

# TRAIL TALK

Oak Ridges Trail Association Quarterly

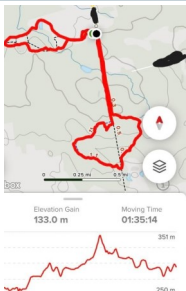


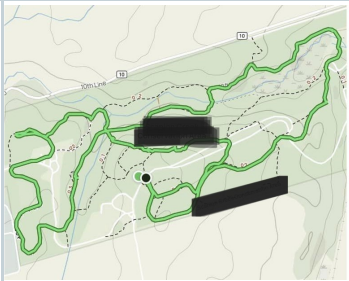




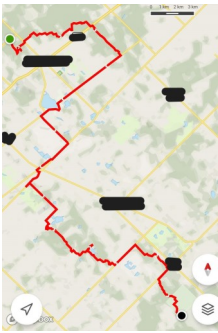
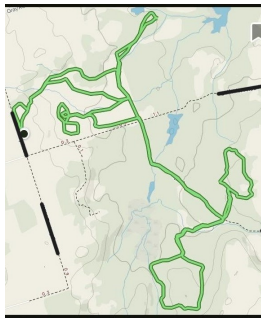

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## Let's Play "Are You an Avid Hiker?"

WINTER 2024

Each of the routes below was taken off ORTA's Facebook page. They had been posted from hikers using various apps. What's your best guess for each location and kilometers posted? Can you name them all? You just might be an AVID HIKER. Answers on page 5.

 <p>#1 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#2 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#3 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#4 _____ #km _____</p>
 <p>#5 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#6 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#7 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#8 _____ #km _____</p>
 <p>#9 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#10 _____ #km _____</p>	 <p>#11 _____ #km _____</p>	<p><b>INSIDE THIS ISSUE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trail Maintenance.....2</li> <li>Festive Forest .....2</li> <li>Hike Leader Training .....3</li> <li>Safe Families in YR Hike.....4</li> <li>2023 End To End Hikers.....4</li> <li>Winter Tips and Hiking Pace .....5</li> <li>In Memory .....5</li> <li>Anniversary Hike Pictures .. .....6</li> <li>Discovery night Jan 25 2024.....7</li> <li>Palgrave Forest .....8</li> <li>Route Changes &amp; Map ..... 9</li> </ul>

Thanks to all the hikers who tracked their respective hikes. Heather Cooper, Cheryl Fisher, Bob Hughes, Chris Abromonis, Rolland Hervieux, Michele Donnelly, Karen Graham and others. Your postings for other hikers is appreciated.

***Building Pathways to an Active Lifestyle***



Noel, Judy, Wilma and Brian blazed a rerouted trail from Durham Forest to Skyloft.



**Oak  
Ridges  
Trail  
Association**

Noel and Judy, and Wilma and Brian put one of ORTA's battery powered saws to good use clearing a large white pine from the trail.



Caledon - Rodney, Wilma, Craig and Brian constructed a new boardwalk to bypass a wetland.

## **Sending our Gratitude to King City's Trees of Giving 2023 Event**

King City's annual fundraiser, housed inside the beautiful spaces in the King Heritage and Cultural Centre, has welcomed ORTA this year as their community beneficiary!

This year's theme was Festive Forest which suits us perfectly! There were about 15 stunning trees decorated by various local and nearby groups who compete for the Best Tree! Guests vote with \$2 tokens and the tree with the most tokens is only one winner. The big winner will be the Oak Ridges Trail Association!



Weibo Chang, Nicole Zama, Diane DelZotto and I were able to find a fresh tree, get it stabilized, add lights and get busy ahead of opening day.

As you can imagine, ORTA doesn't have a tree and decorations of its own, so we had to be a little creative. The result is our ORTA themed tree with a solid hiking boot as its crowning star - our not too subtle message about the importance of sturdy footwear. The branches are surrounded in garlands fashioned from strips cut from old Trail Talk editions with community names, titles, sponsors and hikes prominently visible. A pair of hiking poles are jauntily poking out from the branches. Woodland ornaments together with festive red, sparkling balls reflect the twinkling lights. It was great fun putting this tree together. It is our hope that many ORTA members will have had a chance to visit the display which ended on Dec 16th.





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### *Hike Leader Training—Derek Cowbourne*

In early November, Brian Millage and I led our second Hike Ontario sanctioned Certified Hike Leader training course. There was a total of 12 participants from ORTA, the Outdoor Club of East York, and the Pine Ridge Hiking Club (Ganaraska).

A big welcome to ORTA's seven new Hike Leaders: Cita Wong, Diane Smith, John Weston, Linda Weston, Martin Roy, Scott Heaslip, and Virginia Lee. Please support them by registering for their hikes!

If there is enough interest we will run another course, hopefully Spring 2024. So please let me know if you are interested in taking the course or wish to find out more about it.

*Derek Cowbourne – Hike Coordinator*





As we work to establish a chapter of Safe Families in York Region, we considered a fund-raising event and ways in which we could bring families together, while enjoying the beauty of nature around us.

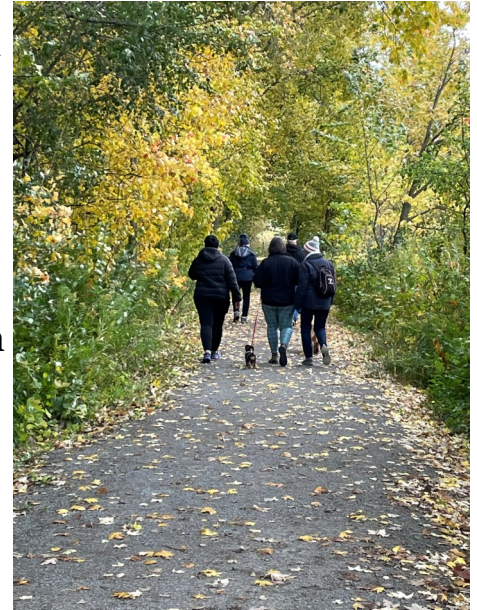


We had met two friendly and engaging individuals from ORTA at Stouffville's Ribfest and they proposed the idea of a guided hike.

I connected with Derek Cowbourne and he kindly provided Josie's contact details. It was a pleasure to chat with Josie and learn of her years of experience with ORTA. She

graciously agreed to guide our hike on October 21st.

It was a cold and blustery day, but our group of six (with two furry friends) met in the parking lot on 19th Avenue (east of 9th line) and we bravely ventured out. As we made our way along the 5 km journey, we marveled at the colours of Fall and Josie enlightened us with facts about the flora and fauna around us.



We thank ORTA and Josie for their support of this first event and look forward to partnering with them annually.

Bonnie Gottschling



Completing the End-to-End of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail is a major accomplishment, whether it takes a year or more to complete it or it's done within a few weeks. So many congratulations to the following new E2Eers!

Chris Johnston, Erica Lise Philips, Uriah Pond, Susan & Jeff Willar, Janice & Fred Higgins, Scott Cecchin, Geoffrey Temple, Ward Porritt, Golda & Sam Wiseman, Lilla Fodor, Joan Richard, Gerald Dowd, Rolland Hervieux, Anna Sunn, Christine Zarebski, Cita Wong, Mary Stratas and Nancy Hogue.



## Winter Hiking Tips

1. Always wear appropriate foot-wear! Hiking boots, poles and icers will help to keep you safe during chilly and icy hikes.
2. Dress in layers!
3. Pack some snacks and be sure to bring water and maybe also a warm drink!
4. Enjoy yourself! Breathe in nature, enjoy the gorgeous scenery of our trails.

## Hike Speeds

ORTA's advertised average hike speeds are consistent with Hike Ontario's speed ratings. Select the hikes which are most suited to your ability.

**Slow:** 3 km/hr

**Slow to Moderate:** 3.5 km/hr

**Moderate:** 4 km/hr

**Moderate to Fast:** 4.5 km/hr

**Fast:** 5 km/hr



Game answers  
from Page 1.  
Upside-down

- 1. Happy Valley 6.4
- 2 Wilder Forest 6.3
- 3 Bob Hunter 8.4
- 4 Scanlon Creek 6.4
- 5 Hall Tract 5.6
- 6 The Dingle 6.14
- 7 Brock Tract East Bluebird Trail 4.43
- 8 Secord Forest 4.45
- 9 Ballantrae Goodwood 38.2
- 10 Fleetwood Creek 17
- 11 Palgrave Rotary Park 6.7

Donate to ORTA

⇒ Celebrate life's milestones

⇒ In memory of a loved one

⇒ In honour of a friend or volunteer

*In Memory of ORTA member  
Grace Moores  
Lifetime member 2000—2023*

~

*In Memory of Greg Vincent  
Hike Leader with The Bruce Trail and  
supporter of ORTA*

~

*In Memory of ORTA member  
Judith Jensen  
Lifetime member 2000—2023*

~

*Remembering an old friend and fellow  
Raichle lover! ~Bill Roberts~  
He always did beat me to the top! BL*

~



## 20th Anniversary Hike and ORTA Potluck Christmas Lunch

WINTER 2024



Dec 4, 2023 Ballantrae C.C. The ORTA Christmas party was a great success as 80 members joined in the festivities. Both the October Rendezvous, with three hikes, and the Christmas celebration, brought laughter and large numbers of members to share stories of the year on trail. One highlight of both events was the wonderful potluck lunch for hungry hikers who were asked to "lug a mug and pack a plate" as we help the environment. Hikers old and new shared tales of travel and past adventures as they watched pictures of the last decades compiled by Bob Hughes. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped organize these events.

ORTA friends on the trail help Brian and Wilma celebrate their 20th anniversary.



Congratulations Brian & Wilma





We hope you have been doing as much trail walking as we have this past quarter. From Caledon to Northumberland and beyond there are a lot of choices along the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.

Derek Cowbourne, our hike co-ordinator will add more about new hike leaders and hiking options- great progress there with weekday or weekend outings. One thing we have noticed there has been a positive change in hiker confidence and participation this past year. Both the fall Rendezvous hikes and party, and the Wedding Anniversary hike and ORTA Christmas party were very well attended. We are always amazed at the results at the POTLUCK LUNCHESES- hikers do eat well, and Ed seems to make enough of his famous trifle to give everyone a sample!

Several groups are working on their end-to-end hikes, and one group finished the challenge. Now that car shuttle hikes are back, perhaps this will spur more folks to start hiking the entire Trail. Whatever your speed or style - Invite a Friend to Join You as you pursue this healthy and active lifestyle.

Keep on Trekking,  
Wilma and Brian

## Discover Your World

Open to everyone, join us for this series of speakers on worldwide journeys, fascinating nature stories, adventure treks and other stories on a wide variety of subjects. It is also an opportunity to get together with your ORTA friends to catch up on what is happening in our organization. Come along and bring a friend to enjoy these pleasant evenings.

Presentations take place in the Ballantrae Community Centre, 5592 Aurora Rd.,

Date: Thursday January 25, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 pm

A \$10 fee covers the hall rental and refreshments. Remember to lug a mug.

## A HIKE ACROSS A CONTINENT THE CAMINO DE COSTA RICA

This trail extends 280km from the Caribbean Sea, up over the Talamanca Mountains, to the Pacific Ocean. It crosses through jungles, indigenous lands of the Cabecar people, remote villages, as well as kilometres and kilometres of banana, sugarcane, coffee and palm plantations.

After hearing about the trail on one of ORTA's Wednesday hikes, four ORTA members decided to embark on this trip of discovery. Anna Sunn, Cita Wong, Nancy Hogue and Teri Tworzyanski will share their experiences.

Come see the beauty of the country, hear about their close encounter with a fer-de-lance snake, learn about the generosity and entrepreneurial spirit of the local people, discover the local cuisine and see what it means to camp in Costa Rica.

[Click here for more information and pictures.](#)

**Next two Discovery Night dates are Feb. 29, 2024 & March 28, 2024**



**Elevate your adventure.**

Use code **OAKRIDGE** and for each tour booked by your club for 2024 we will donate \$25 to the Oak Ridge Trail Association.

**SNEAK PEEK FOR 2024:**

- P.E.I. Hiking**  
8 Days: July 20, 2024
- Newfoundland Coast-to-Coast**  
10 Days: August 1, 2024
- French Alps**  
11 Days: August 15, 2024
- Gaspé Hiking**  
9 Days: September 3, 2024
- Québec Eastern Townships**  
6 Days: September 22, 2024

Be sure to join our e-newsletter and stay up-to-date on all things hiking for 2024! For more information, contact your local travel professional, call **1-888-716-5523** or visit **deluxehiking.com**.

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## Palgrave Forest: Something for Everybody

Many ORTA hikers rank Palgrave Forest as one of their favourite areas. The Forest lies between Highway 50 and Duffy's Lane, bordered on the north by Finnerty Side Road. As a result, hikers can start from three different parking areas. The terrain is rolling with mixed forests and a number of wetlands. Most trails are wide and well marked with numbered sign posts.



Palgrave Forest is also very popular with mountain bikers so there's a subset of narrow, more twisty trails for extra challenge. The main white blazed ORTA trail passes east-west through the area, with a number of blue blazed side trail options. From the large Rotary Park lot by Palgrave Pond, hikers can also do an interesting 20 min loop following the West Humber River that drains that pond.

Hike leader Brian Millage was involved in establishing The Great Pine Ridge Trail in 1973, first steps towards ensuring a multiuse trail, including for equestrians. Numerous groups of riders from both east and west converged in Palgrave Forest, along with officials, even the RCMP! Overlooking the largest pond is a commemorative cairn, signed on the back with horseshoes.

Palgrave Forest can be enjoyed year around; hope to see you there!

Heather Cooper



*Building Pathways to an Active Lifestyle*



## Route Changes and Trail Conditions

Before you head out on any hike you should always keep your guidebook maps and yourself up to date on latest trail conditions. Changes happen. Some are temporary as in the case of YRF Tree planting and some are permanent such as in Durham Regional Forest. ORTA Map 5 and 6. See map to the right.

The blue now is for downhill bikes only and the red trail is for hiking (both ways)

Thank you Bob Comfort for the corrections to our Maps.

Link to webpage: <https://oakridgestrail.org/hikes/current-trail-conditions-route-changes/>



MAP 5

At this time, I would like to thank our advertisers Naturally Superior Adventures and Rock Island Lodge, Comfortable Hiking Holidays, DeLuxe Hiking, DeNure Tours, and Wild Birds Unlimited. Their advertising revenue has helped produce this and past quarterly newsletters in 2023. When you book or visit them, please be sure to let them know you are from the Oak Ridges Trail Association. [editor@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:editor@oakridgestrail.org)

# Thank You

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# Notice Of The Annual General Meeting Thursday April 25, 2024 7pm

WINTER 2024

All members of the Oak Ridges Trail Association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association to be held at Ballantrae Community Centre, 5592 Aurora Rd. Stouffville on April 25th. We look forward to seeing many supporters, hikers and friends on this occasion. If you will be putting forward a motion for consideration of the membership, please share with the Board before April 13th 2024 for inclusion to the agenda. Send to [secretary@oakridgestrail.org](mailto:secretary@oakridgestrail.org).

## ORTA ELECTION OF DIRECTORS – 2024/25

We will once again put forth a slate of nominees to be elected to serve as Directors for a period of one year. We are seeking new ideas and perspectives and your input is welcomed. We meet about 6 times annually and hope that you'll join us. *To be eligible for election as a Director at the Annual General Meeting of Members, a person must:*

- a. be a member in good standing
- b. have confirmed in writing his/her willingness to serve as a Director,

AND GET YOUR THINKING CAPS ON. Who deserves to be recognised for their outstanding work in 2023?

## AWARD NOMINATIONS

**ORTA Award Nominations for 2023 – 2024** Each year the Oak Ridges Trail Association seeks to honour and say thanks to those members who have made significant contributions to our organization and the development of the ORMT.

- The Award categories are: Commendation Awards—Trail Builder Awards—Lifetime Achievement Award.

More information on submissions and how to nominate will be posted to the website in the coming months.

To view previous award recipients <https://www.oakridgestrail.org/library/award-history/>

**SAVE THE DATE—THURSDAY APRIL 25, 2024**

### FOR THIS EDITION

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Michele Donnelly, Manager

Oak Ridges Trail Association

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