



There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.

- Beverly Sills

# Annual Report



2017 - 2018

**Get Outside. Get Healthy. Hike.**

Hike Ontario

**Annual Report 2017-2018**

[www.hikeontario.com](http://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

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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 2017 -2018***

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

## ***Standing Committees 2017-2018***

Lewis Williams	Certification Committee
Mike Bender	Public Education Committee
Bill Mungall	Issues, Policy & Advocacy Committee
Frieda Baldwin	Planning and Development Committee



## ***Board Members – as appointed by our Member Clubs***

Bernard Goward	Avon Trail
Scott Robeson	Bayfield River Valley Trail
Ron Knight	Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)
Anne Armstrong	Bruce Trail Association
Coral Petzoldt	Durham Outdoors Club
Dave Kirkpatrick	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
Wayne Terryberry	Hamilton Burlington Trails Council
Roland Gatti	Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association
Klaus Keunecke	Lambton Shores Nature Trails
Allison Stoecker	Maitland Trail Association
Peter Schaefer	Oak Ridges Trail Association
Cliff Daly	Ottawa Rambling Club
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
Ken Reichert	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

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Submitted by Tom Friesen

I am once again President of Hike Ontario. What energizes me is that our executive is full of effective committed activists. Their efforts deserve our thanks on behalf of hikers and trail organizations across the province.

We have engaged in some creative and valuable partnerships with other members of the trails community:

The Mood Walks III project which supports students in Universities and Colleges who have mental health challenges has begun and Hike Ontario is an active Partner in this project offering training and support through our Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader training programs.

Coleman provided support for this project by donating 25 backpacks to support the Mood Walks project. We also provided hike leaders leading hikes and promotion for Ontario Parks for "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" which took place on July 20.

We supported the Healthy Hikes program of Conservation Ontario with promotion and articles to highlight this program.

The Young Hikers Project section of the website has been updated and workshops to orient the program have been planned. We will provide Young Hiker Project Manuals to several school boards through a grant we received from the TD Friends of the Environment.

We again co-sponsored a workshop on Landowner Relations with the Bruce Trail Conservancy for Trail Associations held at BTC headquarters in Dundas.

We displayed materials and information at "Go Wild. Grow Wild" in London in association with some of our clubs. We similarly provided information in store displays in Toronto.

Hike Ontario bought over 1000 "Take a Hike Buttons" and have provided them to programs promoting hiking with young people and active hikers.

We have partnered with the Hike Haliburton Festival in training Hike Leaders for their events.

We gave up our office space at CMHA Halton in July due to a change of our lease conditions that would have made it impossible to hold board meetings or training courses on Saturdays.

We are pleased to be partnering with the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association and their 50th anniversary celebration as well as Lakehead University in partnering for the Annual Summit in Orillia.

We are taking steps to resolve our financial accounts so that donations can be received and receive a tax credit. We will be voting on a Special Resolution at the Annual Meeting

to make this happen.

I have been pleased to be a part of several events at hikes, parades and Annual Meetings in order to represent Hike Ontario.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### ***Certification Committee***

Submitted by Lewis Williams

#### **Courses:**

Hike Ontario continues to offer the full range of hiking courses, with a focus on hike leadership and hike participant in the non-wilderness and wilderness fields. Our 8 courses are: Safe Hiker, Certified Hike Leader, Wilderness Day Hike Leader, Wilderness Trip Hike Leader, the new and popular Navigation: Map & Compass and Navigation: GPS. The newly developed course, Wilderness Hiker, is ideal for inexperienced but keen hikers who want to venture safely into the wilderness, which is defined as more than 2km from road support. Instructors Mike Whitmarsh and Lewis Williams journeyed to Elliot Lake and taught it last Saturday to members of the Serpent River First Nations.

In 2018 from Jan-Sept 8, Hike Ontario instructors delivered 34 courses with 457 participants. In 2017, 48 courses were offered to 537 participants. In 2016, in total we delivered 36 courses to 504 people. This was up from 2015 with 455 people trained. I am pleased to see that Hike Ontario instructors are delivering courses literally all across this vast province. Congrats to the hiking club instructors of Hike Ontario for offering courses to their members. If you would like help setting up a course for your hikers please contact us and we'll be glad to help.

#### **Instructors:**

Hike Ontario focuses on growing our pool of instructors of all our courses so that we can meet the growing popularity of our hiking courses. There are several people on the waiting list for hiking courses and a call has gone out to our instructors encouraging them to try to plan to teach at least 2 courses in 2018. Once again, please encourage instructors in your clubs to step up and offer courses. Instructors have also been notified that to remain on the active roster, 2 courses must be taught in 5 years and the annual fee of \$25 is due every January. This annual fee is waived for those instructors who instruct but don't claim the instructor fee.

Please note that instructors of Hike Ontario courses must be at least 18 years of age or in special circumstances, with the approval of the Certification Cttee Chair.

Hike Ontario is experiencing challenges with offering the Navigation: GPS course because we only have 1 skilled instructor. If any Board member knows of a suitable and current CHL instructor, or someone who would like to become one, and who would be appropriate for the role of GPS course instructor, please contact Lewis Williams and we can help get that person trained.

One instructor, after 8 months of unsuccessful communications on the part of Hike Ontario, has been placed on the Inactive Instructor List. She can become active and able to teach courses after either paying the annual fee of \$25 or indicating that she will waive instructor fees when she teaches a course.

The Active Instructor List is composed of 29 instructors and is located on the website in the Administration section of the Instructors Area List.

Recently the role of Master Instructor was formalized. Master Instructors are selected based on their superior skills as instructors and mentors and are the only people who can train and certify new Hike Ontario instructors. Currently there are 9 instructors on this list.

Kevin Lowe, president of ORTA, has agreed to join the Steering Cttee of the Certification Cttee. We look forward to Kevin's expertise. This committee has input into Hike Ontario courses, appropriate website content and procedures of the Certification Committee.

Recently I taught a Wilderness Day Hike Leader course at Balsam Lake Provincial Park and trained Glynn Richardson as a Wilderness Day Hike Leader (WDHL) course instructor, contingent upon Glynn training as a Certified Hike Leader (CHL) instructor first. Glynn is the co-president of the wilderness section of the Ganaraska Hiking Club. Special arrangements were made due to his active role in the wilderness section of that hiking club. We will welcome Glynn as an instructor of the CHL and WDHL courses hopefully this fall.

**Website:**

Providing info on the website that is clear and easily accessible continues to be a priority. To that end material has been added and courses have been refined in an ongoing manner to assist our Instructors, especially in the Members Area & Instructors Area pages. David, our Program Manager, continues to make revisions and additions to website Programs material as requested. I invite all Board members to visit our website, especially the Navigation and Wilderness Hiker courses.

Furthermore, the new Navigation: Map and Compass course is now on the website in the Instructors Area. Please visit the site and see what's attracting positive interest in the community.

**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.

Discussions initially took place with the National Cadet and Canadian Ranger Program regarding the Government of Canada using the Hike Ontario courses in their training of youth across Canada. Lately we haven't heard from that organization but we remain hopeful that this initiative will come to fruition. There are several steps that the Cadet Corp must go through before the green light is given. There is also interest in translating the Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader into French for their use and giving the finished product to Hike Ontario. New Business:

Hike Ontario places a high priority on reaching out to members of both hiking clubs and the general public in Ontario so that more people become trained hikers and hike leaders. In the area of professionalism, Hike Ontario, with input from our instructors, offers Hike Ontario Instructor T-shirts at a cost of \$25 shipped or \$20 if picked up.

The Certification and Training Admin Manual has been revised, thanks to our Program Manager's initiative.

We are continuing to determine the validity of a course waiver for our courses.

***Issues, Policy, and Advocacy Committee***

Submitted by Bill Mungall

**Ontario Pre-Budget Consultation Presentation**

HO again made an appearance and presented at one of the sessions put on each year by the Ontario Minister of Finance, this one held in Kitchener. One of our reasons for selecting this venue to present was foreknowledge that the two local Ministers (of Tourism and Natural Resources) would also be attending. We again made the case for a landowner incentive in the form of a token property tax reduction for accepting a trail on their land, on the basis that there is a benefit to the Province in terms of reduced health care costs. We also made a pitch for base funding for HO, to be treated similar to the 52 provincial sports organizations. The Minister of MTCS, Daiene Vernile, approached me afterward and invited me to set up an appointment on behalf of HO...as soon as the election was over.

**New Government**

HO recently wrote the new Minister, Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin - Caledon, enclosing our written presentation, and requested a meeting with HO.

The new government issued its Speech from the Throne, which we reviewed, but found nothing that was in any way material to HO to respond to.

### **Landowner Relations Workshop**

A joint BTC/HO landowner relations workshop was held for a second year at the BTC office in Dundas. It was again very well attended, with a full room of some 2 dozen participants, plus another dozen on the phone....one participant from an HO club calling in from Arizona! Of note was the fact that a number of club presidents attended in addition to their landowner relations directors.

### **Railroad Crossings**

A concern was expressed by ORTA over improvements to GO train service that did not consider reasonable alternatives to the level crossings of the trail, partly due to the local municipality not bringing these to the attention of Metrolinx. Looking further at this issue, HO learned that similar issues might have arisen with the advent of the high-speed rail line (now postponed indefinitely). Letters of concern were sent to Metrolinx and the Ministry of the Environment, without response. HO has also discussed this issue with the Ontario Trails Council and it and HO have resolved to jointly meet soon with Metrolinx to press the case.

### **Ontario Trails Strategy**

The Ontario Trails Strategy, while it still exists, has outrun its written 3-year action plan, to which HO and individual clubs had provided input several years ago during several provincial consultation sessions. MTCS staff are awaiting news as to any new direction, initiatives or further consultations on the OTS that the new Minister and Government may wish to take. One of the initiatives of the OTS was to be a trail classification system. While HO does not actively endorse such a system, I did provide some informal comments when asked to on the hiking component of this system.

HO has encouraged the new Minister of MTCS to endorse the OTS and to engage in a new set of consultations with stakeholders.

## ***Fundraising Committee***

Submitted by Shompa Hai

Hike Ontario's fundraising activities over the last year have been around the following areas:

1. Applying for grants to support Hike Ontario programs.
2. Organizing materials and information that are required for grant applications.
3. Make fundraising effort more efficient by preparing excel spreadsheets to manage the followings:
  - a) Develop yearly application scheduling system and
  - b) Provide opportunities for the Board members to contribute to the process based on their interests and availabilities.

During the last year, Hike Ontario applied to TD friends of the environment to update the



375 pages “Young Hikers Manual” and print them for distribution to the Schools.

We were successful in 4 applications out of total 6 which included the following areas.

1. Ottawa area
2. KW and Cambridge area
3. London area
4. Seaway and Peterborough area

Our applications for Toronto and Hamilton areas were not successful due to overwhelming grant applications.

In order to be more active and prepare applications with good support, Hike Ontario will be looking for volunteers to contribute to the process on regular basis. These volunteers will be recruited based on there interests, experiences and networking abilities.

Last years fundraising effort was possible because of the help and guidance of Hike Ontario’s President Tom Friesen and also support from our Program Manager David Rosenblun.

### ***Public Education Committee***

Submitted by Mike Bender

#### **Summary of Activities and Initiatives**

##### **Hike Ontario Website**

During the first few months of the year, the website working group, which consisted of Ian Bailey, Tom Friesen, Shompa Hai, Scott Mitchell, David Rosenblun, Charles Whitlock and Mike Bender, completed their work on the update. The group focused their efforts on how to improve the function, access/use, communication and aesthetic of the website. A new site map was created to streamline the information that is presented, with straightforward drop-down menus that has a flow and relationship to the information provided. Duplication of information was eliminated and the scrolling banner of pictures was reduced in size to better balance with the written content.

We would like to hear from you about the updated Hike Ontario website. Please let us know what you think and if you have any suggestions. You can send us an email to: [info@hikeontario.com](mailto:info@hikeontario.com)

##### **Starting Up a Hiking Group or Organization**

We are in the process of drafting an information guide that will assist people interested in starting an informal hiking group, or an organized club. We will outline the key steps and actions that should be taken into consideration for establishment and continuous operation. Research for this work is being completed and over the fall or early winter draft content will be circulated to the Hike Ontario Executive for review and comment. Once the guide is finalized it will be made available on the Hike Ontario website. Stay tuned for a completion notification.

## **Outreach Events**

During the winter and summer Hike Ontario and Trans Canada Trail Ontario (TCTO) partnered in hosting a booth at Fort George Nation Historic Site. Both times were planned around a public event at the Fort. In the winter, it was Icestravaganza and in the Summer it was the Fort Open House. At the winter event, TCTO was also installing a time capsule that will be buried for the next 150 years and which Hike Ontario was able to add their button to the contents of the time capsule. At the summer event, Hike Ontario also co-lead a guided walk with Valerie Pringle along the Trans Canada Trail by the Fort to the Niagara River. Thanks to Tom Friesen and Shompa Hai from Hike Ontario attending both events.

On September 24, Hike Ontario will be represented at the Best of the Great Trail Volume 1 book launch at the Toronto Public Library. The author, Michael Haynes will be presenting highlights of hiking adventures from the East Coast to Southern Ontario while exploring The Great Trail.

## **Closing Remarks**

In closing, I look forward to getting more involved with the other elements of Public Education including promotion and education of Hike Ontario programs, the Annual Summit, Volunteer Awards and the Young Hikers' Program. Thanks also to Tom, David and the entire Hike Ontario Executive for all their dedicated efforts, help and support over the last year.

## ***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.

The **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 protecting 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.

18 Organizations took out CGL at the same rate as in 2017, i.e. at a cost of \$3.06 (incl. 8% PST), and 14 organizations took D&O at a cost of \$208 per organization. Hike Ontario

charges a policy fee for the CGL insurance in the amount of \$75, and covers Hike Ontario's cost to administer the insurance 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 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. We therefore ask that all organizations who wish to participate in the Hike Ontario insurance program report 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 insurance program, as well as a Q&A document, are listed on the Hike Ontario website. [hikeontario.com/programs/program-insurance/](http://hikeontario.com/programs/program-insurance/)

As approved at the last Annual General Meeting, we have adjusted our membership fees to \$100 per club, plus \$1 per person. This made the cost more equitable amongst all clubs and slightly increased the membership revenue amount for Hike Ontario in support of its ongoing operations.

### **Closing remark**

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

## HIKE ONTARIO MEMBER CLUB REPORTS

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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.

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### *Avon Trail*

Submitted by Bernard Goward, President

#### **Who we are:**

- 113 km foot path – St. Marys to Conestogo
- Membership 140
- Annual Budget 2018: \$11,453
- Number of Landowners: 102
- 

**Honourary Memberships Granted to:** Jamie Hember and Shirley Gotts

#### **Hikes**

- Tuesday morning Rambles year-round, hike and coffee. Avg. attendance ~ 15
- 34 weekend & special feature hikes; eight different hike leaders; avg. attendance ~ 17
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wildwood Challenge fundraiser – 22 km, 36 hikers; net proceeds \$370
  - Distance hikes, Family Hikes
  - Cross Country Ski & Snow Shoe hikes
- 18 non-Avon Trail members registered completing an end-to-end hike.
- Hike Leader Certification Course offered in September in Dublin, ON

#### **Trail Improvements:**

- 24-foot bridge installed at Km 76 with Landowner assistance
- Grass cutting crews assigned sections; goal – cut grass and weeds 3x per season

#### **New Website:**

- Funded by a Stratford Perth Community Foundation grant
- Mobile friendly
- Pay Pal activated for membership and Store purchases (Guide books, badges, etc.)

- Member-managed membership services with auto reminders of fees, Profile, membership card,
- Newsletters

#### **PR & Marketing:**

- New portable retractable banners – one vertical and two horizontal
- A newly designed flyer on card stock
- Posters generated for special speakers and hikes, such as our Family hikes
- A 'Tear-off map' of the Stratford Side Trail for distribution to local hotels, B&Bs, tourist offices

#### **Trail App:**

- Represented on a Hike Ontario Trail App ad hoc committee
- Recommended Ondago, [www.igloocreations.com](http://www.igloocreations.com) to interested HO clubs
- Engaged Ondago to create an Avon Trail map on their Trail App platform
- RBC-Dominion Securities grants funded this initiative.

#### **Community Service:**

- Began involvement in 'Adopt a Highway' clean-up program, 2 times per year.

### ***Bayfield River Valley Trail Association***

Submitted by Ray Letheren

The BRVTA celebrates its 11 Th anniversary, and maintains 16 km of trail in and around the Bayfield area.

BRVTA paid 2018 memberships: 55

#### **Events:**

- ✓ Community Walk at Varna Trails
- ✓ Participated in Family Day Hike and Soup's On Event on Family Day
- ✓ Community Hike at Mavis' Trail in Varna
- ✓ Earth Day Community Clean-up during the afternoon with 55 volunteers
- ✓ Participate in the Bayfield Home & Garden Show
- ✓ Owl Prowl after Dark hike on the Sawmill Trail
- ✓ Woodland Trail Spring Community Hike Woodland Trail
- ✓ Hosted SW Ontario Camino Pilgrims
- ✓ Co-hosted a community showing of Al Gore Movie "Truth to Power" with over 100 attending
- ✓ Replacing 10 historical / environmental signs on the Heritage Trail

#### **Issues**

Emerald Ash Borer has created a disaster on the trails as we see this beautiful tree is destroyed. Most of the ash trees on the trail have been dead for 5 years. We are seeing most of them in rapid decline, with a few coming down every windy day. We are also

seeing a major re-emergence of vegetation, now that the canopy has been opened up.

### **Updates**

We were very pleased to have one of our current landowner partners extend an invitation to extend the Woodland Trail to the Bayfield River (Zavitz Loop). The land is quite spectacular with beaver ponds mixed terrain and vegetation. It is within 2 km of the village, but has a wilderness feel.

We have 12 trained Hike Leaders and organized a series of monthly hikes on BRVTA trails as well as other local trails. 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, Evening Full Moon Hike, tree identification etc. We were also pleased to host a walk with the Southwestern Ontario El Camino Pilgrims in July.

The BRVTA also assists the Bayfield Tree Project with administration. They are a committee of the BRVTA. This community group has been re planting the public areas in the village with trees, some 300 to date. This has been a very successful project.

The BRVTA is an active member of the Bayfield Blue Community Project. 37 community groups 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 7 water bottle refilling stations at a cost of \$14,000.

<http://www.bayfieldbluecommunityproject.com/>

Several Special Events were also organized such as a spring litter walk in the village was 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 7 years, rising over \$34,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

As a fundraiser we organized our second annual Fall Harvest Dinner and Dance in Bayfield. We hope to continue the success of past years. This is an annual fundraising venture, and covers much of our costs for the year. It also gives us an opportunity to thank and recognize our landowner partners and professional services that support us.

### **Major Project: The Bayfield River Flats Acquisition**

The BRVTA launched an ambitious project in 2017 to raise the funds to acquire almost 5 acres of river side land and transfer the ownership to the Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy. [www.htltc.ca](http://www.htltc.ca). The BRVTA signed a 10-year management agreement to manage the property. After initial cleanup last year, we continue to enhance the property. Working with the HTLTC we obtained a \$5,000 county heritage grant for the property. Stone seating has been added as well as historical natural area signage. The property will also be signed as a Monarch Butterfly and pollinator area.

## **Bayfield River Flats 2018 Usage Report**

The Bayfield River Flats property was acquired late in 2016 through a community fundraising drive coordinated by the BRVTA.

A BRVTA team of volunteers, working with the HTLTC has worked to clean up and enhance the property by:

- controlling Hogweed and other invasive species (spraying and posting)
- erecting signage
- defining the parking area and installing gate controls.
- applied for a Huron Heritage grant (successful)
- chipping walking trails
- created access for a canoe / kayak launch area
- engaged a volunteer Landscape Architect, Kim McCabe
- A property boundary survey was initiated

## **Public Usage**

The community is very pleased with the clean-up. There is now an understanding happening that this is a special natural area that can be enhanced and protected. There is a lot of usage by people interested in passive recreation by the river. It is shocking how little river access there is. One of the largest groups is anglers and their families. Usually there are 2 to 3 individuals fishing. The Flats is a prime fishing area (YouTube: Bayfield Fishing). The Bayfield anglers club has a major restocking program in the river every year. Fishermen are from across south-western Ontario from Windsor to Niagara. Many have a Bayfield connection, but as well, many do not, they come to fish. There has also been significant interest from canoes and kayakers wanting access to the river. Many people come for bird and wildlife viewing. This is a great area for birdwatchers, and as well, the colony of beaver has created interest in the area for viewing.

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

Spring started out with significant portions of the trail washed out due to heavier than usual river flooding. Volunteers helped re-route the trail and clean up debris. The re-routes do provide a different hiking experience each year! We have steady pedestrian traffic on the trail and our recently installed interpretive signage has attracted hikers and draws attention to the historically interesting sites along the trail. We are looking forward to a beautiful and colourful Fall in the river valley this year and are thankful for the continued support that Hike Ontario offers to the hiking community. We have a new website at [www.trouthollow.ca](http://www.trouthollow.ca) - Hike safely!!

## ***Bruce Trail Conservancy***

Submitted by Anne Armstrong

### **Highlights**

- The Bruce Trail Conservancy secured 14 properties and approximately 4 kilometers of Bruce Trail during their 2018 fiscal which ended in June. Five of these properties were donations. We are already on track to securing a stunning 15.5 kilometers over 9 properties this fiscal. A substantial property that is helping with this remarkable achievement is the securement of Driftwood Cove, a 3,200-acre parcel on the Bruce Peninsula with 8 kilometers of Bruce Trail at Driftwood Cove on Georgian Bay. The BTC is acquiring this parcel in partnership with Parks Canada.
- Cheltenham Badlands re-opened September 22. The new parking lot and boardwalk offering views of the red clay hills of the Badlands will help conserve the site. A series of new features and operational procedures, including paid parking and staff during peak visitation have also enhanced safety to hikers and visitors.
- The Peninsula Club will be hosting the Bruce Trail Conservancy 2018 Annual Meeting, Friday September 21 to Sunday September 23. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Evergreen Resort near Little Red Bay, South Bruce Peninsula. Contact the resort directly to make accommodation reservations for the weekend if you are interested in attending. Make sure you mention that you are there for the BTC Annual Meeting.
- Bruce Trail Day is September 30, 2018 from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM at various locations on the Bruce Trail. Bruce Trail Day is an annual event that is hosted by the Bruce Trail Conservancy and each of its Bruce Trail Clubs that offer free guided hikes and family activities to help you explore the Bruce Trail and discover the amazing variety of life along the Niagara Escarpment. This year's Bruce Trail Day will include special hands-on conservation projects on Bruce Trail Conservancy Nature Reserves. Details to come as events are confirmed with our Bruce Trail Clubs.
- The annual Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon is here again. This is a month-long fundraising event that takes place every October in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Participants set a personal hiking goal, seek sponsorship from friends and family, and then hike the Bruce Trail throughout the month of October. Since 2014, Bruce Trail Hike-a-thoners have raised over \$100,000 to help establish, protect, and conserve the Bruce Trail's conservation corridor. Interested in more information, contact Laura Tuohy, at [ltuohy@brucetrail.org](mailto:ltuohy@brucetrail.org). Earn a coveted Hike-a-thon 2018 badge and compete for fun prizes!
- The Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club is once again putting on a film screening and brunch fundraiser in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. This year the film is "The Gardener" which plays Sunday October 21, 2018 at the Gorge Cinema in Elora. For full registration details please email Janice McClelland at [janicedon86@gmail.com](mailto:janicedon86@gmail.com). Beth Gilhespy, Bruce Trail Conservancy CEO, will open the program with stunning visuals



highlighting precious lands preserved and rehabilitated by the Bruce Trail Conservancy and its volunteers. The feature presentation, *The Gardener*, is a mesmerizing, award-winning Canadian documentary from Quebec filmmaker Sebastien Chabot. It offers a rare glimpse into Les Quatre Vents, a 20-acre private garden overlooking the St Lawrence River at La Malbaie, and the self-taught horticulturist who created it, Frank Cabot. Volunteers and staff continued to work together to address multiple encroachment issues including all-terrain vehicles, horses, bikes and even the odd herd of cattle. A growing issue is managing the steadily increasing number of visitors to scenic natural attractions on or near Bruce Trail properties. This will continue to be a challenge as Ontario's population increases.

### ***Durham Outdoors Club***

Submitted by Carol Petzoldt, President

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 113 members at quarter-end. DOC membership includes family, student and individual adult membership.

#### The 2018-2019 Executive

President: Ray Bartodziej  
Secretary: Coral Petzoldt  
Treasurer: Kaja Batinic  
Membership: Jeannie Shanks  
Website: Catherine Shearer-Kudel  
Past President: Deborah Corbett

#### The 2018-2019 Event Coordinators

Canoeing and Camping: Mike Thomas  
Hiking: Mary Perkins  
Walks: Elinor Major  
Biking: Elinor Major  
Urban Events: Barbara Twiner

DOC total activities September 2016 to August 2017 were as follows:

- 53 wilderness and urban hikes
- 5 hiking trips
- 15 bicycle trips
- 4 day paddles
- 5 canoe trips
- 9 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](http://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 camping. 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 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 typically include skiing and snowshoeing. Longer hiking, bicycling and skiing/snowshoeing trips may be to Federal or Provincial parks or areas of interest across North America. 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 Dave Kirkpatrick

The Elgin Hiking Trail Club consists of approximately 80 to 90 members. The 42 km Elgin hiking trail's Southern terminus is in Port Stanley and the Northern terminus connects with the Thames Valley trail North West of St. Thomas.

Over the past year club members have organized and lead more than 45 hikes. Many of these hikes have several members participating who been trained as hike leaders by Hike Ontario. This ensures that our hikes are safe and enjoyable.

The Elgin Club continues to be a co-organizer with The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority to offer the annual Christmas Spirit Walk through Springwater Forest the first Saturday evening in December.

A very successful Annual General meeting was held in April with about 40 people in attendance.

Club members also volunteered and supported the St. Thomas Kinsmen Club at the Pinafore Park gates during Canada Day celebrations in early July.

There have been several trail maintenance outings this year with the trail being constantly improved.

This fall an end to end hike on the Thames Valley trail has been organized and will be

completed over a series of Saturdays throughout the fall.

Come and explore the Elgin Trail. All are welcome.

### ***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.

The ECTA is working with Township of Centre Wellington and Wellington County to sign the new linkage route from the Gerrie Road trailhead of the Elora Cataract Trailway to the Cottontail Road Trail Trailhead at County Road 21. A distance of approx. 3.8km.

The Founder's Project exhibit at the Wellington County Museum and Archives called "Rails to Trails" opened on June 4th, 2017. It was originally to run until November 2017 but was extended until April 2018.

Our 2018 AGM was held on Sunday March 18th at the Victoria Park Senior Centre in Fergus. Our guest speaker this year was Al MacPherson who is President of the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail Association and past Chair of the Board of Directors for Trans Canada Trail Ontario. He was also for fourteen years Park Superintendent of Rondeau, Long Point, & Balsam Lake Provincial Parks and Assistant Superintendent/Supervisor Algonquin Provincial Park. Al focused his talk on the past, present and future of the Trails Canada Trail now called The Great Trail. The Elora Cataract Trailway is 47km of The Great Trail.

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](mailto:info@trailway.org) for more details.

### ***Friends of the Trail (Quinte West)***

Submitted by Bill Gray

The year started off full of hope and new plans, we had just been recognized for the effort that so many people had put into the Lower Trent Trail, as the Government had given us our third lease and extended it for 10 years until 2028. With new individuals set to take over key positions and a few dollars in the bank the positive feelings had helped to boost

our membership by 15% and we commenced substantial trimming and renovation along two major sections of the trail. Then without any indication in July we received a call from the Provincial management team and they advised us that Ontario Infrastructure had exercised the cancellation clause and that the lease would be terminated January 31, 2019. No reason was offered and only through local media have we discovered that the City of Quinte West will be purchasing the Trail. We will continue to maintain the trail and ensure it remains safe and enjoyable until we hand over the keys. We hope the trail will remain non-motorized and that the community will continue to use and enjoy this linear strip of Park Land well into the future.

### ***Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association***

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

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 24, 2017, we have 500 paid members. The GHTA membership structure consists of a family membership of \$25 per year.

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 ([ganaraska-hiking-trail.ca](http://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 manmade structures, such as bridges, boardwalks, etc. You will however find stiles over property fences.

### **Challenges**

#### **Wire Fraud Scam**

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association suffered a significant loss early in 2017, as a result of a phishing scam in which the treasurer was purportedly asked by the "president" to wire \$10,000 to a bank account abroad. Unfortunately, the organization was not able to recover these funds, but has since put more stringent financial controls in place.

#### **Vacant Positions**

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

#### **Mad River section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail**

The Mad River club maintains a 50 km section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail, however, their membership has dwindled to a mere 5 members. As a result, the trail has not been maintained since the fall of 2015. In addition, note 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.

#### **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](http://www.ganaraskawilderness.wikifoundry.com) for the club's hike schedule as well as the latest notices and warnings.

## **Other**

### **Ganaraska End to End**

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

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](http://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=713)

### ***Grand Valley Trails Association***

Submitted by Charles Whitlock

The Grand Valley Trails Association is a volunteer organization committed to establishing footpaths within Ontario's Grand River Watershed and promoting the protection and public enjoyment of the natural environment and human history 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. GVTA became incorporated as a charitable organization on January 23, 1973. We are now 45 years old. Our current membership for August 2018 is 203.

We sometimes use the metaphor of trailblazer to describe those who have gone before and established new ventures. When it comes to the Grand Valley Trail, trailblazer is more than a metaphor. This year we lost our founder Betty Schneider (1927-2018). In 1972 Betty called a public meeting to unite groups interested in establishing hiking trails in the Waterloo County area. Betty's ability to mobilize was recognized in a 1967 KW Record article describing Betty Schneider as "someone who doesn't sit around waiting or hoping for changes and instead initiates them, sometimes through existing channels but more often by creating them herself." When Charles Whitlock became president of the club, Betty sent him a card reminding him to take care of the trail. This is a challenge we can all take up for our trails.

GVTA is reviewing and updating its website. Websites need to be constantly updated to utilize current technologies, to enhance appearances, to simplify web-design and to engage our members in a usable and friendly way of communicating on-line. We have entered into an Agreement with Barking Dogs, located in Guelph, Ontario to assist us in achieving one of the associations goals.

GVTA along with Hike Ontario is currently investigating the use of trail map application similar to what was developed for the Bruce Trail Conservancy where users are able to download trail maps onto their smart-phones and interactively view, plan, track and log

their routes. This on-line application does not entirely replace hard copies of our trail guides. In the interests of reaching all generational demographics, we believe that one way of doing so is to make our trails accessible in a media that is in tune with current technologies, namely through smart-phone devices. An on-line prototype was developed for GVTA by ONDAGO, a Quebec based company. At the time of writing this report, GVTA is reviewing the financial and operational requirements of this application.

After being without a newsletter editor for close to one year, we were pleased to announce that Madeline Rosamond joined the GVTA team as managing editor. Madeline is a postdoctoral fellow with Earth & Environmental Sciences department at the University of Waterloo. To date Madeline has produced three timely newsletters. Like other hiking associations we publish our newsletter on-line as well as providing printed copies. A November 2017 survey showed that the majority of members wish to receive information from the Association via on-line/email (76%) versus regular home delivered mail (7%). 17% had also selected the GVTA website as their source of information. The receipt of information by email or on-line is an important statistic as it provides direction of how best to communicate with the membership.

The GVTA-AGM took place on Tuesday, June 5, 2018. David Marin was this year's guest speaker. David, a recipient of the 2015 Hike Ontario Volunteer of the Year award, is an avid hiker, and HO Board and trail volunteer. His presentation focused on his holidays working as a volunteer in numerous trail and environmental conservation projects in the Eastern United States and England.

For the year ending March 31, 2018, GVTA recognized Receipts totalling \$11,236.77 and Expenditures of \$12,497.85, resulting in a net loss of \$1,261.08. At year end, investments of \$32,861.81 were on hand. A website redesign project is currently underway and a significant amount of the GVTA Savings are earmarked for that purpose. This is an important strategic initiative to help ensure our association is making use of available technology to the help us achieve our goals and objectives.

On July 31, 2018, the GVTA Board objectives were established for 2018-2019. The following major tasks were divided amongst the board members.

1. Membership.
  - Improve communications to members.
  - Recruit new members.
  - Maintain existing members.
2. Trail Maintenance.
  - Recruit more volunteers for trail maintenance.
  - Revise existing trail director and trail captain structure.
3. Volunteer Management, by tapping into sources of volunteers supply.
4. Define Board roles and to create a committee structure to ensure that all volunteers are aligned with a board member.
5. Develop a technology roadmap.
6. Heighten the profile of the association.

## ***Guelph Hiking Trail Club***

Submitted by Mike Curtis

The Guelph Hiking Trail Club is approaching middle age – 45 years young! From a simple start of a few interested people trying to establish a walking trail following the route of the long-abandoned Guelph Suburban Radial Line towards Brampton, we had 244 members at the end of our fiscal year. Our Club manages over 85 km of walking or multipurpose trails around the Guelph area. As with most organizations with Hike Ontario, we gain and lose members, gain and lose sections of trail over time, but we continue to grow.

This year, we have developed a new and dynamic interactive website. Not only does it promote the Club, but it is also a membership management system where people may join the Club, renew their membership and purchase items from our store. Trail reroutes, work parties and other announcements can be posted for all to see. Have a look!

This summer we had the opportunity to refresh the trail surface of our multipurpose trail, the Kissing Bridge Trailway, part of the 127 km G to G Trailway system (the abandoned C.P.R. line) linking Goderich to Guelph. A newly developed trail groomer, towed and powered by a tractor, cuts the sides and centre of the trail, grinds up the old surface, refreshes it and rolls it smooth again. A facelift for a rail trail!

In April, we participated in our ninth Trails Open event as part of Doors Open in Guelph, and because of our active involvement, we have been asked to be on the steering committee for next year. We have also spearheaded a community group which has convinced the City to provide a pedestrian path under the reconstructed Speed River bridge across Speedvale Avenue which will allow a link to the Trans Canada Trail and eventually our Kissing Bridge Trailway.

We have 24 active volunteers who continue to keep our system safe, and many more who assist on specific work parties, while our certified hike leaders continue to lead interesting hikes. Our kids' hikes are well attended, and our winter Trek and Tell presentations are ever popular.

## ***Hamilton Burlington Trails Council***

Submitted by Wayne Terryberry, Chairperson

Hamilton Burlington Trails Council (HBTC) is comprised of 13 primary stakeholders in the Hamilton Burlington Region. This includes trail user groups, land owners, tourism organizations, municipal staff, and even an educational institution, McMaster University.

In 2017 HBTC came to the end of a 2 year Ontario Sport and Recreation Community Fund grant which allowed for a dedicated Project Coordinator to drive initiatives that are representative of stakeholder goals and priorities. This included:



- Developing a website and comprehensive online map of all official trails in Hamilton and Burlington. Recently enhancements have been made which include a featured trails section with interpretive information and images: <http://hamiltonburlingtontrails.ca/featured-trails/>
- Continuing work on the Regional Greenway Network Project (an outdoor active transportation network consisting of multi-use paths, pedestrian walkways, and cycling lanes for both commuter and recreational use in Hamilton and Burlington). PHASE 1 – Cootes Paradise loop
- Founded the Hamilton Burlington Mountain Bike Association (HBMBA) to bring riders together for recreation, education and relationship building with landowners and other user groups. HBMBA has developed a very positive working relationship with the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the Iroquoia Bruce Trail club to address trail use and user conflicts
- Received funding from the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, McMaster University and the City of Burlington to launch the 'Just Walk' - Walk with a Doc Hamilton-Burlington chapter. This program helps and encourages physicians and other allied healthcare professionals to lead free walks for their patients in the area. We hope that by giving our local healthcare professionals the opportunity to play an active role in making credible health education and safe exercise opportunities more accessible within our communities we can get more people out walking and hiking.

### ***Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association***

Submitted by Roland Gatti, President

2018 has been a fun year for us so far. Although we are not a large club, we have an active group of hikers and our hikes are social events as much as hiking events. Our hiking association consists of the Kleinburg and Bolton Chapters totaling 95 members, two up from last Year.

This year we have planned some themed hikes which focus on some aspect of flora or fauna such as native plants, nightly frog life, nights under the stars to name a few. In total we have 16 scheduled hikes on weekend days throughout the year drawing on average 15 hikers per event.

Prior to every hike the hike leader provides an overview of the planned hike covering basic safety issues and precautions pertaining to Lyme disease since the ticks have been detected in York Region.

We are attempting to increase our membership numbers in order gain a bigger voice at government levels when required to protect natural spaces. There is no rise in paid members but we do have an online following of 292 people on "Meetup".

Trail development along the Humber River is progressing hopefully being completed in three years. There is a lot of new housing development in close proximity to our trail network with some great upside. The new subdivisions have interior planned trails that lead to the Humber Valley Trails.

Last weekend our club members volunteered their time to help in the local Bindertwine festival. This is a fundraiser which contributes enough money to our club to pay for trail insurance and operating expenses.

Every year we initiate a project which will improve our trail association in some way. This year our goal is provide our hike leaders with approved first aid training to be arranged before Yearend.

### ***Lambton Shores Nature Trails***

Submitted by Klaus Keunecke

LSNT maintains approx. 40 kilometers of hiking trails in some of the environmentally most sensitive areas (ESA's) in Lambton Shores & Vicinity ranging in size from 69 to 570 acres. Our landowner partners include the County of Lambton, the Ausable-Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA), the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), private landowners in the Ausable River Valley and the Partridge Lifestyles Community Inc. in Northville). Over 1300 acres of special lands, excluding the forested Ausable River Valley from Arkona to Sylvan, are now well protected from further abuse by off-road motorized vehicles.

The 11 km hiking trail along the Middlesex County side of the Ausable River is still partially closed pending removal of dead ash trees along its sides. In future this trail will be co-maintained with members of the Lambton Outdoor Club (LOC) and the Shoelace Club whose members are mostly Dutch farmers in the area. LSNT built a 3 km 'Connector Trail' to connect the trails in the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area to the trails in the Lambton County Heritage Forest. in 2017 and is currently in negotiations with the Kettle & Stony Point First Nation to build another 'Connector' along the shores of Lake Huron from trails in Port Franks to trails in Ipperwash and on to a small park in Kettle Point which features unique spherical concretions in shale beds.

All the trails developed and maintained or co-maintained by LSNT are located in beautiful natural settings that include oak savannah, forested dune-lands, provincially significant wetlands and river valleys with deep gullies, steep forested ravines and a small waterfall over fossil-bearing limestone layers.

### **2018 LSNT Board of Directors**

Co-Chairs: Ross Atkinson & Klaus Keunecke

Vice Chair: Marilyn Keunecke-Smith Treasurer: Linda Attard

Directors: Doug Bonesteel, Ed Hunter, Gerda Schrijver, Lorie Scott & Richard Weatherston

## **2018 Highlights include the following:**

### **LSNT Trail Maintenance & Projects:**

- LSNT Volunteers continued Trail Development & Maintenance efforts -The Shoelace Club has adopted a 3 km section of the Ausable River Valley Trail south of the Sylvan Scout Camp and cleared the same in May - LSNT Volunteers cleared and blazed a 2 km stretch of the Ausable River Valley Trail north of MacDonald Drive and also re-blazed the 4 km Tulip Trail in the Lambton County Heritage Forest
- The Forest Trailhead Log Pavilion has been officially opened earlier this summer by the Mayor of Lambton Shores. Its features include: Landscaping with native shrubs, wildflowers and natural boulders
- Large side-panels with Trail Map, the History of Forest, the Natural Heritage of the area, a Donor Recognition Tree and Native Artwork by local artist Red Dog - Spirit Rocks painted by elementary school kids - A steel roof donated by the Rona Building Centre in Forest. A similar Trailhead Log-Pavilion Project is currently underway in Port Franks
- Approx. 20 On-Trail signs fabricated by local high school students were mounted at various locations and a new Trailhead Map-Sign was installed at the Mystery Falls Trailhead to replace the sign removed by vandals
- The 100 'Green Tunnel Trees' planted by LSNT Volunteers at the Port Franks Community Centre in 2017 are growing well and more mulch was added around each tree in 2018
- 'Role Assignment' was launched in 2018 in an effort to distribute the workload among the members of the LSNT Board of Directors - Lorie Scott was welcomed as the newest member to the LSNT Board
- LSNT continued to actively publicize its trails and activities by word-of-mouth, through distribution of trail maps, on the LSNT Website, on Instagram, on YouTube, on Facebook, and on Twitter

### **LSNT Community Outreach:**

- In March LSNT showed a LSNT promotional video and the movie 'Long Start to the Journey' at the Kineto Theater in Forest. The movie featured a hiker and the challenges he faced on the Appalachian Trail
- In April LSNT manned a display table at the Open House jointly hosted by the Municipality of Lambton Shores & the Kettle Point First Nation.
- Throughout the summer, LSNT led trail hikes organized by the local Health Centres - Conducted a spring-hike for local high school students - Combined forces with the Thames Talbot Land Trust for a May-hike in Joany's Woods - Native artist Red Dog & LSNT Volunteers conducted a Mystery Falls Hike complete with a Pipe Ceremony - LSNT Volunteers participated for two days at the 'Summer Arts & Nature Youth Camp' hosted by the Ausable Port Franks Optimist Club by conducting hikes and teaching camping skills
- LSNT issued an updated tri-fold trail map and collaborated with the Grand Bend Chamber of Commerce to issue an updated map of all the hiking trails in Lambton Shores & Vicinity. The map is an insert in the Grand Bend Summer Tourist Guide available at the GB Tourist Information Kiosk and various area locations - LSNT received 500 maps for distribution
- The University of Waterloo Civil Engineering Student Team engaged by LSNT submitted its design for a 60' pedestrian suspension bridge over Mud Creek in Port Franks
- The Municipality approved LSNT's proposed names for the new 'Grand Trunk Trail' and the 'Lagoon Loop' in Forest and also agreed to physically close the 'Grand Trunk Trail' to ATV traffic

and cut the grass periodically to keep the 'Lagoon Loop' open for hikers, bicyclists & bird watchers

- LSNT launched its 'Free Award Badge Program' to encourage hikers of all ages to hike every trail in Lambton Shores & Vicinity
- LSNT joined the Lambton County 'Adopt a Road' program and will conduct a spring and fall clean-up along a 6 km stretch of Bog Line
- The spread of phragmites is a serious threat to wetlands in the area and LSNT has set up 3 10' x 10' experimental plots on NCC's Forested Dunes property in Port Franks. The plots are covered with walnut husks to see if the toxin leaching from these husks is effective in controlling the spread of phragmites
- As indicated above, discussions are continuing with the Kettle & Stony Point First Nation (KSPFN) & the Central Ipperwash Community Association (CICA) to develop a '11 Km Connector Trail' along the shores of Lake Huron from Port Franks to Kettle Point

#### **Association with other Community Groups:**

- Two LSNT Board members participated in the working group of the 'Collective Impact - Connected Rural Communities Collaborative' hosted by the Grand Bend Area Health Centre
- One LSNT Board member acted as the liaison to the Lakeshore Eco-Network which focuses on environmental education and area re-forestation - Four LSNT Volunteers recently assisted in weeding the Native Garden planted at the Grand Bend Klondyke Soccer Fields in 2017

**LSNT Fund Sources:** During 2018 funds were received from the Forest Community Foundation, the Port Franks Garden Club, the Municipality of Lambton Shores, and private donors

**LSNT Volunteer Participation:** The number of LSNT Volunteers actively involved in trail development & maintenance and the number of Volunteer-Hours logged will be reported to Hike Ontario at year's end for insurance purposes

### ***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.

#### **Membership:**

We have 331 paid memberships (this includes both individual and family)

#### **Activities and Successes:**

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.

There is a great team of volunteers diligently working on the trails.

We also have a team working on mapping out all emergency access points on the trail.

Last fall we worked together with our Bayfield friends to help create a Hospice Trail.

We have a variety of successful annual events:

We do a lantern making workshop in January, followed by a Candlelit Walk in the Maitland Woods in February.

We help facilitate in some fun and interesting community Jane's Walks.

We do a plant and compost sale in May, guided hikes available.

**Currently Underway:**

This weekend (Sept. 29-30) is also the weekend of our Maitland's own El Camino. We have 250 hikers registered for this great two-day event!

**Challenges:**

Our trail crew is always working on drainage issues, especially on our section of the G2G (GART), as well as erosion issues on our trails.

Plans are underway for some new bridges as well as a couple of new outhouses along the trail.

Vandalism has become a real problem, as well as ATV's on the trail.

There is a proposal for a new quarry in our area, which will mean some re-routing of the trail.

Plans are underway for our November Membership meeting, which is always well attended and will include interesting speakers.

***Oak Ridges Trail Association***

Submitted by Kevin Lowe

The year of 2017 was a quieter one in terms of accomplishments than our past year. We did enjoy a very successful 25th anniversary year with a goodly number of hikers earning their "25 in 25" hike badges. In addition, many members took part in our celebratory events such as the "Rendezvous". David Crombie as our keynote speaker at our Annual General Meeting brought full circle his involvement with ORTA as he was the speaker at the inaugural AGM 25 years ago. Those in attendance enjoyed his presentation greatly. All in all, there was a fitting and rewarding series of events marking our 25th anniversary year.

Our membership numbers remain sound with a current active membership of 591 supporters. This number reflects 276 family memberships so our actual number of members is higher. Our Registration process does not provide for identifying all those listed on a family membership. This is a modest increase over the past year, but nonetheless is a continued increase.

We have been busy with many ventures. Dialogues are ongoing with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Forest authorities and Rouge National Urban Park regarding trails and trail placements. We are also watching the double tracking of the Metrolinx lines through Aurora to ensure that the trail is taken into account when decisions regarding crossings are considered.

2017 saw us complete a successful hike leader training with 14 ORTA members qualifying as certified hike leaders. A number of these individuals have already led a number of hikes adding to our total offering.

We have concluded our planning process with the folks from IBM. Their support of our operations has been greatly appreciated. Look forward to seeing a revised brand statement outlining ORTA's purpose as well as a new long-range plan to carry us through the coming years.

Finance and in particular revenue, remains a concern. Despite a very lean, frugal and almost completely volunteer structure, we continue to run a small deficit in our finances. Costs such as postage, printing, trail building materials and everyday expenses such as our office rent continue to rise while our revenue remains relatively flat. This year saw our lowest profit margin on our Adventure Relay in some time. This is an area that will need additional focus in the year to come.

Guided hikes continue to be a cornerstone of our work and we offer many annually, more than many of our sister hike organizations and clubs relative to size. Our hikes target a wide variety of audiences from fast week day hikes to weekend outings targeted at families and many more in between. My thanks go out to our cache of talented hike leaders. You do us proud.

An organization such as ours with so much going on is very dependent on all our volunteers from those who maintain and groom our trails, to those who staff the checkpoints at the Adventure Relay, to those who put together our regular newsletter Trail Talk. Again, we are indebted to you all for all you give so generously to ORTA.

To my Board Member colleagues, I also say thank you. While the Board as a whole only meets formally 4-6 times a year, board members are involved in many other activities and events representing ORTA adding significantly to the many hours they devote to ORTA. Finally, any good organization needs a form of "glue" to hold it together. Our office manager, Michele Donnelly, is our glue performing numerous tasks on our behalf many

well beyond and in excess of the expectations of her position. She is to be congratulated for all her efforts.

As another successful year at the Oak Ridges Trail Association comes to an end, I wish all our hikers, members and volunteers a productive and rewarding coming year. I hope to see you on the trails!

### ***Ottawa Rambling Club***

Submitted by Cliff Daly

The Ottawa Rambling Club's primary spring through fall activity is day hiking complete with optional pond dips at lunch over the past hot summer. In winter, members continue to revel in on-trail and off-trail snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the Gatineau Park, Ottawa's Greenbelt and beyond. From mid 2017 to mid 2018 we scheduled over 100 weekend outings averaging an eco-friendly 6 participants per outing.

In 2018 we added a fifth out-of-town trip where we headed to the Val David region in February for the usual winter activities staying three nights at the Auberge inn. For the first time, our Club put on evening urban hikes over July and August, finishing at a pub for post-outing analysis and refreshments.

Our club continues to offer a multi-pronged training program with particular emphasis on leadership, on/off trail navigation and new this year, route planning. As a result, eight members have joined the leadership ranks and are being mentored in-field by experienced ORC leaders.

### ***Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club***

Submitted by Sean Leon

Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club is a member driven, non-profit group in its third as a group and with Hike Ontario. Our groups site is hosted on the Meetup platform.

Our group activities are limited to hikes and snowshoeing

Membership Total: 130

Our club membership mainly consists of individuals in the late twenties to late forties age range.

The club is run by three organizers (Sean, Ala and Dave) for the last three years. We generally have 3 hikes a month, generally on the weekends. We hike on NCC trails in the Ottawa and Gatineau region.

Attendance for day hikes was generally 4 to 10 persons.

Most of our hikes take place either on evenings and on weekends and tend to range from 5 to 15km.

### ***Rideau Trail Association***

Submitted by Sharen Yaworski

Our annual Membership is holding steady in the 800 to 900 never absolute as some renewal of memberships are late in coming in. We have kept our annual membership at \$25.00 and a reduced price of \$45.00 for two years.

We have 3 clubs, Kingston Ottawa and Central which is the Perth area. Each club offers hikes on weekends as well as during the week. Any member can take advantage of hiking in any of the club hikes. We also advertise our hikes in the local newspaper to encourage newcomers to come hike with us. Each club has their own AGM in early spring and the clubs gather for an Association Annual General Meeting in June.

Trail Maintenance is a constant endeavor thanks to our great volunteers we have had some trail rerouting at the south end of Murphy's Point Park due to some beaver dam issues which made the trail impassable during the wet weather. Ottawa had a new boardwalk constructed on Padden Road. Kingston area has rerouted the marshlands portion in Kingston due to water from last years flooding.

We now have a Secure our Trail working group and a Succession Planning Committee to be more proactive in these endeavors. RTA also has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Plan.

Website and social media have been very instrumental in exposing our Trail to newcomers. We have had 147 new memberships which are purchased on line which was 76.5 % of sales. Our Newsletter which is offered to our membership electronically as well on hardcopy. New members area opting for the e newsletter 87.5 %.

### **Challenges**

We are currently actively looking for a Treasurer for the Association and have been advertising. We are also looking for a second Newsletter editor.

### ***Thames Valley Trail Association***

Submitted by Ian Bailey

Our membership is maintaining at approximately 600 memberships, totaling approximately 700 members. We continue to enjoy the benefits of Hike Ontario Insurance and recently renewed our Board Liability Insurance to the higher \$5m coverage.

We continue to offer multiple 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. We have trained and recruited some new hike leaders, especially for weekend hikes over the summer.



Trail maintenance work has been busy throughout the season. We have a few more major projects caused by erosion, tree falls and flooding, but the trail is overall in good shape. The Spring maintenance reports were received and Fall ones now requested. We have completed a number of projects, one with Union gas to step a sharp incline, the other within the Fanshawe Upper Thames River Conservation Area to build boardwalk on an often-wet section, using boards donated by a local resident. Ontario Parks kindly repaired some steps damaged by fallen trees in Komoka Ontario Park. We tackled an area of Giant Hogweed in the north trail section partnering with a local Land Trust. In line with other groups and organizations we are looking to reduce ongoing maintenance by using plastic blazes. Our current thinking is to use stainless steel screws to reduce impact to live trees but are also in consultation on this with Upper Thames River Conservation.

“The Trekker” editions continue to be well received and complemented, produced by its editor Kathy Vendrig.

We continue to host the meet up site and plan to use other social media sites such as twitter and facebook. We provide regular updates to ensure our information is current.

We attended two well attended shows in the London area: “Go Wild Grow Wild” and “Rexpo”. At Trails Open on April 22 we offered four 30-40 minute hikes each co-led by two of our hike leaders. We had 60 hikers with us including our 4 hike leaders. 54 of these were not (yet) TVTA members!

The TVTA Annual Members picnic was held on June 10th 4:00 -8:00pm.

In collaboration with Reforest London, we offered hike leader training in late June. We offered it to TVTA members free as long as they committed to lead 3 hikes for TVTA within the year.

On Apr 21st we held a very successful Thames River Clean Up. 37 volunteers filled an 8 cubic meter recycle bin with debris cleared from the North East section of Fanshawe Park from Valleyview Road to the sugar bush. We continue to be a part of a much larger effort to clean up the Thames and its tributaries, known as the Friends of the Thames: the 2017 press release noted that 2000 volunteers cleaned up about 200 km of the waterway.

TVTA’s Buckthorn Busters have made significant progress in ridding a section of our trail in Killaly Meadows ESA of Buckthorns. TVTA’s Buckthorn Busters removed hundreds of trees and seedlings. At the city’s request, we met with the city to provide input into an ecological restoration plan for Killaly Meadows ESA. Our Buckthorn Removal program, in association with “Friends of Killaly Meadows ESA”, received an Eco Grant from Nature London to assist with the purchase of high-quality tools to make the process of buckthorn busting easier on our volunteers. More busts are planned into the fall.

## ***Thunder Bay Hiking Association***

Submitted by Hilda Postenka

The Thunder Bay Hiking Association is an active group that promotes and enjoys hiking in Thunder Bay, Northwestern Ontario, and Northern Minnesota. We can be found on social media through Facebook and our website, both of which are popular and receive several hundred hits a month.

At our AGM in September last year, we inaugurated on-line membership registration through our website. This has proven to be a huge success for our club, with our membership numbers experiencing a large increase over the past year. However, the number of hikers actually coming out on our hikes has remained comparable to last year. Our average was 10 to 20 participants per hike, but several hikes saw more than 20 participants, and a few were over 40. During the winter and spring, due to unfavourable weather conditions we did have to shift some weekend hikes from Saturday to Sunday, but fortunately most of our Hike Leaders were able to be flexible and the hike went on! The majority of the events on our schedule are hikes, but we do offer some hike/snowshoe, cross-country ski, paddle, and bike outings, along with the odd maintenance hike. We offer at least one hike and/or other event most weekends, and have a good variety of hikes at each difficulty level each season. When two events are scheduled on the same weekend, we provide the choice of an easier or a more challenging one.

An exciting opportunity for TBHA members this summer was an exchange with a hiking club in Levi, Finland. Levi is located in Lapland, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle. Eleven members of the TBHA went to Levi from August 1st to 10th. They were billeted with members of the hiking club there, and enjoyed a variety of hikes and a paddle in the area. Ten of the Finns are coming to Thunder Bay from September 20th to 30th, and we hope that they will enjoy our hikes and hospitality as much as we enjoyed theirs!

Meetings have started for a planned revision and update of our Trail Guide. Since this project is still at an early stage, we expect that it will take from several months to perhaps more than a year to complete. With the advent of trail apps for smart phones, we realize that there will no longer be as much of a demand for paper versions of a trail guide, but we feel that trail guides still have their place as a showpiece for trails.

We are grateful to Hike Ontario for their work in obtaining and offering affordable insurance coverage for our club, and we appreciate their support.

For more information about the Thunder Bay Hiking Association, access our website at [www.tbha.ca](http://www.tbha.ca), or check out our Facebook page "Thunder Bay Hiking Association".

## ***Voyageur Trail Association***

Submitted by Carole Blaquiére

The VTA in 2017 and 2018 year had its ups and downs like every year. On a good note, the Saulteaux hiking club has a new president Mark Crofts who brings new energy to help revitalize the club, the Coureurs de Bois elected a new executive board including new president Laura Chaplinski also bringing in new energy. The Casque Ilse club's executive, including club president Matt Borutski, has not changed but they continue the good work from the previous year. The executive from the Penewobikong club have spoken up, reminding us that there is a small club, including club president Joanne Marck, in the Blind River, quietly maintaining the trail in the area. Nipigon's executive has been also working quietly, developing and maintaining trails in Nipigon and the surrounding area. The club executive, including president Kirsten Spence has not changed there. Unfortunately, the executive from the newly established Marathon club have dispersed, leaving one person behind. Much work support is needed with the development of the Group of Seven Hiking trail that the town is supporting.

We had to say goodbye to one of our most committed volunteers at the VTA. Bob Sinclair has been an active member of the association since at 2006. Bob liked to help out in the background, using his talents with GIS for mapping the trail. He produced the all maps for the latest guidebooks as well as all the reroutes. He also was often found helping with trail maintenance with his wife Lil. We have been fortunate to have Heath Bishop of Sault College step up to replace Bob.

The year started with the Trailhead North symposium being held in Nipigon in April. Several members of the VTA travelled to Nipigon to take in this event hosted by the Ontario Trails Council, the town of Nipigon and the local Nor' wester club. This club has been busy opening up the Deer Lake and Mazukama Falls hiking trails as well as working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to maintain the trails in Ruby Lake Provincial Park.

The Casques Ilse trail club has continued its work with the upgrading their trails to meet Parks Canada guidelines. They leveraged \$3000 obtained from the VTA to a \$9000 partnership with Tourism Northern Ontario (TNO). The Casque Isles used this partnership to purchase signs to assist with wayfinding, in particular at our trailheads and at intersections along the trail. They led several hikes over the summer including one with Grade 7/8/9 students from local schools as well as maintenance hikes, one of with stewardship youth rangers. The club also started up a 50/50 draw to raise funds for the club.

The Marathon club continues to work on the development of the Group of Seven hiking trail. A \$5000 grant from the VTA was awarded in the winter to leverage \$100,000 from the Ministry of Economic development to continue this work.

The Saulteaux hiking club has indicated that participation in weekend outings is declining whereas participation in other less formal hiking seems to be growing. These groups use the Voyageur Trail infrastructure on a more spontaneous/flexible basis including

weekdays. There is no sign-in sheet, nor a Hike Ontario certified leader which are both criteria for a VTA sanctioned event. Are VTA administrative/policies perceived as a barrier to some folks who “just want to hike”? The club is also having difficulties generate a robust event schedule due to the shortage of certified hike leaders despite having tried to have yearly hike leader certification. The club tries to host weekly events as well as the spring annual dinner. This event is held in April and usually brings out many members that don't join on the weekly hikes. Early 2017 had Dianne Whelan from 500days in the wild come through the region. After snowshoeing the trail that winter, she finished this section of the Trans Canada trail cycling from Garden River to Gros Cap and starting the next leg of her journey in early May by paddling Lake Superior. Other events of note during the summer of 2017 was the partnership/support of the Saulteaux club with the Brigade paddle from Batchewana through Sault Ste. Marie to Fort St. Joseph celebrating Canada's 150th birthday. Maintenance activities are constant, usually led by Don McGorman who works with students from local high schools and post secondary institutions.

In the fall of 2017 the entire executive of the Coureurs de Bois stepped down and a new executive was elected from the membership. They have maintained their impressive number of weekly hikes and their membership continues to grow.

The VTA hosted the Volunteer and Landowner Appreciation Day in February, 2018. This event, by invitation only was attended by 19 volunteers and landowners. The Steve Taylor award for volunteer of the year was long time member and president of the Saulteaux president Gayle Phillips.

Work on the strategic plan began with the decision to update the website completely. A budget was established and a local website design company hired to do the work with the intension of completion by the fall of 2018. Funding was not available for this project but it was obtained for trailhead signs through Tourism Northern Ontario.

Overall membership has stayed relatively the same over 2017 numbers.

### ***Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club***

Submitted by Ken Reichert

The Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club continues to follow the format of providing a 10 - 14km hike once a week for its members. Depending on local festivals, extra hikes can be added during the year. In 2017/18, 56 hikes were offered to the membership.

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 100+ tracks on file.

Ken Reichert, along with assistance from Bob Seftel, fills the role of club coordinator. The previous coordinators, Raymond and Liz Ramshaw, continue to be club members and mentors to the current club leaders. Their years of global hiking experience are a great

asset to the club.

The procedures followed for all hikes are similar to that which HFholidays 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. Raymond and Liz Ramshaw are members of HF and each of them has over 90 weeks of experience hiking with HF over the last 25 years. Most of the procedures followed by HF can be read in their brochure (see on line at [www.hfholidays.co.uk](http://www.hfholidays.co.uk) or email Teachers' Travel at [info@teacherstravel.co](mailto: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 over the past year was good. The average attendance was 15 (max. 25, min. 8).

We continue to try to develop more hike leaders within the club. We currently have 5 leaders. 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 carries a GPS device with the track of the day loaded. Most of our members like to be led; however, we encourage members to use a spare GPS and hike with the leader of the day. This is working well.

We have a formalized risk management plan that is on file with Hike Ontario.



*Chartered Professional Accountant*

99 Thames Street N.- Unit B

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519-485-1265

**Hike Ontario**

**Financial Statements**

**(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

**Year ended 30 June 2018**

**Hike Ontario**  
**(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**  
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**Year ended 30 June 2018**

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*Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 13 September 2018*

*D.A Sparkes Accounting Professional Corporation Chartered Professional Accountant*  
*99 Thames Street N.- Unit B*  
*Ingersoll, Ontario*  
*N5C 3C6*  
*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 2018** 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.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chartered Professional Accountant**

*D.A Sparkes Accounting Professional Corporation  
Chartered Professional Accountant  
99 Thames Street N.- Unit B  
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**Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 13 September 2018**



**Hike Ontario**  
**Statement of Operations and changes in Fund Balances**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
**Year ended June 30, 2018**

	General Fund \$	Programs	Administration	Senior Hike Fund	2018	2017
<b>Receipts</b>						
Retail Sales	\$ 940	\$ -	\$ 940	\$ -	\$ 940	\$ 245
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Insurance	\$ 13,607	\$ 10,607	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 13,607	\$ 16,887
Memberships	\$ 9,695	\$ -	\$ 9,695	\$ -	\$ 9,695	\$ 11,083
Other Income	\$ 225	\$ -	\$ 225	\$ -	\$ 225	\$ 3,587
Programs	\$ 22,545	\$ 22,545	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,545	\$ 27,056
	<b>\$ 47,012</b>	<b>\$ 33,152</b>	<b>\$ 13,860</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 47,012</b>	<b>\$ 58,858</b>
<b>Expenditure Allocation</b>						
Awards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 370
Mood Walks	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 167
Safe Hiker Program	\$ 936	\$ 936	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 936	\$ 54
Senior Hike Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 171
Hike Leader Training	\$ 3,847	\$ 3,847	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,847	\$ 2,169
Insurance	\$ 16,024	\$ 14,261	\$ 1,763	\$ -	\$ 16,024	\$ 14,505
Interest & Bank Charges	\$ 643	\$ 460	\$ 183	\$ -	\$ 643	\$ 1,075
Membership Fees	\$ 428	\$ -	\$ 428	\$ -	\$ 428	\$ 428
Office Supplies	\$ 5,487	\$ -	\$ 5,487	\$ -	\$ 5,487	\$ 1,410
Payroll Expense	\$ 28,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 28,000	\$ 28,000
Professional Fees	\$ 1,255	\$ -	\$ 1,255	\$ -	\$ 1,255	\$ 3,500
Occupancy Costs	\$ 7,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 5,500	\$ -	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 85
Telephone	\$ 950	\$ -	\$ 950	\$ -	\$ 950	\$ 720
	<b>\$ 64,571</b>	<b>\$ 48,004</b>	<b>\$ 16,567</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 64,571</b>	<b>\$ 59,654</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of receipts over disbursements</b>	<b>\$ (17,559)</b>	<b>\$ (14,852)</b>	<b>\$ (2,707)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (17,559)</b>	<b>\$ (796)</b>
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 8,596	\$ (12,659)	\$ 18,724	\$ (4,107)	\$ 4,489	\$ 5,285
<b>Fund balances, end year</b>	<b>\$ (8,963)</b>	<b>\$ (27,511)</b>	<b>\$ 16,017</b>	<b>\$ (4,107)</b>	<b>\$ (13,070)</b>	<b>\$ 4,489</b>

**Hike Ontario**  
**Financial Position**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
**Year ended 30 June 2018**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Bank Account - General	\$ 7,089	\$ 22,407
Accounts Receivable	\$ -	\$ 1,223
Prepaid Accounts	\$ 13,815	\$ 11,696
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>\$ 20,904</b>	<b>\$ 35,325</b>
	<b>\$ 20,904</b>	<b>\$ 35,325</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$ 15,935	\$ 14,352
Deferred Revenue	\$ 18,038	\$ 16,484
	<b>\$ 33,973</b>	<b>\$ 30,836</b>
<b>Fund Balances</b>		
Restricted Funds		
Seniors Hike Grant Funds ( <b>Note 3</b> )	\$ -	\$ -
	<b>\$ 33,973</b>	<b>\$ 30,836</b>
	<b>\$ 33,973</b>	<b>\$ 30,836</b>
Unrestricted accumulated surplus	\$ (13,070)	\$ 4,489
	<b>\$ (13,070)</b>	<b>\$ 4,489</b>
	<b>\$ 20,904</b>	<b>\$ 35,325</b>

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 13 September 2018*



*Chartered Professional Accountant*

99 Thames Street N.- Unit B  
Ingersoll, Ontario  
N5C 3C6  
519-485-1265

**Hike Ontario Trust Fund**

**Financial Statements**

**(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)**

**Year ended 30 June 2018**

**Hike Ontario Trust Fund  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
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Year ended 30 June 2018**

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***Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 13 September 2018***

*D.A Sparkes Accounting Professional Corporation  
Chartered Professional Accountant  
99 Thames Street N.- Unit B  
Ingersoll, Ontario  
N5C 3C6  
519-485-1265*

### **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 2018** 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.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chartered Professional Accountant**

**Ingersoll, Ontario**

***Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 13 September 2018***

*D.A. Sparkes Accounting Professional Corporation  
Chartered Professional Accountant  
99 Thames Street N.- Unit B  
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**Hike Ontario Trust Fund**  
**Statement of Operations and changes in Fund Balances**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
**Year ended 30 June 2018**

	<b>General Fund \$</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Receipts</b>			
Receipted Donations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Programme Fees	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 41,000
	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 41,000</b>
<b>Expenditure Allocation</b>			
Interest & Bank Charges	\$ 59	\$ 59	\$ 45
HST Expense	\$ 195	\$ 195	\$ 441
Office Supplies	\$ 5,053	\$ 5,053	\$ 9,114
Payroll Expense	\$ 30,887	\$ 30,887	\$ 28,272
Professional Fees	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 3,700
Telephone	\$ 956	\$ 956	\$ 738
	<b>\$ 38,651</b>	<b>\$ 38,651</b>	<b>\$ 42,309</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of receipts over disbursements</b>	<b>\$ 1,349</b>	<b>\$ 1,349</b>	<b>\$ (1,309)</b>
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 21,114	\$ 21,114	\$ 22,423
<b>Fund balances, end year</b>	<b>\$ 22,463</b>	<b>\$ 22,463</b>	<b>\$ 21,114</b>

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

**Hike Ontario Trust Fund  
Financial Position**

(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)

**Year ended 30 June 2018**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Bank Account - General	\$ 7,440	\$ 4,230
Accounts Receivable	\$ 15,935	\$ 14,351
HST Recoverable	\$ 337	\$ 3,268
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>\$ 23,710</b>	<b>\$ 21,849</b>
	<b>\$ 23,710</b>	<b>\$ 21,849</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$ 1,247	\$ 735
	<b>\$ 1,247</b>	<b>\$ 735</b>
Unrestricted accumulated surplus	\$ 22,463	\$ 21,114
	<b>\$ 22,463</b>	<b>\$ 21,114</b>
	<b>\$ 23,710</b>	<b>\$ 21,849</b>

**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 13 September 2018*

**“Hiking is a bit like life: The journey only requires you to put one foot in front of the other...again and again and again. And if you allow yourself the opportunity to be present throughout the entirety of the trek, you will witness beauty every step of the way, not just at the summit.”**

***-- Unknown***





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