

Bruce Grey Trail Network

Annual General Meeting – Monday, June 1, 2009
Visitor Centre—MacGregor Point Provincial Park

The Annual General Meeting was preceded by a walk on a MacGregor Point Provincial Park Trail, led by Friends of MacGregor Point Park members Jeff Hemming and Nancy Robinson.

In attendance

Board Members: Chair Brian Wessel, Secretary-Treasurer Andrew Beumer, Director Bob Lesperance, Director Helen Risteen

Executive Director: Ray Gilbert

Members and Guests: Chris Tomsett, MacGregor Point Park; Jeff Hemming & Nancy Robinson, Friends of MacGregor Point Park; Ruth Ann English, Tom Thomson Trail; John Howard, City of Owen Sound Parks; John Fortier, Hike Ontario; Donna Gilbert

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Brian Wessel welcomed all and, following introductions, called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Appointment of Chair and Secretary

Moved by Andrew Beumer, seconded by Helen Risteen and carried, that Brian Wessel be appointed Chair of the meeting and that Ray Gilbert be appointed Recording Secretary.

Guest Speakers

Chris Tomsett of MacGregor Point Provincial Park gave a short talk on the park and its amenities, followed by Jeff Hemming of the Friends of MacGregor Point Provincial Park who outlined the work of his organization in support of the park.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Helen Risteen, seconded by Andrew Beumer and carried, that the minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting be approved as circulated.

Annual Report

Chair Brian Wessel presented the Annual Report for the period of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, as follows:

In the past year we have been most active on the same fronts as reported a year ago, namely our website and the numerous enquiries it generates, the ongoing geocaching project and the ATV Initiative.

Website

Updates to our website are ongoing and are resulting in increasing queries by email and telephone. In the past 12 months, our site had more than 70,000 visits with a daily average site visit of almost 200.

While the majority of website visitors do not call or email, and the number of website visits are down slightly from a year ago, we have seen a significant increase in the number of people asking questions about specific trails. Many others are of a more general tourism nature.

All questions relating to maps are handled by either mailing out Grey Bruce Official Tourism Maps, referring the interested parties to specific trail organizations or the tourism departments of Grey and Bruce Counties. Detailed trail questions are handled when appropriate or referred, most often, to the Grey and Bruce County trail managers.

Our interactive trail map, introduced last summer, makes it much easier for people to find and find out about the 64 trails listed in our website database.

Geocaching

The geocaching project, designed to encourage more participation on trails in the two counties, particularly for youth, continues to show considerable growth.

Funding from Grey Bruce Partners in Health has allowed us in the past year to place complete geocaching kits in every single library branch in Bruce and Grey Counties. Reports from the libraries indicate that this project is being well received. A recent report from Bruce County Library System shows that in one nine-month period the kits were on three-week loans a total of 61 times. In Grey County, we know that two kits were required to meet the demand in Owen Sound and that the lending period was reduced from three weeks to one week because of that demand.

In addition to the kits in the library systems, we have several placed with such groups as the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Big Brothers Big Sisters or in our lending and training inventory.

Each kit contains a hand-held Global Positioning System, a written explanation of geocaching, a Complete Guide to Geocaching DVD and the Geocaching for Dummies book.

We have received considerable positive media coverage regarding this project. There have been several newspaper articles throughout the two counties and several radio and the cable TV interviews.

On April 30 of this year, we conducted a geocaching event at the Headquarters Conservation Area of Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority south of Hanover in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hanover. Despite an all-day downpour, we had 20 people participate in finding caches placed throughout the conservation area trail network. Special thanks to BGTN board member Al Leach and long-time BGTN supporter Betty Perkins for assisting with this event.

In a continuation and expansion of a project launched last year, we have partnered with Bruce County Tourism to place eight geocaches on trails in the county as part of the county's Adventure Passport program.

Our biggest geocaching event ever is planned for September 26 in Owen Sound. In partnership with Grey County, the City of Owen Sound and the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, we are planning a geocaching mega-event for this Saturday event at Harrison Park. Caches will be placed, demonstrations given, refreshments will be available and geocache kits will even be provided for newcomers to this trail-oriented activity.

We are pleased to acknowledge that Grey Bruce Partners in Health has committed \$2,000.00 in funding to promote this event. We are in the process of establishing a committee to assist with the planning and implementation of the event and volunteers will be most welcome. We already have a member of the Ontario Geocaching Association, a staff member of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and a Girl Guide leader with a wealth of geocaching experience who has volunteered to sit on the committee. More geocaching-savvy volunteers will be most welcome.

ATV Initiative

We have continued in the past year to work on the ATV Initiative, funded by Bruce County.

We provided considerable assistance to the South Bruce Peninsula ATV Club in the preparation of a submission to County Council for permission to develop a multi-use trail through a portion of county forest. This proposed trail, from Sauble Beach to Wiarton, involves private landowners, municipal and Ministry of Natural Resources as well as county properties. We helped the club with a public meeting and have met several times with all landowners involved. Very little trail construction is involved in this trail, with the exception of one unopened road allowance, as most of the trails already exist.

The county has recently granted the club permission to begin work to upgrade, sign and gate the trail through county forest consistent with the requirements of the Model for the Development, Maintenance and Monitoring of ATV Trails prepared for the county by BGTN.

Over the next few months, we will be assisting in the preparation of draft land-use agreements with all stakeholders in the county, along with the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance.

We have also been active in the past few months in providing assistance to the Huron Shores ATV Club in the preparation of a proposal for a multi-use trail from just north of Wingham to hook up with the Bruce County Rail Trail near Cargill. We will assist the club in such areas landowner negotiations, public meeting arrangements, trail GPS mapping and trail design, construction, signage and gating.

Our Executive Director was recently the main speaker at a public information meeting in Lucknow, sponsored by the municipality of Huron-Kinloss and with a purpose of exploring the potential for multi-use trails in the municipality. This was a well-attended session with other speakers representing the municipality, local ATV club, Ontario Provincial Police, the insurance industry and private landowners.

Other Activities

In other activities, our Executive Director has represented us on the Bruce County Rail Trail Management Committee and has been an active participant on the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance Council of ATV Clubs advisory committee. This committee's work has been instrumental in the launch this spring of the Trillium Trail Network Gold Trail Permit system—a system that introduced a consistent user-pay trail permits policy virtually province-wide.

Volunteers

We would like to extend thanks to retiring board member-at-large Hugh Harris for his contribution to our board over the past two years.

We also want to thank board member Bob Lesperance for arranging not only for this meeting space today but also for trail tour guide and introduction to MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

Special thanks to Peggy Babineau, an extremely qualified geocacher who acts frequently as geocaching specialist to our staff and board.

Looking Forward

We will continue to work with current and new partners to expand the geocaching project and we will continue to work on providing assistance on the development of new multi-use trails. Our website will be updated and refined throughout the year.

We are planning a mid-year newsletter, following up on the well-received one introduced this past year.

In new directions, the current economy certainly limits new funding opportunities but doesn't exclude them. Our contact information is on our website and the Board of Directors would welcome any suggestions on future activities from our trail friends.

Moved by Brian Wessel, seconded by Andrew Beumer and carried, that the Annual Report be accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Executive Director Ray Gilbert presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Secretary-Treasurer Andrew Beumer for the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 as follows:

Our books are audited on an annual basis and the auditor's report indicates that, in the auditor's opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2009 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

The financial statements show that at March 31, 2009 we had a bank balance of \$18,400.00. The current balance, at today's date, is \$12,600.00.

Our major funding comes from the County of Grey and the County of Bruce. Last year, Grey County provided \$6,000.00 in operating funds and Bruce County provided \$8,000.00. This year, we asked Bruce County for the same amount and asked Grey County to match the Bruce County figure. We have not received written official confirmation of our 2009 funding from either county but understand the County of Bruce will provide funds as requested and that Grey County will contribute \$6,000.00.

Special funding for the ATV Initiative—in the amount of \$12,500.00—was provided by Bruce County last year. We have requested funding in the amount of \$6,000.00 for 2009.

Grey Bruce Partners in Health provided nearly \$8,000.00 in special funding for the geocaching project over the past year, allowing us to ensure that every library branch in the two counties received full geocaching kit.

For 2009, we have received confirmation that Grey Bruce Partners in Health will provide \$2,000.00 for the promotion of the September geocaching event in Owen Sound. Other revenues in the 2008-2009 fiscal year included one \$100.00 individual donation and a \$250.00 donation from the Municipality of Huron-Kinloss.

Moved by Bob Lesperance, seconded by Helen Risteen and carried, that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented.

Moved by Andrew Beumer, seconded by Bob Lesperance and carried, that the actions of the Board and Staff for the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 be approved.

Moved by Helen Risteen, seconded by Andrew Beumer and carried, that BDO Dunwoody of Port Elgin be appointed as auditor for the fiscal year April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 with remuneration to be set by the Board.

Election of Board Member

The Board of Directors of the Bruce Grey Trail Network consists of eight members. With the resignation of Hugh Harris of Markdale, one vacancy exists as the other seven Board members have expressed their wish to remain on the Board. Soren Klemmensen of Markdale has been nominated to replace Hugh Harris as a member-at-large and has agreed to stand for election. This nomination was seconded by Bob Lesperance. There were no nominations from the floor. Moved by Bob Lesperance, seconded by Helen Risteen and carried, that Soren Klemmensen is elected to a three-year term on the Board of Directors. The election of officers will be held by the Directors at their next Board meeting.

New Business

John Fortier of Hike Ontario discussed the possibility of linking our planned fall geocaching event with Ontario Hiking Week. It was agreed that the Executive Director, John Fortier and John Howard of Owen Sound Parks would investigate the feasibility of such a link.

2010 Annual General Meeting

Date and location to be determined by the Board

Adjournment

Moved by John Fortier, seconded by Andrew Beumer and carried, that this meeting be adjourned.