

# TRAIL TALK

Oak Ridges Trail Association Quarterly

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WINTER 2021

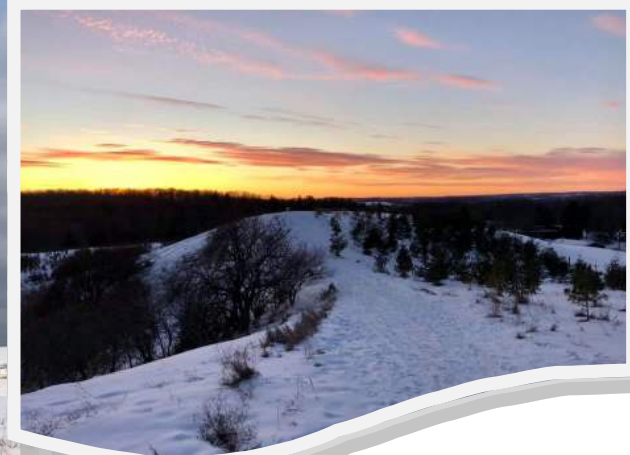


Photo Credits this page: Cheryl Fisher

Starting to get a little cabin fever as winter drags on? If we must stay at home it may be a good time for online reading on hiking articles <http://www.oakridgestrail.org/hikes/hiking-articles/>

Once trails open up for regular hiking again, be it alone or with members of your household, be sure to follow some important safety tips and follow Ontario regulations and guidelines in respect to COVID-19.

See Jacob Sponga's winter hiking tips on the back page.

Jacob is a volunteer with ORTA, contributing to our social media posts. If you have talents you'd like to contribute give us a call or sign up as a volunteer on our membership page.

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## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting



THURSDAY APRIL 22, 2021

All members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association to be held via Zoom call this year. We look forward to seeing many supporters, hikers and friends on this occasion.

If you will be putting forward a motion for consideration of the membership, please share with the Board two weeks prior or before April 8th 2021 for inclusion to the agenda.

Our guest speaker will be storyteller Kevin Callan who had delighted us all in the past and promises to do so again!

Covid19 has brought many challenges for everyone around the world, but also some interesting opportunities and we're all becoming very proficient at them!

Agenda:

7:00pm Business part of meeting.

8:00pm Guest Presentation, Kevin Callan

2020 was indeed an extraordinary year. We really look forward to sharing with you how ORTA has weathered the storm and how we plan to move forward.

Please register to join us for this event here: <https://orta.wildapricot.org/event-4123166>

The Zoom call in details will be emailed to the registrants only. This will occur a few days before the event.

All members will be sent the AGM report documents as usual from the secretary.

If you have any questions please email Lissa Dwyer [secretary@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:secretary@oakridgestrail.org) or call the office at 905.833-6600. Toll free 1-877-319-0285.



Photo Credit: Rob Robotham

### *ORTA ELECTION OF DIRECTORS 2021–2022*

At the Annual General Meeting to be held on April 22, 2021, we will once again put forth a slate of nominees to be elected to serve as Directors for a period of one year. We are seeking new ideas and perspectives and your input is welcomed. We meet about 6 times annually and hope that you'll join us. To comply with our Constitution, the following must be observed.

1. To be eligible for election as a Director at the Annual General Meeting of Members, a person must:
  - a. be a member in good standing
  - b. have confirmed in writing his/her willingness to serve as a Director,
2. Nominations may be made by any Member to the Nominating Committee. Such nominations shall be:
  - a. In writing
  - b. Accompanied by the Nominee's confirmation of willingness to serve.

Received by the Nominating Committee at least five (5) days before the Annual General Meeting.

Please submit nominations by March 31st to the Committee Chair, Wilma Millage. You may use snail mail addressed to our office ORTA, P.O. Box 28544, Aurora, ON, L4G 6S6 or email [past-pres@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:past-pres@oakridgestrail.org)

### *ORTA AWARD NOMINATIONS 2021*

Each year the Oak Ridges Trail Association seeks to honour and say Thank You! to those members who have made significant contributions to our organization and the development of the ORMT. Please send your nomination for a member who should, in your opinion, receive an award. Deadline is March 31st for submissions. The Awards Sub-Committee this year consists of Kevin Lowe [pres@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:pres@oakridgestrail.org) Wilma Millage [past-pres@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:past-pres@oakridgestrail.org).

The award categories are:

- Commendation Awards a maximum of 6 are awarded each year to Members who have made specific contributions to the management and development of ORTA and its programs.
- Trail Builder Awards a maximum of 4 of these are awarded each year to individuals who have made significant contributions to the building and maintenance of the trail.
- Outstanding Member or Member of the Year Award one award each year is presented to the Member who in recent years has done the most to advance the purposes of ORTA.
- Lifetime Achievement Award one award each year is presented to the Member who in recent years has done the most to advance the purposes of ORTA.

## *Uxbridge, the Goodwood Project - Brian Millage*

In 1974 the first organized trail to enter the township along the Moraine was the Great Pine Ridge Trail, mapped and opened with an end-to-end ride by the equestrian Ontario Trail Riders Association. While opened as a horseback riding route, it was fully recognized that with a limited amount of publicly owned land, most trails would need to be multi-use, where practical. In subsequent decades, as the population increased and the value of the many Uxbridge trails became increasingly apparent, Uxbridge adopted the title "Trail Capital of Canada".

The first organized trail group in the area was the Oak Ridges Trail Association, actively maintaining trails and leading hikes from the mid 1990's. As many competing user groups developed, and as conservation authorities acquired large tracts of land, it became necessary to create a framework for communication between the managing Conservation Authorities and the hiking, skiing, cycling and other groups. Stewardship committees were formed to create guidelines for use; the earliest of these is the East Duffins Headwaters Stewardship Committee, formed by the TRCA in 2003. This committee included local landowners and fervent trail promoters Brian Buckles and Michael Tucker, who was the first chair of this committee. It is through this committee that local equestrian, hiking and trail cycling groups, the latter showing a dramatic increase in numbers, first began working together to coordinate and plan, and helped pass on information to their members. The subsequent success of this programme would not have been possible without the direction and strong encouragement of Mike Bender of TRCA.

Brian Buckles is a founding member of Green Durham Association. GDA was formed in response to the expropriation of thousands of acres in Pickering by the Provincial and Federal governments in the 1970's. Over time, work of the organization evolved from fighting the airport to the protection of natural heritage lands, promoting land stewardship, ensuring public access and sound land policy. GDA has had the visionary aim of connecting the various trails in Uxbridge and linking local towns with the abundant nearby trails, thus creating a system for recreational pursuits and the opportunity to enjoy and understand the natural world beyond town borders. The value of this concept has become abundantly clear in 2020 as the COVID virus forced people to curtail travel plans and seek local resources for exercise and emotional calm. It has been reassuring to see so many families using the trails of Uxbridge.

Continued next page





and Goodwood to meet the increasing demand as user numbers surged. It also would provide the impetus for the recognition of existing historical remains in the Goodwood Tract. Over the next two years ORTA volunteers improved wet crossings with boardwalks and created a new trail loop, while TRCA added new maps and signage at trailheads, with significant funding assistance from TransCanada Trail and GDA. This Fall, GDA added thirteen trailside benches along Uxbridge forest trails, many with ORTA assistance, including locations where you can quietly observe waterfowl on Secord Pond or enjoy the view of West Duffin's Creek. For more than twenty years ORTA trail volunteers have helped keep these trails open for everyone and continue to remove fallen trees and work hand in hand with TRCA and GDA. In recognition of the labour and materials contributed over the past years and as part of the Goodwood Project, GDA has generously donated \$10,000 to the Oak Ridges Trail Association. We extend our thanks to Brian Buckles for his vision and the support of GDA, now directed by Liz Calvin, as we all work toward an even better trail future for Uxbridge.

In 2017, a major project was initiated as the Toronto Region Conservation Authority approached ORTA with the concept of a new trail link. One leg of the Trans Canada Trail already travelled south from Uxbridge to Lake Ontario, but with the newly formed Rouge National Urban Park, the opportunity arose for a second link to Lake Ontario using the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail from Durham Forest to the Goodwood Tract and the northern boundary of the Rouge Park at Glasgow. This project would necessitate changes to the existing ORMT trails in Secord



## MEANINGFUL ALTERNATIVES

As part of ORTA's program to Celebrate Life's Milestones or in Memory of friends or family, gifts were received.

In Memory of  
Norm Erickson

In Celebration of  
Fazyah & Tahir's 50th  
Wedding Anniversary

CONGRATULATIONS



Photo Credit: Irene Almasi

Lake Seneca is almost frozen over. There is some open water in the middle. Birds congregate on the edge of the ice. It's not easy being a bird in Canadian winter.

## *THE GDA Bench Project- Rob Ferguson*

Having walked many a kilometer in the TRCA lands, it came out as a wish that we have more places to sit, rest and ponder while attending a recent TRCA Stewards meeting. All in attendance agreed that this was a good idea. A tip quickly led to a contact with Ian Gillespie, who stewards his own wooded acreage and has a portable sawmill.

Ian and I calculated we would need a minimum of 40 4' long boards up to a maximum of 60, so he meticulously sorted through his lumber stock to make sure we aimed for the maximum. Ian generously gave us enough wood to make 16 benches. All the wood for the benches came from the woods nearby.

Next, Mark Melcher received permission for use of a workshop where they make props and stage settings for local theatre productions. A big thanks to Enid and Dave Jones for the use of their barn workshop. Mark, Jon McPhee and Rob Ferguson cut up the raw 2" thick rough cut wood into bench component pieces. Some screw holes were predrilled through tough ash. Other wood was mostly pine and spruce.

They were all packaged and stored in the TRCA barn for easy access when ready to transport to selected site. An email to all the GDA members requested input for bench locations and assistance transporting and installing these benches throughout the month of November. Much enthusiasm was shown by the number of volunteers who offered to help from GDA, ORTA and Rogers.

Individual bench pieces were transported with the use of dollies and wheelbarrows. Modified kayak dollies came in handy.

Once assembled, 3' lengths of 5/8" rebar donated by Wuis Brother Construction, Pontypool, were driven on an angle through predrilled holes in the bench sides into the ground. This might offer some resistance to theft and damage.

Now there are 16 benches spread throughout the Goodwood, Secord, North Walkers Woods, Walkers Woods, Glen Major, Wilders and Brock Tracts

A big thank you to all who made this possible: Ian Gillespie, Jon McPhee, Mark and Nancy Melcher, Enid and Dave Jones, Rob and Bre Ferguson, Liz Calvin, Brian and Wilma Millage, Mark Warren, Anders Waltersson, Bob and Judy Comfort, Noel and Judy Carey, Martin Hunt, Bruce Cohen, Norm Wacholz, Ferdinand, Elijah, and Mildred Martin, Steve Abraham, Bill McCullough, Bruce Cohen, Martin Earle.



*Tips for Winter Hiking cont'd from front page—Jacob Sponga*

1. Always wear appropriate footwear! Hiking boots, poles and icers will help to keep you safe during chilly and icy hikes.
2. Dress in layers! Keeping safe and warm should be your top priority.
3. Pack some snacks, and be sure to bring water! That way you can stay energized, and maximize your enjoyment of the great outdoors.
4. Practice social distancing when necessary and have your mask handy. Make sure you follow Ontario regulations and guidelines in respect to COVID-19.
5. Enjoy yourself! Breathe in nature, enjoy the gorgeous scenery of our trails, and remember that this too shall pass.

Thank you for your continued support of ORTA during the pandemic. We're stronger together as a community.



For more tips on Winter hiking visit our website: <http://www.oakridgestrail.org/hikes/hiking->

**FOR THIS EDITION**

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Photo Credit: Robert Schieck

“A beautiful day to be hiking with my Hiking Bubble on the Oak Ridges Trail at Seneca College King Campus. “

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