



Hello Members and Volunteers – A June update from GDA

Welcome to all of you who have joined us in the past year. We are a small but mighty organization and we appreciate that you share our vision and have chosen to become members.

Membership: Usually we renew memberships each June, coinciding with our AGM. The past year has been an unusual one, to say the least. For this year we plan to extend memberships to the end of 2021. We hope things will return to a more normal situation in 2022.

AGM: We plan to hold our AGM in the Fall to increase the chances that we can meet in person. Our hope is to have the meeting at Skyloft – or what used to be called Skyloft. Many of you will recall the ski hill located just east of Lakeridge along the Chalk Lake Road. Ownership has changed hands and an intriguing project is underway there. We hope to see it for ourselves and hear about the vision the new owners have for the property. Stay tuned for notice of our AGM.

New Parking Lot: If you haven't seen it yet, the parking lot project we helped make happen was in the news recently: <https://www.thestar.com/local-uxbridge/news/council/2021/05/11/new-restrictions-aim-to-curb-roadside-parking-in-uxbridge.html>

Mowing: Several of you stepped forward to help with breaking-in our new mowers purchased with funds from TransCanada Trail. The goal is to help stretch the dollars we contribute to the TRCA towards mowing to keep the trails open and safe for users.

The TRCA created “mowing maps” – every place the mower would need to touch down - and we divided up the properties into segments. We shared the task with Oak Ridges Trail Association, Durham Mountain Biking Association and TRCA. Thanks to all of you who reached out. We are aiming for a total of three mows so one down, two to go.

The next mow will be over the coming weeks, an email will go out to those who offered help, but we could always use more. The mower is a walk-behind commercial model which is self-propelled, so the effort is similar to a regular walk. We mow in pairs, one person walking ahead looking for stumps and sticks in the way, the other person pushing the mower. The biggest task is lifting the mower over the trail entrance and on and off the truck or trailer; this was accomplished without incident by two age 60-ish women, if that provides any idea of effort. Get in touch with us at info@greendurham.ca if you can help with this effort over the coming months.

Other ways to help: In addition to mowing there are a couple of great volunteer opportunities involving not much walking:

1: GDA has purchased 7 trail counters made by TRAF'x. Gaining an idea of the number of visitors to the trails south of Uxbridge will assist with advocating for funding for maintenance and trail amenities such as parking lots. The counters will be installed near certain trail entrances. We could use help installing the posts (step 1), installing the counters (step 2) and visiting the counters on a regular basis to collect & upload data (step 3).

We'd like to get everything up and running by the end of June. If any of these tasks interest you, get in touch by email with Rob Ferguson, who has been the mastermind behind this project: robertdouglasserguson@gmail.com

2: GDA is part of a group of volunteers and organizations which work together for the benefit of the East Duffins Headwaters, lands owned and managed by TRCA. With the number of trail visitors increasing, this volunteer group identified the need for emergency numbers at trail entrances. We approached the Township of Uxbridge with the idea and a map of locations we felt were important to mark with a green emergency number to assist emergency responders. We offered to assist with any task needed to get the numbers installed. The Township has accepted our suggestion and our offer of help. The work will involve driving to the different locations we have identified, choosing numbers, later installing those numbers, and recording their location using GPS. It will take a few vehicle trips but will not require physical effort. If you are interested in helping, get in touch: info@greendurham.ca

Land Protection and Stewardship: We continue to work on a couple of land issues related to stewardship and permanent protection. As always, these are long-term projects which have many ups, downs and unexpected turns. Our hope is that we can share details, and news of success by the time our AGM rolls around.

In the meantime you might be interested in the following: June 15-17: **People's Summit on Protecting Special Places in Ontario** is a unique opportunity to hear what is happening across the entire Province. There will be a long list of presenters; participants can pick and choose sessions at no charge. Register here: [Peoples Summit](#). Our friends from Land Over Landings are part of a panel discussion taking place on June 16. Canada has pledged to meet a target of conserving 30% of its lands and oceans by 2030 (the 30 x 30 commitment). US President Biden made this commitment in one of his early executive actions. Québec and California are ahead in delivering on the promise of 30x30. Ontario currently sits at 10.7%. The Peoples' Summit will showcase and celebrate efforts to protect special places in Ontario.

Happy trails to you all! – Liz Calvin, President GDA