

Newsletter October 2022

Save the date: Our 2022 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday November 5 at 10 am. You can choose to tune-in via Zoom from your home, or in-person at the home of John McCutcheon. John lives at #4260 Concession 7, Uxbridge, across the road from Pine Grove Church. The formal part of our meeting will take about 30 minutes. Afterwards we will walk part of John's property to get an idea of how it connects to future parts of the trail system south of Uxbridge. Please join us! We will send out a Zoom link, agenda, financial statements and 2021/22 minutes in the coming week.

Membership Renewal: Thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships, and a reminder to others to do so. Memberships are \$25/year payable by cheque or via e-transfer to Info@greendurham.ca. Your membership helps us stay in touch with you, and lets others know there is a significant group of citizens which share a common vision for this special area. You are welcome to attend the AGM regardless of membership status, but only members who have paid in 2022 may vote.

Paid Parking in trail areas south of Uxbridge: Many of you will have noticed new roadside signage south of the town of Uxbridge indicating no parking, and signage in trail access parking lots indicating that you must now pay for parking. This is an initiative of Uxbridge Township to generate funds to support trail maintenance and trail amenities. It was implemented in late July of this year as a pilot project. GDA supported the concept of raising funds for trails but we have concerns about the roll-out and implementation of this initiative – among them, the use of a phone app as the only way to pay for parking, the exclusion of Uxbridge residents from having to pay, and the lack of awareness on the part of the Town regarding the enormous role played by volunteers and donors (most of whom come from outside Uxbridge Township) towards the ongoing maintenance of these trail networks.

We have had numerous discussions with the Town about this project and plan to continue to share our observations, concerns and ideas. An Advisory Committee has just been formed and GDA will be a committee member; the first meeting is on October 21. Ultimately, we hope that any new funding stream is applied to support basic maintenance costs, such as the funds provided for many years now by GDA to TRCA. This will allow GDA to partner with TRCA and others on other projects of mutual interest. For now, The Township has agreed that GDA members and volunteers will not be required to pay a fee for parking. To obtain this exemption you need to register your licence plate with the Township, and mention that you are a GDA member – still a hassle, but it's the best we could do for now! And parking is still permitted and is free at the smaller pullovers along the 6th and 7th Concession trail access stepovers

Chainsaw Safety Day – On Tuesday October 18, GDA hosted a training day for volunteers who want to help keep the trails open. Our agreement with TRCA requires that any volunteers using a chainsaw follow certain safety procedures and have training in use of chainsaws. Ontario Parks Association provides a top-notch 1-day training session. GDA paid the course fee for 10 volunteers; in return they covered the costs of their personal protective equipment and chainsaws and will help out when trees fall and block trails. This is the second time we have sponsored this training. It is a superb example of the kinds of partnerships which have

developed to care for the trails. Participants included neighbours to the trails, members of DMBA and ORTA, and the event took place on the property of GDA members John and Lee Fisher.



A big grant –

We were successful in our application this spring for major funding to assist with trail maintenance. We have yet to receive permission to announce receipt of the grant formally, but we **are** permitted to talk about the work we are doing. We've purchased additional mowers and battery-operated hedge-trimmers and string-trimmers to help with maintaining the trail network. Members of GDA, DMBA and ORTA have worked in teams to get the work done. TRCA has done the heavy-duty mowing on certain tracts of land where push-mowers aren't practical.

We've also removed damaged sections of boardwalks deep in Glen Major. One section has been replaced with a sustainable gravel surface and the drainage has been improved. It is worth noting that we were able to complete this work because of our local relationships – road access and brownies were generously offered by the neighbour at a key point near the boardwalk. A longer section further to the south will be completed sometime in November.

We've purchased three battery operated chainsaws and safety kits for use by trained volunteers; these chainsaws work with the same battery as the trimmers and are lightweight. This can be a huge help when trudging in a couple of kilometres to deal with a fallen tree.



Website – We’ve been working on overhauling GDA’s website and it is getting close to completion. Many thanks to GDA members who responded to a request for photos; your beautiful work has made all the difference to this project.

Provincial lands project – We continue to work behind the scenes to achieve our goal of having management of 1300 acres transferred from the Province to the Town, and to have a land management plan developed and a trail established which provides an off-road connection between the Town and the large trail network to the south. Last year GDA board member John McCutcheon donated his land to Uxbridge Township to form an important connection in this project; the land donation process is almost complete. A small lot adjacent to the Provincial lands has been purchased privately with agreement to provide an important trail link in this land assembly. We asked Chrismar Mapping to help us describe this project and our overall trail vision using a map. We’ve attached it on the following page. This draft map will be revised regularly as we gain more information.

Happy Fall everyone!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Calvin, President, GDA

