

FOREWARD

As the Founding President in 1992 of the Citizens for an Oak Ridges Trail (CORT) which later in 1994 became the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA), I was excited to read about ORTA's progress over the years in this comprehensive book on the history and development of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail. I was only involved in the development of the trail and its organization structure during its formative period from 1991 until 1993 when I left the county to take on a seven-year assignment with the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

Noting the extensive period of involvement in ORTA, as a volunteer and leader since he became Chair of the Aurora Chapter in 2001 and ORTA President from 2004-2009, Stan Butcher is imminently well qualified to write this book. To set the stage for the story of the evolution and development of the trail a detailed description of the Oak Ridges Moraine is included as Appendix 1 to Chapter One.

Chapter One itself elaborates on the early history of how the vision was born for a trail system across the Oak Ridges Moraine from the Bruce Trail in the west to the Ganaraska Trail in the east. Included in the chapter was the period leading up to and following a preliminary meeting to discuss the vision which was held at Seneca College on October 6, 1991 in which I was a participant.

Chapters Two and Three chronologically describe the events, milestones and accomplishments of ORTA over the period from 1992 to 2009 as the Association grew in numbers of members, trail sections and in participation in the popular hiking program. One major milestone was the publication on December 31st 2009 of the Fifth Edition of The Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Guidebook which marked the designation of the trail moraine-wide.

The chronology of meetings, events and accomplishments continues in Chapter Four over the period 2009 to 2017. The Annual General Meeting on April 19th 2012 was a celebration of ORTA's 20th anniversary as well as celebrating the opening two days later of the final western gateway at the junction with the Bruce Trail 3 km north of Mono Mills in the Town of Mono.

The establishment of ORTA Chapters played a critical role in developing, completing and maintaining the Oak Ridges Trail. Chapter Five, describes in considerable detail the activities and accomplishments of the 10 Chapters of ORTA. Volunteer Members form the backbone of ORTA, so I was pleased to see recognition given to many of them in the appendices that list members of the ORTA boards and various related committees and positions. Also, there is a whole Chapter Nine on Membership.

Much of the success of ORTA over the years can be attributed to its organization of events and volunteer opportunities along with publicity and fundraising initiatives. These activities are described individually in Chapters Six through Eleven: the Hike Program, the *Trail Talk* newsletter, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Guidebook*, Membership, Fundraising and the *Adventure Relay*. The final chapter looks to the future where the current President sees ORTA on a stable footing with regard to finances and membership, so is in a good position to continue securing the use of land for passive recreational purposes in the years to come.



*Peter Scholefield,
Founding President 1992 - 1994*