

**Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club Annual General Meeting
Reports from the Board of Directors**

April 10, 2016

President's Report

Bob Ferguson

Having just completed my first year as Club President, I continue to be impressed with the level of commitment and interest from the many volunteers who make our Club a success. Every one of the directors and support volunteers make a significant contribution to the smooth operation of the Club that result in an enjoyable experience for close to 900 members.

Special thanks to my predecessor Jean Kerins who has always been available to answer my many questions and provide encouragement. Jean has also continued to handle the busy Badlands file and she will provide a verbal update at the AGM.

Two of our directors are leaving their roles. Greg Huffman has been our Social Convenor and consistently organizes the key events like this AGM. Robert Gillespie is our Secretary and has always offered value by clearly documenting our meetings, arranging meeting places, and part of the Budget Committee. We owe them both a big THANK YOU!!!

I'm delighted that some new "recruits" are standing for election at the AGM! Jackie Clarke is interested in contributing as Social Convenor and Marisa Jokelainen is interested in becoming a Director at Large which is an excellent way to get your feet wet. Marg Bonk is standing for Secretary and we welcome her to the team. I support these three candidates as new members of the board of directors.

The rest of our directors are ready to continue to do a great job in their roles. They have submitted reports on their progress and plans which are included in this package.

There were many highlights in the past year, here are some of them:

- BTC AGM: Our club hosted the event in September 2015
- Donations: We donated more than \$17,000 to the BTC to help carry on the important work of conserving and protecting the Trail for generations to come
- Five of our members were honoured with Ontario Volunteer Service Awards:
 - Colleen Darrell: 10 year award, has been a CHBTC volunteer for 11 years
 - Helen Billing: 10 year award, has been a CHBTC volunteer for 14 years
 - Jean Kerins: 10 year award, has been a CHBTC volunteer for 12 years
 - Carol Sheppard: 10 year award, has been a CHBTC volunteer for 12 years
 - Peter Leeney: 15 year award, has been a CHBTC volunteer for 17 years

As the BTC Caledon Club Director I represent the Caledon Club on the Bruce Trail Conservancy Board of Directors. This role is important in keeping the Club updated on the activities of the Conservancy but also provides input to the Conservancy from the local Club perspective. The Conservancy has five regularly scheduled Board Meetings and the AGM plus numerous committee meetings.

In conjunction with the BTC Board meetings, there is also a Club Communications Committee meeting which includes the representatives from the nine BTC clubs. These meetings allow for a free exchange of information across the clubs. For example, a survey of the clubs' formal end-to-end hikes was completed allowing comparison and the ability to look for best practices. In another example, one club was reviewing its current website and asked for guidance from the other clubs, again in an effort to look for best practices.

As part of the BTC Board, there are opportunities to support the broader organization through involvement in their committees. Recently I have assumed the role of Chair of the Risk Committee. The role of this committee is to systematically perform risk assessments on all aspects of the BTC and to help develop mitigation strategies to reduce the risk and its potential impact on the BTC.

Hiking

Hike Leaders are the most important part of our hiking program. A big thank you to all our hike leaders. We continue to have an active weekend hiking program as well as our mid-week hikes including a full slate of hikes for every Tuesday in all seasons. There have been special hikes such as the photography hikes and the introductory hikes as well as the bed and breakfast hikes which take hikers farther afield to explore other areas.

This past year we took 3 separate groups of students from grades 4-6 out hiking as part of their school programming and for many of the students and teachers it was their first time out hiking. It was quite an exciting experience for all: students, teachers as well as the volunteers from the club who helped lead and assist with the hikes. Due to the overwhelming success of these hikes, the project of leading student hikes will continue with a hike this spring and again next fall. This project is being supported by the Gosling Foundation

Hike Leader Course

Are you interested in leading hikes for Caledon? For any hike leaders who have not yet taken the course and are interested in increasing your skills or would like to learn about handling different hiking situations you may want to consider talking this one day course. All interested are most welcome to attend the certified course put on by Hike Ontario: the certifying body for hike leaders. Caledon will be hosting a hike leader course Saturday November 12, 2016 at the

Tai Chi Centre. The \$75 cost will be reimbursed once you have led 2 hikes for Caledon following taking the course.

Badges

A new badge has been made: “Nature Hunter Badge” designed by grade 5&6 students at Belfountain school as a follow-up to their hike last spring. This badge encourages students to get out on the trail and into nature and it will be handed out as students complete the requirements for it.

140 of the new Wildflower badge have been handed out for completing the Caledon End to End.

Hike Listings

Hikes are listed in the Caledon Comment as well as on Caledon’s website and on Facebook. Please remember to check the website for any changes to the schedule list in the Caledon Comment. Some hike information is in the community publications as well.

Tuesday Hike Co-Ordinator’s Report	<i>Rob Martin</i>
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These points were mostly taken from the weekly hike waiver forms submitted by the hike leaders:

- the average weekly attendance was 16, with a low week of 4 and a high week of 28
 - generally the attendance is quite consistent notwithstanding weather conditions
- attendance dips slightly in the summer months
 - fall attendance was consistently in the 20s due to the very nice weather
- 98% of the Tuesday hikes participants are members of the BTC
- there are currently 180 people who receive the Tuesday Hikers weekly email
- there were a minimal number of requests to be removed from the email group list (< 5)
- there was a steady addition of new hikers requesting to be put on the group email list, many of the requests coming through the website
- thanks to the hike leaders for their generosity in leading hikes, and to those who step up when there is an opening in the schedule. We are able to offer a Tuesday hike virtually all year round (with a break at Christmas)
- The “Loonie Fund” from Tuesday Hikers weekly donations amounted to \$884 for the calendar year 2015. Very well done! The funds were passed along to the Bruce Trail Conservancy

Participation: We had excellent weather on all three days of the Thanksgiving end-to-end this year. Participation was similar to recent years:

	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>
2-day event	50	50	--
3-day event	40	43	38

Usually the 3-day event has higher registration but this year the 2-day program was more popular.

Finances: Financially the event was very successful:

Registration fees	\$2,265	(\$25 for 3 days; \$20 for two)
bus expenses	- 660	(3 days at \$220 / day)
Approximate surplus	\$1,605	(last year the surplus was \$1,600)

Volunteers: There is never a shortage of hikers. The success of the event relies on the commitment of Club volunteers who look after the checkpoints. Many thanks to all the checkpoint volunteers:

On Saturday – Franca De Angelis and Fred Nix

Dave Platt, Dave and Sally Moule

Louise Carberry and Sandy Marven, Jean Trask and Nina Carlisle

Sunday – Colleen Darrell, Brenda Egget, Joe Jany and Averil,

Trevor Stock and Irmgard Richter

Monday – Jean Trask and Barbara Forster

John and Carol Maxwell

Bob and Gail Douglas

Special thanks to Joan Richard who looked after all the hiker registrations and was the on-site person for all three days.

There were no major problems. On Saturday a small group of hikers was rather slow. They agreed to drop out at the next-to-last checkpoint. For next year perhaps we might make it explicit to participants that we will ask them to drop out if they are significantly behind schedule. It is a lot to ask of the volunteers to expect them to remain on checkpoint duty beyond their scheduled time. For a while on Sunday we had a lost hiker but the person did turn up none the worse for wear about two hours late.

Landowner Relations Report*Carol Sheppard*

Verbal report.

Trail Coordinator's Report*Joan Richard*

It has been a very busy year of trail maintenance, with no let-up even during the winter months. Now with spring approaching, our trail captains and other trail workers are looking forward to getting out and preparing the trail for another active hiking season. A recent brief but brutal ice storm has caused a lot of tree damage.

We will be joining three neighbouring Bruce Trail clubs in hosting a training workshop for our volunteer trail workers at Mono Centre in June.

The summer of 2015 saw multiple small work parties fixing audit items described in the trail audit of the previous summer. Most of the items involved installation of diamonds and other signs, standardizing blazes, and some minor tune-ups to the trail and structures. In the meantime of course, there was the regular amount of trees needing sawyers, and steps and side logs needing repair.

Hosting the BTC AGM also required some extra work in the Hockley Valley Provincial Nature Reserve where the sandy, hilly trails see heavy foot traffic and suffer a lot of erosion.

In the early summer of 2015, we transferred the Palgrave Side Trail to Oak Ridges Trail Association at their request. The two major trail systems now meet in the Glen Haffy area south of Coolihans Sideroad.

In the early spring of 2016, we finalized removing a portion of the trail from Finnerty Sideroad just west of Innis Lake Road onto private land, thanks to a generous handshake agreement with the landowner.

Our club is fortunate to have a small but solid base of volunteer trail workers. We are always happy to welcome newcomers to learn the ropes and pass the torch.

Land Stewardship Director's Report*Hamish Duthie*

- The Cedar Highlands property was cleaned up by land steward Ted Stephenson. The site contained many old wood fixtures and other junk from a previous paintball operation. Ted is to be congratulated on his efforts.
- Ted Stephenson has also assumed the stewardship of the new Ben Van Stralen property acquisition on Airport Road. Although a small property, it secures the main trail crossing Airport Road.
- Dog-strangling vine is invading the Caledon Hills BTC area. The seeds are spread by wind, not hikers' feet. Land Stewards are encouraged to report new infestations.

- I am still receiving hand-written and emailed AMRs in spite of encouraging Land Stewards to use Google Docs.
- Land Steward Jan Hannah sent an interesting report on the ecological recovery of the Badlands after fencing, including increased evidence of wildlife and vegetation growth.
- Long-time Land Steward Jamie Wells is stepping down from stewarding the Vitali property and Fockler Woods. Albert McMaster is replacing him. I thanked Jamie for his years of dedication and diligence.
- The new Struck property (Mathilda's Way) management plan was received and is being implemented. I am considering a tree planting on part of this property.
- The Caledon Hills section now contains 16 properties owned or managed by the BTC, and more are being added. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the continued excellent work and dedication of all volunteer Land Steward in our section.

Membership Coordinator's Report	<i>Sally Ker</i>
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Summary of 2013, 2014 and 2015 membership numbers

Total Members at Year End:

2013: 837

2014: 860

2015: 866

CHBTC started 2015 with 860 members. Over the year, this managed to increase to 860. While we didn't have many more members in 2015 than 2014 there was a membership count of over 900 in the spring. The total of 866 members does not include an additional 10 honorary members.

Of the 216 members who did not renew in 2015:

Almost one quarter (56) had joined in 2014 (did not renew following their first year).

Another 13% (28) had joined sometime between 2009 and 2013. Of our 866 members at the end of 2015, eight percent of our members joined us in 2014. Thirteen percent have been members for more than 25 years. Another interesting note, members are increasingly opting for automatic renewal of their memberships. As of the end of December 2015, 142 of our 860 members had signed up for automatic renewal.

Members by length of membership

Percent of members:

In their 1st year of membership: 2014 = 15%, 2015 = 8%

1-5 years: 2014 = 29%, 2015 = 42%

6-10 years: 2014 = 17%, 2015 = 19%

11-15 years: 2014 = 11%, 2015 = 14%

16-20 years: 2014: 9%, 2015 = 22%

21-25 years: 2014 = 7%, 2015 = 19%

more than 25 years: 2014 = 12%, 2015 = 13%

Keeping Our Members

The club does a number of things to connect to and keep our members. These include:

- phone calls welcoming new members
- phone calls to members who have not renewed
- letters to members whose membership is expiring for the first time to thank them for their membership support, remind them of the things that CHBTC does with the support of their membership, and to let them know about upcoming activities and club programs
- emails to all other members about 1 month prior to membership expiry, to let them know that the club values their continuing support and directing them to the BTC on-line membership renewal link.

Publicity Director's Report*Louise Carberry*

- **Organized the Silent Auction for the Bruce Trail AGM in September, 2015, soliciting over 90 items to this event. Thank you letters sent to each organization/person that contributed.**
- **Slide show and presentation made to the Caledon East Historical Society in April for approximately 70 participants. Follow up story appeared in the Caledon Citizen in July 2015, written by the editor of the paper who attended the event.**
- **Participated in the Student Outreach project in May/June, presenting slide show to students at the Alexander CS in Toronto and to the Students at Belfountain PS**
- **Created a Press Release which was sent to local papers to inform the community of the CHBTC hosting the AGM for 2015 in Caledon East**
- **Contribute stories of club events to our Caledon Comment**
- **Add hikes to web sites when feasible**
- **Supply Bruce Trail membership pamphlets to local libraries, and other suitable locations on a yearly basis.**
- **Distributed Bruce Trail Day posters to local libraries, community centres and local shops and general stores**
- **Hosted a display at the Mono Winterfest in January of 2016.**
- **Distribute Bruce Trail pamphlets to local libraries, and other suitable locations in Caledon.**
- **Plan to concentrate outreach in 2016 at local Farmer's Markets in the Caledon area.**

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report*Colleen Darrell***Ontario Volunteer Service Awards:**

Helen Billing - 10 year award - Has been volunteering with CHBTC for 14 years

Colleen Darrell - 10 year award - Has been volunteering with CHBTC for 11 years

Jean Kerins - 10 year award - Has been volunteering with CHBTC for 12 years

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A great big THANK YOU to all who volunteered with the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club in 2014!

We are always looking for new volunteers. Please contact me if you are interested.

Webmaster's Report

David Lamb

Web Site Tracking

	12 Mths 2014	12 Mths 2015	% Change
Visits to Site (sessions)	31,445	39,729	26.3%
Where they came from:			
Organic Search	62.7%	65.4%	
Referral	21.7%	18.0%	
Direct	14.2%	15.3%	
Social Media	1.5%	1.3%	
Where they went: Pageviews	93,876	85,575	-8.8%
	Pageviews		
The Badlands	18,717	27,403	46.6%
Hiking	12,556	11,651	-7.2%
General Hikes	3,246	3,487	7.4%
Self-Guided Hikes	2,208	2,349	6.4%
Club Badges	1,750	1,917	9.5%
Tuesday Hikes	1,677	1,786	6.5%
About Us	2,361	1,769	-25.1%
Events	2,301	1,615	-29.8%
Contact Us	1,980	1,393	-29.6%
E2E Hikes		1,212	
Introductory Hikes	528	904	71.2%
Thanksgiving E2E Hike		781	
Cal e-news	380	728	91.6%
Links	1013	726	-28.3%
Membership	255	580	127.5%
Cross Country Skiing	419	529	26.3%

- For the full year of 2015 visits to our site continued to increase.
- Interest in The Badlands remains strong with growth concentrated in May and June as people searched for information.
- Growth in visits to the Membership tab increased with its move to the home page part way through the year.
- Hiking information continues to be the most dynamic area of the web site as people plan their activities.