



The Ganaraska News

FALL 2026 (September 1 to December 31, 2026)

GHTA Signage Project (Simcoe County) Frieda Baldwin

The Board of Directors of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association recently successfully secured two vital grants to promote the Ganaraska Hiking Trail. The County of Simcoe's "Experience Simcoe" grant awarded the association \$10,000 to install trailhead signage at county forests and along other trail sections in Simcoe County. This signage will encourage hikers to explore all 500 kilometers of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail and encourage newcomers to join local hiking clubs. Because this is a matching "50/50" grant covering half of the total costs, the association must raise the remaining half. To help meet this requirement, the GHTA secured a second grant for \$6950 from the Rotary Club of Midland, which will fund signs specifically across the North Simcoe portion of the trail.



The project will allow us to install large trail head signs (similar to above illustration) at the following trail heads: Charlebois & Martin's Valley forests (near Midland), and Lot 100 and Line 8 parking lots in Oro Medonte. For these large (48" x 72") trail head signs we are cooperating with the Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club (SCMBC) and the County of Simcoe GIS department is providing the mapping.

We are also working on 11 smaller (18" x 24") pedestal signs, which will be installed along high visibility spots along the Ganaraska Hiking Trail. The following locations have been approved in principle by the property owners:

1. Angus: at the Alma Street parking lot of the Barrie-Collingwood Railtrail
2. Midhurst: at the County of Simcoe Admin building, next to the gazebo
3. Tiny Marsh: at the Visitor Centre

4. Tay Shore Trail: at the Hogg Trestle lookout (where the GBSR snowmobile trail meets the Tay Shore Trail) or at the Port McNicoll split
5. Midland: at Pete Petterson Park
6. Midland: at Midland Bay Landing
7. Orillia: at Tudhope Park
8. Wasaga Beach: at the trail entrance at Veterans Drive
9. Oro Medonte: at the P2 parking in Copeland Forest
10. Midhurst: at the Smith SCF parking on Gill Road
11. Springwater: across from the Fort Willow stairs on the North Simcoe Rail trail/TCT

Prior to installation, the sign manufacturer will confirm the exact location, after doing the locates to make sure the signpost is not interfering with anything in the ground below.

The pedestal signs will feature a local map of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail, as well as an insert that shows the entire approx. 500 km trail. The sign will also explain and encourage hikers to explore the Ganaraska Hiking Trail by following the blazes.

We are hard at work and expect to complete this project by April 2027 or earlier.

Our GHTA team and their roles are as follows:

- Pat Tuero - Project Manager
- Victor Tolgyessy – Cartographer
- Rosalind Daschuk - Graphic Designer
- John Sloan - Trail Director
- Frieda Baldwin – President

Musing on the Music of the Leaves

Some memories from Lana – the outgoing editor

My Dad, Jim Laking, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to share our 100-acre forest property with Ganaraska hikers, skiers and snowshoeing enthusiasts for many years. We have an annual snow day on the third Saturday of January. My husband and I have also hosted some Mad River short hikes there in spring and fall. We are always happy to share our property with new guests and able to tell our stories.

This property has been in my family for over 100 years. My great grandfather bought it in 1922 after it had been logged for white pine. Even today, the land shows evidence of that time. The land supported my great grandpa. He collected firewood for local schools, gathered wild honey and sold ginseng. After his death, his son continued stewardship of the land. Wilbur Laking was awarded a tree farmer award.

It was my grandpa's second wife – my Grandma Jean – who changed the idea of our woodlot from being just a place 'the men' went to do work into a place all can enjoy. She extolled the benefits of forest bathing, bird watching and hiking to look for wildflowers or deer. During one of our picnic lunches, Grandma Jean shared this observation. She said, "Listen to the leaves and the music they make as a series of breezes move through". There was a large poplar tree nearby. She noted that a fresh breeze caused the poplar leaves to start the music. Like an orchestra piece where a lone flute introduces a new melody. Then the other leaves pick up the melody and reinforce its beauty. All that music of the forest is missed unless you stop, stay quiet, observe and listen.

MEET YOUR GANARASKA HIKING TRAIL ASSOCIATION TEAM

EXECUTIVE

President: Frieda Baldwin

Secretary: Steve Pogue

Vice President: *vacant*

Treasurer: Pascal Monat

Trail/Landowners Relations Director: John Sloan

CLUB PRESIDENTS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Barrie – John Rudnickas, Susan Lee, Gary Norton

Kawartha – Stephen Kay, George Boyd, Carol Storey

Mad River – Sharon Striegl, Lynn McIlwaine, Don Johnson

Midland – Joanne Sanders, Christina Adamson (co-presidents), Joe Davis

Orillia – Leslie Raymond, Carol Strickland

Pine Ridge – Cynthia Warn, John Ambler

Wasaga Beach – Lorraine Van Vlymen, Jenny Schimmel

Wilderness – Rob Halupka, Carolyn Humphreys, Billy Cudmore

OFFICERS

Membership Director: Christine Cornu

Badge Officer: Jacquie Van Dyke

GHTA Archivist: Steve Pogue

GHTA Hike Ontario Rep: Tracy Parsons

GHTA Nature Canada Rep: Irene Bell

QE II Wildland Prov. Park Rep: Rob Halupka

Couchiching Conservancy Rep: Billy Cudmore

Web Content: Campbell Britton

Newsletter Editor: Liz Stanton

Bookkeeper: Pascal Monat

Webmaster: Billy Cudmore

Social Media Coordinator: John Mumford

Publicity Coordinator: *Vacant*

Training Coordinator: Mary Skinner

Mapping Coordinator: Victor Tolgyessy

Signage Coordinator: Pat Tuero

Assistant Treasurer: Ann Kivinen

Mapping Liaison: John Sloan

ASSOCIATION AND CLUB LINKS

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association: www.ganaraska-hiking-trail.org

Facebook.com/GanaraskaHikingTrailAssociation

Facebook.com/groups/GanaraskaHikingTrailGroup

Barrie: Facebook.com/GHTAbarrie

Kawartha: [facebook.com/kawarthahikingclub](https://Facebook.com/kawarthahikingclub)

Mad River: Facebook.com/GHTAmadriver

Midland: Facebook.com/GHTAmidland

Orillia: Facebook.com/GHTAorillia

Pine Ridge: www.pineridgehikingclub.ca

Wilderness: Facebook.com/GHTAwilderness

Please use Contact Us on the Association Website to send us a message!



Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc.

President's report

Newsletter – Fall 2026

Fall is upon us... the best hiking season of the year: very few bugs, not as hot anymore, gorgeous fall colours, less tourists, mushrooms galore, etc. So, happy hiking to you all.

Our Annual General Meeting was held Saturday April 18, at beautiful Tiffin Conservation Area. We did not have anyone step forward to succeed our outgoing Vice President **Isaac Strang**. We also thanked **Lana Johnson**, **Fern Splichal** and **Tracy Parsons** who were stepping down from their respective roles.

Tracy Parsons is staying on as the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association representative on the board of Hike Ontario. The following accepted new roles: **Gary Norton** joined the Risk Management Committee, **John Mumford** is our social media coordinator and has arranged our new GHTA logoed merchandise, **Billy Cudmore** accepted to manage our new website project, and **Rosalind Daschuk** agreed to help with Graphic Design.

Some of our hiking clubs have now adopted the Hike Registration platform which has been rolled out to other Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association (GHTA) clubs. The new system will benefit the clubs by providing a form that captures participants' names and contact info, their emergency contact info, and compliance with our Waiver of Responsibility/Assumption of Liability. Hike leaders no longer must have hard copy waivers signed for non-members and store the waivers. It is also easier for the hike leaders to contact participants in case of a cancellation or change of time, location, etc. For work parties, especially those involving chainsaws, a waiver still must be signed by participants. The waiver is stored on our website under Resources.

This year, we switched insurance providers. We are now covered under the Hike Ontario insurance policy where previously we were under Ontario Nature's program. Our old policy did not provide coverage for biking and paddling outings, whereas the insurance provided by Hike Ontario does. It should be noted though that biking and paddling outings must be "infrequent" (i.e. once or twice a month), and the club's focus must remain on hiking. Hike leaders should also make note that the insurance does not cover hikes that cross frozen lakes or rivers, so please refrain from doing so on organized GHTA hikes.

A very successful chainsaw course was held May 2 & 3 on the property of a Midland club member. Sixteen individuals graduated from the course. Eight people were Ganaraska members while the others were from the Oak Ridges Trail Association and the Grand Valley Trail Association.

As a follow-up to the famous ice storm of 2025, we applied to the Ontario Government's Disaster Relief Grant and submitted over \$4000 in ice storm related expenses. We recently heard that we will only get just over \$900 from this grant. Disappointing.

Our member numbers are dwindling a bit. The Oro Medonte club felt overwhelmed with their club responsibilities, and they have decided to disband. The Midland and Barrie clubs will take over trail maintenance of the Oro-Medonte section. The Oro-Medonte members have been welcomed into other clubs including Barrie, Orillia and Mad River.

Another problem that recently popped up is Winter Parking Restrictions, specifically in Tiny Township (near Midland), which has a 24 hour ban on parking on roadsides in winter. Most other municipalities along our 500 km trail are usually completing their winter maintenance by midday. The Midland club made a deputation to Tiny Township council on March 11, asking for a revisit of their by-laws. No response yet but hopefully before winter really starts. Please refer to winter parking restrictions in other municipalities on the Resources page of our website.

Now for some good news! The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association was successful in securing two grants to promote the GHTA: a \$10,000 grant from Simcoe County Tourism and a \$6950 grant from the Rotary Club of Midland. More details in the lead story of the newsletter. We recently produced an 8.5 x 11 flyer to promote the GHTA and published a press release (thank you Monica Kee for your help with this) which got us some good exposure in local Simcoe County on-line papers and on CTV News Barrie. We need to do some similar outreach in our eastern flank (Wilderness, Kawartha, Pine Ridge).

We are also looking forward to the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association's 60th anniversary in 2028. You may recall that we celebrated our 50th anniversary at Lakehead University in Orillia in collaboration with Hike Ontario's AGM and Summit. It was a great success. The GHTA board agreed to host the 2028 Hike Ontario Summit. The Midland club agreed to help host it.

In closing, remember... getting outside is good for your inside! So go hiking and enjoy the outdoors.

Frieda Baldwin

EXPLORE MORE. EXPERIENCE MORE.

Use code **CANADASKA** and for each tour booked by your club for 2027, we will donate \$25 to the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association.

Portugal Hiking 9 Days: April 2, 2027	DOUBLE \$6,795*	SINGLE \$8,195*
NEW: Sacred Trails of Haida Gwaii 7 Days: May 1, 2027 – SOLD OUT!	DOUBLE \$8,695*	SINGLE \$9,795*
NEW: Japan's Golden Route 16 Days: May 12, 2027	DOUBLE \$13,995*	SINGLE \$17,795*
Saskatchewan Hiking 10 Days: June 6, 2027	DOUBLE \$5,695*	SINGLE \$6,795*
Yukon Hiking 12 Days: June 18, 2027	DOUBLE \$9,995*	SINGLE \$11,695*
Newfoundland Coast-to-Coast 12 Days: July 24, 2027	DOUBLE \$8,995*	SINGLE \$10,595*
P.E.I. Hiking 8 Days: July 11, August 29, 2027	DOUBLE \$5,895*	SINGLE \$7,095*
NEW: Camino Francés Walk 14 Days: September 30, 2027	DOUBLE \$8,895*	SINGLE \$9,695*

***GUARANTEED DEPARTURES**

PRICE INCLUDES: Roundtrip airfare from Toronto, Connections Program, coach transportation, accommodation, meals and highlights as listed on website, all entry fees and passes, local guides and Tour Director. Prices are in Canadian dollars, are per person and include HST.

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Our New Newsletter Editor

In our last issue, the team had expected Rosalind Daschuk to take the position of Newsletter editor. It turns out that the best fit for Rosalind now is to assist with the new signage project using her graphic design skills. The search continued and we have landed with Liz Stanton. Liz is a new member of the Barrie Club.



Liz retired a couple of years ago after a long career in programme management in the non-profit sector. She now spends much of her time on artistic pursuits including landscape photography.

Please continue with your excellent support for Liz. Both Lana and Liz have worked on this issue which is a good way to transition.

Open Positions in the GHTA

The Vice-President, Publicity Officer positions are open.
Please see the job description below:

	Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. VICE PRESIDENT, GHTA JOB DESCRIPTION
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This position is elected by the members, annually at the AGM.
Average time commitment: approximately 2 hours per month.
Qualifications: the ideal candidate will possess:

- a passion for hiking,
- ability to communicate online, and in person
- a commitment to help make the Association thrive.

Duties:

1. Take on the responsibilities of the President when the President is unable to fulfill those activities.
2. Attend meetings of the Board of Directors, and the Executive.
3. Provide input to operational issues being discussed during meetings and ad-hoc between meetings.
4. Take on certain projects, as needed and time permitting.



Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc.

GHTA INC. PUBLICITY OFFICER

Job Description

The duties of the Publicity Officer include:

1. Ensure the Association Facebook Page or other social media have up to date postings and information. Encourage club Facebook coordinators to post on a regular basis.
2. Research for physical venues to promote the Ganaraska Hiking Association Inc., such as Toronto Outdoor show, health fares; organize GHTA Inc. presence there.
3. Write and send articles to local newspapers promoting the GHTA.
4. Update and coordinate printing of the membership brochure as needed from time to time.
5. Arrange distribution of the membership brochures to the clubs according to their needs.

Rotary Club Support

By John Sloan, [GHTA Trail and Landowners Relations Director](#)



The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association wants all members to know about the financial and resource support we have received recently from local Rotary Clubs.

The Barrie Rotary Club has donated both funding and people to help with the water crossing structures that have been built in the Simcoe County Forest Orrock Creek tract (between Old Second South and Gill Road on the Barrie trail).

The Midland Rotary Club has made a generous financial contribution to our current signage project which will help us display information about the Ganaraska Hiking Trail in multiple locations along our trail in Simcoe County.

The generosity of the Rotary organization has been tremendously helpful to the GHTA and made these projects possible, and we say, "thank you". If you know any Rotary Club members in your area, please let them know how impactful their help has been to the GHTA organization.

This photo shows one of the bridges made possible by the financial and resource support of the Barrie Rotary Club.

GHTA Trail and Landowner Relations:

Please send all reports to John Sloan at trails@gha.ca.

GHTA Mapping

Anyone interested should contact either John Sloan at mapping-liaison@gha.ca or Victor Tolgyessy at mapping-coordinator@gha.ca for more details.

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Signage

For information or signs, contact Pat Tuero at Signage@gha.ca

Certified Hike Leader Training

Mary Skinner, Training Coordinator

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association members can now access online training for Certified Hike Leader status. The training involves two online sessions through Hike Ontario. Visit their website for the next available courses:

<https://hikeontario.com/takeacourse/trainingcourses/certified-hike-leader/>

Fifty percent of the course fee will be reimbursed by GHTA upon completion of the online course. The other fifty percent will be reimbursed once the member has led three official club hikes. Have your club president let Mary Skinner know when you have finished the course and the three hikes. We keep a record of certified members for insurance purposes. Contact Mary at training@gha.ca

Anyone interested in obtaining Emergency First Aid training is also encouraged to contact Mary.

Supporting the Association

Annual Membership fee is \$ 30.00 per household.

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. is a registered charitable organization (Charitable Registration No 84744 7414 RR0001), and issues tax receipts for donations over \$25.

You can easily add a donation when renewing your membership or use the Donate page on the website to submit a donation at any time. You can also mail a cheque to the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc., P.O. Box 693, Orillia, ON L3V 6K7. Tax receipts are mailed before February 28 the following year.

New GHTA Branded Merchandise John Mumford



Breaking News! The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. is now offering some GHTA logoed products for you to proudly wear. The GHTA merch site is now open! The selection is still small, but we hope to add some brighter colours soon. All items are unisex.

<https://northboundapparelco.ca/collections/ganaraska-hiking-trail>



Aside from the Northbound offerings, there are some GHTA logoed neck gaiters for \$18.50 plus shipping.

If interested, contact John Mumford directly for the gaiters at sociamedia@gha.ca or by Voice/Text 905-715-1440.

Archaeology and Adventure

Indigenous Engagement Committee | Teika Viducis

Every person brings the context of their lives to a hike; anyone who has walked with me will tell you that my profession shapes every adventure. I'm an Ontario Archaeologist who has worked province-wide, including across Cree, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg (including Ojibway) and Wendat territories.

In the province of Ontario archaeological assessments are separated into four stages... stages one and two share many traits with going for a hike. After a sixty-hour week it can be quite a challenge to turn my brain off and just wander on the trail.

The field component of a stage one assessment has the archaeologist walking over the landscape looking for evidence of ancient and historical land use. This occurs when we look for things like honeysuckle and lilac (European plants typically planted close to the homestead), apples planted as an orchard, or linear piles of rocks caused by the clearing of fields for Euro-Canadian agriculture.

In the case of Indigenous archaeology, our first hint is always the distance to natural watercourses (creeks, rivers, etc) and areas of permanently dry land (no one wants to live in a swamp or have their home flooded in the spring). In addition, I look for ovoid rock piles which are often caused by a First Nations burial during the

winter. I also look for soil burial mounds (think of Serpent Mounds Provincial Park), and smaller evidence of habitation like the scarring on birch trees (visual evidence of harvesting birch bark for the construction of birch bark canoes). My favourites are petroglyphs and petrographs.



A stage two archaeological survey often consists of two parts. Part one, called a field walk (is exactly what it sounds like), imagine walking in a freshly ploughed field and dropping flags at every artefact you see. Part two follows with the retrieval of each of these artefacts in the Controlled Surface Pick up while geolocating and recording these evidence of human life from thousands of years ago.

This is where my challenge emerges; every walk I go on turns into a stage one-two archaeology event. My eyes are carefully trained to search. I'm either looking for artefacts on the ground or for human alteration of the landscape.

These pots are examples of simple pottery that a child may have made.

As an archaeologist, one of the most awe-inspiring things I find are a class of not particularly well-made pots. Seeing small broken pieces of pottery sparks joy. Not because of what the pots look like, but because the young children who made them had not learned to smooth their fingerprints out yet. Those little fingerprints tell of a child learning and a caregiver choosing to fire that little pot not because it was useful but because a child they loved made it. Humans have always been humans, and the act of completing a child's early pottery effort is akin to us putting a kid's art up on the fridge. So intrinsically human it almost hurts.



Here is a handful of clay to be manipulated into a creation. However humble or elegantly made.

The Ganaraska Hiking Trail walks us through land which has been inhabited for more than ten thousand years. This land has supported people in the joys and struggles of their lives. From falling in love, raising their children, to losing loved ones; humanity is written across this landscape if we choose to look for it. From burials to creativity, agriculture and gather-hunting, teaching and learning. This land wants you to learn to read it, and once you do, she opens her pages, and you can see children and grandparents, bounty and starvation, love and loss.

Teika taught her family members traditional pottery making. They learned how to gather, process, make and fire pottery using traditional methods.



CLUB REPORTS

Barrie

By John Rudnickas, President



A new season to look forward to! Sure summer is nice but cooler days and fewer bugs, make for great hiking.

This year we broke with the past club practise of a summer hiatus and continued with organized hiking. An intrepid hike leader didn't want to stop, so we couldn't say no and voila, the process was started. Seems there were other intrepid hikers out there as well, so our summer hikes were well attended. We decided to forgo our normal schedule and hikes were planned on an ad hoc basis and posted on the GHTA

calendar. As this seemed to work well, we will likely continue along this path (trail?) next year, as long as we have leaders willing to lead and hikers willing to join the pack.

As always, the summer is a challenging time for keeping our trails well maintained. Heat, bugs, holidays, nature on a growth spurt, knee replacements etc. do unfortunately get in the way. We do the best we can, with whatever volunteer resources are available. The fall brings on a necessary resurgence of activity. We are planning to set up some trail maintenance days so keep an eye on the calendar and come out to help and have some productive fun.

This year we will once again be working on improving accessibility and safety, mainly in the Orrock Creek tract, where our trail crosses several streams. This is one of our favourite areas and bridge construction (both physical and interpersonal) seems to be one of our favourite activities. The work will include adding to our current water crossing inventory (7 constructed thus far!) as well as installing handrails on some existing structures. Once again the Rotary Club of Barrie has been very generous in their donations to cover the cost of building materials so it's up to us to get to work. You don't require special skills to lend a hand but a fondness for carrying building materials into the bush is an asset. Anyone volunteering to supervise will likely be handed a hammer.

This season we are planning to follow our past practise of holding organized hikes on Wednesday and Sunday mornings along with joint Orillia/Barrie hikes on Thursdays. As our experiment with holding ad hoc hikes was a success this summer, you may see some of these popping up as well. Bottom line, keep an eye on the GHTA website calendar for details.

We are always happy to welcome new members and this year we would like to offer a particular welcome to the members of the former Oro-Medonte Club who have decided to join the Barrie Club. Being a small club, they made the decision to close up shop and amalgamate their membership with other clubs.

Can't close this off without a thank you to our volunteers. You make this all work! We appreciate your work. The club can always use more help, especially when it comes to leading our organized hikes. Please let us know if you are interested. We can cover the cost of hike leader training and certification, you just have to provide the enthusiasm.

Have a great fall (perhaps I should say autumn?) and hope to see you on the trails.

Kawartha

By Stephen Kay, President



The short Spring schedule (May and June) came and went in a flash...but not without some memorable hikes. While a few hikes were in town, many were further afield. There were beautiful views of lakes and streams, peaceful walks along quiet country roads, long and demanding hill climbs, and many ventures into the forest.

Some of our Longer Hikes managed to serve a dual purpose. The Spring schedule included KHC Leg 2 (Victoria Crossing to Wagar Rd) on May 1 and KHC Leg 1 (Crosswind Rd to Victoria Crossing) on June 5 providing an opportunity to assess trail maintenance. These 2 sections

are in good condition although it might be beneficial to redo some of the painted blazes to improve visibility.

A small section of KHC Leg 4 (north of Somerville Concession 11) was an entirely different story. Fortunately, a group of 3 experienced individuals volunteered to spend June 15th completing the significant amount of work required to remove dead fall obstructions, establish small detours, relocate or place new blazes, and clear branches/small brush to make blazes visible. A huge shout-out to George, Richard and Mike for all their hard work!

June also saw us kick off the 2026 'KHC Challenge' – a five hike series covering approximately a 70 km stretch of the Oak Ridges Trail ending just south of Uxbridge. Legs 2 and 3 were completed in July and August with the remaining 2 legs planned for September and October.

While we're usually socializing outside, May 19 was an indoor event. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was combined with a potluck social and, as always, the food was delicious and abundant (no wonder we need to hike!) The business portion of the night was well planned, and brief, as current members of the Executive were largely acclaimed for another term. Unfortunately, there are two key positions remaining unfilled – Club Secretary/Treasurer and Social Convener. Looking for volunteers....

From a communications standpoint, information about all of our Club hikes can now be found on the GHTA's Google Calendar with the Longer Hikes group now using the online registration app following a largely successful trial in May and June.

As Fall arrives, it will bring new adventures including the opportunity to guide a group of Pine Ridge hikers through our small section of 'wilderness' as they tackle the final leg of the Kawartha section. We're excited for the opportunity to support these eager hikers and to showcase this challenging trail!



We hope you enjoy the upcoming schedule, made possible thanks to the support of a large number of volunteer hike leaders. And, as always, our planning has taken trail maintenance considerations into account. Hikes have been planned for KHC Leg 3 (Wagar Rd to 3rd Concession) in mid-September and KHC Leg 4 (3rd Concession to Monck Rd) toward the end of October. Assuming Mother Nature complies, we should have hiked the full length of our trail section by the end of

October in an ongoing effort to fully understand maintenance requirements.

Hope to see you this Fall!

Mad River

By Lana Johnson, Secretary for Mad River

Our club is well into summer mode. We enjoyed some cycling and paddling. We had a summer kickoff event that included a delicious potluck lunch.

We have also begun a summer project of advertising our club and the GHTA at local town farmers' markets. We have a beautiful display screen and a new brochure that includes an expanded map of the Mad River section trail. We met people in Stayner, Creemore and Collingwood. Members have had the opportunity to share lots of information. Our efforts have already resulted in some new members. Our club is also planning an end of summer social in September. A full schedule of hiking will resume in October. We will be offering a series of Mad End-to-End hikes. Watch for those as they are posted on the Hike Calendar.



The team did not leave out the required trail maintenance activities. The new section of the multi-use rail trail from Angus to New Lowell has been blazed. The club has tested it out. It is a lovely path. We hope you take advantage of it.

Two of our tougher sections of the Mad River trail where frequent rains and hot weather help grow tall grasses are Glencairn and Avening. Teams were out on a couple of occasions to cut down those grasses, remove deadfall on trails and reestablish the path.

We will be out in September to refresh trails for the fall hiking season.

Enjoy and stay safe. Be careful with respect to ticks. Members have noticed that they are widespread this year.

Midland

By Christina Adamson and Joanne Sanders, Co-Presidents

The Midland Ganaraska Hiking Club has been busy! The Club offered a chain saw course May 2 and 3 for members who wanted to learn how to safely and properly use a chain saw. The course was given by Bernie Stockermans of Logging & Sawmill Safety, who last year provided the same course to some GHTA volunteers when the County of Simcoe Forestry hosted the course in Midhurst.

The Club participated in the Hike for Hospice on May 25 at Little Lake Park and on June 6 at the Mental Health in Motion Walk at the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care.



The Midland Ganaraska Hiking Club had a display booth at two well attended Senior Fairs. One was at the Penetanguishene Arena and the other was at the Midland Askennonia Senior Centre. Many people stopped by the booth to inquire about the hiking trails, particularly the trails in their area. Visitors had lots of questions and showed a genuine interest in learning more about the Club. Brochures and handouts were very well received and appreciated.

We participated in the Midland Canada Day Parade. Several Midland Ganaraska Hiking Club members dressed in their full hiking gear even though the day was especially hot!

On Saturday, July 11th the Club participated in a new event hosted by the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition in partnership with the Canadian Museum of Water called North Simcoe Eco Exchange at the Coldwater Museum. The event was open to organizations that are working on environmental, conservation, stewardship and community issues affecting North Simcoe. It was well attended and we lucked out with a beautiful sunny day. Some visitors showed interest in hiking, and many

were glad to know about trails to explore in their neighbourhood.



A big **"thank you"** to our Trail Director, Joe Davis who has been very busy organizing trail maintenance parties in preparation for the summer season. Members joined Joe on the trails. We were trimming overgrown branches, removing large trees, refreshing faded blazes and cutting back branches that were blocking some of the blazes. This incredible effort will allow for easy and safer navigation when using the trails.

We hope everyone will get out and enjoy the many beautiful trails!

Orillia

By Leslie Raymond, President



Our regular Monday and Tuesday morning hikes have continued throughout the summer. Thanks to John Sloan for leading some Saturday morning "beat the heat" hikes in August.

We will continue to offer hikes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays in the fall. All hikes will be posted on the calendar on our website.

Keep an eye on the calendar for trail maintenance days as there are a few spots of our trail that need a bit of work.

If you've ever thought of leading some hikes, we can always use more hike leaders. I'm sure I sound like a broken record, but we won't be able to offer all our hikes if we keep relying on the few hike leaders that we have left.

I welcome all the Oro-Medonte members who have chosen to join the Orillia club after the unfortunate folding of the Oro-Medonte club.

We look forward to seeing you on some hikes!

Pine Ridge

By Cynthia Warn, President

"The earth has music for those who listen." Shakespeare

Spending part of the summer 'up north' is a must, and this year part of that routine included a camping trip with several Pine Ridge Hiking Club stalwarts. We hiked in and around Restoule Provincial Park and I recommend the area to anyone interested in great scenery and peaceful forest trails.

Our spring hikes (Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays) were lovely. The weather was much more conducive to getting outside this spring. We've had one true heat wave this summer, but it's been pleasant compared to last year's scorching start.

Our last hike of the spring session – or our first hike of the summer session – is always the Canada Day Parade. This year we marched in the Cobourg parade (PRHC alternates between Cobourg and Port Hope). We were placed just ahead of the local radio station's vehicle, which was playing all Canadian tunes. It was difficult to restrain ourselves from becoming the Pine Ridge Dancing Club!

For July and August, we have changed from bi-weekly to weekly Wednesday evening hikes. These hikes have a slightly different format to our fall/winter/spring hikes - more social than strenuous - with an average distance

of 5km terminating in a destination that serves cold beverages. To keep a balance of relaxed and rigorous



hiking for our 'quiet' summer session, a group of Pine Ridge hikers walked the Oak Ridges Trail from its eastern terminus to highway 115, over 5 days. It was hilly, buggy, hot and challenging, but ultimately quite satisfying to complete our self-imposed task. I can report that we are having a bumper year for poison ivy.

Looking forward to the autumn season, our Hike Coordinator, has published our three-hikes-per-week-schedule which starts on September 2nd, and finishes on December 13th, one week after the PRHC AGM. Connie has introduced an on-line fillable form that is distributed to all our hike leaders who can see all the entries, in real time. The leaders can choose a slot that is unclaimed, enter their chosen hike (referenced from our hike catalogue page number), and the entry is instantly visible to all the other hike leaders. The Hike Coordinator reviews the forms to ensure there is no repetition in hike selection, and all date slots are filled. A simple, user-friendly method!

Go here to see our hike schedule:

<https://www.pineridgehikingclub.ca/hikeschedule>

Keep in mind that we are delighted to welcome new members, people who want to give hiking a try, and members of our fellow GHTA clubs.

In the foreseeable future, the GHT route has a detour:

There is a detour where Choate Rd. crosses under the 401 (km 2.7 of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail). Hikers travelling north must now proceed straight at the Jocelyn St. /Cavan Rd. intersection (km 2.3) to Victoria St. N. (approximately 1.0 km). Turn right (north) at Victoria St. for 1.5 km to the intersection with Choate Rd. Turn right on Choate Rd. for 0.5 km to the intersection with the unmaintained section of Hawkins Rd.(km 4.3) where you will rejoin the GHT. Hikers travelling south must turn right (west) at the Hawkins Rd./Choate Rd. intersection (km 4.3) to the Choate Rd. / Cranberry Rd. intersection (0.5 km). Turn left on Cranberry Rd. and travel south to the intersection with Jocelyn Rd. (approximately 1.5 km). Take a left on Jocelyn St. to the intersection where the GHT meets Molson St. (approximately 1.0 km). Turn right (south)."

Wasaga Beach

By Lorraine van Vlymen, President

The big story this spring and summer has been the changeable and wet weather. Many of our hikes and picnic plans had to be rescheduled or relocated. We are a flexible group. We took it all in stride. The wet, cool spring and humid summer meant lots of biting insects so the hardy hikers that entered forested areas had to be well prepared. We are lucky here at the Wasaga Beach Club as we can always go hiking along the beach or on shoreline trails if trails are drowned out or too buggy. As a matter of fact, one of our favourite routes behind the dunes right in town is still under water.

One benefit of the wet spring was a magnificent display of plants including orchids in the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park and other areas we hike through. As a matter of fact, the forested trails are still so green and lush that forest bathing is still on the agenda.

Despite the weather, we did manage to tackle some trails further away in Simcoe and Dufferin County forests and on the Kolapore Uplands. At this point, we are hoping for a dry autumn so we can go back to more of the



rocky trails up on the escarpment and some other more challenging areas we don't normally visit.

Our kayaking group got going this spring and summer with occasional trips on the Nottawasaga River. We are hoping to entice more members to join us. With such great kayaking spots in the area, we will be expanding further afield.



We carried out three community outreach activities this spring and summer. The roadside cleanup on Veterans Way was well received. Our community garden project at the entrance to Beach One which has a Club Plaque has dedicated volunteers who are much appreciated. Finally, we participated in the Seniors Expo where we had a display highlighting all the benefits of our club. Some members of the community have signed up for introductory hikes as a result.

One new event this year was a summer picnic after a hike on the part of our trail that runs through Stayner. This was very successful and will be repeated.

Next on the agenda is attending to trail maintenance with the annual blaze check and refresh if weather permits. Our AGM is scheduled for September and that is always a key time to review our past activities and to make future plans. One special upcoming event is a celebration of the official trail opening in Wasaga Beach that occurred 30 years ago in October. Plans are currently underway to celebrate that milestone.

We still offer three weekly hikes at different levels of difficulty that range from one to two hours. We occasionally have longer hikes which are 3+ hours for those wanting more of a challenge.

We continue to communicate through a weekly email that seems to work very well for us. It contains information on upcoming hikes and other items of interest (e.g. safety tips, appropriate hiking attire, community events). Members have expressed appreciation for photos of hikers and the treasures we find at the various locations we visit.

I really appreciate the dedication and work our hike leaders have done in keeping us going no matter the conditions. As we have lost some of the more senior members of the club, we look forward to enticing some more members to join us as we have a lot of fun together.

Wilderness

By Carolyn Humphreys, Vice-President

Hibernation — probably not top of mind as we savour the last days of summer. The fact is that the Wild Ones essentially hibernate after re-installing the floating bridge at Montgomery Creek back in May. The bugs and the heat often keep us out of the woods except for maintenance.



This spring maintenance was conducted both on foot and by canoe. Shout out to our spring Montgomery floating bridge volunteers Rob, John Craig and Afsoon Khazae. In the week after the bridge was installed, a large group of volunteers helped clean up the Montgomery Creek loop. Once again Wilderness Union members stepped up to offer their assistance, and for the first time we recruited volunteers via Facebook. We are grateful to Rob, Jeremy, Billy and Carolyn for their leadership.

Despite the heat and bugs, the summer attracted many new hikers to Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park - this place is magic! Knowing what to expect is critical to making sure you are up for the physical challenge and that you are properly equipped. Unfortunately, some folks were not suitably prepared on the Canada Day long weekend: three separate calls went out for emergency response with heat stress as a common issue as noted by the first responders. For a safe and enjoyable time in the Wilderness, experienced hikers prepare by bringing plenty of water, planning for the weather, having maps at the ready and by staying alert.



And now we are about to “wake up” —**ready, set, fall... here we come!** There’s going to be more maintenance. It has become clear that overnight hiking trips are the best/only way to reach the interior trails. In October, Jeremy will lead a 4-person team that will be dropped off by float plane on Wolf Lake to conduct interior trail maintenance. As usual the floating bridge over Montgomery Creek will be removed in November and stored for the winter; we will be putting out a call for volunteers in due course.

Keep in mind that Fall and Winter are the best times for hiking the Wilderness section!

Hunting Season

The most important dates for hikers to note are **Oct 19-25** and **Nov 2-15** when local hunters take time off to be in the bush for the moose and deer seasons, respectively. ***Wear blaze orange & stay safe.***

Most of the Wilderness Section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail lies within *Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park*, which in turn falls within **WMU** (Wildlife Management Unit) **56** with some of the west end within **WMU 53A**.

Following is a summary of the most relevant open seasons for hunting in the Wilderness section for the various game species:

- Small game (grouse, rabbits): Sept 15 - Dec 31
- Ducks: Sept 19 – Jan 3; Geese: Sept 1 - Dec 16
- Black bear: Sept 1 - Nov 30
- Moose (firearms): Oct 19-25
- Deer (firearms): Nov 2-15

For more information, click on the following links:

Ontario's 2026 Hunting Regulations Summary: <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2026-03/mnr-2026-ontario-hunting-regulations-summary-en-2026-03-10.pdf>

Summary of Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/regulations-provincial-territorial-summaries/ontario.html>

Enjoy the glories of the season. Stay safe and healthy!

Membership fees are currently \$30 per family. Please see information at bottom of newsletter.

From your Editor

Feel free to message me at newsletter@gha.ca with any ideas for articles or pictures for future publications.

Thank you

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Ratings

RATING	DESCRIPTION
Easy	Well defined trails, gentle inclines. Hiking boots and poles optional. Suitable for beginners.
Moderate	Generally on trail. May be hilly, some rough spots or obstacles. Boots and poles recommended.
Difficult	Rough terrain. May include bushwhacking, steep sections, long climbs and descents, beaver dams or other obstacles, rock scrambling. Boots and poles essential, and a high level of fitness. Long pants and sleeves recommended.

FALL 2026 HIKE SCHEDULES

Hiker's Code

- Respect private property
- Stay on the trail
- Cross fences using stiles
- Carry out all garbage
- Walk around the edge of fields
- Protect wildlife, trees and shrubs
- Never strip bark from trees
- When hiking on the trail on your own, keep dogs on a leash near farms and where required by law
- Dogs are NOT permitted on group hikes unless otherwise specified

This information is current as per newsletter publication. Please check with the hike leader, or see the updated hike information on the GHTA Hiking [page](#), registration apps, or email information from your local club closer to the time of the planned hike. Hiking page is: https://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=4586

All GHTA members are encouraged to take part in any of the hikes, regardless of which club they belong to. Call the leader if the weather is at all questionable in case the outing has been cancelled. Wear suitable footwear and clothing. Bring snacks/drink/lunch. See the hike rating chart.

Important Notice: Unpaid volunteers conduct events. Anyone participating in these events, or making use of the trail in any way, does so at their own risk. The Wilderness section should only be hiked with an approved Ganaraska Hiking Trail leader.

Event organizers and hike leaders are encouraged to have their hikers/participants provide emergency contact information. Waivers must be signed by non-members before each hike; members sign a blanket waiver as part of their membership. Clubs who will be using the new registration system will have all hikers confirm waivers at the time of signing up on a hike. These waivers will be saved on the GHTA website. Hike leaders will not need to request and store paper copy waivers for any hiker who accessed this new system.

BARRIE HIKES

All hikes are posted on the Ganaraska [website](#) calendar.

The Barrie Club offers hikes on Sundays and Wednesdays. We join the Orillia Club to hike on Thursdays. Wednesday hikes are easy hikes lasting about two hours. The Thursday and Sunday hikes are moderate to challenging hikes lasting between 3 to 4 hours. All Barrie hikes start at 10:00 a.m. Please check the GHTA Google Calendar for detailed information about our hikes.

KAWARTHA HIKES

All hikes are posted on the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association website hike calendar (https://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=4586).

Hike information will also be provided by email although it may be in an abbreviated format.

The Kawartha Club generally schedules 2 hikes per week as follows:

Shorter Hikes (every Wednesday morning) – easy to moderate, 1.5 -2 hrs (5-8 km)

Longer Hikes (often on Saturday but could be any day except Wednesday) – moderate to moderate+, 3-5 hrs (10-15 km) on varied terrain and often include a lunch stop

Please check the website frequently for additions, updates or cancellations. Registration information can be found on the website calendar of hikes.

MAD RIVER HIKES

HIKES AND UPDATE: All hikes posted on the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association website hike calendar, (www.ganaraska-hiking-trail.org). Hikers are encouraged to check the calendar frequently for updates, hike cancellations and/or changes.

Members are encouraged to check emails for further club activities.

The hiking schedule typically is as follows:

Tuesday hikes: Moderate to difficult, 3-4 hours (9-12 km), varied terrain and includes a lunch stop.

Thursday hikes: Easy/moderate, 1.5-2 hours (5-8 km)

MIDLAND HIKES

Local Wednesday hikes will continue as usual. Meet at Food Basics at 1 PM. The hike location will be chosen on the day of hike.

General Information for all hikes:

- ✓ Hikers will meet at Food Basics in Midland before the hike or at the trail head unless otherwise noted.
- ✓ Hikes beginning at 10 AM are often 8-10 km will take 3-5 hours. Hikers will require a packed lunch.
- ✓ Hikes beginning at 1 PM are 4-6 km and will take 2-3 hours. Bring a snack if you wish. Hike details will be posted to the Ganaraska calendar 1-2 wks prior to the scheduled date.
- ✓ Pace for all easy hikes is 2-3 kph, the moderate to difficult hikes indicate hills and other obstructions or a faster pace (4 kph or more).
- ✓ Always bring a bottle(s) of drinking water.
- ✓ Use common sense and dress for sun, cold, heat or rain. Bug repellent and sunscreen may still be needed for many fall hikes.
- ✓ Walking poles are recommended on most hikes.
- ✓ Sign up for all hikes can be done via the Ganaraska Hiking Trail website:

https://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=4586 Click on Find a Hike and select link from calendar.

- ✓ If not a Midland club member, please check in with the contact person by phone or text at least 90 min prior to hike start time.

ORILLIA HIKES

Please check events and hikes that are posted on the Hiking calendar [website](#).

The Orillia club hikes on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. We share Thursday hikes with the Barrie club. Monday hikes are one hour easy local hikes and start at 10:00am. Tuesday hikes start at 9:00am are 2 hours long with easy to moderate difficulty. The Thursday and Saturday hikes tend to vary in length and difficulty and often are 3-4 hours.

Please check the website frequently for additions, updates or cancellations. Registration information can be found on the website calendar of hikes.

PINE RIDGE HIKES

Hikers Should Arrive At Least 10 Minutes Before the Advertised Hike Departure Time.

Please visit the Pine Ridge Hiking Club website at www.pineridgehikingclub.ca/hikeschedule for the most up-to-date information and details.

For details and information regarding meeting times and locations, please refer to our website at [Hike Schedule | Pine Ridge Hiking Club | Ontario](#)

WASAGA BEACH HIKES

Our club is planning hikes on a weekly basis and will connect with club members as hikes are planned. Stay tuned!

WILDERNESS HIKES

Please check the Wilderness Club Facebook page. Details will be emailed to members and posted in Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GHTAwilderness>.

Alternately, please see:

https://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page_id=4586
Click on Find a Hike and select link from calendar.



Merchandise Order Form

Proudly support the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. Purchase merchandise listed below or make a donation.

Just fill out this order form and select one of the payment methods below.

Item	Quantity	Price (incl. shipping)	Total
CREST of GHATA logo*		7.00	
END TO END BADGE –member price		0.00	
END TO END BADGE – non-member (incl. 1 year membership) **		32.00	
SECTION BADGE – Barrie		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Kawartha		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Mad River		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Midland		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Orillia		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Oro Medonte		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Pine Ridge		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Tiny		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Wasaga Beach		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Wilderness		7.00	
SECTION BADGE – Wilderness Crossover (special)		10.00	
50 HIKES IN 1 YEAR BADGE *		7.00	
100 HIKES IN 1 YEAR BADGE *		7.00	
200 HIKES IN 1 YEAR BADGE*		7.00	
250 HIKES IN 1 YEAR BADGE *		7.00	
GAP BADGE (while quantities last)*		7.00	
SUBTOTAL			
DONATION			
GRAND TOTAL			

- Section badges are for hikers who hiked an entire section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail.
- End to End badges are for hikers who completed all 10 sections.
- ** Non-members who wish to purchase an End to End badge also need to fill in a Membership Application Form.
- No log is required for badges marked with *
- Tax receipts will be issued for donation amounts of \$25 and over.
- Payment options:
 1. Make cheque payable to the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. and mail the completed form to Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc., PO Box 693, Orillia ON L3V 6K7.

2. Email badgeofficer@gha.ca and treasurer@gha.ca the completed form (and your hike log if required), and e-transfer the appropriate amount to treasurer@gha.ca.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROV _____

POSTAL CODE _____ TELEPHONE _____

Email _____

Additional comment for
GHTA: _____

GANARASKA HIKING TRAIL ASSOCIATION INC.

MEMBERSHIP STATUS REPORT - Aug. 2026

<u>CLUBS</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
	Summer	Winter	Fall
BARRIE	82	52	76
INDEPENDENT	6	5	8
KAWARTHA	81	72	94
MAD RIVER	41	37	37
MIDLAND	98	94	110
ORILLIA	63	45	76
PINE RIDGE	100	90	120
WASAGA BEACH	68	61	77
WILDERNESS	56	52	81
PAID MEMBERSHIPS	595	533	715
LIFE MEMBERS	25	26	26
MEMBERSHIPS	620	559	742
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS	21	21	21
LAND OWNERS	82	82	81
TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS	723	662	844

GHTA Membership Form (or register and pay [online](#))

The membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.
☐ New ☐ Renew ☐ Change of address or club affiliation.
Please complete the form and send it with your cheque, payable to the
Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association, to the following address:

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc.
P. O. Box 693 Orillia, ON L3V 6K7

NAME(S) _____
SPOUSE _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ POSTAL CODE _____
HOME TELEPHONE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____
SPOUSAL EMAIL (if applicable) _____

Membership (includes family) \$30.00
Donation \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

A receipt for a tax deductible charitable donation will be sent by Feb 28 in
the next year for donations of \$25 or more.

Please associate me with the following Ganaraska Trail Hiking club:
Midland ☐, Kawartha ☐, Wilderness ☐, Orillia ☐, Barrie ☐, Mad River ☐,
Wasaga Beach ☐, Oro-Medonte ☐, Pine Ridge (Port Hope) ☐,
Independent ☐

By submitting this form, I certify that I have read the Ganaraska Hiking
Trail Association Inc. Waiver Form (available on the website) in full, and
that I agree to be bound by it.

Signature: _____

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www.brownrabbit.nf.ca

The Ganaraska News is published three times a year for the members of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc. and the generous landowners who permit the trail on their land. Please submit content by April 1, August 1 and December 1 for upcoming issues.

Please send your news, stories, poems and photos via email (Newsletter@gha.ca). Please use Word or similar formats, but not PDF. Digital images should have a minimum of 300 ppi resolution and be JPG or PGN, not PDF.

Web Addresses: president@gha.ca
info@gha.ca

Mailing Address: **Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association Inc.**
Box 693, Orillia, ON L3V 6K7

The GHTA welcomes all donations. Tax receipts for donations over \$25.00 will be issued. Charitable registration #847447414 RR0001
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