

# TRAIL TALK

Oak Ridges Trail Association Quarterly  
ISSN 1481-5982



SUMMER 2024

## Elected Board of Directors for 2024-2025

- Bob Alexander
- Weibo Cheng
- Lissa Dwyer
- Brian Millage
- Wilma Millage
- Garry Niece
- Jeremy Reesor



Photo credit: Roz Fitzpatrick. Hike led by Noel Bain at the Davis Tract in the York Region Forest.



Photo credit: Janice Wainwright at McRae Lake (hike led by Russ Burton)



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- AGM Presenters..... 2
- Awards ..... 3-4
- Uxbridge Chapter Report ... 5
- Aurora Street Festival ..... 6
- Hike News ..... 7
- Meaningful Alternatives ..... 8
- What is an End to End ..... 9
- Trails Reroute & Updates .. 10
- Weekly Trekker ..... 10



Joanne Baker who graciously agreed to serve as emcee for the AGM. Her cheerful nature and delightful sense of humour allowed her to connect the elements together in a fun way. It's always lovely to have a new voice to honour the ORTA year that was 2023. Thanks again Joanne!

Comfortable **Hiking Holidays**  
Hike an adventure. Rest in comfort.

# MACHU PICCHU

**August 13 to 25, 2025**

Explore the Sacred Valley of the Incas by hiking through the famed salt pans of Maras, the ancient ruins of Pisac, and trekking high up into the Urubamba mountain range. Then that all important day arrives when we hike into Machu Picchu – **rounding the corner of the Sun Gate and seeing Machu Picchu with your own eyes will give you goose bumps!**  
**NO CAMPING – ALL ACCOMMODATIONS ARE IN HOTELS AND LODGES**



[www.letshike.com](http://www.letshike.com)

TICO #50023501 & #50023502

Liz Calvin, Green Durham and Charlene Coulter, Ontario Parks

Inspiring and encouraging sums up our pair of speakers this year. Liz heads up Green Durham Association which was born from the controversial expropriation of lands in Pickering intended to become a federal airport. Provoked into action in 1972, People or Planes successfully got the airport plans halted. The group then dedicated their resources and energies to ultimately become the Green Door Alliance named to honour the path of green joining lands to the Pickering airport expropriated ones. This group has accomplished so much over the years. Partnering with many others, most notably Parks Ontario, they have assembled a collection of parcels well on their way to being designated as the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park. The largest landowner in this area is TRCA but includes several others. While the park's name might get some tweaking, the plan is a marvelous one that brings together lands with various owners into a string of parklands to be enjoyed by everyone including creating a migratory pathway for animals. Certainly, the members of GDA are closely aligned with ORTA in their vision to create extensive trail networks for all to enjoy. To date, 1300 acres have been assembled and during the summer of 2024, Parks Ontario will be evaluating specific areas worthy of protection. Liz provided lots of great maps to illustrate their story and Charlene explained the process from Parks Ontario's view. Together, they are mutually respectful of what can be possible.

It was a wonderful presentation and judging by the volume of questions, much appreciated by our membership.



## Lifetime Achievement Award 2024—Garry Niece



Garry joined ORTA in 2002 and has been involved in various volunteer roles since that time.

He first started as a Trail Captain and then moved up to Scugog Chapter Chair in 2004. As ORTA became involved in the Adventure Relay Garry once again stepped up and became a volunteer there as well as a participant.

Discovery Night was headed up by Garry from 2011 thru 2017 when Wilma Millage then took over. Discovery Night is one of the few income sources that ORTA has along with membership fees. He has since taken up the critical role of Trail Director and helped us extend our Trail from Caledon in the West through to Warkworth and Castleton in the east.

As a Board member from 2012 he was promoted to the position of Vice-President in 2014 along with his Trail Director role. Definitely one of the key volunteers that ORTA is fortunate to have. It is this kind of volunteer enthusiasm that has allowed us to build and maintain our Trail over the years. Garry is a prime example of the type of volunteer who cares about our Trail and our organization. Definitely a well earned award for Lifetime Achievement. Thank you Garry for all your years of service and we look forward to having you with us for many years to come.

Shop Online *my* **WBU** store

Connect With Us



@WBUBarrie

@WBUNewmarket



We Have Two Locations to Assist You



**WBU Barrie**

515 Bryne Drive, Unit B, Barrie, ON

(705) 726-7600

www.wbu.com/barrie

**WBU Newmarket**

16655 Yonge Street, Unit 2, Newmarket, ON

(905) 868-9696

www.wbu.com/newmarket

**BIRD FOOD • FEEDERS • GARDEN ACCENTS • UNIQUE GIFTS • OPTICS**

*Building Pathways to an Active Lifestyle*

## ORTA's Trail Builder Awards **Trail Builders**

These members participate in Trail building efforts such as bridges, walkways, etc. as well as trail work in areas where there are no chapter folks to take on the task.



**Craig Barnes** – Craig has been a valuable trail worker for several years. He has worked in King and Uxbridge chapters wherever maintenance or trail builds are required. He has also taken a chainsaw certification course to help out on big jobs.



**Rodney Harrison** – Rodney is a one-man trail maintenance team as he frequently monitors the trails of Caledon, trimming and clearing branches and fallen trees. He has also participated in several boardwalk builds across the whole trail.

## ORTA's Commendation Awards



**Anna Sunn** – Anna loves the trails of Uxbridge and as an ORTA hike leader she regularly conducts hikes in the local forests. She has also assisted with upgrading trail signage for the Trans Canada Trail along the ORTA trails in Uxbridge. Anna pictured here with Nominating Committee members, Karen Graham, Reza Farmand and Wilma Millage



**John Weston** – Trail Captain, Richmond Hill – John has performed trail captain duties in Richmond Hill for several years now keeping the trails in order for hikers. He has also stepped forward to become one of the recent new ORTA hike leaders.

**Rob Lawrence**— Rob has been a doing Trail maintenance for many years now in the Whitchurch/Stouffville Chapter and we appreciate all the work he has put in over that time. He worked closely with Noel Bain during that time.



*Uxbridge Chapter = Brian Millage, Uxbridge Co-Chair*

One thing you can say about the Uxbridge Chapter - it is rarely dull and quiet. Our trails are hiked regularly and year round both by guided hikes and the general public.

Our maintenance crews always have something to attend to, especially this spring with the hot and wet conditions, and the occasional windstorm. We appreciate calls to the office if you see trees down on trail- size and location appreciated. Each year sees another repair or improvement in Secord Forest boardwalks and elsewhere. If you walk a favourite area periodically, consider registering as a trail monitor for that area- a short email to Michele at " [in-fo@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:info@oakridgestrail.org) " will do and she will pass your interest on to me or another Chapter Chair who will get in touch with you. We can always use more sets of eyes on the trail.

Recently Mike and Joanne Baker of Scugog

organized a Chapter Chairs meeting at Anna's in Goodwood to discuss plans for the year and share ideas. One suggestion was to make our presence and hiking program known through displays at the local farmers' market in Uxbridge and elsewhere.

You have probably noticed that there are more weekend hikes available than in previous years. Also Karen Graham's weekly news summary is a good reminder of hikes and events to come.

Stay tuned as we hear more details about the recently confirmed plans for Ontario's first Urban Provincial Park- in Uxbridge.

Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park is a 532 hectare (1,350 acre) operating recreational class park, located in the Township of Uxbridge, 25 kilometers east of Newmarket and 50 kilometers northeast of Toronto.

Effective July 1, 2024, the park will strengthen the long-term protection of biodiversity and important habitat for species at risk while providing opportunities for the public to enjoy the area's natural beauty, including hiking and other ecologically sustainable recreation activities. Check out ORTA's [News and Events page](#) for updates

**Take the path less travelled.**

Use code **OAK RIDGE** and/or each tour booked by your club for 2024. We will donate \$25 to the Oakridge Trail Association.

Gaspésie National Park, courtesy of Eric Marchand.

**2025 Tours COMING SOON!**

**2024 GUARANTEED DEPARTURES!**

<b>P.E.I. Hiking</b> 8 Days: July 20, 2024	<b>DOUBLE</b> \$4,395*	<b>SINGLE</b> \$5,195*
<b>Newfoundland Coast-to-Coast</b> 10 Days: August 1, 2024	<b>DOUBLE</b> \$5,995*	<b>SINGLE</b> \$6,995*
<b>Gaspé Hiking</b> 9 Days: September 3, 2024	<b>DOUBLE</b> \$4,295	<b>SINGLE</b> \$5,295

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Connections Program, coach transportation, accommodation, meals and highlights as listed on website, all entry fees and passes, local guides and Tour Director. Prices are in Canadian dollars, are per person and include HST. \*Roundtrip airfare from Toronto.

**DeLuxeHiking**  
Ready for Adventure

**1-888-716-5523**  
[deluxehiking.com](http://deluxehiking.com)

**PROPOSAL TO CREATE UXBRIDGE URBAN PROVINCIAL PARK**

For the most up to date information regarding this proposal please regularly visit our project webpage at:  
[www.ontario.ca - Proposal to create Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park](http://www.ontario.ca - Proposal to create Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park)

If you have any questions, are interested in learning more about the proposal or would like to be placed on the management planning mailing list, please contact:  
**Kendra Couling**  
A/Sr Planner, Southeast Zone, Ontario Parks  
[planning.sez@ontario.ca](mailto:planning.sez@ontario.ca)  
(705) 313-6491



The Aurora Street Festival 2024 was another resounding success.

Enormous thanks to Deb Lennon, Gaye Mas, Robert & Chantal Knezacek, Ray & Adele Matsella, Gail Birkett, Rosemary Johnston, Jody Raffensberger, Heather Cooper and Chapter Chair Bruce Corbett who set up our now famous demo tree! All of you did a wonderful job sharing the ORTA message with visitors stopping by. Although the first shift set up in a light rain, by the time the event got rolling, skies began to clear and the day remained overcast but warm and calm.

Our booth had a steady stream of guests curious about routes, issues, membership and of course, group hiking. Old friends and new stopped by to say hello. The event is quite an eclectic one with a wide range of services and products on offer including a church group who hand out walking sticks and the Backroads Maps guys both effectively our allies!

Many vendors were selling butter tarts, knitted products, hand crafts, 3D printed toys and countless other creative offerings. The Craft Beer Garden is a popular spot to take a load off where I enjoyed a delicious cider and a pulled pork sandwich! Music and entertainers are cleverly spaced along the route so that you can't hear any two at once! While I miss the years when Graystones sold schnitzels on a bun, old makes way for the new with a food truck selling lobster rolls!

If you missed it, mark your calendar for the first Sunday in June and plan to join us next year!



## Hikes

2024 has seen 161 hikes scheduled to the end of June. Last year the number was 106. My thanks to our hike leaders for making this happen and to all of you who are enjoying the range of locations, speeds, and distances that are on offer. There were 213 sanctioned ORTA hikes last year, how many more will it be this year?



## Summer Hiking Tips

1. Keep your eyes on the weather. Summer storms can happen quickly and unexpectedly. Know how to stay safe when lightning is around.
2. Pack some energy snacks and be sure to bring plenty of water. You should be able to drink whenever you feel like it and still have a little left at the end of the hike. Consider using electrolyte replacement drinks or chews.
3. Be bug/tick aware. Use approved repellants, e.g. DEET or Icaridin. Check yourself after and even during the hike: we've seen ticks crawling on backpacks after they were left on the ground during breaks.
4. Listen to your body and pace yourself accordingly. Enjoy yourself! Breathe in nature, enjoy the gorgeous scenery of our trails.

## Trail Improvements and Reforestation coming to Beare Hill Park

Those of you who have enjoyed the 360° views from the top of the Beare Hill know that the hike up is well worth the effort. The following information is courtesy of the City of Toronto:

The southeast quadrant of Beare Hill Park will be under construction as the trail is upgraded to mitigate the effects of ongoing erosion.

Construction is expected to start in mid-July and be completed by mid-September 2024. During this time, the informal trail will be closed and guests will be

asked to use an alternate route while construction is underway.

Additionally, thousands of native trees and shrubs will be planted in fall 2024 and 2025 to support local ecology, promote biodiversity and control stormwater runoff. Temporary fencing will be in place to protect the growing foliage.

## MEANINGFUL ALTERNATIVES

In Memory of  
Dennis Trowse




Several donations have been received.  
Thank you.

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



Many thanks to the many volunteers helping out at this years AGM held in April.

PHOTO Credit:  
All AGM photos including awards courtesy of  
Bob Hughes.  
Thank you Bob!

**Wild Apricot app (hike registration app)**

Do you use the 'Wild Apricot members app' on your phone? This makes registering for hikes quick and easy.

Additionally, click on the GPS coordinates on the day of your hike to find your way to the trailhead.

Search your app store and use your ORTA login.



**Lake Superior**

Guided Sea Kayak Trips  
> Pukaskwa, Slaters, Sibley, Superior Park

36 ft Voyageur Canoe Tours  
> Musical & Pukaskwa & Group of Seven

Paddle Canada Certified Instruction  
> Sea kayak, Canoe & SUP

Hike: Pukaskwa & Lake Superior Park

**ROCK ISLAND LODGE** Lodge based day adventures  
Photography & Arts Workshops  
Spring Fishing

1-800-203-9092  
naturallysuperior.com  
rockislandlodge.ca



## What is an end-to-end (E2E)?

The Oak Ridges Trail is approximately 270 km, with an additional 30 km of side trails. Like many trail organizations, the Oak Ridges Trail Association offers a coveted end-to-end (E2E) badge once a hiker completes the entire trail and submits their log.

Hike leader Neil Runnalls started leading an E2E cohort in January 2024 beginning at the western terminus in Caledon. This cohort is completing the trail in manageable 10km sections every two weeks. They have recently completed the Uxbridge sections and are heading eastward. Members are welcome to join this cohort at any time during their journey. Keep an eye out for hike postings and post-hike photos on Facebook. Thank you Neil for leading the group!

Please visit the [ORTA Store](#) for details on obtaining a copy of the Oak Ridges Trail Guide.



Photo credit: Karen Graham. E2E hike led by Neil Runnalls



### FACEBOOK CHANGES

A few months ago, ORTA transitioned to an Official Oak Ridges Trail Association Page to promote our hikes and association. Facebook Pages are designed for businesses and organizations to promote their services.

How can you help?

- Please follow us at [Oak Ridges Trail Association!](#)
- We would appreciate it if you would give us the thumbs up or heart on some of our posts
- 'Share' a post/event to your personal Facebook page
- Send us ORTA hike/trail photos for us to post on Facebook.

Please send them to [publicity@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:publicity@oakridgestrail.org). Big thank you to our many ORTA photographers!



## Update on the Seneca Campus section of the Oak Ridges Trail

Trail Update for ORTA Map 2 King East:

Seneca King Campus is installing Armor stone and removing sections of the board walk that will be replaced. This section of the trail (L4-1 and L4-2) will be closed or have limited access. The trail work will be completed this fall. The section of the Oak Ridges Trail west of Eaton Hall will be closed until this work is completed. Seneca asks that hikers not enter the closed trail. Thank you.

[HTTPS://OAKRIDGESTRAIL.ORG/HIKES/CURRENT-TRAIL-CONDITIONS-ROUTE-CHANGES/](https://oakridgestrail.org/hikes/current-trail-conditions-route-changes/)

CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR UPDATES BEFORE HEADING OUT ON THE TRAIL.

### Weekly Trekker News

- Each Monday morning, the Weekly Trekker News is sent via email to subscribers. The email provides a brief overview of upcoming hikes and events
- To receive this weekly email, visit [your WildApricot profile](#) on the website (not the app), edit your profile and click the Weekly Trekker News box under Email Subscriptions. If you require assistance, please contact [publicity@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:publicity@oakridgestrail.org)
- Non-members are welcome to sign up for emails from ORTA at <http://eepurl.com/iIMfiE>

Oak Ridges Trail Association:  
Mailing Address: P.O.Box 28544  
Aurora, ON  
L4G 6S6

EDITOR@OAKRIDGESTRAIL.ORG

Michele Donnelly, Manager, 905-833-6600,