association ii) Participation in Roundtable discussion re plans for MNR Dunelands in Ipperwash and iii) 2-Day Nature & Trail-related work with children at the Summer Arts & Nature Youth Camp sponsored by the Ausable Port Franks Optimist Club
- Repair of damage caused by vandals and removal of extensive graffiti painted on trees & boardwalks in the Ipperwash Dunes & Swales Nature Reserve (an NCC Property)
- Removal of dead ash trees along the Ausable River Valley Trail
- Joint 'Nature Appreciation Hike' with members of Lambton Wildlife Inc. (LWI) of Sarnia (scheduled for Oct. 15)
- Work is underway to update Trail Maps and build additional Trailhead Displays
- Volunteer Trail-Work is expected to involve 25 participants and exceed 200 hrs in 2016

Maitland Trail Association

Submitted by Allison Stoecker

The Maitland Trail Association maintains a variety of different trails totalling 84 km. The largest of which is the 'Maitland Trail which is a 49 km hiking trail that follows the beautiful winding Maitland River in Huron County.

We are currently celebrating 40 years!

Membership:

We have 313 paid memberships (assuming a family is 2), and 88 complimentary and lifetime memberships.

Activities and Successes:

MTA has had an active Facebook site for over a year and as of August 25, we are now on Twitter.

MTA was recently awarded the “Tourism Development Award” for our work on Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail.

We offer over 100 hikes and events every year.

There is usually one scheduled hike every weekend as well as every Tuesday, we have our Tuesday Trompers.

We also offer cross country skiing, birdwatching, photography opportunities, a variety of workshops, as well as cycling and paddling events.

We participated in “Healthy People Healthy Parks” on July 15, 2016 with an organized hike at Point Farms Provincial Park.

There is a tree planting day organized for Sept. 10.

Registration has just closed for our MTA El Camino 2016, which is our annual end-to-end event, taking place September 24-25, 2016.

Challenges:

Landowner Hunting/Hiking Initiative (Brian McCulloch)

Our association has in the past closed a couple of sections of the Maitland Trail at the request of the landowners. Last year we undertook a survey of all the landowners along the Maitland Trail and discovered that many more landowners hunted with either bow or guns during the open deer hunting season. If not themselves their friends did. We also found that some of the landowners have had close contact with hikers during their hunting parties. Many were upset at both the risk to hikers and the annoyance of having their hunting party disrupted. The MTA Board established a subcommittee to consult with a landowner/hunter, and Huron County. We concluded that the due diligent approach to protect the safety of our hikers and respect landowner’s rights was to close 46 km of the Maitland Trail this year, and ongoing for the two-gun hunting weeks of November and December in our area (WMU 85A) as per O.Reg. 678/98. We have communicated this plan to all landowners, membership and the general public. In addition at all major access points there will be a legally approved sign posted clearly in the path of hikers of the trail closure. The signs will be removed early winter.

Trail Classification (Brian McCulloch)

On the advice of legal we will be classifying all our trails as ‘Recreational Trails’. This infers a lesser standard of care to the condition of the trails. Signs will be modified to reflect this change, and other relevant documentation.

We have included the lawyer’s information in case any other club seeks this type of expertise:

Christine Carter Papazian | Heisey | Myers Barristers & Solicitors
Standard Life Centre Suite 510, 121 King St. West
P.O. Box 105, Toronto, ON M5H 3T9
Phone: 416.601.2707 | Assistant: 416.601.2007 | Fax: 416.601.1818

Trails: We have a very dedicated group of Trail Rangers and Trail Crew who continue to maintain the trails, build bridges, and handle erosion problems.

Landowner relations: we now have volunteer liaisons and we continue to try and keep a good relationship with the landowners.

G2G: We are working with the Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail expansion and a crowdfunding campaign has begun. There will be big expenses surrounding 2 big bridges that need built.

Oak Ridges Trail Association

Submitted by Peter Schaefer

We are quite satisfied with what has been accomplished over the past couple of years by our volunteer organization which has just around 600 members. This number has not been changing, either up or down, by very much over several years now.

Having added new members to our Board over the last few years has helped us in moving forward on many projects as new ideas come from new individuals. We are fortunate to have so many interested and capable people helping in making ORTA successful. After Wilma Millage had served four years as President of ORTA, we appointed at this year's AGM April Kevin Lowe to this position. We have currently nine Board Members but are still looking for a Publicity Director.

We now have our own hike leader trainers authorized by Hike Ontario who trained four new hike leaders in 2015. Last year we organized and led 366 group hikes for 4501 hikers.

We have begun to renew our Chapter structure, attracting local volunteers who look out for the trail in the various areas. This re-vitalization across the Trail gives us more visibility in the regions and also gives us a resource from which to recruit members who are knowledgeable about the Trail for our Board and Executive. Just this last year, Scugog and Richmond Hill formed new Chapter committees to promote the Trail in their areas along with the Whitchurch-Stouffville, Aurora, and Uxbridge Chapters. The more people we have involved, the more ideas and energy we put into moving forward.

We have created a new data base for our membership records which includes the ability to enter new and renewal memberships on-line. It provides greater flexibility to create reports and communications and is much easier to maintain than our previous system.

We designed a new website www.oakridgestrail.org which is not only attractive to look at

but is also efficient with its drop-down menus. It also allows hike leaders directly easy posting and updates of hike information.

We are extremely proud of the improvements made this past year to the western route of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail, connecting Palgrave C.A. to the Bruce Trail in Glen Haffy. Our trail in that area is now mostly off road and passes through a variety of forests, interspersed with pleasant meadows. There are several scenic outlooks and streamside sections, all creating excellent hiking opportunities. We strongly believe that this revision of our western trail will instill strong interest in hiking in this region of the ORMT. It should also help us promote the ORTA presence in Caledon.

Our continuing working relationships with TRCA, and other conservation authorities, and more recently with The Nature Conservancy of Canada, have created new areas to explore and to extend our trail system. We will continue to work closely with all our land owners across our Trail to attain our on-going goal of moving the Trail off-road and securing it for future generations.

The Adventure Relay has been the major annual fundraiser for ORTA for the past ten years. The 160 km team event of trail running, cycling and paddling across the Oak Ridges Moraine is held on the second Saturday in June between Rice Lake and King City. This June 11th, over one hundred ORTA volunteers were staffing the 15 checkpoints for the event, assisting the 33 teams who challenged the Moraine trails. Not only has this event strongly contributed to financial stability for ORTA, but it has also introduced several hundred competitors to the communities and topography of the Oak Ridges Moraine and to our Trail. We thank all the volunteers for their time, the teams for their support and special thanks go out to our corporate sponsors.

The York Regional Forest Spring Festival this year was a wonderful experience for our volunteers. There was a turnout of several hundreds and many engaging activities were organized for the participants. ORTA organized and led a moderate-paced hike for 30.

The Markham Music Festival provided us with the opportunity to showcase ORTA. Thirteen volunteers manned our booth in four shifts.

The Stouffville Strawberry Festival was attended by eight volunteers to man our ORTA booth. This festival has proven in the past to be ORTA's best publicity event outside of the Relay.

Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club

Submitted by Sean Leon

The Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club is a member driven, non-profit group in its second year as a group and with Hike Ontario. Our groups site is hosted on the Meetup platform. Our group activities are generally limited to hikes, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Membership Total: 115 (to date)

Current membership trends:

Interest in membership is growing. Potential members and current ones are interested in endurance hikes above shorter or scenic hikes

Recent activities & successes:

- King's Mountain Night Hike (2 KM) - August 31 · 8:15 PM
- 10 Lookout hike through Gatineau park (23.1km) - August 27
- Black Diamond (Difficult Trails Loop) Including Kings Mountain (22km) August 20

Current challenges facing the club:

Our current challenge is having / getting more hike leaders to post events. Although we have many CHLs many in the group most are busy with work or family obligations. However, most are content with our event schedule.

Rideau Trail Association

Submitted by Sharen Yaworski

Our 45 AGM was held in June and Lars Thompson stepped forward to be our President for the next year. Lars and his wife have been RTA members for many years. They have held many positions in the RTA executive over the years.

We are hosting the Hike Ontario Summit this year, being held in Perth Ontario which is the location of our Central Club. Perth is a beautiful town in Ontario which is celebrating its 200th year in 2016.

We invited Doug Knapp a life long lobbyist who lives in Kingston. The Rideau Trail was formed under the leadership of Doug in 1971. He was also there for the first days of Hike Ontario. There now exists an excellent recreational trail network comprising the RIDEAU TRAIL linked to the WATERFRONT TRAIL, and K&P and CATARAQUI TRAILS. None of this would have happened without the vision, persistence, persuasion and years of hard work by Doug Knapp and we invited him here to the 2016 Summit to say Thanks Doug!!

Paul Galipeau is our Marketing and Communications who has done an amazing job getting us more visible in the social networks such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. We also have a new website and all 3 of our clubs in the Association have their own site as well with all our hikes listed as well our maps are always updated and free to print from the website. We have Paul speaking at the Summit this year to pass on some of his successes in working with social networks to enhance exposure of our hiking club.

Our Quarterly Newsletter continues to be a special treasure, thanks to our very talented editors John Cornish and Steve Kelly. We upgraded to a very professional look by adding shiny colour pages on front and back of the newsletter two years ago and were amazed at the impressive look.

One of our biggest successes is the willingness for our members to volunteer their time when we have trail maintenance and building projects to complete. Our members need

only to be called on the phone and they are ready to come out to lend a hand. We have a network of 287 km of trail to keep up which includes side loops for day hiking.

Our membership has increased for the first time in the last few years. It is always a challenge to any hiking club. We feel our attention to Marketing and Communications has helped with this enhanced Membership. We now have 780 annual members and 153 Life Time members for a total membership of 933. Our Challenges are always trying to increase our membership and to retain members. To keep our club interesting we have many other activities other than hiking we have a few social gatherings thru the year. We also started an impromptu pub night about 10 years ago and we meet monthly to have a meal and drink with fellow hikers.

Thames Valley Trail Association

Submitted by Ian Bailey

Our membership is at an all time high of 620, rising steadily over the year from 545 this time last year. We hope this interest in hiking continues.

We continue to offer at least 5 hikes per week, from one hour moderate Mondays and Saturday morning walks, to 2 hour Tuesday and Thursday Ramblers, and 2-4 hour weekend hikes. Fast paced hikes are offered at least twice per week. We have a comprehensive range of hikes planned for the upcoming season.

Regular trail maintenance work has been carried out over the summer and heavy in a number of places after the mild winter. We gathered a list of members willing to assist with trail maintenance and had some out on a section work day. We hope to promote this more next year. We have requested Fall trail maintenance reports from our section leaders and will use these to identify and prioritise trail work. We generally have good coverage for maintenance volunteers across the trail.

Our new website is now fully operational although still consuming significant time to fix some aspects and update content. The latest focus has been on using automation in Membee to provide various membership reports and mail-outs (renewals etc.).

“The Trekker” editions have been well received and complemented, produced by its new editor Kathy Vendrig.

The board members will be focusing on updating the trail guide once the Bill 100 miscommunications have (hopefully) been resolved with our landowners. A big thank you to Tom Friesen and Hike Ontario for all their efforts on trying to resolve both local and widespread concerns. Another focus will be on replacing the club computer and providing effective archives of our information, likely through web based online storage.

We have continued to offer hike leader and safe hiker courses and recently completed a seniors Safe Hiking course as part of the Seniors Hike Initiative. We continue to host the

meet up site and plan to use other social media sites such as twitter and Facebook once the website is fully developed. Two members of our board attended sessions regarding the future of our environmentally sensitive areas and the trail design standards acceptable within them.

Our Board will be having a number of changes (including change of President) this October with longstanding members resigning and hopefully new people replacing them. Their contributions will be missed but we are very positive about the organization in the coming year.

Thunder Bay Hiking Association

Submitted by Hilda Postenka

The Thunder Bay Hiking Association continues to be a strong and successful organization that actively promotes hiking. Our presence on social media has increased our visibility to potential members, and we have over 750 followers on Facebook and several hundred hits a month on our website. This year we are in the process of having a new website developed, which will be more user friendly on mobile devices.

Over the past year, while we experienced only a small increase in our number of memberships, we did continue to have increased numbers of hikers coming out on our hikes. Our memberships increased from 163 to 166, most of which were individual and a few were family. However, for years the average turnout was 10 to 12 members per event, but this year again many hikes topped 20 participants! We were lucky that we have had good weather for most of our outings so far this year. Of the 72 that were scheduled, 48 were hikes, 1 was a maintenance hike, 15 were hike/snowshoe, 3 were ski, 3 were paddle, and 2 were bike.

In May, we were able to offer the Hike Ontario Certified Hike Leader and Wilderness Day Hike Leader courses in Thunder Bay. They were well-attended and the majority of our Hike Leaders are now accredited. We are thankful for the support of Hike Ontario in making this possible, and for their work in obtaining and offering affordable insurance coverage for our club.

Most of our hikes take place in the Thunder Bay area, with some offered on the north shore of Lake Superior and others in Northern Minnesota. While we have several favourite trails, we continue to seek out new places to go and sights to see. We offer hikes at each difficulty level every season, but the majority of our hikes are at the intermediate level. There is a hike offered most weekends, and sometimes we are able to offer two, an easier hike or event one day and a more challenging one the other.

For more information about the Thunder Bay Hiking Association, access our website at www.tbha.ca, or check out our Facebook page "Thunder Bay Hiking Association".

Voyageur Trail Association

Submitted by Carole Blaquiére

Over the past year the VTA has continued to move forward on some projects, such as the strategic planning session and further development of trails on the northern shore of Lake Superior. The Nor'wester club has gone from having their one last executive step down to being revived by new participants in the Nipigon area. In Elliot Lake, the Coureurs de Bois have continued to increase their membership, bucking the trend everywhere else and in Marathon, the Group of Seven Trail is currently going through an environmental assessment with the hopes of building trail next year. The Casque Iles hiking club has a new executive who continue their partnership with Lake Superior National Marine Park.

The strategic planning group worked on developing two surveys, with the support from Ontario Trails Council. Both the Board Member and Trail User surveys were launched in the spring to collect data to guide the strategic planning along with the results of two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercises. One more SWOT exercise is planned for the northern region.

Trail maintenance continues to be done by dedicated volunteers along the trail. Trail Maintenance week was May 14th to the 22nd. There was a successful launch in Sault Ste. Marie at the Hiawatha Conservancy building, also known as the sugar shack. Most trails in the conservancy were spruced up to get ready for the summer season. Trail maintenance was also done in the Echo Ridges, Casque Iles and Saulteaux area.

The Nor'wester club have new members/executives from the Nipigon area. They are working hard to include new loop trails under the VTA banner. The first, The Deer Lake Trail was official launched at the beginning of August with some new signage and a YouTube video.

The VTA was represented at the Northern Trails Conference in Marathon by Chris Kuntz, who received the Ontario Trails Council's Trail User Award in recognition of our efforts in building the regional connectivity, by bringing communities together through significant trail development. This really reflects the efforts of the folks along the north shore of Lake Superior to develop and revive trails in the area.

Membership overall has increased due to the increase of membership of the Coureurs de Bois club. They have over 100 members of the overall xxx. The club continues to offer a number of different hikes each week and participate in a number of volunteer opportunities as a group such as Winterfest and acting as Park Ambassadors for Mississagi Park.

The partnership between the Casque Iles club and the LSNMP continues to be valuable. The park supports the signage and maintenance of the trail which provides opportunities to enjoy the Marine park from shore. A guided hike to the red chairs in July provided the participants with excellent views as in the picture below.

In Gros Cap, the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy (LSWC) is developing a new loop

trail through the Dr. Frederick van Nus Preserve off the Voyageur Trail. Look for this new hiking opportunity in the new year.

All in all, it's been an active year developing, maintaining, and promoting the Voyageur Trail.

Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club

Submitted by Raymond and Liz Ramshaw

As can be expected this hiking club is a conservative organization. Little changes and our turnover is about 1% per annum.

This club has been run by two coordinators (Raymond and Liz Ramshaw) for the last ten years. The programme has had an unchanged format of providing a 10-14km hike once a week throughout the year. Occasionally there are extra hikes depending on local festivities. The hike locations are usually in Waterloo Region. Social activities after hikes are strongly encouraged and well supported.

We do not create trails or maintain trails. We use existing trails and have about 90 tracks on file.

The procedures followed for all hikes are similar to that which HF Holidays Inc. uses.

These are associated with safety, liability, risk management etc. HF is one of the largest hiking organizations in the world and operates world wide. Our club's coordinators are members of HF and each of them has over 80 weeks of experience hiking with HF over the last 20 years. Most of the procedures followed by HF can be read in their brochure (see on line at www.hfholidays.co.uk or email Teachers' Travel at info@teacherstravel.co in Toronto).

The number of Waterloo 55+ club members is capped at 50. Members pay a small subscription, enough to pay for membership of Hike Ontario and Hike Ontario's insurance plan. This year's subscription was \$10 p.p.

Hike participation in 2014 was good. The average attendance was 15 (max. 30, min. 6).

One challenge, that the club has, is to train hike leaders. We have 5 leaders, but it is not easy to increase this number. Some members do not like to use a GPS and this device is at the centre of designing new tracks and leading existing hikes. Every leader and back marker carry GPSs with the track of the day loaded. However, most of our members like to be led. We encourage members to use a spare GPS and hike with the leader of the day. This is working well.

Two years ago we formalized a risk management plan that has been sent to Hike Ontario. We congratulate ourselves.

Hike Ontario

Financial Statements

(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

Year ended 30 June 2016



Richard E. Hamilton & Associates Accounting Inc.
The Society of Professional Accountants of Canada
99 Thames Street N.- Unit B
P.O. Box 364
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519-485-1265

Hike Ontario

Financial Statements

(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

Year ended 30 June 2016

Hike Ontario
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
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519-485-1265

Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by the management, we have compiled the financial position of **Hike Ontario as at 30 June 2016** and the statements of operation and changes in fund balances for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Date: _____
Ingersoll, Ontario

Signed: _____
Registered Professional Accountant

Richard E. Hamilton & Associates Accounting Inc.
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Ingersoll, Ontario
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Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 22 September 2016

Hike Ontario
Statement of Operations and changes in Fund Balances
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
Year ended 30 June 2016

	General Fund \$	Programs	Administration	Senior Hike Fund	2016	2015
Receipts						
Retail Sales	\$ 130	\$ -	\$ 130	\$ -	\$ 130	150
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,452	\$ 15,452	9705
Insurance	\$ 13,640	\$ -	\$ 13,640	\$ -	\$ 13,640	\$ 4,615
Memberships	\$ 8,836	\$ -	\$ 8,836	\$ -	\$ 8,836	\$ 4,529
Other Income	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 15
Programs	\$ 26,982	\$ 26,982	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,982	\$ 35,267
	\$ 50,588	\$ 26,982	\$ 23,606	\$ 15,452	\$ 66,040	\$ 54,280
Expenditure Allocation						
Awards	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ 1,510
Mood Walks	\$ 305	\$ 305			\$ 305	\$ 1,112
Safe Hiker Program	\$ 3,251	\$ 3,251			\$ 3,251	\$ 2,098
Senior Hike Program	\$ -			\$ 1,562	\$ 1,562	\$ 1,516
Hike Leader Training	\$ 4,590	\$ 4,590		\$ -	\$ 4,590	\$ 4,069
Insurance	\$ 11,724	\$ 10,170	\$ 1,554	\$ 2,026	\$ 13,750	\$ 3,968
Interest & Bank Charges	\$ 859	\$ -	\$ 859		\$ 859	\$ 184
Membership Fees	\$ 328	\$ -	\$ 328		\$ 328	\$ 455
Office Supplies	\$ 867	\$ 867		\$ 3,500	\$ 4,367	\$ 1,747
Payroll Expense	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 28,000	\$ 29,000
Professional Fees	\$ 1,950		\$ 1,950		\$ 1,950	\$ 5,200
Occupancy Costs	\$ 3,300	\$ -	\$ 3,300	\$ 300	\$ 3,600	\$ 2,500
Travel	\$ 404	\$ 404	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 404	\$ 11,908
Telephone	\$ 320	\$ -	\$ 320		\$ 320	\$ 708
	\$ 43,897	\$ 34,719	\$ 9,178	\$ 19,388	\$ 63,285	\$ 65,976
Excess (deficiency) of receipts over disbursements	\$ 6,691	\$ (7,738)	\$ 14,428	\$ (3,936)	\$ 2,755	\$ (11,696)
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 2,530			\$ -	\$ 2,530	\$ 14,226
Fund balances, end year	\$ 9,221	\$ (7,738)	\$ 14,428	\$ (3,936)	\$ 5,285	\$ 2,530

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

Hike Ontario
Financial Position
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
Year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Assets		
Bank Account - General	\$ 34,492	\$ 50,410
Accounts Receivable	\$ 13,925	\$ 16,494
Prepaid Accounts	\$ 12,737	\$ 11,202
Current assets	\$ 61,153	\$ 78,105
	\$ 61,153	\$ 78,105
Liabilities		
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$ 1	\$ 6,410
Deferred Revenue	\$ 15,750	\$ 13,595
	\$ 15,750	\$ 20,005
Fund Balances		
Restricted Funds		
Seniors Hike Grant Funds (Note 3)	\$ 40,118	\$ 55,570
	\$ 40,118	\$ 55,570
	\$ 55,868	\$ 75,575
Unrestricted accumulated surplus	\$ 5,285	\$ 2,530
	\$ 5,285	\$ 2,530
	\$ 61,153	\$ 78,105

Director _____ Director _____

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements

1. Purpose of the Organization

Hike Ontario was incorporated on January 16, 1975 in the Province of Ontario as a not-for-profit corporation. The objectives of Hike Ontario are to advance hiking and walking trail use in the Province of Ontario and to provide related educational services. As a not-for-profit corporation without Share Capital, it is exempt from income taxes under section 149(1)(t) of the income Tax Act.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Hike Ontario follows the accrual basis of accounting whereby revenue is recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when goods and services have been received.

Hike Ontario receives a significant amount of donated services from members as volunteers the fair market value of which is difficult to determine. Accordingly, the value of donated services are not reflected in the Financial Statements.

This summary of the major accounting policies is presented to assist the reader in evaluating the financial statements contained herein. These policies have been followed consistently in all material respects for the periods covered:

Fund accounting

Grants are recognized in revenue when reasonable assurance exists with respect to its amount and collectability and in proportion to authorized and related expenditures incurred as Hike Ontario fulfills the requirements of the grant. Grants received in advance of fulfillment are reported on the balance sheet as deferred revenue.

3. Senior's Hike Grant

In 2015, Hike Ontario received a grant from the Province of Ontario for \$ 65,200 to promote hiking for individuals 55 and older. The grant expired March 31, 2016. Hike Ontario has submitted the final financial summary detailing total expenditures of \$ 25,082. This may result in a repayment of \$ 40,118.

Grants are recognized in revenue when reasonable assurance exists with respect to its amount and collectability, and in proportion to authorized and related expenditures incurred at Hike Ontario fulfills the various requirements of each grant. Grants received in advance of fulfillment of related terms and conditions are shown as deferred revenue on the Balance Sheet.

Insurance program fees are levied at the beginning of the year to participating clubs and invoiced accordingly. Unpaid fees at Hike Ontario's fiscal year end are shown on the Balance sheet as Accounts Receivable and deferred revenue until recognized is shown as revenue.

Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 22 September 2016

Hike Ontario Trust Fund
Financial Statements
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
Year ended 30 June 2016



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Hike Ontario Trust Fund
Financial Statements
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
Year ended 30 June 2016

**Hike Ontario Trust Fund
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
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Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 22 September 2016

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Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by the management, we have compiled the financial position of **Hike Ontario Trust Fund as at 30 June 2016** and the statements of operation and changes in fund balances for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Date: _____
Ingersoll, Ontario

Signed: _____
Registered Professional Accountant

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Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 22 September 2016

Hike Ontario Trust Fund
Statement of Operations and changes in Fund Balances
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)
Year ended 30 June 2016

	General Fund \$	2016	2015
Receipts			
Receipted Donations	\$ 3	\$ 3	\$ 6,180
Programme Fees	\$ 41,100	\$ 41,100	\$ 38,400
	\$ 41,103	\$ 41,103	\$ 44,580
Expenditure Allocation			
Interest & Bank Charges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,557
HST Expense	\$ 415	\$ 415	\$ 1,128
Office Supplies	\$ 11,248	\$ 11,248	\$ 4,857
Payroll Expense	\$ 27,503	\$ 27,503	\$ 28,386
Professional Fees	\$ 1,911	\$ 1,911	\$ 8,910
Telephone	\$ 314	\$ 314	\$ 469
	\$ 41,391	\$ 41,391	\$ 45,307
Excess (deficiency) of receipts over disbursements	\$ (289)	\$ (289)	\$ (727)
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 22,712	\$ 22,712	\$ 23,438
Fund balances, end year	\$ 22,423	\$ 22,423	\$ 22,712

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Financial Position

(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

Year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Assets		
Bank Account - General	\$ 34,009	\$ 34,006
HST Recoverable	\$ 2,254	\$ 1,299
Current assets	\$ 36,264	\$ 35,305
	\$ 36,264	\$ 35,305
Liabilities		
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$ 13,841	\$ 12,593
	\$ 13,841	\$ 12,593
Unrestricted accumulated surplus	\$ 22,423	\$ 22,712
	\$ 22,423	\$ 22,712
	\$ 36,264	\$ 35,305

Director_____ Director_____

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

1. Purpose and Objectives of the Trust

The following sets out the purposes and objectives of the Trust.

- a. To promote and fund educational conferences, open to any member of the general public who is interested in hiking and a recreational activity.
- b. To fund the preparation, production and distribution of information dealing with concerns of hikers and available to any person interested in hiking.
- c. To fund the planning and operation of educational programs dealing with hiking, hike leadership, trail management and other concerns of hikers, and
- d. To fund volunteer awards to recognize service to hiking.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

This summary of the major accounting policies is presented to assist the reader in evaluating the financial statements contained herein. These policies have been followed consistently in all material respects for the periods covered:

Hike Ontario Trust is a registered charity with a singular objective of funding Hike Ontario's educational activities. The Trust Fund is a separate legal entity from Hike Ontario a not-for-profit Corporation and therefore the revenues and expenditures the Not-for-Profit are not reflected in the financial statements of Hike Ontario Trust Fund. Transfers from the Trust Fund are provided to Hike Ontario to defray Hike Ontario eligible educational and certain program expenses. The President, Treasurer, and a Director of Hike Ontario are the trustees of the Trust Fund.

Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 22 September 2016

VIRGINIA JOHNSON AWARD

This award is dedicated to the memory of Virginia Johnson, a wonderful volunteer who showed tremendous dedication and proficiency in making Hike Ontario an effective organization. The winner of this award is Raymond Soucy, Hike Ontario Fund Raising Chair.

Raymond Soucy has been an effective and dedicated board member on the Hike Ontario Board representing the Elora Cataract Trailway Association which he has led as president since 2008. His presence at the board table has always been positive and helpful. Many creative ideas have come from this group and been shared with other trail associations under Raymond's leadership.

Raymond stepped up to assist us on the Fundraising Committee for Hike Ontario becoming the chair in 2013. Raymond was successful in creating an application for the Seniors' Hike Initiative to the Sport and Recreation Communities Fund. This support has been critical in maintaining our financial viability as we continue to employ a part-time program manager.

Raymond is professional, positive and able in the role that he has undertaken. His "Can-Do" spirit is appreciated and will be missed during executive meetings. It is a pleasure to award him the Virginia Johnston Award.

Submitted by: Tom Friesen
President
Hike Ontario

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Each year, countless Ontarians volunteer their time, energy, creative and professional talents to enhance Ontario's hiking and walking opportunities. These individuals devote endless hours to serve on committees, champion important issues and causes, coordinate events and/or donate their business expertise and resources to further the positive growth and development of Ontario's pedestrian based trail network.

Annually, Hike Ontario recognizes three individuals who have contributed significantly to the success of a club program or project in one or more of the following areas: Advocacy, Marketing, Public Relations, Governance, Trail Development, Events, Risk Management, Land Securement or Landowner Relations, Fundraising and/or Hike Leadership.

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015-2016 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE:

Karen Hill, The Avon Trail

Karen has worked tirelessly for the Avon Trail for over 10 years. She has a passion for the outdoors, for conservancy of nature and for the promotion and protection of the trail and its legacy.

When Karen joined the Avon Trail in 2004, the Trail was in a precarious state. The actual trail was badly in need of clearing and refreshing, stiles and bridges were needed, volunteer trail workers were lacking, membership numbers were in decline and the board was operating with insufficient members. Karen joined the board in 2006 as Secretary. In two years' time, she took over as President soon after Sandra Coulthard passed away. Karen brought many changes to the club and, on her retirement in 2015, the Avon Trail was in a much better place due to her energy and leadership.

While president, the membership grew to over 100, a more than 100% increase and donations increased so that the club became financially sound. Karen oversaw the process of a successful Trillium grant application, the proceeds of which went toward placing new signage along the entire length of the trail, and she promoted an active network of communication with our neighbouring trails and with Hike Ontario. Karen brought a much-needed focus to bear on the Trail's relationship with our landowners. She partnered with other volunteers to bring our landowner contact list up to date and always emphasized the relationship with our landowners as being our number one priority. She continually emphasized that without the generosity of the landowners, there would not be a trail. Karen initiated the system of Trail Monitors and Maintenance Crew which has become the backbone of maintaining the Trail up to standards of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. All of these improvements were only made possible because of Karen's leadership that inspired a number of others to pitch in and join the volunteer base of people in order to accomplish these goals.

Karen brought her organizational expertise to the board table. Forms were created for Monitoring the trail and creating a record of due diligence. Our insurance was changed with a policy that included landowners, two new editions of the Trail Guide, a Trail Workers Guide and a History of the Avon Trail were all been published under Karen's leadership. A donation program was initiated and a website launched that gleaned over 400 hits a year. In addition, Karen was an active representative of the Trail at Hike Ontario meetings as well as advocating for the Avon Trail in particular and the hiking community more generally at various municipal advisory committees.

Last year, 2015 was the 40th Anniversary year for the Avon Trail. Karen envisioned a number of special events to mark the occasion, and due in large part to her vision and leadership, we look back on that as a memorable year. The activities included a 40th Anniversary Launch Hike in which several founders and honorary members participated, an 'Ultra Runner' Event, the launch of the Family Hikes concept, and the planting of twenty-five native red maples on various landowners' properties along the trail. It is with pleasure that the Board of the Avon Trail recommends Karen Hill as a candidate for Volunteer of the Year for Hike Ontario.

Submitted by: Bernard Goward
President
The Avon Trail

Marc Vallee, Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

We would like to nominate Marc Vallée, President of the Midland Ganaraska Hiking Club, for his ongoing commitment to the club, as well as for his and his wife Janet's enthusiastic support of all the club activities.

Marc joined the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association in the late 80's and served as president of the Midland Ganaraska Hiking Trail club for the last 18 years. Marc has been instrumental in creating a very active hiking club, with a year-round activity program, which includes snowshoeing, paddling, camping, biking, and social events, such as an annual corn roast, various pot lucks and the annual Christmas party. Marc and his wife Janet will actually dress up as Mr. & Mrs. Santa. Marc and Janet also had a mock wedding on the trail during a camping trip in Killarney 15 years ago. Marc organizes all of the annual trail maintenance work parties, personally visited with all our landowners to ensure trail access on their land, and spearheads the hike schedule committee. Since becoming the club president 18 years ago, he has attended 99.9% of all GHTA board of directors meetings, and is an active contributor to the discussion at these meetings.

Marc, and his wife Janet, have contributed immensely to the promotion of the club in the Midland area, as well as to the moral and social well-being of club members. Life is good in the Midland club, thanks to Marc (and Janet).

Submitted by: Frieda Baldwin
Hike Ontario Representative
Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

Jack Tannett, Rideau Trail Association

Jack has been an RTA member since 2014 and on the Central's Executive since 2015 as Trail Maintenance Coordinator. Taking his position very seriously, the trail has never been in better shape, nor have members been so aware of all of the locations of noxious weeds. Starting as a member of the RTA he hiked the entire trail and blogged about. Known for his photographs which often find their way into the newsletters, Jack has willingly helped other who want to hike the entire trail or portions, offering guidance and advice.

Quickly Jack has become an integral part of Central and the RTA Board, now taking on the role of Vice Chair, in between leading hikes and he is always up to accompany another leader on a pre hike. Having recently completed hike leader trainor training, Jack will soon be teaching new hike leaders. A life long hiker who retired from a career in engineering which allowed him to hike all over Canada, the UK, and Australia, he can now turn his full attention to hiking and not have work get in the way.

Always one to lend a hand, or house in the case of Summit meetings, or volunteer, Jack is generous with his time and knowledge and Central and the RTA is richer for his membership.

Submitted by: Sharen Yaworski
Hike Ontario Representative
Rideau Trail Association (Kingston)

“I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees.”

-- Henry David Thoreau



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