



AvonTrail.ca



ANNUAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 23, 2021

Table of Contents

Avon Trail Annual General Meeting November 17, 2020: Minutes	3
President’s Report.....	5
Membership Report	6
Financial Report	7
Trail Map Coordinator Report.....	8
Trail Report	9
Landowner Relations Report	10
Hike and Events Report	11
Marketing Report.....	12
Avon Trail Store Report	13
Newsletter Report.....	14
BUDGET 2021-2022	15
Avon Trail Board 2020-2021	16

Avon Trail Annual General Meeting November 17, 2020: Minutes

via Zoom

Present for speaker: 21

Present for AGM: 21

1. The President, Jane Foster, welcomed those present.
2. **MOTION** – M/S Terry Aitken/Donna Weitzel that the agenda be accepted as presented. Carried.
3. Jane Foster, President, introduced our guest speaker, Terri LeRoux (Hike Ontario President) who spoke about “The impact of Covid-19 on our Trails”. Terri was thanked by Jane Foster.
4. Due to time and with general consensus, the refreshment break was omitted.
5. **MOTION** – M/S Meg Westley/Tracy H., that the minutes of the AGM, November 19, 2019, be accepted. Carried.
6. The Year in Review (see Annual Report for details).
 - a) President’s Report – Jane Foster
 - b) Financial – Maria Antonio
 - Opening Balance November 1, 2019 \$3881.16
 - Closing Balance October 31, 2020 \$8994.71**MOTION** – M/S Maria Antonio/Terry Aitken, be accepted as presented. Carried.
 - c) Membership – Julia Vryheid
 - 183 members as of October 31, 2020.
 - d) The Trail – Bruce Graham
 - 48 monitors (need 12 more)
 - e) Landowner Relations – Terry Aitken
 - 95 landowners
 - f) Hikes and Events – Meg Westley
 - g) Marketing/ Public Relations – Carol Miller
 - h) Newsletter – Tom Kimber
7. Budget 2020-2021 – Maria Antonio
 - MOTION** – M/S Maria Antonio/Tracy H., that the balanced budget, income = expense = \$11850.00 be accepted as presented. Carried.

8. Commendation Recognition Awards, presented by Jane Foster, to:
- Ted Derry** for exceptional and outstanding service to the club in designing organizing and building the Bamberg Creek Bridge.
- Bruce Graham** for his leadership and organization of trail monitors and for achieving a standard of excellence on the Avon Trail, end to end.
- Maria Antonio** for faithful and invaluable service to the club in performing the duties of Treasurer over six years.
- Dave Williamson** for long time and faithful service to the club as steward of the Avon Trail Tools.

9. Election of Officers

MOTION – M/S Meg Westley/Bruce Graham, that the following slate of officers be elected to the Avon Trail Board of Directors:

President	Jane Foster	1 year remaining
Vice President	Carol Miller	1 year remaining
Treasurer	Not filled.	Temporary acting Treasurer – Maria Antonio
Secretary	Renee Lehen	2 year term
Director	Terry Aitken	1 year remaining
Director	Donna Weitzel	1 year remaining
Director	Meg Westley	1 year remaining
Director	Ted Derry	1 year term
Director	Jane Eligh-Feryn	2 year term
Director	Trevor Patkau	2 year term
Past President	Bernard Goward	

Carried.

MOTION to adjourn – M/S Ted Derry/Maria Antonio. Carried.

Minutes recorded by Tracy H., Board Secretary

President's Report

The year 2021 seemed to begin uneventfully during the Winter and Spring for Avon Trail as we waited for positive changes regarding the pandemic still affecting all of us. The continued lockdown and restrictions stalled the feeling of creativity. There were no organized hikes, no members' meeting and the Avon Trail board continued to meet via Zoom on a monthly basis during that period.

In the Spring, the board and maintenance applied to the Stratford Perth Community Foundation for a grant in order to purchase needed grass cutting equipment. Avon Trail was awarded \$1000.00. Grant support came from Annie and Isabelle Chesterfield fund, Donald McTavish Conservation Fund and Stratford Perth Community Fund. A Stihl brushcutter with safety harness and helmet was purchased to help in the work of keeping the trail groomed.

With large numbers of individual hikers still walking our trail and with the concern for landowners uneasy about the lack of respect for their property, the board felt that educating the public about respect for private property was necessary while acknowledging that hiking promotes mental and physical health especially during the stress created by the pandemic. 39 trail etiquette signs were designed with the help of Sharon Zehr, our webmaster, and our trail captain Bruce Graham. These signs ask the hiker to not stray from the path, not to walk on crops and to refrain from dropping garbage. These signs also showed our many landowners that Avon Trail wished to provide our support to them and to hopefully decrease the threat of closure of any further sections, having had many during the previous year.

A number of hikers walked the trail from End to End and sent in their logs outlining their experiences. With travel outside the province discouraged, many found new discoveries close to home and hiking Avon Trail was a joyful experience for them.

The Stratford Side Trail will be receiving new signage on the Avon Trail side trail. This section will be marked with blue blazes. The project will be completed next year.

During the dry hot summer, the memorial tree in St. Marys was watered by a dedicated group of members to ensure its continued health. I thank these people for your dedication to ensure this tree thrives.

With the end of sales for the Avon Trail guide, there was increased need to ensure that our map of the trail was kept updated through Ondago. The board is mindful of options for having the trail map available for members and non members alike. A printed version may yet be available once the new route through Waterloo is established in future. Also option of having the maps on the website available with download for a fee is being discussed.

Many members of the current board are ending their 2-year term on the Avon Trail Board. The decrease in social interaction, largely due to the pandemic, made the work of recruitment more

difficult. However, through an appeal on the website, some members have stepped forward to volunteer for board positions and directors at large. I thank these people for this commitment and especially thank the nominating committee for their work in this process.

Without the support and dedication of the board during 2021, the year would have been more challenging for me. I am in awe of the talent displayed amongst the board members. It has been an honour working with all of you. To the outgoing board members, please accept my gratitude for your service as board members.

The next board for 2021/2022 will not only have many new faces but will also be influenced with new ideas and renewed vigour. I look forward to working with all of you.

Submitted by Jane Foster, President

Membership Report

Membership Report as of October 21, 2021

Total number of paid memberships **164**
(78 are Family Memberships -- Family memberships count as 2 people)

Total number of Members: **247**

Honourary Members:	Active	5
	Inactive	8
	Total	13

Note: 1. There was an increase of 16 memberships since October 31, 2020
2. Members who used the website to pay for membership – 150

Submitted by Julia Vryheid, Membership Secretary

Financial Report



Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for the Year ended Oct 31,2021				
TD Bank Balance forward Nov 1,2020				8994.71
Investment-TD Bank 14 Month GIC due Jun 25/22				4273.01
Investment-TD Bank 14 Month GIC due Jun 25/22				<u>5190.14</u>
				<u>\$18,457.86</u>
RECEIPTS				
DONATIONS (49)		5996.00		
MEMBERSHIPS (170)		5050.00		
TRAIL GUIDES (244)		4184.00		
AVON TRAIL BADGES (58)		537.00		
TD INVEST. EARNINGS (INTEREST RE-INVESTED)		30.79		
TOTAL INCOME				<u>\$ 15,797.79</u>
EXPENDITURES				
P.O. BOX RENTAL		195.49		
INSURANCE		775.00		
STATIONERY, STAMPS		856.31		
AFFILIATION FEES		269.00		
TRAIL MAINTENANCE & SIGNAGE		3155.24		
PROJECT & TRAIL DEVELOPMENT, SHED		2436.95		
EQUIPMENT		1021.60		
NEWSLETTER, XMAS CARD-LANDOWNERS		124.75		
PROMOTIONS & OUTREACH		1673.53		
WEBSITE & COMPUTER PROGRAM		2321.02		
BANK FEES, PAYPAL		399.47		
TOTAL EXPENSES				<u>\$ 13,228.36</u>
				<u>\$21,027.29</u>
BALANCE OCTOBER 31,2021				\$ 11,533.35
INVEST. GIC-TD BANK				<u>\$ 9,493.94</u>
				<u>\$ 21,027.29</u>
Prepared by: Maria Antonio				

Trail Map Coordinator Report

This year, the Board created the position of Trail Map Coordinator (TMC) whose role it will be to coordinate reroutes and other changes to the trail map. (There have been as many as seven reroutes in the space of just over a year). An amendment to the Constitution is on the Agenda of the 2021 Annual General Meeting to approve this new position.

The Role of the Trail Map Coordinator

The Trail Map Coordinator is essentially responsible for the Avon Trail map, its accuracy, usefulness and availability. There are two specific functions of the role. The first is to gather and format data and supply reroute information for posting on the Avon Trail website. In this, the TMC will work closely with the Landowner Relations Officer, the Trail Captain and the Cartographer. The second is to ensure information is submitted to Ondago for revising the app.

The current Trail Guide is now out of stock. Considering the enormous resources required to undertake a revision of the Trail Guide, the Board has decided to discontinue reprinting the Avon Trail Guide in its present format. Instead, the TMC will ensure up-to-date maps will be made available in PDF format for download from the Avon Trail website. However, this new format will no longer include the text description of the trail.

In addition, the TMC is responsible to ensure the Ondago app reflects all current reroutes and other changes. In addition to reroutes these might include kilometer references, Parking, hazards, Points of Interest, photos, etc. Together with the PDF maps posted to the website, this and the free Ondago download will provide the hiker with more than adequate guidance for navigating the trail.

Posting reroutes

Reroutes can take anywhere from two weeks to six or eight weeks from the time a route is closed to the posting of the reroute on the website and on Ondago. The landowner, the Landowner Relations Officer, Trail Captain, Cartographer and trail maintenance crew members are all involved in this process. ***Considering the hikers we serve and the reputation of the Avon Trail among the hiking community, posting reroutes as quickly as possible is a high priority.***

In the coming year, decisions will be needed about the format, process, content and cost involved in creating the PDF maps for the website.

Submitted by Bernard Goward, Trail Map Coordinator

Trail Report

Trail make-up at October 31, 2021

The Avon Trail, St Marys to Connestogo, is divided into of 32 Sections: 26 Main Trail (2020: 37) and 6 Side Trail (2020: 6). The Section reduction is due to Landowner change of heart partially offset by new sections created. Each Section should have a two Monitor team.

Monitors

At October 31, 2021, eight sections are without Monitors due to retirement, ill health or “drop out.” Four sections are monitored by a single person rather than the preferred compliment of two. During 2021 where a section was unmonitored, or the Monitor failed to report, the Trail Captain or an experienced volunteer covered that section

During the period ending October 31, 2021, Monitor reports were received for all sections: two in spring and one in autumn. Monitoring hours totaled 140 (2020: 274).

The Avon Trail needs additional volunteers to assist with Monitoring sections.

Maintenance

Maintenance has been done weekly throughout 2021 and has totaled 438 hours (2020: 530 hours). Work included repairing stiles, bridges and boardwalks; chainsaw work; tool repair; blazing; grass cutting; and removing hazards such as barbed wire or trip hazards. Work has been performed by the Maintenance crew, some once or twice during the year and others almost weekly.

A concerted effort to re-blaze the Avon Trail was commenced in 2019. Blazing poles and tuxedo blazes have been added to assist in navigation.

Construction

Building trail fixtures, such as bridges or boardwalks, and creating new trails is classified as Construction. During 2020 various Construction volunteers spent 182 hours (2020: 419). Major achievements were improvements to boardwalks and six trail re-routes.

Tools

The club owns trail maintenance tools, including axes and clippers, and grass cutting tools, such as lawnmowers. At year end the club owns 3 lawnmowers, 4 weedwhackers and 2 bearcats. All are operational. All are stored in the club’s shed in Stratford with the exception of one chop saw located in a nearby woodwork shop.

Summary

The Avon Trail is in very good shape at time of writing: safe and easy to follow.

The energetic and cheerful volunteers who stepped up to assist during 2021 are too many to list here but my thanks go to each and every one of them.

As discussed above, a serious shortage of volunteers to assist with Monitoring the trail. This will be a challenge to address in the 2021/2022 year.

Submitted by Bruce Graham, Trail Captain

Landowner Relations Report

Since November 2020, Avon Trail lost several sections of the trail between Camp Bimini and the Little Lakes (km. 34.1 to km. 50.9) largely for reasons beyond our control. The Ondago app for the sections lost were adjusted accordingly.

The Periwinkle Loop (from Km 36.5) off Line 20 and the Harmony Loop (from km. 40.4) off Road 111 at either end of a closed off section have been improved immensely.

Progress is being made towards creation of an angled paring space on Line 20 near Camp Bimini. This idea was instigated by landowner Augustine Walch early September 2021. He is providing the gravel surface. The Avon Trail Board has agreed to provide the approximate cost of \$1100.00 of 18 metres of culvert for the project.

We still await word from the city of Waterloo on the finalization of the alternate route through N-W Waterloo.

Submitted by Terry Aitken, Landowner Relations Officer

Hike and Events Report

As the pandemic continued, we had another year with few scheduled activities - as we waited out the third wave in the late winter and spring.

Last November and December, Terry Aitken led the Tuesday morning Rambles, with social distancing protocols in place, obeying provincial guidelines re. numbers, and with no carpooling. We did hold a weekend hike to Schneiders Bush in November and the Christmas Lights walk in December, and then went back into lockdown in January.

There were then no further organized hikes until July when the Tuesday Rambles started up again, following Public Health recommendations. These have been well attended ever since and most capably led, as ever, by Terry Aitken.

Very cautiously, this fall we started running weekend hikes again: two in each of September and October, and one in November, with limited numbers but enthusiastic turnout.

We held no social events this year except for an appreciation lunch for our hardworking maintenance crew in October.

We all missed the February Social!

Looking ahead, we very much hope 2022 will bring a further return to normal hiking and social activities.

Submitted by Meg Westley, Hike Scheduler

Marketing Report

2021, as the pandemic continues to dog us, we see no signs of interest from new and seasoned hikers languishing. Folks hiking the AvonTrail are our best advocates. Hats off to our diligent maintenance crew for providing a safe and memorable hiking experience!

WEBSITE this tool continues to be well used by members and visitors alike. Sharon Zehr of Zoom Marketing remains our capable webmaster. Club members keep the site news current. Hike schedules, reminders of upcoming hikes and photos add to this dynamic site. Tom Kimber is responsible for our newsletter, alerts for reroutes and hike changes. As last year, he is continuing to keep information current and interesting!

Brochures are still being well used and in particular the Stratford Side Trail map is popular with Stratford visitors. Stratford Tourism is very pleased to be able to offer this activity to visitors especially during this pandemic year 2021. In September we printed another 5K Stratford Side Trail maps. Widely distributed by Stratford Tourism, through libraries and friends of the library. More AvonTrail rack brochures will be needed this coming spring.

Socials There have been no socials as such. As a board we are feeling the need to gather for some fun, let's hope we are able to implement much missed and need social events for our membership.

No trade shows this year, as last year, due to the pandemic.

BADGES for the End to End were popular as many continue this as their personal challenge.

Ondago Trail App continues to be well used as indicated by map uploads. In light of this and the many reroutes that had to occur this year, and the associated costs we have decided to not print guide maps this year. This is disappointing but the board felt it was prudent at this time.

Social Media members posting on Facebook and Instagram continue to be an asset as we maintain distance but don't lose touch. Thank you to all of you who so faithfully share your hiking tales through words and photos.

We are also listed on the phone under 211, an information line that can be very helpful for newcomers. This is maintained by the United Way.

Projects and Publicity were at a minimum this year. As mentioned above social media and our website are excellent for spreading the word and it would seem the word is out. The AvonTrail is a great, well maintained hiking trail.

It has been a quiet year socially but always busy with trail work. We still have a terrific membership of like-minded individuals with new editions and increased interest in hiking. If you are interested in being part of maintaining this trail, in anyway, please never hesitate to contact us and ask questions about how you can help.
Let's all get outside and Take a Hike!

It has been my pleasure to work with each of you in 2021. Sincere thanks for this opportunity.

submitted by Carol Miller, VP Avon Trail

Avon Trail Store Report

Total Sales 2021

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1. Trail Guides | 244 | (note: inventory now zero) |
| 2. Avon Trail Badges | 22 | |
| 3. End to end Badges | 49 | |

Submitted by Gloria Hinz, Store Manager

Newsletter Report

The Avon Trail Tales is an open Newsletter presenting stories related to the Avon Trail involving social events, rambles, hikes on the Avon Trail and elsewhere. Any member is welcome to contribute their story for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Four newsletter editions, all electronic, were published in 2021.

- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 1 February
- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 2 May
- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 3, September
- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 4, November

The stories reside on the Avon Trail website. When necessary, time-sensitive news stories are pushed out to our readership through email alerts using the website. If you have any hiking stories you would like to include or ideas of what might make a great story, send them along to newsletter@avontrail.ca

The Newsletters and alerts appear under **the NEWS tab** on the Avon Trail home page. You can return to any newsletter throughout the year by using the 'Search...' entry box on this same page. All newsletter editions will appear if you enter 'Avon Trail Tales Newsletter Edition' and hit the enter key.

The Avon Trail Home page was given a New Look, with sidebar Hikes Events, Highlights and Recent Articles. In the newsletters, 'Trail Sections along the Avon Trail' have been highlighted in stories, giving readers a picture of these sections, their lengths, parking spots and entry points, and the time needed to hike these sections.

The ongoing pandemic in 2021 forced the cancellation of hiking events and gatherings. When allowed, following Ontario provincial COVID protocols, organized hikes led by Avon Trail leaders commenced again later in the year, first with the Tuesday Morning Rambles and then with longer Saturday hikes.

Many thanks to all who contributed stories and photos throughout the year. Thank you, Donna, once again, for chronicling the hikes and events through images in the Avon Trail Photo Gallery.

Submitted by Tom Kimber, Editor

BUDGET 2021-2022
For the Year ending Oct 31, 2022

	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22
	Actual	Budget	Actual
REVENUES			
Project Grants	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Memberships	5,050.00	4,000.00	
Trail Guides	4,184.00	1,300.00	
AT badges	537.00	350.00	
Fundraisers		-	
General Donations	4,996.00	5,000.00	
Total Revenues	15,767.00	11,650.00	
EXPENSES			
Trail development& Conservation	414.69	1,125.00	
Shed 2021/Culvert 2021	2,022.26	1,100.00	
Equipment & Repair of Eqp.	1,021.60	1,000.00	
Trail Maintenance & Signage	3,155.24	1,800.00	
Miscellaneous		60.00	
Room rentals-members meetings		-	
Guest honoraria & expenses		500.00	
Printing guides and maps,sleeves		-	
Training		-	
Newsletters,xmas card-landowners	124.75	100.00	
Affiliation fees	269.00	270.00	
Promotions,events registration	1,673.53	2,000.00	
Fundraising			
Insurance	775.00	800.00	
Office supplies,stamps,faxes	856.31	300.00	
Post Office Box Rental	195.49	195.00	
Website& Development	2,321.02	2,000.00	
Bank Fees	399.47	400.00	
Total Expenses	13,228.36	11,650.00	
SURPLUS(DEFICIT)	2,538.64	0.00	0.00

Avon Trail Board 2020-2021

President: Jane Foster

Past President: Bernard Goward

Vice President: Carol Miller

Secretary: Renee Lehnen

Treasurer: Maria Antonio

Directors: Terry Aitken (Landowner Relations)

Ted Derry (Trail Maintenance/ Construction)

Donna Weitzel (Web Photo Gallery)

Meg Westley (Hike Scheduler)

Trevor Paetkau

Jane Eligh-Feryn