

GDA Newsletter

May 20, 2014

Please join us for our Annual General Meeting on Saturday June 7 at 10:30 am.

The meeting will be held at Pine Grove Pioneer Church, Uxbridge. The church is on the 7th concession just north of Durham 21 and on the east side. Space for parking is limited on the church property but is available on the east side of the 7th concession. Our speaker this year will be Andrea Fraser, Trails Coordinator for the Township of Uxbridge. Andrea will bring us up to date on the Township's trail projects, accomplishments and plans.

An agenda is enclosed with this newsletter, we look forward to seeing you there. Be sure to bring your completed membership form and fee with you to this meeting.

Your Association has been very active in the last months. Some of the files we are working on with various partners include;

1. Establishing an off-road route for the Trans Canada Trail as it moves into Uxbridge Township from the east. Partners in this initiative include the Township, the Trans Canada Trail committee and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.
2. Working with the TRCA to construct a trail head and parking lot off Brock Road that will provide convenient access to the Wilder Forest and Nature Preserve. The Wilder family has made this possible by offering to provide the land necessary with a generous lease arrangement if issues around access can be resolved. We are hopeful that work will begin almost immediately.
3. Lobbying the provincial government to turn over management of the Nesbitt property to the TRCA on a long term lease arrangement so that this property can be incorporated into the TRCA's planning for their East Duffins Headwaters properties. This initiative is very close to being a done deal.
4. Promoting a land swap between the TRCA and the Dagmar ski resort that will permit access into the TRCA's Dagmar south and north properties from the trail head and parking lot at the Pickering/Uxbridge townline and the 7th Concession. The terms of the land swap have been agreed to by the parties but one last small issue must be resolved before the deal can move forward.
5. Working with Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to get the federal government to agree to a trail route through the Trust's property that will complete an off road trail from Durham Forest south to the TRCA's Dagmar properties.
6. Completing our work with Ontario Nature on aggregate extraction issues in the township. Ontario Nature will be making their report entitled "Bioregional Planning for Aggregate Extraction in the Townships of Uxbridge and Scugog available very shortly. This is a lengthy report and it is not possible to summarize it in this space. Suffice it to say that that highlights the issues that concern us as residents and promotes working together to find reasonable solutions to conflicting priorities.
7. Working with Lafarge to insure that their "Regan" pit is rehabilitated to the highest standard and that all or a major part of the property will come into public hands once mining has

been completed and their license surrendered. The Regan pit is a very strategic property which borders TRCA properties to the west and south, Durham Forest to the east and the Nesbitt property to the north. It will bulk up properties already in conservation authority hands to provide well buffered habitat for the flora and fauna of the area. Recently Lafarge facilitated the placement of 50 bluebird boxes, with the help of neighbours and GDA members, on sections in the pit that have been replanted. This is an encouraging sign of Lafarge's good intentions.

8. Promoting GDA's vision for the federal airport lands. We recently met with Chris Alexander, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to discuss our vision and to brief him on the resolutions supporting our position which were passed unanimously by Pickering and Uxbridge councils. Minister Alexander supports our vision and told us that he would try and arrange a meeting for us with the Minister of Transport, Lisa Raitt so that we could make a direct pitch to the Minister responsible for these lands.

GDA has also been looking ahead at succession planning and strategies to ensure our organization continues to play an important role in policy, stewardship and land acquisition. A first step was to develop a vision, mission and strategy and it is included at below. A committee has been struck to explore memberships, fundraising, communication, and possible future activities for GDA. We want to engage new members and continue to make a difference both now and in the future. One important action will be to improve the website capability to permit online donation and membership payment, and member subscription to newsletters. Stay tuned for more information!

Mission: Green Durham Association is a non-profit registered charity dedicated to protecting, preserving and enhancing the forests, farmlands, and natural areas which lie northeast of Toronto in Uxbridge, north Pickering and adjacent Green Belt lands.

Vision: Our vision is of key natural areas, such as the Oak Ridges Moraine lands, which will be protected and enhanced, of conservation lands linked to communities, and of agricultural lands which are actively and sustainably farmed. These communities should grow in ways that preserve these unique lands for future generations.

Strategy:

We work in partnership with municipalities, conservation bodies and other partners to plan for, acquire and manage trail networks, nature corridors and conservation lands.

We support and promote land protection and stewardship efforts on private lands.

We support research, make comments and advise on policies and decisions affecting land use.

Goals:

To support healthy habitats for flora, fauna, wetlands and watersheds.

To support development of trails for passive recreational use

To be a constructive voice on all issues which may have implications for our vision for these lands.