

Newsletter to Members

Within the past 9 months GDA has lost two long-time friends and supporters. In the fall of 2018 Alastair Gillespie passed away and this past March Bill Wilder also died. Both individuals had an interest in public and private land stewardship and conservation and co-founded Durham Conservation Association in 2001. Durham Conservation Association merged with Green Door Alliance in 2011 to become Green Durham Association. Bill and Alastair's wise counsel, foresight and generous financial contributions to conservation will be felt for years to come.

A photo taken of Alastair and Bill at the opening of the Wilder Forest and Wildlife Preserve on October 31, 2015. Their friendship spanned more than 75 years.



You can read more about the remarkable lives of Alastair and Bill here:

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theglobeandmail/obituary.aspx?n=alastair-gillespie&pid=190128938&fhid=9911>

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theglobeandmail/obituary.aspx?n=william-price-wilder&pid=192009793&fhid=9911>

AGM: Our Annual General Meeting will take place on the morning of Saturday June 8 at Pine Grove Church. Formal notice will be sent closer to the date but mark your calendars in the meantime. Anyone who is a member in good standing (that means you have paid your yearly membership fee) is eligible to vote at the AGM and be named to the Board of Directors. Several great candidates stepped forward in response to the request in our last newsletter.

Maps: The final map in our printed map series of the south Uxbridge area is due to be completed in time for our AGM. This last segment has been more challenging for Chrismar, professional mapmakers based in Uxbridge, because of the complex mixture of unmarked trails, land leases, and management by different organizations. Watch for them out on the trails in the coming weeks as they "ground truth" what they have drawn from aerial photographs. Ground truthing is what distinguishes GDA's maps from those available from online: someone has been out in the field to confirm what the trail looks like and where it travels.

Trail Maintenance Agreement: Our formal agreement with the TRCA to help maintain the trails has been a big success. A newsletter has just been sent to the 25 volunteers who have stepped forward over the past year to lend a hand. One interesting aspect, and an illustration of how helpful the agreement has been: the number of visitors to the Wilder Forest has increased this past year (perhaps due to our published maps of the area? Who knows?). Visitors access the parking lot to the Wilder Forest trails by traveling down a laneway operated by Pathways on Pleasure Valley, a horseback riding facility. Owner Michael Chen has signed on as a GDA volunteer to allow him to help keep the parking lot cleared and the laneway accessible. Thank you Michael!

We have a number of projects planned for the coming season, some of them smaller and routine, others more ambitious. GDA was recently given \$1000 by Trans Canada Trail to assist with spring clean-up on sections of The Great Trail which travel through the East and West Duffins Headwaters lands. Watch for us on Thursdays out on the trails starting early May, and come to the AGM to find out more.

Partnership with other organizations: This winter GDA assisted Durham Mountain Biking Association with the purchase of specialized equipment called Snowdogs, designed to compact snow to keep the trails of Durham Forest open for winter mountain biking, walking and snowshoeing.

Policy news: The current Provincial government is reviewing many programs and legislation, and inviting public comment. Some of these are pertinent to the work of GDA and its members. Earlier we let you know about Schedule 10 of Bill 66, which received many comments. There are several areas currently under review which may also be of interest to GDA members. The links to learn more and to submit comments are included below:

- Proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act which are intended to help conservation authorities focus and deliver on their core mandate, and improve governance: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-5018> Closing date for comment is May 20, 2019
- A proposed regulation which outlines how conservation authorities permit development and other activities for impacts to natural hazards and public safety: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4992> Closing date for comment is May 21, 2019
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry recently announced a review of aggregate operations in Ontario, with an emphasis on “engaging our partners to identify ways we can cut red tape, create jobs and build a sustainable aggregates industry.” The announcement can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-aggregate-reform> which links to an on-line survey. Responses and other submissions are due May 1, 2019.

See you on June 8, and don't forget to renew your membership
<https://www.greendurham.ca/membership>