

Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club
54th Annual General Meeting
Sunday, June 4, 2017
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Hall, 20 Russell Street East, Thornbury

Directors Present: Jill Smith-Brodie, Ros Rossetti, Mike Arkless, Joelle Martin, Glenda Collings, Will Overton, Stew Hilts, Margaret Yaraskavitch, Joan Nuffield, Bruce King, Monica Tirion

Regrets: Bill McMurray, Kelly Killoran

1.0 Welcome and introduction of Board Members and Guests was done by Jill Smith-Brodie
Ros Rossetti confirmed quorum for the meeting.

2.0 Approval of proposed agenda

Motion: To approve the proposed agenda by Peter Ryan

Seconder: Blain Horsley

All in favour.

3.0 Approval of minutes of June 7, 2016 AGM

Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 7, 2016 AGM by Margaret Yaraskavitch

Seconder: Peter Ryan

All in favour.

4.0 **Motion to approve changes to Club By-Laws**

Ros Rossetti explained the requested changes:

- to change the dates of the meetings to coincide with the change in the timing of the Financial Statement year-end to be consistent with the BTC,
- in addition to the 4 meetings per year, the Board would like to be allowed to vote electronically, when necessary.
- the BTC – Club Director Representative's term has been changed to 3 years at the BTC Board, and should also be reflected in the Club By-Laws. All other terms will remain one year.

Motion: To approve the changes requested to the Club By-Laws by Jack Morgan

Seconder: Mike Osborn

All in favour.

5.0 Directors' Reports

5.1 Trail Maintenance & Development – Will Overton

- an unusual number of Trail Captains resigned since autumn/16. Nine; but have all been replaced either i) by the retiring TC, ii) by the Volunteer Chair's assistance, iii) by other TCs or iv) by Blain Horsley talking with hikers as he performs his chain saw jobs. N.B. Margot and Rick Byers are also landowners of part of the section they will manage,
- the chain sawyers have been busy every month of the winter/spring of 2017, and the mowers are just now beginning their grassy tasks. The Trail Captains have nearly all sent in their Spring//17 Trail Status Reports,
- the Wodehouse Karst S.T (1.5. km) has been officially opened but could not be traversed because the ephemeral lake was still there,
- application to the GSCA for a 3rd Line stream crossing in Municipality of Grey Highlands (with the collaboration of the Meaford District Ridge Runner Snow Mobile Club), has been made, and
- the new Main Trail section of our BT through the Daphne and Gordon Nicholls Nature Reserve (i.e. north of Grey 40) has been flagged by BVC members and visited and approved by the BTC environmental staff from Dundas House. Official opening to occur on Wednesday, July 26/17.

5.2 Trail Activities – Joelle Martin

- Varied outings (walks, hikes, snowshoeing, X-C skiing) were offered throughout the year, all led by our capable hike leaders.

- The Beaver Bites Challenge, comprising of a series of 7 hikes to cover all of the Beaver Valley side trails, was introduced this year. The new Beaver Bites Badge is awarded to those who complete the challenge.
- A Solar Viewing event was organized and presented at the E.C. Carr Astronomical Observatory on June 2nd. Another astronomical event is planned for the fall.

5.3 Land Stewardship – Stew Hilts

- Daphne and Gordon Nicholls Nature Reserve
The highlight of Land Stewardship work this year is the new Daphne and Gordon Nicholls Nature Reserve. Consisting of two adjoining blocks of land immediately north of Grey Rd. 40, this new property fills the last gap in protecting the trail all the way from Webwood Falls to Griersville Rock. The Nicholls family has donated the funds for this property in memory of Daphne, and Gordon is taking an active interest in our new trail route through it. The new trail will be ready later this summer.
- Database Development
Thanks to Mike Osborn and Bob Hann, we have made enormous strides in developing a club-wide online information system. Starting with the Land Stewardship records provided by the BTC, this has expanded to include much more club-specific information. The availability of this online system will be a big advantage for on-the-ground care of our trail and properties. We lead the 9 BTC clubs in developing this.
- Invasive Species Campaigns
Joan Nuffield and Bob Hann continue to lead the charge to control invasive species, especially Garlic Mustard and Buckthorn. Individual members and Trail Captains continued to deal with smaller infestations of Garlic Mustard on their properties, and for larger infestations, at Old Baldy and Loree, this year Joan reached out to the general public for help. The sunny Saturday pull at Loree attracted 35 adults and one toddler, while the rainy Sunday pull at Old Baldy attracted 16 adults and five young kids. It is expected that for large infestations, we will continue to ask for and receive help from the general public. As of this writing, a “make-up session” for Old Baldy is in planning. A special thanks to those “old hands” of the Garlic Mustard Wars, who helped teach the newbies how to recognize, pull and bag GM. A very special thanks to Joelle Martin, who helped at BOTH public pulls!
- Bob organized the spring Buckthorn destruction efforts, with lots of volunteers pitching in to help. We particularly appreciate the contribution of Bill Moses, of the Sydenham Club, who did the spraying of Buckthorn stumps for us this year. We are making steady progress on eliminating as much Buckthorn as possible!
- Ongoing Land Steward Work
On top of these major steps forward, all the usual land stewardship work and reporting goes on, supported by over 40 Land Stewards who monitor over 50 properties. We deal with specific problems as they arise, and seem to be successfully caring for the land BTC owns in the valley.

5.4 Landowner Relations & Land Securement–Bill McMurray, Jack Morgan

- This year the BTC acquired 12 properties for approximately \$3 million, totalling 1100 acres, which added 9km of main trail, and 5 km of side trail.
- 4 of the new properties were in the BV section: 2 were the Daphne and Gordon Nicholls Nature Reserve, the Lower Valley Road Nature Reserve, and the Susan Harvey “Randall Taylor Easement.”
- The BTC is always working to identify and discuss with owners’ ways to acquire properties in perpetuity, preferably by donation of land, or by acquisition with financial donations. In addition, permanent easements are now allowed.

5.5 Publicity – Margaret Yaraskavitch

- E-notes communicator, Christine Blake, has maintained this direct communication with our members and is now stepping down. We are looking for a volunteer to take on this important task.

- Irena Marinko, continues to work on making information flow on our website fluidly and more content will be adjusted with the help of the relevant Board members and BVBTC volunteers. Design changes will be seen as well.
- Joan Nuffield continues to provide a quality newsletter available electronically, with some copies mailed to members.
- Beaver Bytes is the electronic newsletter that comes to members every month, with the exception of Beaver Tales newsletter months. Irena Marinko is the editor.
- Facebook “likers” continue to increase and a variety of messages related to the BV Club and the BTC are posted. Some members like the page, most “likers” are outside of our geographic area.
- Participation in events such as the Canadian Snowshoe Championship at Craighleith and displays at farmer’s markets in Meaford and Thornbury, help to keep the BT in the minds of the public.
- The Trail Angel program is a great way for our members to have conversations with hikers and thereby serve as ambassadors for the BT and the BVBTC
- Making Connections with Partners - Participating in organizations like Grey Highlands Tourism Advisory Committee, Visit Grey, helps to reinforce the BT as an important natural resource for our local people and visitors to the area. The annual brochure swap event for Grey Bruce was an opportunity to disseminate our BTC and BVBTC print materials.

5.6 Newsletter/Special Events – Joan Nuffield

- Newsletter - the Co-Editor, Lisa Sammut, has resigned to volunteer closer to home, she will be missed. Anyone wishing to fill the position, or to do layout for the newsletter in future, should contact the Editor Joan Nuffield.
- Fundraiser - Trivia Night, April 22, 2017 - we had a total of 9 tables at Trivia Night this year. We are looking for someone to take on the organizing of this event.
- Fundraiser - Barn Dance - assuming we do obtain the required municipal permit, the Barn Dance fundraiser will take place on Saturday, September 16, at the Little-Davey barn. A plan is in place for upgrades to the barn and to procedures (e.g., designated volunteers to handle emergency response) and facilities (e.g., having fire extinguishers on hand) for the night of the Barn Dance.

5.7 Financial Statements 2016/2017 and Budget 2017/2018 – Mike Arkless

1. 2016/17 actual

- A very healthy year from a financial standpoint.
- Donations are inflated this year by the inclusion of \$1,400 from Grey Bruce Community Funding, \$1,000 from the family of Linda Murray and \$250 from Grey Bruce re the 50th Anniversary of BTC.
- A strong year in respect of Fundraising activities - netting a total of over \$4,000 from the efforts of our members.
- The T & D costs reflect a lot of activity and work throughout the period and include the non-recurring costs associated with the Webwood viewing platform (these are offset by the GBCF donation). Modest costs associated with the recent garlic pull are included in this line item.
- The format of the accounts was changed to included an "Operating Surplus" line, which stands at almost \$6,200, and then shown separately the BTC donation of \$10,000 that we have booked in this year (comprised of payments of \$5k and \$2k already made) and a further \$3k which we will hand over to BTC at the AGM. We retain over \$10,000 in our TD bank account which is comfortably above the \$5,000 minimum holding that targeted.

2. 2017/18 budget proposal

- To keep things relatively simple the prepared budget for 2016/17 assumes a full 12-month period, based largely on the 2016/17 actuals. The plan assumes that we will undertake similar fundraising activities to those undertaken this year, although I have removed additional donations that we received this year which may not necessary repeat.

The key adjustments made include:

- reducing the donations line to take out the large one-off payments received this year
 - rounding out the major line items, to remove the degree of precision incorrectly implied by trying for a specific point number!
 - reducing the T & D line to exclude the impact of the Webwood spending in 2016/17
 - adding a \$1,000 contingency line.
- Assuming that a further \$5,000 donation to BTC will be made at this time next year (although an interim payment is also possible).
 - All of the above will leave us with a modest net deficit for the year, but keep our cash position strong, and again above the minimum \$5,000 balance throughout the period.
 - Attached is a Word document containing the Income Statement and Balance Sheet for 2016/17 and the Income Statement 2017/18 proposal, which will be voted upon at the AGM on Sunday.

3. Other

- No further updates have been received from head office on the proposal to introduce a new accounting system in the second half of 2017. This could be a major undertaking so the Quickbooks system will be kept in reserve until things have been successfully transitioned!

Motion: To approve the 2016/17 Financial Statements by Mike Arkless.

Secunder: Ros Rossetti

All in Favour.

Motion: To approve 2017/18 Budget by Mike Osborn.

Secunder: Rick Byers

All in Favour.

5.8 Members & Volunteers – Kelly Killoran

- Last year as the BTC changed over their membership data collection program, they ran into a number of issues. During the time period from June 2016 – Jan 2017 there were no updates of new members or reminders to our lapsed members. Over the last 4 months we have been updating our own membership list by sending out welcome letters and reminders to renew, to increase membership levels. As of April 2017, there were 537 members, representing a 7% decrease from April 2016 as a result of the data collection issues (consistent with other clubs).
- List of positions held by volunteers:

2016	2017	
147	149	Active Volunteers
		Positions
13	12	Executive Board
38	35	Hike Leaders/Committee
63	60	Trail Captains
29	38	Trail Maintenance
50	56	Land Stewards
29	38	Support Volunteers
222	248	Volunteer Positions

- Some volunteers hold more than one volunteer position
- This year our 2017 volunteer celebration will be held at the Beaver Valley Ski Club, October 28, 2017. Our list of guests will include both our volunteers and our landowners. We are having our celebration on a Saturday evening to accommodate our weekenders

5.9 Archivist – Fred Young

- Fred has completed archiving about half of the documents digitally, and is hoping to be finished in a couple of months
- Most of the information was compiled from boxes of newsletters and documents that Ruth Calvert had kept, while the remainder was from Grey Roots.
- A big thank you to Mike Osborn and Bob Hann who have helped Fred, in addition to Araby Lochart, Jack Morgan, Will Overton, and John Corrigan.

5.10 BTC – Club Director – Bruce King

- Over the past year the Board of the BTC has spent a substantial amount of time on governance issues. This has resulted in extensive changes to the bylaws, which will be printed in the Bruce Trail Magazine this summer, and voted on at the BTC AGM on September 23. Many of the changes are housekeeping in nature, but there are significant changes related to the process by which the clubs nominate directors to the BTC Board, and the directors are elected
- 2016 – 2017 has been very successful in both fundraising and land acquisition to secure the trail. However, it has become obvious to the Board and Staff of the BTC that we need to substantially accelerate the pace of both if we hope to secure a continuous corridor and trail. Major efforts are being devoted to this.
- The Board has devoted considerable attention to government relations and starting to update the BTC strategic plan. The move (in June 2016) of the BTC office to a new location in Dundas has improved working conditions for staff, and provides good meeting space.

5.11 President's Report – Jill Smith-Brodie

- The Bruce Trail Conservancy officially marks its 50th Anniversary next Saturday, such an amazing milestone. Our Club is meeting today at its 54th AGM. All of this made possible thanks to the commitment and passion of thousands of volunteers, landowners and leaders with a remarkable vision that is as alive today as in days gone by.
- Here are some highlights of the year to date:
 - two different work parties composed of volunteers from the Beaver Valley Club, as well as other BTC Clubs, travelled to Costa Rica in December & March to work with our Friendship Trail partner on the Sendero Pacifico
 - thanks to Glenda Collings' efficient hiking schedule, the baton travelled through the Beaver Valley with the help of members and families from near and far, as well as a Scout Group, John Burton's Grey Highlands Secondary School's environmental class, and at one point the chainsaw crew consisting of Blain Horsley and Paul Parkin. The Mayor of Grey Highlands, Paul McQueen and Councillor Cathy Little were there as we received the baton from the Blue Mountain Club. Marguerite, Geoff and Kate Solomon, family of our Club's pioneer Keith Solomon, were present as we passed the baton to the Sydenham Club.
 - in the Beaver Valley Club section, 2 new Nature Reserves have been established since our last AGM, the Lower Valley Road Nature Reserve, and the Daphne & Gordon Nicholls Nature Reserve, together conserving 97 Beaver Valley acres, and 1.9 km of main Trail. Will Overton, Blain Horsley, Jack Morgan and I had the pleasure of flagging what will be a new section of main Trail through the two properties the Nicholls family donated to the BTC in memory of Daphne.
 - a pair of Sandhill cranes were photographed nesting in wetlands on one of our Bruce Trail owned properties in the Beaver Valley. We are most happy to guarantee them and their future generations a secured home

- on May 13 local historian Dale Fawcett and our own Stew Hilts cut the blue ribbon and officially opened the new Wodehouse Karst Side Trail.
- our invasive species champions Joan Nuffield of garlic mustard renown and Bob Hann, better known as Buckthorn Bob, were relentless in pursuit of their eradication of vermin vegetation.
- last September's Barn Dance was so well attended and appreciated that plans are underway to make this an annual event
- our partnering with the Royal Astronomical Society for 2 events, a solar viewing and night sky viewing with proceeds going to support our two organizations.
- Our Challenges are:
 - to maintain our roster of volunteers and recruit others to join our team
 - to find ways to energize our fundraising initiatives
- Retiring Directors:

One of our 13 Directors is retiring. Joelle Martin, who has been an integral part of our Club since 1991 has been instrumental in the success and popularity of the Beaver Valley Club and has instilled into so many people the love of hiking. She will be missed.
- On Saturday, June 17th Joelle Martin will lead what she says is her final hike for our Club at Old Baldy. This to be followed by a potluck picnic at the Kimberley Hall.
- On June 25th, a team of intrepid hikers will undertake the 50 km Fundraising Challenge. Undaunted by the hazards of steep ladders, rocks, boulders, bridges and boardwalks of the Bruce Peninsula they will march steadfastly toward the finish line. All funds raised will go towards purchasing land to secure our Trail for future generations. Club participants seeking sponsorship are Neil McFadgen, Art Smith and the Eager Beaver Valley Twosome (aka Jill & Hilary). Sponsorship can be done online at brucetrail.org.

Motion: to accept reports by Joelle Martin

Secunder: Araby Lockhart

All in Favour

6.0 Report from Nominating Committee & **Election of Directors** – Ros Rossetti

6.1 Introduction to New Board Members: Joelle – Glenda Collings

- Glenda is a very active new member of the community, and will be a wonderful addition as the Trail Activities Director
- It should be noted that there are still two vacancies on the Board, for the Fundraising Director, and a Member-at-Large

Motion: to elect the directors of the Board as nominated by Peter Ryan

Secunder: Araby Lockhart

All in Favour.

7.0 Other Business

7.1 Guest Speaker - Warren Bell, Chair BTC Board

- Strategy – due to the increasing value of land, and development, the BTC wants to accelerate land acquisition in order to secure approximately 900 km of trail, by acquiring 1004 properties
- There is currently a new phase of the Escarpment Legacy Campaign with a push to increase large donations for land acquisition, along with huge efforts being made to encourage land donations and encourage permanent land easements in order to secure the BT
- There have been \$16 million in pledges so far, \$5 million in donations, with \$1.3 million in pledges coming from the BTC Board of Directors alone.
- Currently there are 16.5 staff at the head office, 1500 volunteers, and almost 10,000 members
- Governance – Bill Murphy led a project to ensure the BTC was following best practices for governance, which entailed 90 interview hours

- The results have led to maintaining 19 Board members, but gradually changing voting power so that all Directors have equal votes, and ensuring that the streaming is identical for club reps and members at large
- These governance changes have been well received

7.2 Presentation – Jack Morgan

- Jack delivered a wonderful speech to Joelle Martin, with heartfelt compassion and a fun-loving sense of humour to honour her astonishing dedication to the BVBTC over 26 years
- Joelle was Secretary for 10 years, in addition to various other positions as Trail Captain, Trail Activities Director, Hike Leader, Trail Angel, and over 4 years as President and Past President
- Joelle has fought Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard, she has painted blazes, and fittingly she carried the baton for the final leg of the BVBTC section of the 50th anniversary relay
- Joelle has been a wonderful example to all, she has encouraged so many, and mostly, she has been a doer extraordinaire!
- Thank you, Joelle.

7.3 Keith Solomon Award – Ros Rossetti

- Joan Nuffield and Bob Haan were awarded this honoured award
- Since they joined the BVBTC in 2008, they have worked tirelessly, as Trail Captains, Land Stewards, organized Buckthorn work parties and Garlic Mustard education seminars and pull parties, Joan is the editor of the Beaver Tails newsletter, and has organized the Barn Dance and Trivia night, while Bob has been a mower captain, and helped as a “google driver”
- Congratulations to Joan and Bob

7.4 Planned Giving – Ros Rossetti

- The Escarpment Legacy Campaign is an initiative to get large individual donations through planned giving, through bequests in wills – by either lump sum or other – all forms of donations are appreciated

7.5 Donation to BTC – Mike Arkless

- Mike presented a \$3,000 cheque to Warren Bell from the BVBTC

Motion: to Adjourn 54th AGM by Norine Baron

Secunder: Mike Osborn.