

Oak Ridges Trail Association

ANNUAL REPORT

AGM April 2023

"Building Pathways to an Active Lifestyle"



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OAK RIDGES TRAIL ASSOCIATION –2023 ANNUAL REPORT

AGENDA

- 7:00 Welcome and call to order
- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of the Minutes for ORTA AGM 2022
- Recognition of Chapter Chairs & Recognition of Directors, Key
 Committee Members & Office Staff
- Motion to adopt reports contained in this Annual Report*
- Treasurer's Report** – Bob Alexander
- Motion to adopt Financial Statements*
- Past President's Report**
- Nominating Committee
- Motion to adopt Board of Directors for 2023-2024*
- Awards and Presentations
- Adjournment of the Business Meeting
- 7:45 Break before presentation
- 8:00 Guest Speaker – Steve Shikaze

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Minutes of the ORTA AGM 2022

Region and Chapter Reports:

Western Region

King

Caledon

Central Region

Aurora

Richmond Hill *no report

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Eastern Region

Uxbridge

Northumberland

Scogog *no report

Thank you to the many photographers who share their talents with ORTA through our Facebook page. Pictures used on the front cover clockwise: Cheryl Fisher, Lissa Dwyer, Marita Jones, Cheryl Fisher.

Director's and Key Committee Member's Reports:

Hike Program

Treasurer's Report, Summary Statement & 2022 Financial Statements

Membership

Greenbelt Committee

Past-**President's Report**

Nomination Committee Report

Recognition Awards

Member of the Year

Lifetime Achievement

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Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

Invitations were sent to the membership on February 23rd by email and 9 were delivered by phone calls made by the Secretary on March 6th, 2022. Annual Reports were emailed to the Membership on April 14th and 9 by Canada Post on the same day.

Kevin Lowe called the meeting to order at 7pm with 46 members joining the call.

After yet another extraordinary year, we welcome you to our second Zoom AGM and hope that we can convey all the news in a meaningful way until we can meet again in person. Our thanks to former Board Member Carol Dowell who will be serving as Zoom technician while minutes are being recorded by Lissa Dwyer. Your thoughtful patience is much appreciated as we navigate this format. We ask that you ensure that your mute status remain engaged and please use the chat feature to ask questions or share **comments. During the course of our meeting, we'll be using Zoom polls for motions.** Clicking submit will ensure that your vote has been counted.

Our first order of business is to approve tonight's Agenda as no additions were made,

#1 Motion to approve the AGM 2022 agenda as presented within the Annual Report given to the membership by email on Thursday April 14, 2022 or by mail (9 members).

Moved by Lissa Dwyer and seconded by Michele Donnelly. Carried by a unanimous vote of 46 in favour.

The second order of business is to approve the official Minutes from our 2021 Annual General Meeting which are also contained in your Annual Report. As no amendments were recommended,

#2 Motion to approve the Minutes from the ORTA 2021 AGM as printed in the 2022 Annual Report distributed to the membership.

Moved by Lissa Dwyer and seconded by Kevin Lowe. Carried by a unanimous vote of 48 in favour.

As you know, it takes a lot of dedicated people to have ORTA run as it does especially in light of the last years during the pandemic. Staying engaged during this difficult time illustrates how amazing our team is and how important it is to our membership.

Over the course of the past year, your Board of Directors and several Key Committee members have put in many hours in support of the organization so I will read their

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names in an effort to recognize their contribution to our organization; your Board of Directors..

Treasurer Bob Alexander,

Regional Director Frank Alexander,

Member at Large Weibo Cheng

Communications Carol Dowell

Secretary Lissa Dwyer,

Fundraising Huw Evans

Past President Wilma Millage,

Regional Director Brian Millage,

Trail Director Garry Niece,

and myself President Kevin Lowe.

Key volunteers to acknowledge include Trail Talk editor and Office Manager Michele Donnelly , Hike Coordinator Derek Cowbourne, Volunteer Coordinator Gaye Mas, Webmaster Bob Charlton, Membership coordinator Caroline Schweitzer, Bookkeeper Simonette Fellion. We remain very grateful to all the other members who serve in other ways and I apologize if I overlooked anyone.

Several of these dedicated members have put together a summary of their activities over **the past year which I hope you'll take time to read and enjoy in your Annual Report.**

#3 Motion to receive reports from Directors, Chapter Chairs and Key Volunteers including Hike and Membership Reports as included in the 2022 Annual Report.

Moved by Lissa Dwyer and seconded by Weibo Cheng. Carried by a unanimous vote of 48 in favour.

Treasurer Bob Alexander shared the 2021 financial updates for the association.

#4 Motion to adopt 2020 Financial Statements prepared by Paul Stainton Accountant as presented.

Moved by Bob Alexander and seconded by Garry Niece. Carried by a unanimous vote of 52 in favour.

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Bob explained the thinking behind his motion and our decision to not use Paul Stainton for the review for 2022. There are 3 primary options and we would like the **membership's consent to investigate the alternatives.**

#5 Motion for the membership to authorize the Board to investigate other forms of financial statement approval and to implement the agreed upon option for the 2022 financial year.

Moved by Bob Alexander and seconded by Lissa Dwyer. Carried by a unanimous vote of 51 votes in favour.

Past President Wilma Millage provided an activity report included in the Annual Report.

Kevin shared the highlights from his report also included in the Annual Report.

In Wilma's absence, Lissa shared the outcome of the Nominations Committee which will see several several significant changes to the 2022/2023 Board of Directors:

Carol Dowell – has chosen to step down from her work on the ORTA Board for the coming year. We thank her for her good work in updating the promotional materials for our association and wish her well in her new job.

Huw Evans – has chosen to step down from continuing his work on the Board and we thank him for his work in the fundraising area over the past few years.

Frank Alexander – will be stepping down from his role on the Board with ORTA after many years of distinguished service. ORTA is indebted to Frank for his work on the Adventure Relay, rebuilding the Chapter Chair network and of course, his contribution to this Board.

Kevin Lowe - while not retiring from the Board, will be moving to the position of Past-President. I have served as President since 2015 and the time has come to step aside. I will focus on our Hike Instructor programme as overseen by Hike Ontario.

The following persons have consented to Nomination as Directors-at-Large for the year 2022-2023

Robert Alexander	Newmarket
Weibo Cheng	Richmond Hill
Lissa Dwyer	Aurora

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Kevin Lowe	Markham
Brian Millage	Newmarket
Wilma Millage	Newmarket
Garry Niece	Brooklin

We will also be asking all of our Chapter Chairs to once again become members of the ORTA Board. This will enable them to be more involved in the day to day working of the overall organization and give us more resources for Board positions in the future.

At our first meeting, the Directors will appoint Officers in accordance with the applicable By-law#1.

#6 Motion that the membership approve the slate of Directors for the year ahead as listed in the 2022 Annual Report.

Motion was moved by Garry Niece and seconded by Weibo Cheng. Carried by a unanimous vote of 50 in favour.

Lissa shared the outcome for the Awards committee wherein we be focussed on two very special award recipients. In addition, we will be planning to host a BBQ in honour of our past honourees who were unable to be feted properly while our meetings were online.

Outstanding Member of the Year – Bill McCullough

There are a lot of ORTA members who volunteer to monitor trail for fallen trees, pick up litter and write seasonal reports. Only a few devote many months of the year to clear fallen trees, mow meadow trails and repair boardwalks- again and again. Bill has been one of those consistent volunteers who has helped blaze and reroute trails, build boardwalks, string trim and mow a variety of trails and all this in addition to being one of the most regular Monday hikers. Bill has put in hundreds of hours on Uxbridge trails and Caledon and King West trails as he transports our heavy duty self-powered grass mowers and string trimmers in his pickup, and stores and maintains the equipment from season to season.

Lifetime Achievement Award – Frank Alexander

When Frank joined ORTA and then became the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chapter Chair , it was quickly evident that he was a motivator. Drawing on his managerial skills he effectively organized his volunteers to monitor, blaze and maintain the OTRA trails in his area.

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As Regional Director, Central Region, he has organized Whitchurch-Stouffville, Richmond Hill and Aurora, into a very effective management group for our trails in the region. This has involved many volunteers in each Chapter encouraging them to be active in their communities and involving more members in each area to participate and communicate about their various activities in the Region both locally and on our ORTA website.

He has also maintained an important liaison with York Region as our representative on their trail user Advisory Team where he makes the other groups aware of the many ORTA activities and trail concerns.

For many years Frank has been one of the main organizers **for ORTA's Moraine** Adventure Relay. His organizing skills were effective as he managed the staffing of the fifteen Relay Checkpoints and in the past few years he also organized the most complex of them – the Finish Line at Seneca College. He also managed the overall publicity of the Relay across the 160 km of the race.

Frank's enthusiasm, cheerfulness and organizational skills will be sorely missed, but we know he leaves a well trained team to carry on.

This concludes the formal portion of our meeting unless there are any other items of business to be discussed. Please use the chat window to ask your question or share your thoughts.

#7 Motion to adjourn the 2022 Annual General Meeting:

Moved by Garry Niece at 7:35pm. Carried by a unanimous vote of 45 in favour.

While there were 85 members registered to attend the online AGM, there was only ever a maximum of 58 participants on the call. As we know that Kevin Beaulieu from Greenbelt and Justin Jones & Amanda Gebhardt from WSP were signed in, we know that the balance will have been members.

56 (58-2) active lines in attendance representing 56 memberships.

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CHAPTER CHAIR AND REGIONAL REPORTS 2022

WESTERN REGION REPORT

Brian Millage, Regional Director

King, Ed Millar, Chapter Chair

A number of severe weather events impacted various locations across the Oak Ridges Moraine in 2022 but, for the most part, the King Section escaped serious damage. There were the normal number of tree falls to clean up and regular outings with the lawn mower and trimmer were carried out to keep the vegetation at bay. Repairs were made to the boardwalks and bridges to keep them safe and blazes were refreshed where needed. Volunteers Bill Fines and Craig Barnes were instrumental in 2022 in assisting with the maintenance of the trails in King.

The King Section continued to respond to requests from the Nature Conservancy of Canada keeping the trails in the Happy Valley Forest safe for ORTA and others to use.

Longtime volunteer Barry Moir who provided many years of service to ORTA in King - ORTA Trail Builder Award in 2008 – is being recognized by King Township by having a section of the King Trails named in his honour.

Caledon, Neil McGeachy, Chapter Chair & Brian Millage, Regional Chair

Neal Stein, Rodney Harrison and Steve & Cheryl Fisher have spent many hours on the trails of King/Caledon this past year keeping trails clear and safe. In addition, local landowner Paul Glaab has adopted a section of trail west of Humber Station Road and mows it several times a season. Several small adjustments and additions have been made to trails in the Palgrave area as well as an extension eastwards of one concession along the Caledon Trailway from Mount Pleasant to Mount Wolfe. This short reroute avoids a fair stretch of paved road.

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CENTRAL REGION REPORT Brian Millage, Regional Director

Aurora, Bruce Corbett, Chapter Chair

Spring and Fall trail inspections were conducted and reported as usual.

April 23 Over a dozen volunteers helped with the Case Woodlot Spring Clean-up.

June 5 Once again, Lissa Dwyer and her crew animated the ORTA booth at the Annual Aurora Street Festival. This is a great opportunity to inform and interest people in off-road adventures on ORTA trails.

September 14 Chapter Chair, Bruce Corbett, met on-site with Greg Scott of the Town of Aurora to plan and locate sites for 5 new posts at key trail direction changes in the Sheppard's Bush Trail. These posts were installed in October by the Town of Aurora crew. We are so glad to be able to count on the Town of Aurora trail maintenance people to accomplish major work that is beyond what ORTA volunteers can do!



Neil at Aurora
Street Festival

October 16 Bruce and Sharon Corbett and Trail Captain, Jody Raffensperger were among the participants on the ORTA Rendezvous Hikes at the Trail Hub. Many thanks to Brian and Wilma who led the hike which introduced us to some area trails. It was our chance to get acquainted with The Hub, a great new facility for outdoor activities.



October 23 Bruce painted the blazes on the new posts. This greatly improves trail signage for this trail which changes direction several times where other trails are present.

2022 was not a banner year in the Aurora Chapter but every year is a good one as more and more people use our trails, both the ORTA and the network of Town Trails.

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Whitchurch-Stouffville, Scott Heaslip & Olivia Petrie, Co-Chapter Chairs



Mel Young

More than twenty volunteer trail captains in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chapter look after eleven trail sections on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Nine of the trails are part of the York Region Forest and two are part of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The Chapter works closely with colleagues at the Region and Conservation Authority, who together ensure that the trails are well-maintained and easy to navigate. In 2022, through our spring and fall inspection undertakings, trail captains found most trails in relatively good condition and some issues requiring follow up, such as

fences in need of repair and trail obstructions, were dealt with promptly and effectively. Trail captains also looked after touching up some trail blazes, loosening or replacing some of the signage, and cutting back smaller branches to maintain clearance on the trails. Notably,

the amount of garbage collected during these inspections seemed to be less than in

previous years, and we hope this trend continues. Importantly, hikers were quick to express appreciation to the trail captains while they were conducting their inspections, and we know this gratitude is shared broadly by all those who enjoy the use of these trails.



Daniel Braganza



Tracy McNaught

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Also in 2022, we saw the departure of Caiti McLelland from her Co-Chair role, while she is thankfully continuing on as a Trail Captain. Back-up trail captain, Olivia Petrie, has taken on this role and is indebted to Caiti, as well as Co-Chair, Scott Heaslip and deputy co-chairs Tracy McNaught and Ryan Zylstra, as well as the ORTA Board, for their support through the transition. As 2023 unfolds, the W-S team will begin re-building the momentum from pre-pandemic times, and hope to engage volunteers and members in new ways. On the agenda so far are the Green Up Clean Up event organized by York Region to be held on Saturday, May 13, **2023, and an ORTA booth at Stouffville's Strawberry Festival** to be held on Saturday, July 1, 2023. More details on these events, including how to get involved, will be coming soon.



EASTERN REGION REPORT

Brian Millage, Regional Director

Uxbridge, Co-Chairs Jon McPhee & Brian Millage

The 2022 year started off with a bang as a tornado ripped through the Uxbridge region, and others, and ORTA responded to the call. North Walker Woods trails were devastated with multiple trees uprooted and blocking most trails. Three ORTA chainsaw crews went to work and 200 combined hours later the trails were cleared and safe. Volunteers from Green Durham and Durham Mountain Bike Association cleared many other trails in the region. The town of Uxbridge is still dealing with the aftermath of the storm.

Later in the year five members of ORTA trail crews took a day long safety course regarding chainsaw operation and handling. Our thanks to Green Durham for organizing the course. This certification increases the number of certified members who can respond to treefalls along our trails. Both of our groups have been transitioning our equipment from gas to battery powered, with the exception of the self propelled mowers that are the real workhorses when it comes to keeping meadow grasses (and ticks) back from our trails. We have recently added long handled hedge trimmers in addition to our string trimmers for trail maintenance. We are fortunate to have a good number of dedicated volunteers in some chapters and are grateful when new volunteers step forward to adopt and monitor sections of trail.

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Our thanks to the folks at Trans Canada Trail- yes, it has officially been rebranded- as they again awarded ORTA with a \$1K grant for the purchase of lumber and new equipment. The funds went towards the construction and repair of Boardwalks in the Second Forest of Uxbridge on trails we share with the TCT, connecting with the Goodwood Tract and the Rouge Park (RNUP).

Parking fees collected at four Uxbridge parking lots, @\$6 per car, are being put towards bridge reconstruction, a portable toilet and winter parking lot plowing. Holders of seasonal passes may now register any additional family cars at the same address. We have suggested that future plans should include more trail maintenance and mowing by paid employees, work currently done by aging volunteers.

Northumberland, Chapter Chair George Gordon

An inspection of the trail in Northumberland Chapter was carried out in the summer of 2022. However, this was done by car to access locations with limited walking of the trail. The Ganaraska Forest portion of the trail was closed by Ganaraska Conservation for much of the summer hiking season due to a May storm that brought down many trees. Hikers of the western portion of the trail have reported issues that have been taken care of. An outstanding issue is repair and update of signage across the Northumberland Chapter of the trail. Additional volunteers for work parties are required if this task is to be completed in 2023.

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HIKE PROGRAM

Derek Cowbourne, ORTA Hike Coordinator

I am pleased to report that the 2022 hike program was busy and very popular. There were:

- 205 hikes led by 21 hike leaders.
- 2440 hike participants by 207 individual members.
- 2056 km covered on the hikes, or 24,237 km if you sum the individual hikers.

Comparing these numbers to the year before and accounting for the full 12 months of **2022 vs the six months of 2021's program, 2022 had a 20% increase in the number of** hikes and a 30% increase in the number of hikers. My thanks to all the hike leaders but a special shout-out to Josie Klostranec who again led the most hikes (43), covered the most distance (400 km), with the most participants (462). Thank you, Josie: we are certainly going to miss seeing you on the trails – you leave some very big boots to fill!

Many hikes were at the registration limit and the waitlists were well used. This continues and makes it clear that ORTA needs to add new hike leaders and even more hikes. All ORTA hike leaders are required to be Hike Ontario certified and, in April 2022, eight members completed the course run by Kevin Lowe: Anna Santarossa, Cheryl & Steve Fisher, Deb Lennon, Greg Jaski, Lynn Tulk, Patti Juffs, and yours truly! With the increasing number of hikers, we can always benefit from more active hike leaders and I would like to see another course put on this Spring. Please let me know if you are interested in becoming an ORTA hike leader.

With several changes to the restrictions governing hikes, keeping the hike registration system running smoothly was a challenge, but most ably managed by Michele. One welcome change permitted members to register a non-member, with the prior approval of the hike leader: and this would change again for 2023 with the re-introduction of public hikers.

My thanks also go to Bob Comfort for managing the post-**hike data base ... and taking** care of any errors that my wayward computer mouse introduced!

End to End: we had two members who recorded end-to-end completion of the trail in 2022, congratulations to Chris Johnston and Erica Lise Phillips. However, several hikers were prevented from completing the E2E in 2022 after the devastating wind storms led to trail closures in the Ganaraska Forest and Long Sault CA. I am sure I will be reporting on these in the 2023 report.

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On a related note, a very big thank you to all the individuals and crews who worked long and hard to clean up the damage from the storms and make the trails open and safe again.

Here's hoping that we can have a full year of ORTA hikes in 2023, enjoyed by an increasing number of members, led by an increasing number of leaders, from end to end of the Oak Ridges Trail.

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TREASURER’S REPORT

Bob Alexander, Treasurer

You may recall that at last year’s AGM, we passed a resolution to authorize the Board to explore options regarding production of our annual financial reports. We received great input from Anna Sunn in this regard who discovered that not all nonprofits were required to prepare external reviews and ORTA qualified for an exemption. So we decided to prepare only internal statements, have a Board subcommittee review them and recommend their approval to the Board. The committee is chaired by Garry Niece with Anna Sunn and Mack Chiu as members. Let me tell you that they were tougher than our external accountants! My thanks to them for helping us save about \$3,500 each year going forward. As well, Anna was instrumental in making suggestions that improved our results by almost \$2K!

Actuals for 2022 came in \$.7K worse than the 2021 actual. Revenues were down by almost \$18.5K due to much lower guidebook sales and lower membership dues. Also, no Government assistance! Expenditures were down by \$17.8K from 2021. Main variances were guidebook costs down \$10.7K, rent down \$4.1K, and professional fees down \$3.5K

Our plan for 2023 calls for a deficit of \$10.2K, \$4.3K less than 2022. Interest of \$2.0K on our invested funds is the major contributor to the improvement. Our assumptions on membership dues and donations remain flat. Our cash position at the end of 2023 is projected to still be over \$50K.

The assumptions for 2023 assume there will be no impact on our operations from the upcoming Greenbelt initiative.

In closing, I would again like to acknowledge the help and support of Simonetta Felin and Michele who do most of accounting work and deserve all the credit.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Summary financial information (2022 and 2021 reconciled with externally reviewed statements)

(000's omitted)

	PLAN 2023	ACTUAL 2022	ACTUAL 2021
Total assets	69.2	79.4	96.6
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1.8	1.8	4.5
Net Assets	67.4	77.6	92.1
Operations:			
Revenues:			
Membership dues	18.0	17.3	21.3
Donations	13.0	12.2	13.0
All other	5.0		
	4.2		
	17.9		
Total revenues	36.0	33.7	52.2
Expenditures:			
Administration	28.0	27.8	27.1
I.T and data base costs	5.0	4.1	3.6
All other	13.2	16.3	35.4
Total expenditures	46.2	48.2	66.1
Overall net (shortfall)	<u>(10.2)</u>	<u>(14.5)</u>	<u>(13.9)</u>

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Oak Ridges Trail Association

Statement of Operations

For the year ending December 31	Prior Year 2021	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Budget 2023
Operations Revenue				
Membership dues	\$ 21,290	\$ 17,260	\$ 21,000	18,000
Guidebook sales	10,853	3,385	7,200	1,800
Donations and grants	12,946	12,164	13,000	13,000
Discovery nights income	280	-	-	1,200
Misc. income and government aid	6,852	922		2,000
Total operations revenue	\$ 52,221	\$ 33,731	\$ 41,200	\$ 36,000
Operating expenses				
Administration costs	\$ 27,096	\$ 27,814	\$ 27,000	28,000
Guidebook costs	13,260	2,565	4,792	1,450
Membership data base and support	3,607	4,074	4,000	5,000
Rent	8,580	4,460	4,460	2,400
Communication costs	3,514	2,234	2,160	2,000
Insurance	3,339	2,178	3,500	2,300
Association membership costs	1,251	1,559	1,300	1,600
Trail maintenance	405	1,850	1,500	1,500
All other	1,561	1,517	1,700	2,000
Professional fees	3,468	-	3,000	-
Total operating costs	\$ 66,081	\$ 48,251	\$ 53,412	\$ 46,250
Operations surplus (shortfall)	\$ (13,860)	\$ (14,520)	\$ (12,212)	\$ (10,250)

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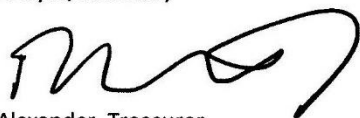
Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31	Prior Year 2021	Actual 2022	Budget 2022	Budget 2023
Assets				
Cash and short term investments	\$ 73,742	\$ 60,324	\$ 67,723	\$ 51,524
Accounts receivable	1,856	1,568	656	1,568
Guidebook inventory	11,715	16,516	8,174	15,066
Prepaid expenses	6,413	-	5,161	-
HST receivable	2,921	1,009	421	1,009
Total assets	\$ 96,647	\$ 79,417	\$ 82,135	\$ 69,167
Liabilities				
Accounts payable and accruals	\$ 3,200	\$ 350	\$ 1,500	350
Payroll taxes payable	1,319	1,459	719	1,459
Total liabilities	4,519	1,809	2,219	1,809
Net assets beginning of year	105,988	92,128	92,128	77,608
Operations shortfall for year	(13,860)	(14,520)	(12,212)	(10,250)
Net assets end of year	92,128	77,608	79,916	67,358
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 96,647	\$ 79,417	\$ 82,135	\$ 69,167

Approved on behalf of the Board:



Lissa Dwyer, Secretary



Bob Alexander, Treasurer

April 1, 2023

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MEMBERSHIP

Michele Donnelly / Caroline Schweitzer, Membership Coordinator

Membership remains stable. ORTA membership totalled 618 in 2022 (single, family x 1.25*, lifetime and student members)

Family 278 (40 new)
Single 181 (34 new)
Lifetime 87 (0 new)
Student 2 (2 new)

Although membership remains relatively strong, 2022 showed a slight drop compared to 2021 and 2020. The drop came from a decline in both new family (40 new in 2022 vs 54 new in 2021 and 84 in 2020) and single memberships (34 new in 2022 vs 44 in 2021 and 35 in 2020).

*Note: Family membership is multiplied by 1.25 (300 x 1.25) to reflect our base.

Our outlook is positive with festivals and events beginning to take place again. Discovery Night has been rejuvenated in person again and the Aurora Street Festival on June 4th and the Whitchurch Stouffville Strawberry festival on July 1st will help boost new supporters for ORTA.

At a special board meeting in November 2022 it was approved to allow the general public to join guided hikes led by ORTA. Implemented in December, the general public **are now able to apply to become a “Public Hiker”**. By following the guidelines and agreeing to the waivers in the hiking program they can register for hikes, where allowed. In December we had 17 people sign up as Public Hikers and in the first 3 months of implementation there are over 60 Public Hikers now registered on the system. We are happy to report that 4 Public Hikers have become full members of ORTA.

Thanks to Denise Chong who became a part of the membership team in October 2022. Our thanks to Eric Brown who retired from this volunteer position in July 2022. Denise **is a retired grade 3 teacher that taught writing to students. As she says, “those were the days when the students were taught writing.” Denise has been using her “flare” for** writing the personalized thank you, condolence or celebration cards to our members and donors. Caroline and I are very lucky to have you join us on the membership team.

As your membership coordinator, I (Caroline) encourage you to share any thoughts, concerns or ideas with me. I can be reached at membership @oakridgestrail.org.

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GREENBELT INITIATIVE

Kevin Lowe

For the past 8 months, ORTA has been involved with a group of stakeholders such as conservation authorities, municipal governments and other agencies along the length of the moraine to plan and create a lasting moraine trail. The intent of this group is to improve the trail, move more of the trail off road and ensure that the trail will continue to be available to future generations.

The group has created an action plan to be implemented over several years. Here are the targets for years one and two.

Priorities For Years 1 and 2

- ❖ Convene Strategy Implementation Working Group to advance final governance model discussions and strengthen partnerships.
- ❖ Identify staffing resource needs based on initial conversations and feedback
- ❖ Develop a preferred Trail Alignment, working with partners to determine where public lands may be available, where acquisitions are necessary and where access agreements need to be strengthened.
- ❖ Develop construction and maintenance training standards, insurance requirements and reporting needs, enter agreements with partners such as Conservation Authorities and Municipalities for ongoing maintenance or construction of trails.
- ❖ Advance partnerships with Indigenous Nations, specifically through the convening of an Indigenous Round Table and ongoing partnerships with the Moccasin Identifier Project to increase Treaty Awareness along the Trail
- ❖ Update Branding and Wayfinding for the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail
- ❖ Initiate Landowner Relations Strategy
- ❖ Finalize Policy elements for inclusion in Municipal and Regional Planning documents – **host an ORMT ‘Road Show’ to introduce the Trail to incoming municipal and Regional Councils as an important provincial trail.**

As the workgroup moves forward with its agenda more details will be shared. For 2023, **our representative on this committee will be Garry Niece. If you’re interested in participating, please let us know.**

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PAST-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wilma Millage, Past-President

What a busy year we have had after our years of small groups and quiet trails with COVID. Nice to have a return to normal as numbers increase for hikes and events. The local restaurants have been happy to see us return for lunch after our Monday hikes (we actually had 17 come out after one of the latest hikes).

Of course the maintenance of trails never went away but it was a good way to **keep active and on the trails.** Read Brian's Regional Chair note for details on the hundreds of hours that were spent by ORTA volunteers early this year in helping clean up the mess of trees after the tornados that went through our forests.

Our Fall Rendezvous hike in October, followed by a social with lunch at the Hub **was a great success.** In Brian's report he talked about the number of hikes we had and over 60 hikers joined in the event. Many of the hikers stayed for lunch. As this was our first opportunity to host a group event since the arrival of covid, there were numerous recognition awards to present from past years when we **weren't able to meet in person.** Our thanks to John Fisher and the folks at The Trail Hub for making their beautiful facility available for the event.

Discovery Night was able to resume in-person sessions as well. I have taken over the hosting of these events and am enjoying trying to find interesting speakers for the event. If you know of any good speakers please let me know their contact details. Since Discovery Night is now our main fund raising activity (the Adventure Relay has not been running for 3 years now), we did have to increase the entry fee to \$10/person. Folks seem to understand this and we are getting good turnouts.

We have added some new Chapter Chairs and Co-chairs over the year. Steve Fisher has agreed to serve as Co-Chair with Ed Millar in the King Chapter. Steve is also leading hikes as is his wife Cheryl. They are leading mostly in the west end of our trail.

Whitchurch/Stouffville has experienced many changes with the retirement of Frank Alexander as the Regional Chair. Olivia Petrie and Scott Heaslip are the new Co-Chairs.

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In Scugog Mike Baker has taken on the role of Chapter Chair. He and his wife Joanne will be working at raising the awareness of ORTA in that area and have already posted an ORTA map and article in a local newspaper to that end.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are currently without anyone in this role. The rest of the Board are filing in as necessary.

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Wilma Millage, Past-President & Bob Alexander, Treasurer

New voices are always welcome, so please let us know if you would like to join the Board in the future. All the current members have generously agreed to remain on the board for the year ahead.

Regrettably, Kevin Lowe stepped down from the Board on September 10th, 2022 and we remain grateful for all that he has contributed in many capacities.

The following persons have consented to Nomination as Directors-at-Large for the year 2023-2024

Robert Alexander	Newmarket
Weibo Cheng	Richmond Hill
Lissa Dwyer	Aurora
Brian Millage	Newmarket
Wilma Millage	Newmarket
Garry Niece	Brooklin

We will continue to invite all of our Chapter Chairs to participate as members of the ORTA Board by joining our meetings. This will enable them to be more involved in the day to day working of the overall organization and give us more resources for Board positions in the future.

At their first meeting, the Directors will appoint Officers in accordance with the applicable By-law#1

We move the acceptance of the above persons as Directors of the Association.

Wilma Millage and Bob Alexander

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RECOGNITION AWARDS

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit nominations for the 2023 awards. **We hope that you'll be with us to learn about this year's honourees.** If not, they'll be published in Trail Talk and on our website.

Commendations

Trail Builders

Member of the Year

Lifetime Achievement

HAPPY TRAILS!

HOPE TO SEE YOU OUT ON THE OAK RIDGES
TRAIL!