



AvonTrail.ca



ANNUAL REPORT – 22 November 2022

A) Avon Trail - Annual General Meeting Minutes - 2021

Date and Time: 23 November 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans Centre,
151 Lorne Avenue East, Unit 261,
Stratford, Ontario

Present: 50 people, all fully vaccinated and registered per public health regulations

1. Welcome: Opening remarks by Jane Foster, Avon Trail (AT) President.

2. Motion to adopt agenda: Ken Nicholson/Ted Derry, carried.

3. Speaker: Bruce Graham presented a photo show of his walking trip in Prince Edward Island in September 2021. On behalf of the AT, Ted Derry presented Bruce Graham with a gift of wine in a handmade presentation box.

4. Refreshment Break and Social Time

5. Review of Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020: Presented by Jane Foster.
Motion to accept minutes: Tracy H./George Keirstead, carried.

6. Review of 2021 Business:

A) President's Report delivered by Jane Foster. Details included in Annual Report.

B) Financial Report compiled by Maria Antonio, delivered by Justin Innes, included in Annual Report. Justin noted that AT is in a sound financial position and has a balanced budget. **Motion to accept Financial Report: Justin Innes/Donna Weitzel, carried.**

C) Membership Report delivered by Julia Vryheid. Julia noted that membership has increased from 2020. Website glitches are being solved. Details included in Annual Report.

D) Trail Map Coordinator's Report delivered by Bernard Goward. Bernard outlined the process AT follows in keeping maps current with Ondago app and on updates on the website. Noted trail has had 7 reroutes over 13 months. Highlighted new hard copy maps for Stratford Side Trail; trail to be marked with blue blazes. Details included in Annual Report.

E) Trail Maintenance Report delivered by Bruce Graham. Noted that trail is in good shape due to many volunteers who work on it. Details of maintenance activities in Annual Report.

F) Landowner Relations Report delivered by Terry Aitken. Noted also that Forest Motel lands may not be sold and there is possibility of 2.3km floating boardwalk loop. Noted that Ontario Hydro has removed 2 maples on Line 20 in preparation for construction of new culvert and parking. Work on same anticipated for 2022. Details in Annual Report.

G) Hikes and Events Report delivered by Meg Westley, included in Annual Report.

H) Marketing and Publications Report delivered by Carol Miller, included in Annual Report.

I) Store Report delivered by store manager Gloria Hinz, included in Annual Report.

J) Newsletter Report delivered by editor Tom Kimber, included in Annual Report.

K) Budget for 2021/2022 presented by Justin Innes, included in Annual Report. **Motion to approve 2021/2022 budget: Justin Innes/Terry Aitken, carried.**

7. Constitutional Amendment: Proposed amendment adding 3 positions to Board to align with current practice outlined by Jane Foster. Details of positions and their respective responsibilities posted on AT website more than 30 days prior to AGM with hard copy and projected document available for review. See Appendix A. **Motion to add positions of Trail Coordinator, Landowner Relations Officer, and Membership Secretary to Board: Bernard Goward/Ken Nicholson, carried.**

8. Retiring and New Personnel and Board Members:

A) Commendation and Recognition Awards: On behalf of AT, Ted Derry and Jane Foster presented Terry Aitken with a plaque. Terry received a standing ovation for his dedicated service to AT. Jane Foster expressed gratitude and presented awards on behalf of ATA to retiring board member and managers, Meg Westley, Julia Vryheid, and Gloria Hinz.

B) Organizational Changes 2021/2022:

- Jane Foster introduced Store Manager, Cindy Kimber (replacing Gloria Hinz) and Membership Secretary, Noreen Ollivier (replacing Julia Vryheid) in 2-year terms.
- Jane Foster introduced Treasurer, Justin Innes (replacing Maria Antonio) in 2-year term and Landowner Relations Officer, Ross Campbell (replacing Terry Aitken) in 1-year term.
- Meg Westley (Hike and Event Coordinator), Terry Aitken (Landowner Relations) and Maria Antonio (Treasurer) are retiring.
- Trevor Paetkau (Director at Large) and Renee Lehnen (Secretary) will complete the second year of 2-year terms.
- Ted Derry (Maintenance and Construction), Jane Foster (President), Carol Miller (Vice President/Marketing), Donna Weitzel (Photo Gallery), Bernard Goward (Past President) will remain on the Board at the present time.
- New Board members needed. See next item.

9. Introduction of Candidates for 2021/2022 Board of Directors: Jane Foster introduced candidates for Directors at Large: Paul Abell, Melissa Winkler, David Parratt, Martha (Smith) Manning and Ross Campbell (Landowner Relations) and Justin Innes (Treasurer)

10. Election of Directors: Motion to elect Paul Abell, Melissa Winkler, David Parratt, Martha (Smith) Manning as Directors at Large to the AT 2021/2022 Board of Directors for 2-year term, Justin Innes as Treasurer for a 2-year term, and Ross Campbell as Landowner Relations Officer for a 1-year term: Bernard Goward/Ted Derry, carried.

11. Closing Remarks: Jane Foster thanked membership for ongoing support of the trail, Bernard Goward suggested AT arrange an end-to-end event in 2022 as they are traditionally held every 5 years, and Bruce Graham thanked Cindy Kimber for helping keep statistics on volunteer hours.

See Appendix B for the roster of 2021/2022 Board Members.

12. Motion to Close: Meg Westley/Terry Aitken, carried.

Minutes recorded by Renee Lehnen, Secretary

B) President's Report

As the end of 2022 draws ever near, my thoughts turn to the achievements of our trail and the challenges we all have experienced with the pandemic ever in the background of our day to day lives.

When I think of the restrictions endured in 2021, I am thankful that this year we have been able to begin a more normal approach in the activities on the trail as hikers and maintenance support keeping in mind the practice of self-protection. We basically adapted to the changes around us.

Avon Trail continued to be discovered by hikers who were thrilled to experience the country views with differing land elevations, fields in various stages of plant growth, mature woodlots, climbing over stiles, seeing animals wild and domestic, multiple bird species and crossing small wood bridges made by our dedicated maintenance crews. Their testimonies to what they saw and heard were often seen in their logs sent in to Avon Trail. I had the pleasure of reading them, learning where we, as a hiking organization, excelled and what areas of the trail we could improve on.

We were relieved and pleased this year to not be requested to close down any section of the trail by concerned landowners as was the case in previous two years of the pandemic crisis. The trail seemed to return to a more normal pattern of respectful use by hikers. It is hoped that in time, we may once more inquire from current landowners of areas recently denied to us and pursue reducing the amount of road walking(particularly between Wildwood Conservation area and Stratford).

In June, a group of 9 participated in a one day Basic First aid course held at Avondale United Church, Stratford. Among the 9 were 5 Hike Leaders, one from Avon Trail Maintenance and 3 other Avon Trail members. Basic First Aid knowledge is encouraged by Hike Ontario when conducting/leading sanctioned Hikes for insurance purposes. Avon Trail is one of many hiking organizations within Hike Ontario and obtains insurance through Hike Ontario for our events

and protection of maintenance participants of the trail. The course was very informative and supportive of need to care for our volunteers and hikers within our organization.

As Summer approached Avon Trail began to have more leader lead hikes once again on weekends. These hikes attracted many members and non-members alike. These were followed by 2 larger hike events in August and October with successful outcomes.

In June, work was started by South Perth Municipal office on creation of an angled parking area on Line 20 off the Periwinkle Loop entry. Although the loop is not part of the main trail, the board felt that due to the narrow road of Line 20, the safety of parked cars and hikers was essential. Perth South provided the labour to create the parking and Avon Trail bought culvert material to be installed. The landowner provided gravel for top of parking area. The collaborative work created 5 angled parking on the site.

After several months of talks with City of Waterloo, the Avon Trail route through Northwest Waterloo has successfully been altered from Conservation Drive. A route through the Columbia Forest south of Conservation Drive was established and signage now in place. Route through Stamm Woodlot north of that forest was secured with signage installed as well. We are thankful that this reroute has now been mapped and useable for hikers.

Maps for the Avon Trail are now in digital form and can be downloaded through the website. We thank the Trail Map Committee for their commitment to this lengthy project.

As my tenure as President of Avon Trail draws to a close, I wish to thank the current board for their support and encouragement in 2022 and to those whom I have worked with on previous Boards. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with our dedicated team of volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Foster, Avon Trail President

D) Membership Report to 13 November 2022

Total number of members: 182

Total number of paid memberships: 126

70 Adult memberships

6 renewed by cheque

64 renewed on line

56 Family memberships (count as 2 people)

4 renewed by cheque

52 renewed on line

Total Honorary members 13. No change from Oct 31, 2021

Active 5

Inactive 8

Notes:

There has been a decrease of 37 memberships since October 31, 2021.

The Webmaster is working diligently to solve the continuing problems experienced with the on-line purchase of memberships and renewals. Oftentimes the renewal date does not get updated correctly through the system.

Submitted by: Noreen Ollivier, Membership Secretary

E) Trail Map Coordinator Report

The Avon Trail Board elected not to continue to produce the Avon Trail Guide in its current format following Edition 8.0. The cost in time and expense was great and the printed maps quickly became obsolete due to reroutes. The board endorsed continued use of the ONDAGO app as our interactive map format. The board also wanted to continue to make printable maps available to be purchased from the Avon Trail website. The Avon Trail Map Committee was created to explore a new method to create these maps. The committee was chaired by Bernard Goward. Members included Tom Kimber, Jamie Hember and David Parratt. The committee met several times in the spring of 2022 with the following results.

1. Elected to use Google MyMaps as the format for the new printable maps. GMM is a user friendly tool that allows our maps to be created in-house. Reroutes can quickly be incorporated into updated maps.
2. We produced a series of 11 maps that cover the entire AT and all of its side trails. The maps are available in both Satellite and Terrain View. Text is provided with the maps showing KM references, parking locations, trail cautions and other useful information.
3. The printable PDF maps were made available to the hiking public in July 2022 as Avon Trail Guide Edition 9.1. The maps can be purchased on the AT website at a cost of \$10 (\$5 for members). Purchasers are notified by email when updates are available for download. We are already at Edition 9.3.
4. In moving to our new map format, reroutes to Edition 7.5 were removed from the AT website in September and reroutes to Edition 8.0 will be removed in December.

I feel the Avon Trail has a set of new printable maps we can all be proud of. Many people have contributed to their creation. They include, Bernard Goward, Tom Kimber, Jamie Hember, Sharon Zehr, Donna Weitzel, Brenda Tarr and Jane Foster. A big thank you to all of you. I also want to acknowledge the assistance of Clive Clark in posting updates to ONDAGO.

MAP HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2022

1. Forest Rd. Side Trails - both sides of Forest Rd. (previous route of main AT)
2. Expanded Periwinkle Side Trail
3. Returned main AT across Glasgow St Bridge

4. Opening of the long-awaited Waterloo Reroute. This 11.6 km section gets the AT off some busy roads and on to a path through the Columbia Forest.

5. Total length of Avon Trail increased to 129.7 km

Submitted by David Parratt, Trail Map Coordinator

F) Maintenance Report

Trail make up at October 31, 2022

The Avon Trail, St Marys to Conestogo measures 127.9 km, and is divided into of 42 Sections: 35 Main Trail (2021: 32) and 7 Side Trail (2021: 6). The Section increase is due to the additional sections created in Waterloo. Each Section should have a two Monitor team.

Monitors

At October 31, 2022, six sections are without Monitors due to new sections created or Monitors who appear to have “dropped out.” Four sections are monitored by a single person rather than the preferred compliment of two. During 2022 where a section was unmonitored, or the Monitor failed to report, the Trail Captain or an experienced volunteer covered the section

During the period ending October 31, 2022 Monitor reports were received for most sections: one in spring and one in autumn. Monitoring hours totaled 177 (2021: 140).

The Avon Trail needs additional volunteers to assist with Monitoring sections, particularly in the Kitchener/Waterloo end of the trail.

Maintenance

Maintenance has been done throughout 2022 and has totaled 382 hours (2020: 438 hours). Work included repairing stiles, bridges and boardwalks; chainsaw work; tool repair; blazing; grass cutting; and removing trip hazards. Work was performed by the Maintenance crew almost weekly. Persons interested in helping with Maintenance are welcome to join; even twice a year is helpful. Contact info@avontrail.ca.

Timely grass cutting continues to be a challenge during the summer.

Construction

Building trail fixtures, such as bridges or boardwalks, and creating new trails is classified as Construction. During 2022 various Construction volunteers spent 203 hours (2021: 182). Major achievements were improvements to boardwalks and five “get off the field” 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 brushcutters (weed whackers) and 2 bearcats. All are operational and

professionally serviced. 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 2022 are too many to list here but my thanks go to each and every one of them.

As discussed above, a shortage of volunteers to assist with Monitoring the trail. This will hopefully be addressed in the 2022/2023 year.

Submitted by Bruce Graham, Trail Captain

G) Landowner Relations Report

We clarified use of the trail on the former Forest Motel property and reopened the trail on the Trevor Schlotzhauer property on the other side of Forest road. In and out on both trails makes an enjoyable hike.

On the trail between road 111 and 112 a section of trail was moved off a field into Dan Jeffrey's bush.

On the trail south of the line26 a short section was moved off a field into another bush belonging to Dan Jeffrey.

A parking lot was installed near the entrance to the Perrywinkle Loop to facilitate the movement of large farm machinery in the area.

On the Waterloo end the trail through Columbia Forest is now blazed and ready for use. The trail through Stamm Woodlot is now open year-round.

Thanks to everyone who has stayed on the trail kept the trail clean and demonstrated appreciation for our landowners.

Thanks to Terry Aitken for his continued interest in Landowner relations.

Thanks to Bruce for his leadership in getting trails off fields and into treed areas

Respectfully submitted by Ross Campbell, Landowner Relations

H) Hikes and Events Report

HIKES for 2022:

Tuesday Rambles: After Pandemic lockdown ended after January 2022, Tuesday Rambles resumed. Tuesday Rambles are conducted year-round (except in case of inclement weather). Sections of Avon Trail are hiked in and out. Average Distance: usually 4 to 7 km. Carpooling to selected sites – very popular with attendance averaging 20 to 25 people in warmer weather. Hike Leaders: Terry Aitken, Jane Foster, Renee Lehnen, Bruce Graham, and Tracy Halliwell. Note: Terry retired from Hike leading in October 2022.

Weekend Hikes:

Participants ranged from 6 to 9 hikers (low compared to pre-pandemic years)

1. June 18th 2022 –Nith River Trail -- Exploring the banks of the Nith River on the Avon Trail – Distance: 9.3 km – Hike Leader: Bruce Graham
2. June 25th, 2022—G2G Trail (Millbank West)—Distance: 12 km. – Hike Leader: Bruce Graham
3. July 9th,2022--Hickson Trail – rail trail between Hickson and Woodstock – Distance: 14 km—Hike Leader: Bruce Graham
4. July 23rd, 2022 – G2G (Millbank East) – Distance: 17 km. --Hike Leader: Bruce Graham
5. July 30th,2022—Backyard Honey Company Hike (Berletts Road) –Tour and Beekeeping Overview –5km hike followed on Avon Trail – Participants: 5 Hikers --Hike Leader: Jane Foster
6. August 6th, 2022 – Schneiders Bush to Columbia Forest on Avon Trail—Distance: 15 km – Hike Leader: Bruce Graham
7. August 20th, 2022 – Black Hole Road to Benmiller – Maitland Trail – Distance: 12 km – Hike Leader: Tracy Halliwell
8. August 27th,2022 -- River Valley Golf Course on Thames river (Thames Valley Trail Association) to St. Marys (Avon Trail) – Distance: 10 km – Hike Leader: Tracy Halliwell
9. October 1, 2022 – Fall Colour Hike – Morrison Dam/ McNaughton Conservation area on Ausable River to Exeter(loop hike) – BBQ followed in Grand Bend – members hike only – Participants: 13 hikers --Hike Leader: Maria Antonio

EVENTS for 2022:

1. March 9th, 2022 – Coffee House Talks at Wilmot Recreation Centre, Baden – Getting into Nature, the trails—Speaker: Melissa Winkler (Avon Trail Board member) – supported/ added talk by Avon Trail Maintenance personnel Cindy Kimber and Ted Derry) about trail blazing.
2. September 17th, 2022— Fall Fest at Stratford Perth Museum trail – in support of Stratford Perth Tree Trust and environmentalist groups –venue provided opportunity to engage with outdoor enthusiasts – Avon Trail booth attended by members of Avon Trail Board

Special Hike Events:

3. September 3rd, 4th, 5th, 2022 – The Queens Platinum Jubilee Hike in honour of Queen Elizabeth’s 70 years on the Throne—Distance: 70 km. within 3 days – 24 enthusiastic hikers, some as far as Markham –Special thanks to Bruce, Tracy, Tom, Cindy and Clive for planning and execution of the hike plus support and attention to providing a nutrition break middle of each hike day, and to volunteer drivers Ted, Carol, Donna, Jane, & Ross. Badges awarded to all participants. Hike Leader: Tracy Halliwell
4. October 22, 2022 – 5th Annual Wildwood Challenge – Distance: 22 km loop hike around Wildwood Lake (Upper Thames Conservation Authority) line 9, South Perth. Organizers: Tracy and Bruce. – Attended by record number of 63 participants locally and distant – Appreciation to Julia, Gloria, Cindy & Clive for nutrition breaks, Phil & Carol for help at registration kiosk, volunteer drivers Ted and Bruce, and volunteer baking contributors Jamie, Christine, Gloria, Cindy, Clive & Jane, as well as to our two sweeps Rose & Tracy. All helped in the success of this event. Badges awarded to all participants.

Respectfully Submitted by Hike Leaders Bruce Graham, Tracy Halliwell, Jane Foster, Maria Antonio, Renee Lehnen, and Carol Miller.

I) Marketing/Public Relations Report

- Carol Miller stepped down as Vice-President, and hence Marketing, in early Summer 2022. All relevant materials/contacts/information were passed on to Martha as a holding reservoir
- Martha stepped in as a co-administrator for the AT Facebook group
- There hasn't been a lot of activity on the marketing aspect of the AT in 2022: - Updating the AT information on the United Way listing
- Helping to promote the Wildwood Challenge through a FB "event"
- Plans to coordinate a social media/marketing subcommittee
- Plans to start a FB business page
- Coordinated AT attendance at the Tree Trust's "Fall Fest"
- Anna Kuepfer Wright was approached regarding her offer to help with social media and has declined to help presently due to competing priorities. She said to reach out again in the new year to see how things are going by then, it is in my calendar to do!
- Used FB "Events" feature to create an event for the Wildwood Challenge. I believe this worked well

Submitted by Martha Manning, AT Board Member, Marketing

J) Store Report

Avon Trail Store Report
 Total Sales 2022
 November 1, 2021 – October 25, 2022

Item	Total Sales	Total Revenue	Stock Remaining
Trail Guide	39	281.00	
Avon Trail Badges	10	78.00	14
End-to-End Badge	17	130.00	15
Queen's Platinum Jubilee Hike	26	2,210.00	
5 th Annual Wildwood Challenge	63	2,205.00	
Shipping		28.00	
Total	150	\$ 4,932.00	

Recommendations:

Redesign and reorder of the Avon Trail Badge

Reorder of the End – to – End Badges

Redesign of the website for hiking events so that people have to send in their Waiver form before payment – but as one integrated system. (See G 2 G Camino event as an example)

That hiking logs have to be submitted before purchase of end-to-end badge as one integrated system. Having hiking logs submitted to the store manager would facilitate order processing greatly!

Respectfully Submitted,
 Cindy Kimber, Store Manager

K) Newsletter Report

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

Three newsletter editions, all electronic, have been published thus far in 2021.

- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 1 March
- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 2 May
- Avon Trail Tales Newsletter, Edition 3 October

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 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 using the 'Search...' entry box on this page. All newsletter editions will appear if you enter 'Avon Trail Tales Newsletter Edition' and hit the enter key.

This year the trend was to release more News Alerts than Newsletters.

Letters to the Editor are welcome at anytime and added to a Newsletter. Stories too with photos from any writer who wants to contribute.

Regards.

Submitted by Tom Kimber, Newsletter Editor

L) Budget 2022/2023

AVON TRAIL, 2022-2023
Budget for the Year ended Oct 31,2023

	2021-22	2022-23	2022-23
	Actual	Budget	Actual
REVENUES			
Memberships	5,501.00	5,000.00	
Trail Guides	257.00	500.00	
AT badges	108.00	150.00	
Fundraisers	4,654.00	4,500.00	
Interest	303.84	350.00	
General Donations	2,608.75	2,500.00	
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Total Revenues	13,432.59	13,000.00	-

EXPENSES

Shed 2021/Culvert 2022	1,247.98		
Trail Maintenance & Signage	2,299.41	3,276.60	
Room rentals-members meetings	802.30	1,000.00	
Guest honoraria & expenses	160.65	300.00	
Training	710.00	1,000.00	
Misc		673.40	
Affiliation fees	327.00	325.00	
Fundraising	2,852.11	3,000.00	
Insurance	989.00	1,000.00	
Office supplies, stamps, faxes	328.23	400.00	
Post Office Box Rental	303.74	325.00	
Website & Development	912.51	1,200.00	
Bank Fees	368.21	500.00	
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Total Expenses	11,301.14	13,000.00	-
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SURPLUS(DEFICIT)	2,131.45	-	-
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M) Avon Trail Board 2021/2022*Executive:*

President: Jane Foster

Past President: Bernard Goward

Vice President: Carol Miller

Recording Secretary: Renee Lehnen

Treasurer: Justin Innes

Directors:

Trevor Paetkau

Martha Manning, Marketing/Public Relations

Dave Parratt, Trail Map Coordinator

Melissa Winkler

Ross Campbell, Landowner Relations

Donna Weitzel, Web Photo Gallery

Ted Derry, Trail Maintenance/Construction

Paul Abell