

### CHAPTER FIVE LOCAL CHAPTERS DEVELOPED THE TRAIL By Engaging Landowners and Participating in Community Events

After the Founding Meeting in May 1992 the CORT Board had to decide how to actually develop the trail. It would not happen overnight, but would come into being "mile by mile" as potential routes were identified. The Bruce Trail was a model, but each of their clubs was responsible for, typically, some 60 km of trail and was to an extent self-governing. Whilst the folk who joined CORT embraced the wider vision, in practical terms they were focussed on how the trail would pass through their community. The logical conclusion was to form Chapters each corresponding to the Municipality which the trail would cross. Chapter committees would be working groups with the remit to promote the association locally, scout out potential routes, negotiate with landowners, designate and maintain their section of trail. Each Chapter Chair would be their representative on the Board.

It was never envisaged that ORTA would own land; this was not provided for in the Letters Patent or any updating of the Constitution. Rather existing trails would be upgraded as necessary for incorporation into a moraine-wide hiking trail system; some new lengths of trail would be needed to link them together. This necessitated negotiations and agreements with public and private landowners. Public lands offer advantages in terms of securing the trail route in perpetuity. But to avoid walking along roads links along private lands such as the margins of fields are always an attractive option. Thus at the end of 2009 there were some 50 Landowners who are acknowledged in Appendix 5.1.

We must acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the Trail Directors who have coordinated trail developments; ensured agreements are in place with the Landowners; and set and monitored trail maintenance standards:

Keith Stafford	1997 - 2000
Tony Bulson	2000
Ray Matsalla	2001 - 2003
Peter Schaefer	2003 - 2008
Garry Niece	2008 - taking a rest?



There have been so many ORTA Members and community personnel involved in the development of the trail that we cannot name them all. So what follows is a summary of each chapter's story highlighting the principal characters and events. Each story is surprisingly unique.

From time to time re-routing is necessitated by changes in land ownership or as opportunities arise to use more attractive or more secure routes.

Thus this chapter includes significant local developments throughout the 25 years 1992 - 2017. There is a sense in which the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail will never be finished; maintenance by local volunteers is ongoing.



From a series of cartoons in a Community Newspaper.

In many ways this is an exciting chapter; second only to Chapter One. In what order should the chapters' stories be compiled? In various presentations the trail has been reviewed from west to east, Map 0 to Map 12. Since this is an historical account it seemed appropriate to present them in the order of date of formation:

- Uxbridge
- King
- Scugog
- Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Caledon
- Aurora
- Clarington
- Hope-Hamilton
- Richmond Hill
- Humber Headwaters

## UXBRIDGE CHAPTER Township of Uxbridge, Durham Regional Municipality York-Durham Line, Map 5 to Map 6, Lake Ridge Road

On January 11<sup>th</sup> 1993 twenty-one supporters attended a meeting which established **Uxbridge Chapter**, headed at first by Teresa Porter. So, for the record it became the association's first chapter, but only by two days. Teresa was also the CORT Treasurer and soon after Tom Rance became the Chapter Chair.

Durham Region's Official Plan adopted by the Regional Council in June 1991 had envisioned a "continuous system of open space that shall weave through the natural and man-made environment . . . opportunities for a variety of recreational activities . . . and protect the Oak Ridges Moraine." "Intrusion of the expanding urban area into this Major Open Space System . . . would not be permitted." "Promote the creation of linked trails throughout the system for public use."

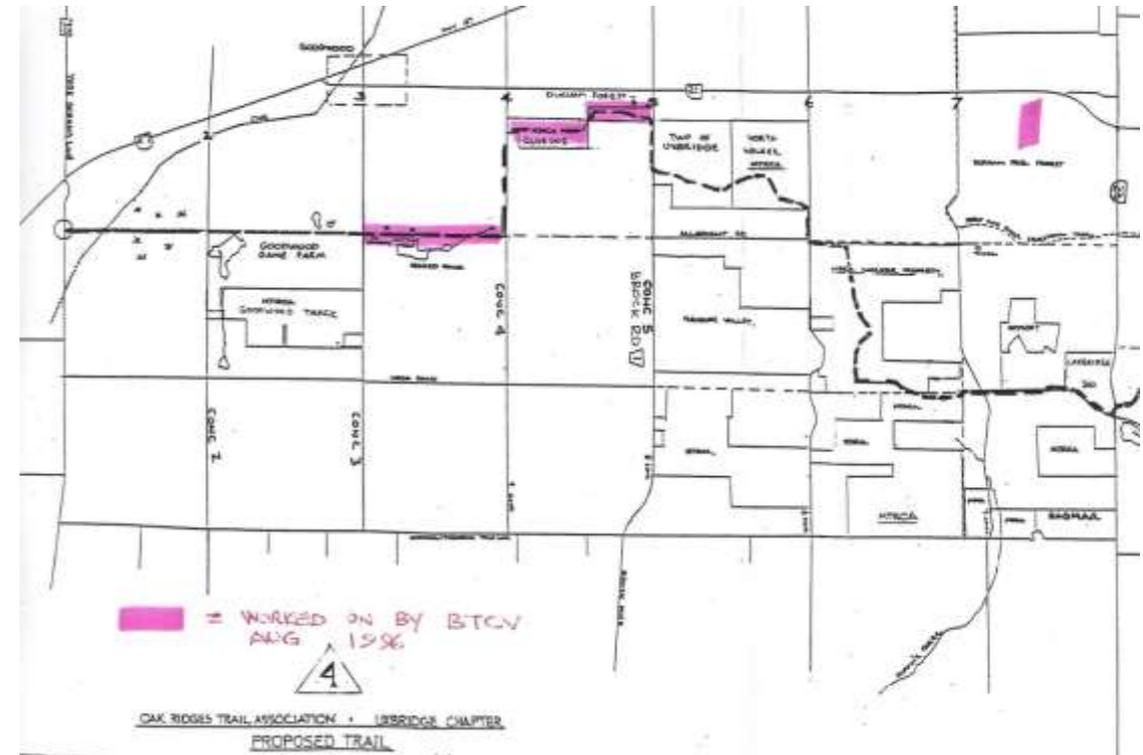
Thus a trail system was a key element of this plan which encompassed Durham Forest and several MTRCA properties. In fact, Tom Rance admitted at the 1994 ORTA AGM that the amount of public land made establishing trail routing much easier than in other townships. David Armour and Frank Van Hezewijk plotted a potential route which Tom walked with MTRCA representatives on May 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

The cooperation of the Town of Uxbridge and MTRCA was forthcoming, but CORT would have to fund developments such as signage and boardwalks. However sorting out the insurance and other conditions for an agreement with MTRCA for a trail corridor through the Walker property was a protracted process. ORTA's Funding plans were not developed; should chapters be responsible for their own financing? Tom took the initiative to seek grants for projects within Uxbridge.

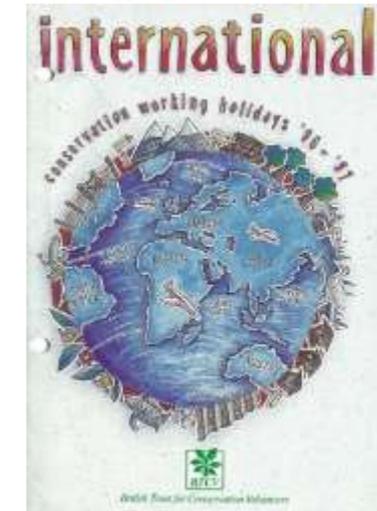
A 26 km section was opened in the fall of 1995. The highlight of August 1996 was the assistance provided by a 10 member team from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. To enjoy this working holiday they had to pay their own way!

*Opposite a section of Uxbridge Chapter's working map, issue 4, August 1966 and the BTCV's brochure which offered 68 opportunities between May and November 1996.*

<sup>1</sup> SGB: this brings to mind how little composite mapping was published 25 years ago.



**UXBRIDGE, ONTARIO 910**  
 6-17 August 1996  
**Trail work**  
 We will be working with the Uxbridge Chapter of the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA). Uxbridge is situated on a moraine ridge (formed by glacial deposits), which runs east to west through southern Ontario. The Oak Ridge Trail is still under construction and there are several sections requiring a variety of work. This may include clearing, consolidation of embankments, gravel placement, construction and laying of boardwalks, building pedestrian bridges over streams, and making stiles. You will be staying in an Environmental Education Centre with bunk type beds. ORTA will arrange some leisure activities such as a trip into Toronto or to Lake Simcoe. There will also be barbecues at local residences.  
**Meeting Point:** Toronto  
**Cost: £250**





Above: the BCTV Shuttle



A collection of photographs shows the team not only worked hard but played hard with their hosts. Despite receiving much attention from mosquitos they went on to work on the Voyageur Trail.

Grants totalling \$12,000 were received during 1996-7. And 75 tons of gravel was donated by the Aggregate Producers Association in November 1997.

Ralph Shier worked long after dark to get all the gravel placed without extending the rental of the Bobcat into the next day.

A route across Uxbridge was finalized in 1997, agreements were signed with MTRCA and MNR, and the trail blazed.

Having achieved so much, Tom Rance moved on to become ORTA President, handing over leadership of the chapter to Ralph Shier with Trail Captains Frank Van Hezewijk, Elizabeth Martins and David Armour committed to ensuring upkeep.

In 1999 some rerouting was reported by Colin Barnet, Chapter Chair 1998 – 2001, to avoid wet areas in the Secord property. This has proved to be an on-going issue over the years. The TRCA periodically closes sections for rejuvenation.



Along one rather moist section near the Secord Property beautiful Lady Slipper Orchids are found about one year in four.



Tom Rance returned to the responsibilities of Chapter Chair for two years. The Trans Canada Trail includes a short section coincident with the ORT through Durham Forest. TRCA approved and blazed loop trails in East and West Walker Woods in 2001; in 2002 ORTA established the Frank Shaw Trail in North Walker Woods. Guidebook Map 5 shows the many side trails in the area.



In 2003 Brian Millage became Chapter Chair; one of his first tasks was working with TRCA to eliminate unnecessary trails in this area. Mountain bikers and equestrians also use trails in Durham Forest and Walker Woods. Brian has been proactive to ensure good relationships between ORTA, the Durham Mountain Bikers Association (DMBA) and other users of the Conservation Areas and Regional Forests. The DMBA is responsibly participating in trail maintenance and has separately signed routes in some areas.

In 2003 the Town of Uxbridge, through the "Uxbridge Naturally" initiative commenced the creation of a network of urban and rural trails – the "Countryside Trails" - which connect with the Oak Ridges and Trans-Canada Trails. The town has rightly claimed the designation "Trail Capital of Canada." Exploration continues with objective of making connections with Rouge Park and a trail to Lake Ontario.

From the get-go ORTA's Uxbridge Chapter has been in the forefront of the association's development and we enjoy the many beautiful hiking opportunities; most recently the re-route through the Skyloft property to Lake Ridge Road at the eastern end; see Guidebook Map 6.

### KING CHAPTER Township of King, York Regional Municipality King-Caledon Townline, Map 1 to Map 2, Bathurst Street

On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1993 **King Chapter** was formed with Fiona Cowles as its leader – only two days after Uxbridge Chapter.

At the AGM on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Fiona presented a map showing the route being planned across King Township. She noted the section between Weston Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Concession has been barricaded and they would need to repair damage by ATVs. King Greenway Committee has been working with CORT on this, and the Toronto BTA Club had offered to assist. From Happy Valley it would continue east under Highway 400 along 16<sup>th</sup> Sideroad (passing Fiona’s house) to Jane Street.

Some great restorative work was done during the next twelve months. Eric Worsley became Chapter Chair and reported in 1994 that negotiations were underway with Mary Lake Monastery and Seneca College, King Campus for routes through their properties. They were trying to decide how to get up the steep bank on the east side of Dufferin Street to continue on 16<sup>th</sup> Sideroad towards Aurora.

*Below: March 27, 1995. Signing the Agreement with Seneca College. George Fry (Principal), Eric Worsley Stu Koch and Fiona Cowles*



Permission for the trail past Mary Lake Monastery was granted by a handshake.

**Hikers find injured man**

Hiking is not only good for your health, it sometimes can benefit others. That is what members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association found out last weekend.

Fourteen association members were hiking along a trail that follows the Moraine. Tom Atkins recalled that when the group was on a road allowance at the corner of the 16th Sideroad and Dufferin Street, they heard a strange sound.

Members quickly identified the sound as a call for help, and went to investigate. Mr. Atkins said they found a local farmer lying

beside his tractor, writhing in pain.

He apparently had dislocated his hip, Mr. Atkins said, and had been lying in the field for approximately an hour.

While some of the hikers went to his house to call an ambulance, others covered him with jackets to prevent his hyperthermia from worsening.

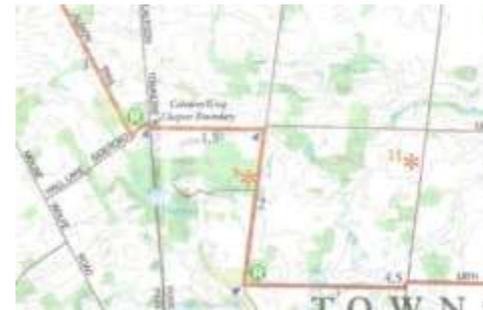
The man is now recovering in hospital.

Mr. Atkins said he and the other hikers are not heroes. "We just happened to be in the right place at the right time to help this guy out," he said.

On May 7, 1995 a 14 km section was opened with a hike by 53 people from 7<sup>th</sup>. Concession through Mary Lake and Seneca College properties to Bathurst Street. Eric quoted Winston Churchill, with regard to the King Section of the trail: "This is not the end, nor is it the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning."

The 1997 AGM was appropriately held in the Log Cabin on Seneca Campus. Tom Atkins reported the trail had been extended north on the Happy Valley allowance and then to the 8<sup>th</sup> Concession through some farmland.

In August 1997 an experienced team of six from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers augmented by a Canadian volunteer and assisted by six ORTA Members built 200 m of boardwalk across a swampy section of the unopened road allowance going west from 9\* below towards Hall Lake.



*From The King Weekly November 13, 1996*

King Chapter believed they had permission from town officials to route the trail along any unopened road allowance. There was considerable consternation in the Fall of 1997 when King Township Council moved to sell this road allowance – our boardwalk lumber and all – to the adjacent landowners.

It was rescinded on April 20, 1998 following over 50 letters to council objecting to such a sale of public land. But, in deference to the adjacent landowners concerns for privacy and newly planted forest the Council would not allow it to become part of the trail connection to Caledon which was therefore routed along 19<sup>th</sup> Sideroad.



In October 1999, 300 species of indigenous plants and bushes were planted at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Side-road and Weston Road adjacent to the Toronto Carrying Place plaque. They are now well established.

By the end of 1999 King Section, 35 km long, was nearing completion with two thirds 'off-road' largely thanks to Bruce Chambers' efforts with landowners. With the ORTA's highest proportion of its route across private land this remains a significant work load for chapter volunteers.

The Woodland Passage Trail – our first section designated for Disabled Access under UTAP – was opened in 2004, jointly sponsored by Seneca College.

Private landowners invited us to have a side trail across their properties to Pine Farms. This has provided a popular loop, with the delicious treats at the café, particularly at apple blossom and harvest seasons.



*Blossom Time at Pine Farm.*



Ed Millar spent over 50 days in 2004 working on the trails. In 2005 he succeeded Bruce Chambers as Chapter Chair. The Ed Millar Side Trail across Keele Street was opened on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at which time he was also honoured by the province for his volunteer efforts for King City Trails to which it provided a link.

*Ed waiting for the opening at the style access to the Ed Millar Side Trail.*

Four Trail Captains were certified under the Chainsaw Course offered by Seneca College.

With substantial lengths of trail across private land to maintain, Ed has engaged assistance from various quarters including the Ontario Stewardship Rangers – a group of high school students funded by MNR.



At the northern extremity of the Moraine the Koffler-Bales Side Trail providing public access through the University of Toronto's Jokers Hill Scientific Reserve to the Thornton Bales Conservation Area added further to the chapter's responsibilities.

In 2016 LSRCA replaced the infamous 99 Steps.



ORTA's Office was established in 2004 at the Gate House in the Seneca College King Campus. Since November 2015 it has been at All Saints Church in King City where Fiona Cowles and Ed Millar have been active members.

For several years Ed had been working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the TRCA to improve trail access in the magnificent Happy Valley Forest Area. The main trail was rerouted in 2015 across Love Mountain and to the south a side trail was opened in TRCA's Humber Source Woods. In addition there are a number of loops which may be used for organized hikes "by appointment." West of Concession 7 some changes are in process following further land transfers to the NCC.

At the 2014 AGM Mark Stabb, Ontario Program Director of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, described the conservancy’s plans for the Happy Valley properties now under their care. There have been negotiations over the preceding two years, headed up by King Chapter Chair Ed Millar, resulting in ORTA having increased access to trails in Happy Valley. A new formal agreement was signed.

**Appendix "A"**

Properties Approved for ORTA Trail Route and ORTA Guided Hikes

Part of Lots 4, 5 and 6, Concession 7, Township of Hamilton, Northumberland County (Hazel Bird Nature Reserve)

Part of West ½ of Lot 16, Concession 6, Township of King, York Region (Love Mountain Nature Reserve)

Properties Approved for ORTA Guided Hikes

Part of Lots 19 and 20, Concession 6, Township of King, being Part 1 of RPlan 65R23717 of King, together with an Easement over Part Lots 19 & 20, Con 6, King; and Part 4 of RPlan 65R23717(Goldie Feldman Property)

Part of East Half of Lot 19, Concession 7, Township of King, County of York, as in R556895 (Langtry Property)

Part of Lot 18, Concession 7, Township of King, Regional Municipality of York, as in Instr. No. B2262B, being the hole of PIN 03385-0040 (LT)- Mary Tasker Property

The Main Trail is approved for publication in The Guidebook and public access; this includes an attractive reroute around using the trail developed by David Love on his property.

There are adjacent properties now in the conservancy’s care – see picture opposite - which are sensitive and remain closed for necessary protection. But with appropriate notice ORTA is permitted access for official Guided Hikes on trails in these properties.

A GENERAL MAP OF NCC CONSERVATION LANDS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY FOREST; THE BATTILANA SPIZZIRRI PROPERTY (OUTLINED IN RED) HAS BEEN RENAMED "THE LANGTRY NATURE RESERVE"

**Property Location Map**



\* approximate scale

- Langtry Property Boundary
- Mary Tasker Property Boundary
- Creed Donation Property Boundary
- - - - - Easement 1 Boundary
- - - - - Easement 2 Boundary

**SCUGOG CHAPTER**  
**Township of Scugog, Durham Regional Municipality**  
**Lake Ridge Road, Map 6 to Map 7, Avery Road**



John M. Scott initiated Scugog Chapter with a hike on October 15, 1995.

By the next Spring he was able to report they had 35 Members; were in dialogue with landowners along their proposed route and had commenced blazing. So Scugog became the third chapter to get going. Their efforts led to the fourth map included in the First Edition of The Guidebook, November 1997. Appx. 8

Members took opportunities to distribute ORTA Brochures and got frequent write-ups in the *Scugog Citizen*. By 1998 local membership had risen to 66, mainly from Port Perry. On one occasion they had 82 people on a hike; John would have "preferred more manageable numbers."

In 2001 Peter Bramma succeeded John as Chapter Chair. The following year he reported the route was on roads (21 km) and road allowances (10 km). Being further to the east in agricultural county these are lightly travelled. Efforts continued to get the trail off-road, but this proved more difficult than elsewhere.

The chapter involved schools in a number of ways, including trail maintenance projects. A hike was led for 18 boys as part of their qualification for the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Medal. Another for about 80 Grade 9 students introduced them to how the moraine was formed; its use by European settlers and the status of the moraine today.



*A favourite lunch stop.*



*Ice Cream after a Wednesday hike.*

Garry Niece became Chapter Chair in 2004, but he accompanied and his wife Grace to Japan the following year and was succeeded by Elizabeth Stewart.

Under Elizabeth's leadership a 1.13 km of main trail and a side trail winding through the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's Purple Woods brought ORMT briefly into the Town of Pickering.

This location is one of the more spectacular Checkpoints for the Adventure Relay



*Looking south from Purple Woods Conservation Area.*



To comply with CLOCA's practices blazes were not painted on trees but on 4 ft. posts suitably installed. .

In 2003 the ORMF provided financial assistance to CLOCA to acquire the spectacular Rhamini and Easter Seals tracts – the latter now known as Crow's Pass. ORTA Volunteers rerouted the Main Trail through virgin territory in the Rahamani Tract in May 2006; 30 posts were hammered in and blazes installed.

Harold Sellers gave strong support to the chapter's efforts to get more of the trail off-road with a Side trail and rerouted Main Trail in Crow's Pass for an official opening in October 2008.

Retired Durham Region Police Officer Peter Brama was Chair of Scugog Chapter 2002-2004 and a popular, friendly, Hike Leader. He passed away on October 3, 2007 after a long battle with cancer. Many ORTA Members attended his funeral at All Saints Anglican Church, Whitby, where he and his wife Jacky were active members and contributed to a Memorial Bench on the main trail through the Rahmani Tract.



Garry Niece returned from Japan in the Fall of 2008 and became ORTA Trail Director. He was also Acting Scugog Chapter Chair 2009 - 2016.

## WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE CHAPTER Township of Whitchurch–Stouffville, York Regional Municipality Highway 404 to York-Durham Line, Map 4

In 1997 Joe Palma was deputed by the Board to take the initiative to get the local members to become active and identify a route across this township; an important link between Aurora and Uxbridge. Chapter Chair Chuck Suikki similarly reported a year later that he was finding it difficult. His appeals didn't fall on deaf ears as in the fall of 1998 they had blazed a route which received approval of the Town and the blessing of York Region by the following spring.



*Map 4 as included in the Second Edition of the Guidebook, November 1999. This simple route is much different from what we now know today – next page.*

In 2001 Charlie Atkinson became Chapter Chair, recruited six Trail Captains and with the help of his wife Janet convened an active committee with a focus on local publicity. The following year he detailed plans to avoid the villages of Ballantrae and Musselman Lake and route through the several beautiful tracts of York Region Forest. The forestry staff were very cooperative and by summer 2003 much of the new route had been blazed. The following year six side trails were added, a development which has continued providing a great number of hike options. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority made a side trail from the Whitchurch Conservation Area, which had a useful parking lot, into the Robinson Tract.

Charlie did a great job painting blazes and ensuring that ORTA Trail Signs were installed at the many entrances from roads. [Equestrians had been using trails in](#)



the York Region Forests for many years and complained that the bright blue paint he used to blaze the side trails spoofed their horses! YRF set up a Liaison Committee which has ensured good relations between all users of these trails some of which are also popular with mountain bikers and dog walkers.

Crossing over Hwy 404 into the Vandorf Community, the Main Trail makes an interesting loop around the park to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum. Hikers have always been welcomed here to explore the local history, especially the collection of heritage buildings. In 2013 rerouting the trail around the new building required new panels for the Trail Key – a QR Code linking to our website was added – our first use of this innovation. *Photo from the Museum's website.*



John Saringer as new Chapter Chair in 2006, thanked Charlie for leaving everything in such good shape. In 2008 he noted changes to the short lengths of trail on private land and that this chapter has the lowest proportion on private land but many attractive side-trails in the forests.



The chapter was then without a leader until Frank Alexander became chair in Spring 2010. Frank quickly re-established the practice, followed here more diligently than in some chapters, of formal Spring and Fall Trail Inspections.



*The Annual Stouffville Strawberry Festival and other local events are enthusiastically supported. In 2012 some 800 ORTA leaflets were handed out; 3 Memberships and 6 Guidebooks were sold, together with 13 sectional maps.*



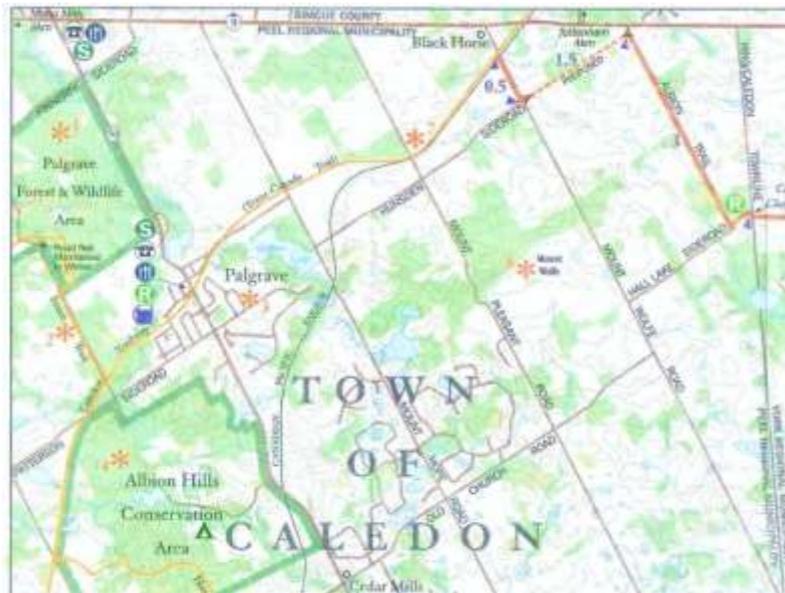
York Region Forests has several large parking lots which are the meeting places for popular hikes in this area, in particular Eldred King Woodlands and the Hollidge Tract. Around the YRF HQ complex and elsewhere they have created wheelchair accessible sections of trail.

*The Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Platinum certified.*

## CALEDON CHAPTER King - Caledon Townline to Duffy's Lane, Palgrave, Town of Caledon, Map 1

It's significant to remember that the CORT Founding Meeting was held at Albion Hills Conservation Area just south of Palgrave. Debbe Crandall, Chair of STORM (Save The Oak Ridges Moraine) was one of the Founding Members of CORT. A decade later she would represent the environmental community on the Provincial Task Force which led to the Oak Ridges Conservation Act.

In 1995 Debbe's sister Sheilagh, a member of the group developing the Caledon Trailway, became the liaison person with the objective of linking to the ORT at the King Township boundary. In 1996 they identified two potential links and Sheilagh Crandall became Chair of the fledgling Caledon Chapter.



A portion of Map 1, The Guidebook, Second Edition, 1999, showing the ORT provisionally joining the Caledon Trailway near Black Horse.

*Note that at this time the Bruce Main Trail came to the west of Palgrave village along a length of the Caledon Trailway (which had also been designated as part of the Trans Canada Trail) and then went NW along Duffy's Lane.*

Subsequent routing of the ORT via Hunsden Sideroad provided safer access off Mount Pleasant Road which includes a parking area.

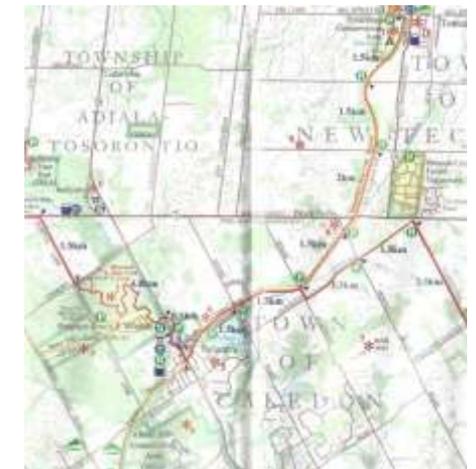
Probably because Caledon had a plethora of trails, especially the Bruce Trail, the Caledon Trailway and the Humber Valley Heritage Trail, it took until 2005 to complete designation of the ORT westward from Mount Pleasant Road to the Stationlands Kiosk on the west side of Highway 50 in Palgrave and then north to a parking lot on the east side of Highway 50 adjoining the Mill Pond.

At the Stationlands Kiosk the Oak Ridges Trail connected to the Bruce Main Trail. This was recognised as a significant achievement in development of the moraine-wide trail with a lunchtime press briefing at Queens Park on June 21, 2005.



However, the route of the Bruce Main Trail into Palgrave village along the Caledon Trailway and then west through Palgrave Forest was way east off the Niagara Escarpment. Shortly afterwards the BTA was successful in securing a reroute which resulted in their route from the Palgrave Forest and Wildlife Area to Glen Haffy Conservation Area becoming a Side Trail. (Bruce Trail Reference Map 17.)

In 2007 the continuation of the Caledon Trailway north of Highway 9 to Tottenham, otherwise known as the New Tecumseth Trail, became OTRA's Tottenham Side Trail at the invitation of the Town of New Tecumseth. This was our first venture north of Highway 9 into Simcoe County.



Executive Director Harold Sellers represented ORTA in the preparation by TRCA of a Management Plan for Palgrave Forest and Wildlife Area. This provided an attractive winding route for the ORT to the junction of Finnerty Sideroad and Duffy's Lane in 2008. TRCA later provided a Trail Head parking lot on the west side of Highway 50 and another along Finnerty Sideroad.

This story concludes in the last section of this chapter: Moraine Meets Escarpment. In 2016 the ORMT's western terminus was relocated to Glen Haffy.

**AURORA CHAPTER  
Town of Aurora, York Regional Municipality  
Bathurst Street, Map 3b, to Highway 404**

Aurora Chapter would be responsible the shortest length of trail in the ORT from Bathurst Street to Highway 404. The population in Yonge Street Corridor, see Map 3, provided the largest number of Chapter Members, but they were more interested in hiking opportunities out in the moraine’s countryside than across town. Attempts in 1993, 1995 and 1997 to form a team to identify a route across town, inevitably involving sections along streets, all petered out for lack of sustained interest.

Since a link through Aurora remained a high priority, Bob Ellison accepted the challenge, being appointed by the Board as Interim Chapter Chair in April 1998. By September, under his hardworking and persuasive leadership, he was able to report an eleven member Planning Committee had hiked options for the route.

They had been encouraged by positive meetings with Jim Tree, the town’s Supervisor of Parks. Much goodwill resulted from their commitment to care for the Case Woodlot – not just the selected trail - under Aurora’s “Adopt-a-Park” scheme. They engaged the local community in a much needed clean-up; 150 people collected a tonnage of garbage from this 40 acre lot.

In October Ray Matsalla became Chapter Chair with active committee members Gillian and Stan Butcher, Robert Johnston, Grant McKeich, Harold Sellers, Bill Smith, Suzanne Summers and Norman Wood. Sylvia Gilchrist joined the team soon after. They met monthly, detailed the route and presented it to the Town.

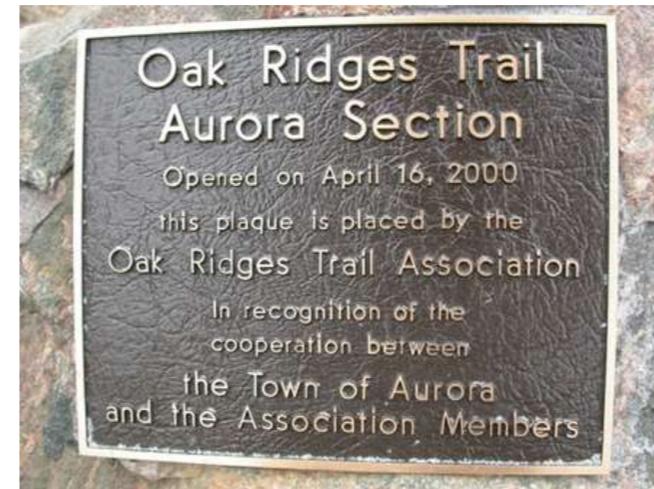
A formal meeting with Town staff resolved differences between departments over which streets should be used. It was not considered appropriate to paint white blazes along urban streets. Instead, ORTA was required to design and supply directional signs which the town would install. Following a public information meeting on July 5<sup>th</sup> the Town Council’s approval was given on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1999.



We had the agreement of the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority for a route through Sheppard’s Bush. But continuing south there were no trails through the Vandorf and Alliance Woodlots which the Town owned. The Town would be constructing a trail from Sheppard’s Bush to Vandorf Side Road as part of the Nokiidaa Trail project. They invited Ray, Bill and Stan to tape a potential route which would avoid removing larger trees – it occupied them for a very interesting Saturday bushwhacking including crossing the Holland River on a log. <sup>2</sup>

Going east from Bayview Avenue there was no option to walking along Vandorf Side Road. But Sarah Stevens who owned the land adjacent to the dangerous junction with Leslie Street invited us to make a loop around her property.

*ORTA Style and Sign at Leslie Street.*



The complexity of the route required a map with named streets; hence the Town of Aurora Map 3b at a larger scale than the Guidebook norm. Just in time for the Second Edition, November 1999. See Appendix 8, page 808.

*Plaque placed at the junction at the south end of Sheppard’s Bush on the occasion of the official opening by Mayor Tim Jones.*

<sup>2</sup> Sometime later the Town identified this length as the Klaus Wehrenberg Trail; ORTA Founding Member Klaus has worked tirelessly for many years to establish walking trails in Aurora.

The committee continued with formal monthly meetings and an annual Christmas Party. Incoming Chapter Chair Stan Butcher's first priority was determining the options for getting the trail off the streets wherever practicable. A detailed report was presented to the Town on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003.



Sketch Map from Report: **Oak Ridges Trail – Optimum Route through Aurora**  
 Solid black lines indicate preferred route; dashed lines alternatives to consider.  
 Note that initially the route along Vandorf Sideroad was designated "proposed" at the Town's request. It was blazed later to complete the connection to Hwy 404.



The trail through Case Woodlot (A) was extended to Bathurst Street in Summer 2006.  
 Mayor Tim Jones cut the green ribbon.

Left to right:  
 Colleen Brean, Aurora Parks Dept.,  
 Stan Butcher,  
 Kim Gavine, ORMF,  
 Robert Johnston,  
 Mayor Tim Jones,  
 Bill Smith,  
 Ray Matsalla and  
 Harold Sellers.



Opportunities to publicise ORTA, such as a booth each year at Maple Syrup Festival in Sheppard's Bush and the Longest Street Sale have been a strong feature of the Chapter's activities.

### Ceding Members to Establish Richmond Hill Chapter.

Almost 40% of the ORTA's Members reside in the Yonge Street Corridor – from Toronto to Bradford. They were initially listed in Aurora Chapter. How might this group be divided to be more useful? On April 22, 2002 a meeting was held in the North York Memorial Community Hall to float the idea of a chapter for members living south of Highway 7. In addition to promoting ORTA in Thornhill and Toronto it might, for example, have a maintenance team which would travel to assist in rural areas to the east or west where we had few members. The idea didn't fly.

Bloomington Road, Aurora's southern boundary is more or less along the crest of the moraine. The Moraine's Natural Core Area, as defined by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, is to the south. During the Optimum Route Study in 2005 ORTA decided the route across the Town of Aurora should be maintained as its main trail even though it was not fully within the moraine. The desired route along the Natural Core Area through the community of Oak Ridges would be an alternative main trail. To facilitate this 88 Members ceded to form the Richmond Hill Chapter on October 19, 2005, leaving Aurora still 153 strong.

### The Nokiidaa Trail.

The towns of Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury jointly planned a multi-use recreational trail alongside the East Branch of the Holland River. Several ORTA

Members assisted with this project, providing volunteer community input. See The Guidebook, Map 3

The Town of Aurora encountered organised resistance to proposed routes between properties north of St. John’s Sideroad into Newmarket. The solution, after a series of consultations and public meetings was an extensive boardwalk across the wetland now known as The Hadley Grange Nature Reserve.

Going from the southern end of Aurora to Holland Landing the Nokiidaa is an attractive trail, with few short links on streets, enjoyed by many people including a good number of ORTA Group Hikes.

**Recent Developments.**

The route through Aurora approved by the Town in 1999 was recognized by all concerned as a compromise due to the lengths along streets. The Town published a new Trails Master Plan in November 2011 which generally took account of the ideas in our 2003 submission.

Vandorf Sideroad was reconstructed in 2016; a footpath alongside to the Trails Master Plan’s standards was impracticable due to the nature of the land, but there is now a clearly marked bicycle / pedestrian lane on both sides.

The Town remains committed long term to the idea of a recreational trail running along the crest of the Moraine. This is the southern boundary of the Magna property (J). To facilitate this future development a spur from Vandorf Woodlot to Bayview Avenue (H) has been incorporated adjoining a new residential sub-division.



*The Main Trail continues right and the Spur goes ahead*

Sadly the route around the Sarah Stevens property with a fine view to the south had to be relinquished when the property was sold.

**Ontario Municipal Board Rules in Favour of Improved Trail Route.**

Foremost on the wish-list for improvements to be addressed when opportunity arose was to get the trail off-road into the greenspace which was the Highland Gate Golf Course (B).

In the fall of 2015 a developer submitted an application for closure as a golf course and construction of additional upscale residences. Their proposed core recreational area appeared inadequate with part of the trail on a sidewalk close to housing. ORTA representatives headed up by Chapter Chair Bruce Corbett met with concerned local ratepayers; the developer; Town Planning Staff; Town Councillors and Mayor; and, later with the local MPP. In March 2016 the issues went to the Ontario Municipal Board with ORTA a participant. On December 2, 2016 the OMB ruled in favour of an alternate plan providing a “greatly expanded trail network.” Thanks and congratulations to the ORTA Chapter participants.



**The Aurora Chapter Experience**

The committee established by Bob Ellison in 1998 overcame the challenge presented in creating an urban route. Several members became ORTA Directors and their acceptance of Board duties sometimes left the chapter short of leaders.

## CLARINGTON CHAPTER Municipality of Clarington, Durham Regional Municipality Avery Road, Map 7 and Map 8, to Cold Springs Road

At the AGM in May 1998 Roy Forrester reported they were just getting started with six people on the committee. Roy had been a town councillor and thus knew his way around; the Mayor promised to keep them informed of any developments related to the unopened road allowances they might wish to use. They had mapped out a route from Avery Road along the unopened road allowance along Concession 10 north of Long Sault Conservation Area. This was shown in the Second Edition of the Guidebook, Map 7.

They sent letters to 140 landowners; only two adverse replies were received. So, in 1999 blazing and signage was underway.

Approval was received for 44 km of trail, most of which was off-road – Roy counted unopened road allowances as off-road. Going through the pedestrian tunnel under Highway 115 provided safe access for hikers into the Ganaraska Forest. By Spring 2001 signs were erected and the trail cleared to this point.

The Town's approval in 2001 included the Old Swamp Road running SE between Mossport Road and Leskard Road. An adjoining landowner, claiming ownership, went to the police with photographs of Roy and three colleagues working on the land; charges of trespass were laid. At the 2002 AGM Roy reported that the charges had been dropped as the Town confirmed their ownership. But the Landowner sued the Town and ORTA for trespass; she claimed there had been steps taken to purchase the disused roadway. A protracted legal case ensued. Whilst this was in process the ORT was routed via Leskard. The Civil Court Judge found it was the Town's land. But that was not the end of the matter as the Landowner, against the advice of her Lawyer, proceeded to appeal. It was rejected.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately ORTA's Directors and Officers Insurance was in order – our legal bill alone was \$60,000.



<sup>3</sup> The Landowner was also promoting a diamond mine in Northern Ontario, obtaining funds from a Spanish Count and Countess – a claim based on her clairvoyant insight, not prospectors' reports. Unable to settle her legal bills she had to sell up.



Opposite: the temporary route whilst the ownership of Old Swamp Road was before the courts. Above: a section of Map 7.

Side Trails were constructed: through ORTA Member Murray Yeo's property; the Bluebird Trail west of Highway 115; and, the Vista Loop to the east.

The trail system east of Highway 115 through the Ganaraska Forest – West Area used existing trails some of which were rather heavily used by off-road bikes and ATVs. There was little for the chapter to do apart from blazing and signage.

*The issue of charging for access through the Ganaraska Forest, of concern also in Hope – Hamilton Chapter, is addressed in Chapter Two.*



By November 2003 the Clarington section of the trail was completed, including along Old Swamp Road. Incoming Chapter Chair Rick Patterson said at the 2004 AGM: "A new landowner welcomed us with open arms after a couple of years of tension. It follows a creek full of trout in April and skirts a pond with lots of wildfowl and wetland animals."

At the Official Opening on June 6, 2004 Roy's achievements were acknowledged by the community and ORTA.

*Presentation to Roy by M.P. Bev Oder.*

A section of the Old Swamp Road was later made suitable for wheelchair access including a bridge built by members.



Section of Map 7



At the western end of the Clarington Section logging in 2005 led to widening of the road allowance north of Long Sault Conservation Area. The trail was moved into the CA with designated one-way loops to minimise damage to the sandy soil.



Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) made one loop wheelchair accessible.



Under Rick Patterson's leadership Clarington Chapter became increasingly engaged with the community, organizing hikes for a church group and joining the Lions Club in organizing a hike-a-thon for the Big Brothers and Sisters of Clarington on June 11, 2005 which included Cottontail Rabbit Trail.



ORTA was not finished with the "Saga of the Old Swamp Road." In 2007 President Stan Butcher and Executive Director Harold Sellers were called to site. Talking with the landowner were a representative of Federal Fisheries and Oceans, and Provincial and Municipal Officers with environmental responsibilities. The Landowner had claimed an ORTA Representative told them the stream should be realigned to correspond with the property boundary which would also improve the line of the trail.<sup>4</sup> A backhoe had been used to divert the creek – which was a trout spawning area. Whilst this was a serious matter, it was observed the creek now benefited from improved shade and thus no charges ensued.

In 2011 the property was again for sale; hearing that a short length of the ORT crossed the property the purchaser's lawyer had insisted on having a certificate of ORTA's General Liability Insurance naming the purchaser. Early afternoon before closing Stan Butcher had just arrived at a motel in Tobermory. His cell phone rang: "all hell" had broken out because our Insurer had not faxed them the certificate. "Fortunately I had my business phone directory with me."

### A Vital Section of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail

In recent years local ORTA Members have continued to be focussed on Town of Clarington activities rather than ORTA programs. Grace Moores keeps them in contact with the association and leads seasonal hikes. Highway 35/115 Junction and Long Sault Conservation Area are two interesting checkpoints for the Adventure Relay; local members ensure everything's well prepared . . .

<sup>4</sup> We never discovered who might have suggested ORTA wished for realignment. The landowner was living in a rural area for the first time and was unaware of the regulations related to care of fish habitat.

## HOPE – HAMILTON CHAPTER

Municipality of Port Hope and Township of Hamilton, Northumberland County  
Cold Springs Camp Road, Map 9 to Map 10, Northumberland County Forest

On June 9, 1998 Tom Rance and Brian Logan hosted a meeting in Port Hope with the intent of exploring possibilities for the eastward development of the trail. Gary Ford, a veteran Ganaraska Trail leader, agreed to become Chair of a Ganaraska Chapter reaching to Highway 28 just west of Bewdley.

In 1999 a proposed route was submitted to the Municipality of Port Hope for approval. Also Gary reported at the 1999 AGM on plans to continue east into the Township of Hamilton; hence the name change to Hope – Hamilton Chapter.

Approvals were received, maps drafted and the trail signed and blazed in 2001; considering the length of trail involved a great achievement by the chapter committee of four: Gary Ford, Gwen Brice, Steve McMullen and Eric Wright.



See Map 9. Coming from the West Area of the Ganaraska Forest at Cold Springs Road the ORT joins the **Ganaraska Trail** through the Central Area along the unopened road allowance to avoid the user fees which the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) would otherwise charge. (See Chapter Two.)

Partway through the East Area the Ganaraska Trail turns south towards Port Hope. The ORT reaches beautiful Rice Lake at Bewdley.

Unfortunately, continuing east from Bewdley, private cottage properties and the nature of the shoreline meant it would never be practicable to hike close to the lake. See map opposite: Oak Ridges Drive, County Road 9, is far too busy for safe walking. The route selected therefore goes several kilometers south on Coates Road to Donaldson Road and then north on Lander Road to the Victoria Inn on the road into Gore’s Landing.



Part of Map 10, Guidebook Third Edition, 2002.

In fact the quiet unopened road allowances, the Old Indian Trail, Point of Interest 7\*, and views along the way make this a pleasant hike.

Tony Holmes also joined with the local committee to investigate how the ORT might extend to the Northumberland County Forest. Probably Donaldson Road had been chosen earlier partly with this in mind as Donaldson Road becomes Beaver Meadow Road and leads directly into the forest.

The chapter hosted the 2003 AGM at the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority Interpretive Centre, NW corner of Hwy 401 & RR 28. There was a little concern when, after watching fish climb the ladder up the Ganaraska River in town, the post-meeting hikers were led across two lawns – but they were Gary’s and the hike leader’s properties!

Since 2005 there has not always been an active local committee. Chapter Chair Petra Hartwig reported the trail had been extended down to the waterfront in Gore's Landing in 2008. Donaldson Road to Gore's Landing became a side trail when the trail was rerouted along Beaver Meadow Road into the Northumberland County Forest. The Hazel Bird side trail was opened in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. *Part of The Guidebook Map 10, 6<sup>th</sup>. Edition below.*



*The Guidebook contains some particularly interesting notes about Points of Interest. Rice Lake offers beautiful vistas.*

*Gore's Landing has become an important landmark in ORTA's story as the start of the Adventure Relay.*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND CHAPTER Township of Alwick – Haldimand, Map 11, to Castleton, Township of Cramahe, and Map 12 to Warkworth, Municipality of Trent Hills**

**A** committee - *Gary Ford, Malcome Massie, Gwen Bryce & me* - formed in the fall of 2000 to recommend a route. Several meetings have been held. Two main topics are: where to go & where to end. The Moraine itself ends around Trenton but there is no general agreement on what constitutes the Moraine & where the end actually is. Some people have asserted that the end is around Castleton north of Colborne. Trying to get a handle on this is complicated; relevant maps are on wildly differing scales & information is inconsistent. We are looking forward to spring when we can get out and tramp around, so much more exciting than poring over maps.

*Tony Holmes, Chair*

### **Northumberland & Quinte or What?**

*A short note in Trail Talk, Spring 2001*

Gary Ford suggested at the 2001 AGM the goal might possibly be beyond the end of the moraine to join the Hastings Heritage Trail.

This committee participated in the 2003 process determining the Preferred Route for the ORT, but in 2004 Tony reported development would have to await completion of Management Plan for the Northumberland Forest.

On behalf of the board Peter Schaefer visited Castleton and famously reported: "It doesn't even have a chip truck."

A public meeting to introduce ORTA to Castleton was well attended and in no time banners appeared declaring the community "Gateway to the Moraine."

*Following retirement Tim Lawley had moved to live in Cobourg and became Chapter Chair.*

In 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Northumberland County for ORTA to blaze hiking trails through the Northumberland Forest. In the meantime Tim was making contacts with local residents and landowners along potential routes.



The Northumberland Forest Advisory Committee was formed in 2007 with nominees appointed by the County; Tim Lawley represented ORTA. His summary report to our 2008 AGM is reproduced below. It provides insight into the efforts which the association – and all user groups and stakeholders - had to put in to establish an acceptable multi-use trail system.

#### ORTA Northumberland Chapter Report – April, 2008 for AGM

When completed this section of the trail will extend from just south of Gores Landing in the west to Castleton in the east. The total length of this section will be approximately 30 kilometers. For approximately 20 kilometers the trail will pass through the Northumberland Forest that, also, lies on the Oak Ridges Moraine. The forest is owned and operated by the County of Northumberland and, as of now, most forms of recreational activity are allowed in the forest. This 'open access' has created areas of conflict between the different user groups and, more importantly, has led to large-scale environmental damage. In March of 2007 the County formed a Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) that "...represents 20 different forest stakeholders whose purpose is to act as a sounding board for the County as they address several Forest Master Plan components the first of which is a Trail Study". (I represent the Oak Ridges Trail Association on this committee.) Since its inception the FAC has met six times to receive and discuss presentations from County staff and consultants, including one field trip in June 2007. An 'open house' meeting was held in January 2008.

The Draft Trail Report, compiled by Dr. John Marsh of Trent University's Trail Studies Unit, makes a total of 29 recommendations. Some highlights of particular interest to ORTA are:

- a. Provide a non-motorized Oak Ridges Trail from west to east through the Forest
- b. Provide at least one trail accessible to the physically disabled
- c. Provide three, designated non-motorized areas
- d. Install and maintain barriers to restrict motorized access to non-motorized zones
- e. Develop trail standards
- f. Implement a trail maintenance program in cooperation with user groups
- g. Use the former ski hill area/facilities for non-motorized activities and a Forest Center

In light of the recommendation for three, non-motorized zones the current proposed route for the Oak Ridges Trail will be reviewed in an effort to direct it through these zones. I hope to have a further meeting with John Marsh to carry out this work.

Following the open house the County are in the process of reviewing several issues that were brought forward from the various presentations. Also, in March 2007 the County sent a letter to the Provincial Government (Minister Jim Watson, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing) asking for clarification on how the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan addresses the issue of the use of motorized vehicles on the Oak Ridges Moraine. This letter is a result of various parties threatening legal action against the County should the use of motorized vehicles be allowed under the Forest Master Plan. Although the next meeting of the FAC is planned for April 24, I anticipate that waiting for the response to this letter will cause a delay in the on-going work of the FAC.

There were four established recreational user groups – we were newcomers. Some, particularly dirt bikers, were considered bad stewards of the lands but were vehemently opposed to restrictions on activities they'd enjoyed unchallenged for many years. The Northumberland County Forest Management was the principal player in all aspects of this process and welcomed our involvement since we brought environmentally sensitive users to the table.

Tim wrote: *"Welcome to the rolling hills, rural pastures, coniferous forests and scenic views of Lake Ontario."*

Credit must be given to Tim Lawley for his incredible persistence as this process dragged on. Harold Sellers, and Fred Johnson representing ORMF, accompanied Tim on several occasions. Between March 2007 and July 2009 when the Northumberland County Forest Staff presented the final route selections for each user to the County Council; there were numerous meetings, workshops, field trips and two Open Houses.

A key access point is the parking lot on the east side of Hwy 45 at Morris Road. For folk not familiar with the area: exit Hwy 401 at the Cobourg junction beside the Big Apple; drive northeast 16 km to this point. Coming from the Township of Hamilton the ORMT enters the Northumberland County Forest via Beaver Meadow Road. Walking trails through this section to Morris Road were already established but needed to be accurately mapped using GPS.

Our proposed route was accepted in time for inclusion in the Guidebook Fifth Edition at the end of 2009; below a section of Map 11. But at this time many kilometers still had to be explored in detail, blazed and signage installed.



The Forest Manager Mia Farrow assisted in detailing the route of a hiking trail away from existing trails where motorised uses continue to be permitted. It goes up to a magnificent lookout - \*6, Map 11, 6th Edition opposite - the site of an earlier ski-hill. She designed complementary "blazes" for each of the users to differentiate between the various routes. These, rather than painted blazes, are used across the Township.



East of Hwy 45 partway through the County Forest the route goes through the NCC's Peter's Wood.

Beyond the forest the trail branches at Morganston Road: northeast through Rice Lake Plains, Map 12, to Warkworth in The Municipality of Trent Hills. Warkworth is beyond the moraine but provides a terminus in a well serviced community leading to a future connection with the Hastings Heritage Trail. Finally there is the southeast branch to Castleton which had been developed with Harold Sellers. Tim Lawley spent many days finalizing and blazing these routes with some assistance from Fred Johnson, Bob Comfort and Brian Millage.

The route into Warkworth shown in Map 12, Sixth Edition, 2012 has since been modified as shown opposite at the suggestion of a local landowner to move the trail from the busy Hwy 25 onto quieter roads on the east.



Above: part of Map 11, Sixth Edition, 2012

The trails through the forest are heavily infested by Poison Ivy. Maintenance of the ORMT east of Hwy 45 is going to be a long-term headache for ORTA since there are very few Members and only occasional hikers visiting the area. Tim Lawley has retired from active leadership, but Kim Aagaard and Fred Johnson have retired to live in Warkworth.



**Opening Ceremonies of the Three Eastern Trailheads**

Thus there are three ORMT Eastern Trailheads: Hwy 45 at Morris Road; in the village of Warkworth; and at Castleton Sports Ground. Gateway Kiosks were provided; at each there was an official opening ceremony in 2010. Funded by the ORMF, these events are described in the Addendum to Chapter Three.

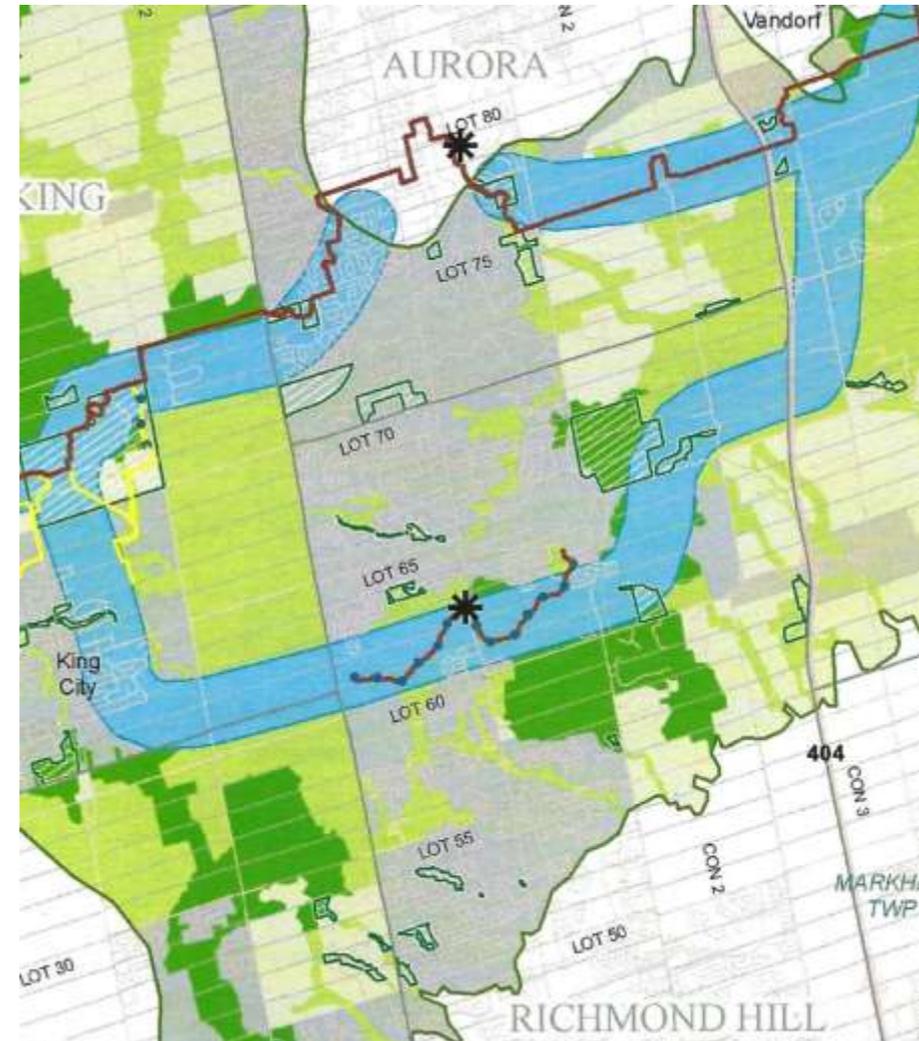
**RICHMOND HILL CHAPTER**  
**Oak Ridges Community, Town of Richmond Hill, York Regional Municipality**  
**Map 3, Bathurst Street to Bethesda Sideroad**

This section of the trail is of particular interest as it was the epicentre of the battle to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine. Proposals in the late 1990's for massive development of subdivisions on the last undeveloped swath of moraine land crossing Yonge Street south of the community of Oak Ridges, North Richmond Hill enraged environmentalists and local residents alike. On February 23, 2000, at a public meeting attended by 1,700 people at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel, the Richmond Hill Council, realising resolution was beyond the municipality's authority passed the issue to the Province. Informed public action helped in the battle for protective legislation – the Oak Ridges Moraine Act – and the "Crombie land swap" of this property for land in Pickering.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan's vision for the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail was that it should wherever possible be in Natural Core Areas and secondly Natural Linkage Areas. The Oak Ridges Corridor lands were designated as Natural Core Areas. The town's Parks, Recreation and Culture Department was developing a Trails Master Plan in 2003. A route west – east across the Oak Ridges Corridor was added at ORTA's suggestion to proposed trails running south to north.

Should the Optimum Trail Corridor from Bathurst Street to Highway 404 cross Yonge Street through these lands? It was recognised there was no prospect of an easily secured connection to the existing Main Trail in King City west of Bathurst Street nor to Vandorf east of Highway 404. This incurred considerable debate within ORTA since the Aurora route, established in 2000 after several attempts, went along town streets which were technically off the moraine. The resolution was to designate twin Main Trail crossings of Yonge Street, retaining the Aurora route and adding a southern route. *See map opposite.*

Once protected, however, the trail through this corridor was not assured until the Land Exchange was drafted in September 2004 to bring the Oak Ridges Corridor lands into public ownership. The Province engaged the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in 2005 to develop a management plan for the land under the working title of the Oak Ridges Corridor Park. It was to include a trail from Bathurst St. to Bayview Avenue constructed by the developers. ORTA Members living south of Bloomington Rd. formed the Richmond Hill Chapter in 2005 to participate in discussions with the town, the developers and the TRCA.



Section of Map from ORMF Report on ORMT Improvements, 2011.  
 Dark Green = Natural Core Areas; Lime Green = Natural Linkage Areas  
 Blue bands show the (approximately 1 km wide) Optimum Trail Corridors  
 Red line shows the ORT across Aurora between Lots 75 and 80  
 Red line with blue-green dots shows the southern trail route established in 2006 across the Oak Ridges Corridor, Lots 61 and 62, Bathurst - Bayview  
 Yellow lines show side trails.

An Advisory Committee was struck: Executive Director Harold Sellers represented ORTA and our members Sharon and Jim Bradley were also on the committee representing other groups. It became bitterly divided between those who saw the value of a trail being constructed before neighbouring subdivisions were built and others, some of whom had worked hard for protection of these lands, who wanted no human encroachment. In July 2006 a series of Public Workshops were called for input to the management plan as a public park with the Bathurst Glen Golf Club and the trail system as key components. A good number of ORTA Members participated; facilities resulting from their suggestions included the parking lot on



Yonge Street looking south – Trail Crossing at Bond Lake.

Old Colony Road and the Yonge Street crossing lights at Bond Lake. Hikers would also be able use the golf club parking lot which would be a trail head. Eventually the wisdom of a trail designed to direct traffic by new residents away from sensitive areas won out and a route was included in the final management plan approved by TRCA in October 2006.

Construction of the trail from Bathurst Glen to Sandbanks Drive, south of Lake Wilcox, which includes attractive vistas of Bond Lake, was undertaken by the developers of McLeod’s Landing residential area. These developments did not directly involve work by our members, but provided input to the new Map 3, Yonge Street Corridor, for the Guidebook 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2006.

*To arrest concerns the crossing lights indicated new developments at Bond Lake; these signs were installed on Yonge Street in 2009. Could we have signs like these moraine-wide?*

The public and our group hikes had been using the well-constructed trail for three years before finally in 2009 the ownership and funding issues were resolved. TRCA installed Gateway Kiosks with attractive maps and posts bearing the ORTA Logo were installed along the trail.



**Richmond Hill Chapter and Hiking Club.** 84 ORTA Members ceded from Aurora Chapter in 2005, leaving Aurora with 160. They began local activities with display booths at the Mill Pond Splash and the Oak Ridges Family Fair in June 2006.

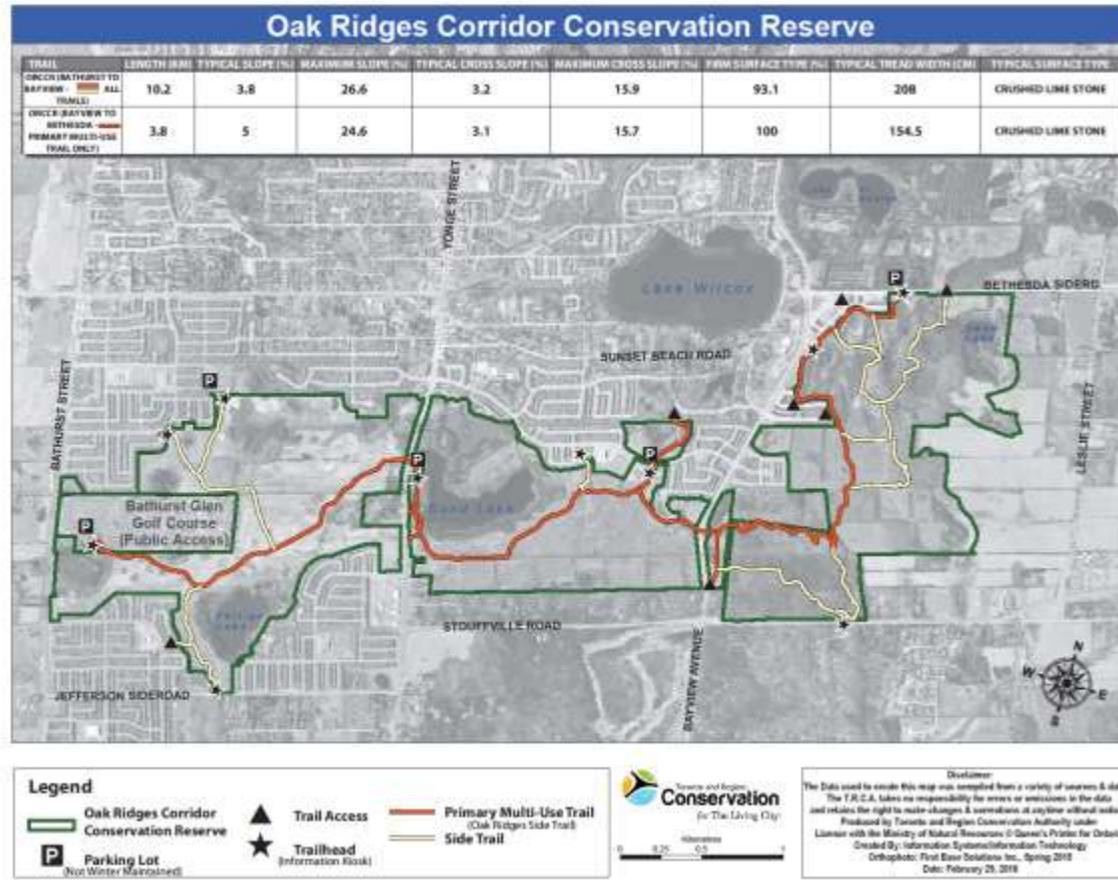
In 2008 under the leadership of Ken Kishibe the chapter hosted the ORTA AGM with the Mayor and several Councillors in attendance. Harold Sellers, with some members’ help, operated a Richmond Hill Hiking Club for new hikers as a Parks, Recreation and Culture Department program. Participants paid a fee but received a copy of the Guidebook and Membership in ORTA. This boosted chapter membership to a record 154 in 2010, but few continued when the program ended.

**Going East of Bayview Avenue.** TRCA next commenced acquisition of, and/or management rights to, the Natural Core lands east of Bayview Avenue. These included the Jefferson Forest and Swan Lake properties with spectacular hills and kettles. Previous owners had not taken steps to prevent misuse by dirt bikers and dumping of unwanted materials. Chapter Chair Rhys Beak and friends became fully engaged with TRCA staff in decisions on closure and rehabilitation of misused areas and the design of a network of trails.

The park system, Bathurst Street towards Leslie Street, now officially known as the Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve, was opened by Mayor Dave Barrow in November 2016 – see the map on the next sheet. It provides some superb vistas into dry kettles. There are remnants of old orchards and other developments

The newly reconstructed trail east of Bayview Avenue constructed in 2015 gives safe pedestrian access under Bayview Avenue’s William Bell Memorial Bridge and continues NE to Bethesda Sideroad.





**Oak Ridges Community Connections.** The Oak Ridges Community Centre includes a lounge with displays featuring the Oak Ridges Moraine and a small depository of related literature. It is thus an attractive meeting point for hikes. The centre overlooks the spectacular Lake Wilcox Park, formerly Sunset Beach Park, which was opened in 2014.

Lake Wilcox is the largest kettle lake on the moraine; the local community has been challenged to improve its stewardship through the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment convened by ORTA Members Sharon and Jim Bradley. We note ORTA’s mapping guru, Naturalist Peter Atfield, lives nearby. Just east of Bayview Avenue is the beautiful Lake St. George, source of the Humber River east branch. Public access is restricted as it is managed by TRCA as a residential Field Education Centre



**Future Developments?** Will this southern route crossing Yonge Street in Oak Ridges ever be linked with the established ORMT northern route through Aurora?

A swath of land northeast of Bethesda Sideroad through to Haynes Lake – top right corner of the map opposite – is owned by the Town. Access under the proposed reconstructed Leslie Street would allow the trail to continue eastwards on Bethesda Side Road – there is a sidewalk along this unpaved road which crosses over the CN Main Line, Highway 404 and a tributary of the Rouge River. But how do we get from there to Vandorf?

Similarly in King Township there is no easy option for an attractive trail going west from Bathurst Street to join the northern route in the Seneca College or King City.

**The Natural Core Lands of the Oak Ridges Moraine in this community are of great importance because they are the nearest to the City of Toronto and are easily accessed by transit.**



### HUMBER HEADWATERS - MORaine MEETS ESCARPMENT Palgrave Forest to the Niagara Escarpment at Glen Haffy, Town of Caledon, Map 0

Harold Sellers pursued negotiations to extend the ORT to the western extremity of the moraine as envisioned in the Optimum Trail Corridor. Going north across Highway 9 into Simcoe County, the trail would cross the Township of Adjala –



Tosorontio through two beautiful small forests, TRCA’s Ballycroy Tract and Simcoe County Forest’s Patterson Tract, to the small Town of Mono in Dufferin County. A Trail Head was planned for the terminus at the junction with the Main Bruce Trail at their highly visible parking lot at Airport Road and 7th Line.

This extended the trail way beyond Caledon as shown in the additional Map 0 – Humber Headwaters. There were no ORTA members in the Caledon to Mono Mills area so formation of a new chapter was not imminent. A number of ORTA stalwarts detailed the route and it was blazed late in 2009. This marked the western completion of the Oak Ridges Main Trail.

However residents near the BTA’s parking lot objected and the Town of Mono provided a new parking lot where the Bruce Trail crosses 5 Sideroad. Re-blazing of the route was completed with hours to spare by Trail Director Garry Niece assisted by Frank Alexander who had travelled from Scugog and Stouffville respectively. The Official Opening on Saturday, April 21, 2012 was attended by a good number of ORTA Members, representatives of the BTA and the local community as recounted in Chapter Three.

However, people who started their End-to-End Hike from the Mono Mills Trailhead commented that, although it was through a pleasant rural area, it was not enjoyable. As is clear from Map 0, most of the trail to Duffy’s Lane from Mono was on roads; lightly travelled, mostly dirt roads with no shoulder.

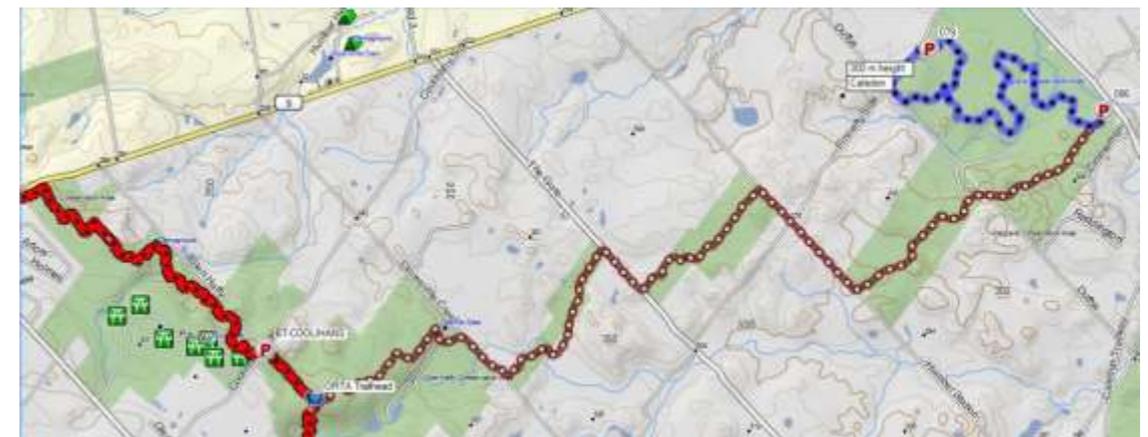
Towards the end of 2014 David Moule, long-time local resident and Caledon Hills Club Member of the BTA, offered to assist ORTA by providing contacts with landowners who might be amenable to accommodating some off-road sections. David met Brian Millage and Stan Butcher at King City on February 19, 2015. Reviewing his suggestions we realised it would be a long term project to make any

substantial improvements. The conversation moved on to consider the Bruce Side Trail from Palgrave Forest to Glen Haffy. Could ORTA designate this connection to the Main Bruce Trail as our route to the western end of the moraine?

The idea was presented to the Bruce Conservancy and their Caledon Hills Club. Having moved their main trail well west through Glen Haffy Conservation Area they no longer needed a connection to Palgrave; they’d be happy for ORTA to take it over! Negotiations with the landowners, principally the TRCA, moved swiftly – it was simply a change in who would care for it, the trail would remain intact.

Caledon Trailway and Simcoe County had reconstructed the New Tecumseth Trail some two years earlier. (We had enjoyed a good rapport with them; folk wanting to hike their trails will find advanced Interactive Trail Maps on the web.). But, in rerouting the Main Trail it was logical to relinquish all ORTA designations north of Highway 9. The short but interesting lengths of TRCA’s and Simcoe County Forest’s trails through the Ballycroy and Patterson Tracts and the New Tecumseth Trail to Tottenham would no longer be ORMT side trails.

Trail Director Garry Niece, Brian Millage and some local members sprang into action. Blue blazes were repainted white; signs and blazes on the route from Duffy’s Lane to Mono were removed and the ORTA route through Palgrave Forest to Duffy’s Lane was designated as a Side Trail. Bob Comfort did a GPS survey and a Temporary Map 0 was issued showing access from Coolihans Sideroad.



**Temporary Map 0**  
Red = Bruce Main Trail      Brown = New Route of Oak Ridges Moraine Trail  
Blue = Oak Ridges Moraine Palgrave Forest Side Trail



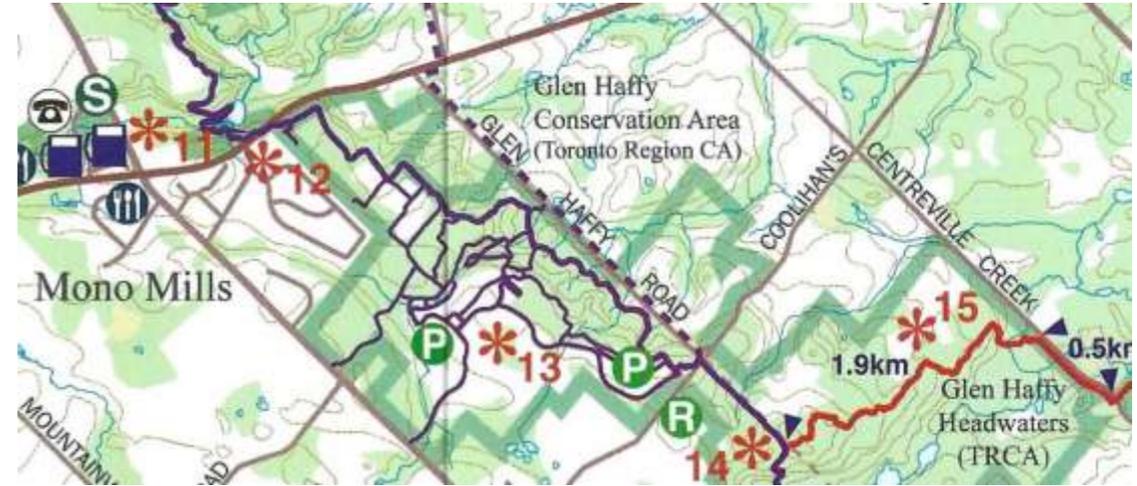
This very significant change to the ORMT was made when ORTA took over the BTA's Palgrave side trail making it our main trail joining the Bruce Trail at Glen Haffy. As BTA's Joan Richards put it: "This section is actually on the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Bruce Trail focus is on the Niagara Escarpment."

ORTA Members Frank Alexander and Lena MacDonell, both former IBM employees, had solicited a grant from their Community Action Fund towards the cost of the new West Trailhead Map and Kiosk. This was unveiled in by Dave Robitaille of IBM on September 15th 2016 in the presence of Frank (left), Lena (right) and a good number of ORTA Members. Much of this section is across TRCA lands and Mike Bender added words of support for ORTA's trail work. President Kevin Lowe and Regional Director Brian Millage responded on our behalf.

New local resident David Swiffen was enthused and became the Trail Captain!

Map 0 "Moraine Meets Escarpment" in Guidebook Edition 6.1 published in January 2017 is thus totally different from the previous editions "Humber Headwaters." The new Trailhead is accessed by a 0.7 km hike on the Bruce Trail from roadside parking on the southeast side of Coolihan's Road - Point of Interest 14\*.

From Glen Haffy hikers join the Bruce Trail to reach the western extremity of the Oak Ridges Moraine at the parking lot east of Airport Road, Mono Mills, where the junction with the Bruce Trail had been located originally. See Chapter Three page 314 and Appendix 8 page 813.



Key: Oak Ridges Moraine Trail is red. Bruce Trail is deep purple thicker line. Highway 9 going SW to Mono Mills is brown

**The new Trailhead is a fitting starting point for End2End Hikes.  
The trail to Palgrave is one of the most beautiful segments  
of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.**



*This large tree makes for a welcome mid-hike break.*

## APPENDIX 5.1 - LANDOWNERS

This list of Landowners corresponds with the "Completed Oak Ridges Moraine Trail" as shown in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of *The Guidebook* published in December 2009. By 2017 some of the private properties had changed ownership; changes continue to occur. There is no longer any section of the ORMT in the County of Simcoe. It can be appreciated that keeping in touch with Landowners is a substantial task.

### Private Landowners

Margery Coons  
 Mike O'Hara  
 Doug, Earl, Murray and William Groombridge  
 Don and Pat Watt  
 Bill Salmon  
 Katy Ginn  
 Barbara Houlding  
 Brian Gellatly  
 Sara Stevens  
 Hendrick von Kuenheim  
 George Stewart  
 Murray Wilson  
 Murray Yeo  
 Dave Barber  
  
 Puck's Farm  
  
 Mary Lake Augustinian Monastery  
  
 Seneca College King Campus  
  
 Goodwood Game Farms Ltd.  
  
 Lafarge North America  
  
 Castleton Sports Club  
  
 Percy Agricultural Society, Warkworth Fair Grounds

### Public Landowners

Simcoe County Forest  
  
 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority  
  
 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority  
  
 University of Toronto – Joker's Hill Scientific Reserve  
  
 Province of Ontario – Oak Ridges Corridor Park  
  
 York Region Forest  
  
 Durham Regional Forest  
  
 Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority  
  
 Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority  
  
 Northumberland County Forest  
  
 Nature Conservancy of Canada

### Municipalities

Dufferin County  
 Town of Mono  
  
 County of Simcoe  
 Township of Adjala – Tosoronto  
 Town of New Tecumseth  
  
 Peel Regional Municipality  
 Town of Caledon  
  
 York Regional Municipality  
 Township of King  
 Town of Aurora  
 Town of Richmond Hill  
 Township of Whitchurch-Stouffville  
  
 Durham Regional Municipality  
 Township of Uxbridge  
 Township of Scugog  
 Township of Clarington  
  
 Northumberland County  
 Municipality of Port Hope  
 Township of Hamilton  
 Township of Alnwick-Haldimand  
 Township of Cramahe  
  
 Municipality of Trent Hills  
 Town of Warkworth

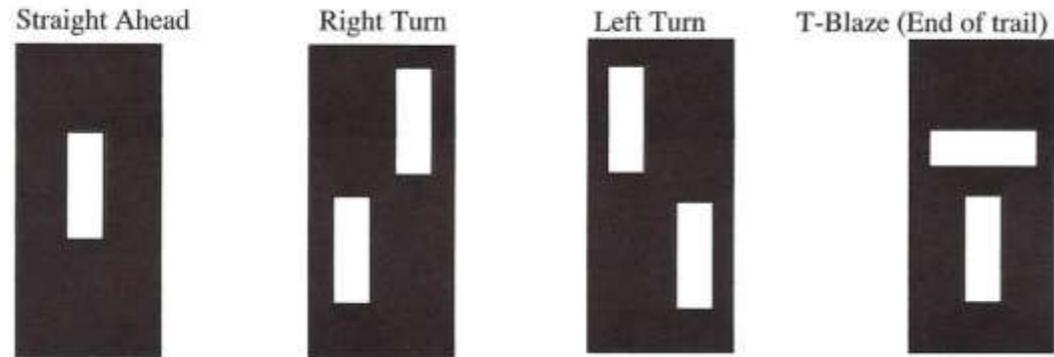
## APPENDIX 5.2 BLAZES, SIGNS, TRAIL KEYS AND GATEWAYS

### Blazes and Signs

To mark the trail along the route ORTA adopted from the outset the standard used by the Bruce Trail and elsewhere – painted white blazes for the main trail and blue for side trails. This has served well except in a few instances where the ORMT meets up with another trail system.

*Details summarised from the Trail Maintenance Manual:*

Blazes are rectangles 2 x 6 inches (5 x 15 cm.) Where there is a visibility problem with blazing on lightly coloured surfaces, a 'tuxedo blaze' is used, a white blaze framed with a larger (3x7 inch / 8 x 18 cm) black rectangle. Blazes are normally painted directly onto a tree trunk or fence post existing in an appropriate easily seen location. Where this is not possible – or in some cases not permitted by the landowner – a 4 ft. tall post may be installed.



Where further identification of the trail is required intermediate signs bearing the ORTA Logo are installed – see next page. Along streets in Aurora blazing was not permitted and directional signs were installed.

Blazing and the installation of signs is the responsibility of Trail Captains and maintenance teams. Additionally a custom sign is used in some locations, e.g. to thank the landowner for access through the property.



12" x 12" Entry Sign normally used at an access point to the trail from a road  
Specific information about the owner's permission for use may be added  
Most of the ORT Signs are on metal stock and printed in one colour.



5" x 6" intermediate sign along a Side Trail.  
The same design on white background is widely used along the Main Trail

Alternative 6" x 5" intermediate sign used along the Main Trail.

A recent alternative – a Formica type finish on a 5" x 6" metal backing. This is much more durable as, unlike the above metal signs, it is near impossible to bend.



ORTA Logo produced in full colour.

Incorporates QR Code which links to the ORTA Website



8" x 8" Sign used in Aurora indicating direction  
Available for Straight Ahead, Left Turn and above for Right Turn

12" x 12" Highway Sign

A design installed along 5<sup>th</sup> Sideroad into Mono and Highway 25 into Warkworth at the request of the Highways Departments.



**Trail Keys..Photos: Richard Knobbs of Fantasy.**

As recounted in the Addendum to Chapter Four, Trail Keys are installed at regional road crossings in York Region. Used on a number of trails across North America, being visible from the road, Trail Keys, were proposed as a better sign for indicating crossings of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.

The local company *Fantasy Sign and Display* manufactures The Trail Key of the latest long-life materials, which they claim to be the perfect solution for exterior way finding. Their exclusive Trail Key is a 190 mm (6 in) square aluminum extrusion with radius corners and is slotted for graphics panels. The standard height is 1500 mm (59 in.) Each panel is custom designed and can be easily replaced following a trail reroute. When the key beside the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum was updated a QR Code was added.



The Trail Key is supported by their Ground Key, a 915 mm (36 in) solid aluminum extruded post designed for the strongest and easiest installation. Installation has to be done by Fantasy – their staff travel across the continent.



- Here are the details which apply to each Trail Key; observe the four sides:
- Logos of ORTA, our partners and the local Municipality.
  - Street address – helpful if inviting friends to join a hike, invaluable if there’s a need to call emergency services.
  - GPS Cordinates.
  - Blazes in standard format
  - Details of where the trail is heading.

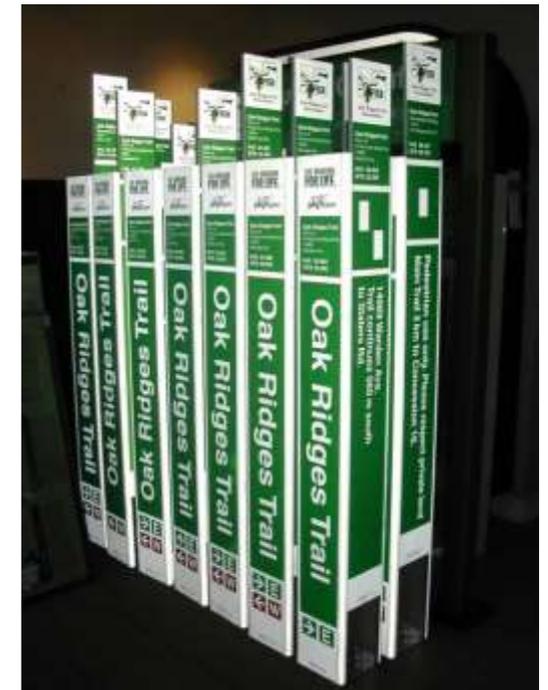
*Panels sideways to the road, one in each direction, bear the words **Oak Ridges Trail**. Of luminous material, this night time photo shows a Trail Key illuminated by a vehicle’s headlights.*

The photo opposite is at the east side of Jane Street where the Main Trail enters the copse. Towards the base is a feature used for the first time on the ORT Trail Keys. The green →E shows the way towards Mary Lake and eventually our Eastern Gateway; the red ↑W to the west. Crossing Jane Street the trail routes in a northerly direction for 0.4 km to westbound 16<sup>th</sup> Sideroad; Guidebook Map 2.

This code realizes a particularly interesting key west of Ballantrae where the trail crosses Aurora Road; Guidebook Map 4. Walking northwards out of the YRF Clarke Tract up Sandy Lane, the key is across the road. You are confronted by the green ←E indicating you must walk in a westerly direction to go east! This is in fact correct! By following this arrow, or the blaze, you turn left and go about 60 metres westward; then turn right, northward, through the YRF Patterson Tract. You will be proceeding along the Main Trail towards our Eastern Gateway.

16 Trail Keys have been installed where the Main Trail crosses significant roads:

- RR27 Previously Highway 27
- RR56 Weston Road
- RR55 Jane Street
- RR6 Keele Street
- RR53 Dufferin Street
- RR38 Bathurst Street
- RR34 Bayview Avenue
- RR12 Leslie Street
- RR8 Woodbine Avenue
- RR65 Warden Avenue
- RR3 Kennedy Road
- RR67 McCowan Road
- RR15 Aurora Road
- Provincial Highway 48
- RR30 York Durham Line
- RR40 Bloomington Road



*ORTA’s Trail Keys in Fantasy’s workshop awaiting installation.*

Whilst an attractive option, ORTA ultimately considered them rather expensive and not the best choice for Highway Signs moraine-wide.



### Highway Signs

Signs on each side of the road ahead of the trail crossing, like those on Yonge Street in Oak Ridges, might be more useful as they give the driver opportunity to draw in at the crossing.



### Gateway Kiosks

Kiosks funded by the ORMF at four principal gateways are shown in the Addendum to Chapter Three, pages 313 - 315:

**Morris Road at Highway 45** where the trail enters the main section of the Northumberland Forest.

**Warkworth** Fairgrounds in the Municipality of Trent Hills

**Castleton Sports Grounds** in the town of Cramahe.

**Western Gateway.** Originally at Mono Mills in partnership with The Bruce Conservancy this was revised and relocated at the new junction of the ORMT and the Bruce Trail at Glen Haffy.

### Information Kiosks

A number of Kiosks have been placed by our partners, with detail input by ORTA.



Sign placed by the Durham Region Highways Dept.

**Stationlands Kiosk** at Highway 50 in Palgrave.

The earlier western junction with the Bruce Trail at the Caledon Rail Trail; see Caledon Chapter page 511. Designed to mimic a railway station. On the opposite side of Highway 50 there is a map of the trails (the ORMT is shown in purple.) and continuing east ORTA Logos are included on signs to Mount Pleasant Road



**Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve.** TRCA has installed kiosks at Bathurst Glen Golf Club, Bond Lake and Old Colony Road. Marker Posts along this trail include ORTA Logos. Kiosks with maps are anticipated for the east section under development.

*The Old Colony Road kiosk has been rebuilt with updated mapping.*



*This includes accessibility data, although no mention is made of UTAP.*



Above left **Secord Forest.** Perhaps the oldest kiosk to which ORTA contributed behind the Secord Pond parking lot.



Above right at **Walker Woods**



*Sometimes there's a proliferation of signs - spot our blaze opposite the Weather Radar Tower, Uxbridge Concession 7!*

**Palgrave Forest and Wildlife Area.** TRCA have installed Information Kiosks at the parking lots. Detail maps show the ORMT and our side trail, and the several other trails which are more suitable for mountain bikers.

*Numbers refer to points on TRCA's Maps. You may find a supply at the kiosk! The tip of Marker Posts point North.*





**Whitchurch Conservation Area, LSCRA.** Access to the ORMT in this forested area was shown for a while by Greenbelt Walks signs on Highway 404.

**Case Woodlot.** ORTA has a key to an "Information Cabinet" placed by the Town of Aurora where the trail exits the woodlot at Henderson Drive.

There can be confusion when the ORMT is in the area of other trails which also use standard white blazes, such as the Bruce the Ganaraska. So, at various locations along our trails there are signs to confirm that hikers are in fact on our trail



In King Township there is a number of signs by Landowners:

**Koffler Bales Side Trail** - an Information Kiosk alongside the roadside parking off Bathurst Street.

**York Region** have signboards with maps at most of their forest trail locations.

**Happy Valley.** The Nature Conservancy has provided several information boards telling stories of the properties now in their care.

**Toronto Carrying Place.** At the corner of 16th Side-road and Weston Road there is a sign commemorating ORTA's planting of trees. Chapter Five, page 506.

