

Toronto Bruce Trail Club

AGM Meeting Minutes

Date Sunday, April 10, 2022

Time 2:00pm – 3:30pm

1. Call to Order

Rhea Rasquinha called the 2022 TBTC AGM to order at 2:00 p.m. Rhea introduced Jackie Randle, from the BTC Head Office who reviewed Zoom Webinar procedures including voting and Q&A.

Moved by Rhea Rasquinha, seconded by Graham Allen, that the agenda for the 2022 AGM be adopted as presented. Motion Carried.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Louise Kent, Membership Director presented the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Opening Remarks

Graham Allen welcomed the members to the 2022 TBTC AGM and thanked the webinar organizers, Jackie Randle and Meghan Croll from BTC Head Office, and Rhea Rasquinha for the AGM package and slide deck.

4. Prior Meeting Minutes

Moved by Rhea Rasquinha, seconded by David Royle that the minutes of the April 17, 2021 AGM meeting be approved as amended. Motion Carried.

5. President's Reports

Graham Allen presented the President's Report.. After four years as President, Graham will be moving to Past President. Graham thanked the current Board members for their work, and acknowledged Janet McColeman and Orest Nahcziewec for their past service, as they will be transitioning off the Board.

The TBTC highlights presented by Graham include the following:

- A new website for the TBTC
- A new unified hiking listing calendar, which was completed in collaboration with the BTC.
- A new Google drive for distribution, storage and retrieval of Board materials
- The good state of the Club's finances

- The inclusion of bios for each Director on the TBTC website
- Regularly scheduled meetings (3 times a year) with the CEO of the BTC, Michael McDonald and the other Club Presidents
- A strong Land Management Committee
- The purchase of two new properties by the BTC and a handshake agreement on a third one
- An increase in diversity for the Club's Board
- The stability of the Board, which has incorporated new ideas while also maintaining previous traditions

6. Treasurer's Report

- Margaret Corner provided an overview of the financial statements.
- Membership fee revenues were \$2,600 over budget and \$2,300 over the 2020 actual amounts.
- Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the TBTC was only able to hold one bus hike this year. None of the special events planned occurred. The Club had budgeted for these events to resume in the Fall of 2021 - which unfortunately did not happen. Accordingly, both revenues and expenses are below budget in these categories.
- There were a record number of hikers earning badges in our section this year. This included 429 (2020 -258) end-to-end badges, 73 (2020 – 32) side trail badges and 196 new winter end-to-end badges.
- The TBTC's surplus for the year was \$5,378 which included a \$10,034 donation to the BTC.
- The statement of financial position shows the Club in to be in a very healthy financial position. As of December 31, 2021, the Club was holding \$50,462 in cash.

Moved by Margaret Corner, seconded by Marlis Butcher that the TBTC Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2021 as previously circulated be accepted. Approved.

TBTC 2022 Budget Highlights

The highlights of the 2022 TBTC Budget include:

- A projected deficit of \$5,545
- A planned BTC donation of \$20,000
- Trail maintenance expenses of \$7,150 - the majority of which is for lumber for boardwalk repairs
- No major fundraising events have been budgeted for 2022
- A Landowners' appreciation dinner is being planned for 2022, for which the TBTC has budgeted \$5,800.

7. Directors' Reports and Questions

The following questions were received prior to the AGM. Responses to the questions were also submitted prior to the AGM.

Q1. Why does the TBTC keep donating large amounts of dollars back to the BTC on a seemingly yearly basis instead of possibly to other BTC clubs or maybe donating to other like-minded hiking/conservation/environmental charities? Does this yearly return of funds to BTC suggest that TBTC gets too much revenue from membership dues that it cannot use effectively for the club itself and its services/activities? Does the TBTC or BTC get a Revenue Canada tax receipt for these donations back to BTC on behalf of all club members?

Response: The nine Bruce Trail Clubs are entirely created, organized and dedicated to supporting the mission of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Our success, and the success of the BTC are symbiotic. The Bruce Trail Clubs have a proud 50-year tradition of supporting the mission of the BTC, including running our own fundraising initiatives that help raise money for the BTC. The BTC is our charity of choice, and the need is both urgent and great. Approximately 30% of the Bruce Trail is still unsecure, forcing hikers off the optimum route and on to roads.

Both the TBTC and the BTC have experienced a surge in membership – which has helped to create more revenue for the Club. The Club has done a wonderful job managing its Club expenses. When there is an opportunity to donate back to the BTC we do so. The TBTC is committed to helping the BTC reach the goal of preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone forever. The BTC is responsible for land acquisitions and has funded several new acquisitions in the Toronto Section in recent years. As mentioned in the Land Acquisition AGM report acquisitions in 2021 include Duff Pitt, Reid property and Brown property. The TBTC is not a legal entity and has no charitable status, therefore a tax receipt is not issued. The BTC does not get a charitable receipt for the donation, but the donation is counted as revenue in support of the mission. The TBTC is proud to support the BTC.

Q2. How useful/reliable/complete/accurate is the Toronto Club's volunteer database for its active use by the TBTC Board and Club Directors, specifically how directors are actually presently using the database for land stewardship, trail maintenance, volunteer events:

- recruitment of volunteers for projects

- tracking of volunteer contributions (e.g., hours per year as Trail Maintenance in the Annual Report noted 685 volunteer hours; what other directors can provide that kind of information for 2021?) —who the current/past volunteers are/were by years of service (could be used for TBTC volunteer awards) —assessment of success in optimal deployment of volunteers including assessment of volunteer satisfaction with their experience."

Response: Annually, the TBTC tracks the number of volunteers in conjunction with the BTC. Reporting of volunteers at the club level is done by the applicable leads such as Trail Maintenance, Land Stewardship, Biodiversity and the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer expressions of interest are received through the TBTC and BTC websites. Specific volunteer vacancies are filled by accessing the list of interested volunteers or by posting the requirements on the websites. Trail Maintenance is the most advanced in tracking volunteer hours. Hike Leaders' volunteer contribution is recorded not by hours, but by the number of hikes lead. Board of Directors' hours are not tracked, but each board position description includes the estimated number of hours required. A volunteer survey is an interesting concept but antidotally, the TBTC has a number of interested people who are waiting for volunteer vacancies.

Q3. "In the last two years the Club has spent about \$15,000 and a lot of volunteer hours on our new website. That is a lot of money and a lot of effort. Could we do a better job looking after it? Could we ask for volunteers to proofread the calendar entries? Some of the entries were and still are nonsensical. A hike in Unionville with parking at Cherry Beach does not make sense. Plus Covid 19 protocol and trail safety rules are not descriptions of a hike. Could these entries be logical and informative? If newcomers should stumble upon our hike entries they should find the information they need, be inspired and feel confident that this is a well-run organization that offers interesting hikes."

Response: During the pandemic, communicating with our membership has become more important than ever. The Board acknowledges the tireless work of our Communications team who have dedicated considerable time and effort to ensure that our members know that we are thinking about them and that we care about their well-being. Hike leaders, including leaders in training have recently received additional guidelines in submitting hike entries. There continues to be a very positive response to this initiative.

With many members returning to hiking we continue to update our website and refine our hike schedule to help grow our membership. We hope people find what they are looking for and enjoy a wonderful time with us.

Follow-up Question: Could we ask for volunteers to proofread the calendar entries?

Attached I am sending you an entry out of the hiking calendar. The entry does not have enough information: I don't know how long the hike is, the hike has no description, I don't really know where to meet the group and I am confused about the second date that I would be signing up for. It would not be printed like this.

Please don't get me wrong. In no way do I want to blame the hike leaders for this shortcoming. I think hike leaders are doing a terrific job for the club. Maybe some hike leaders need more help and support to put their entries in, but it would still be good to have volunteer proofreaders/editors or just somebody that is taking the lead on calendar entries. In the annual

report I read that we have a volunteer waiting list.

If we want to attract new members to the hiking program the entries should be more informative and inviting.

Response: We acknowledge that some of the hiking listings are not always accurate as people learn to use the new on line hiking registration system. The Hiking Director reviews entries and approves hikes submitted. Hike Leaders, should they choose, have the option to draft an entry for review by the Hiking Director prior to posting.

A mentorship program will be created to match new hike leaders with experienced hike leaders to ensure hike entries are completed accurately. A hike leader's Facebook page was created by TBTC's Communication Director to share best practices which again can be promoted. To answer your question specifically, we are not planning to have a volunteer review hike listings before posting. Should the issue continue we will review. Membership across the BTC continues to grow and we are looking forward to the return of the Hiking Initiation Program (HIP) in May to attract new members.

No further questions were received at the AGM.

8. Nominating Committee Report

David Royle presented the Nominating Committee slate of thirteen members for the Toronto Bruce Trail Club Board for 2022-23.

Returning Board Member Nominees:

Name	Position as of May 2021
David Royle	President
Graham Allen	Past President and Club nominee to BTC Board
Louise Kent	Vice President and Membership Director
Margaret Corner	Treasurer
Rhea Rasquinha	Secretary
Peter Pritchard	Land Acquisition and Landowner Relations Director
Laurent Thibault	Trail Maintenance Director
David Rowney	Communications Director

Alina Lin Public Relations and Education Director

Marlis Butcher Volunteer Coordinator

Juliet Williams Special Events Coordinator

First time nominations to the Board for 2022-23:

Name Position as of May 2022

Neal Stein Chair, Land Management Committee

Tom Swales Hiking Director

Moved by David Royle, seconded by Alina Lin, that the slate of thirteen members be elected to the Board of Directors for the year 2022-2023. Approved.

9. Presentation of Awards

Marlis Butcher presented the Todd Bardes Award and Nina Carlisle award.

A. Todd Bardes Award

- The Todd Bardes Award is given annually to outstanding persons who have made significant volunteer contributions to the TBTC in the prior year or two. Such volunteering could be in the areas of trail maintenance, hike leading, social event planning, communications, administrative tasks, fundraising and Board service.
- Nominations were received for the following volunteers:
 - Margaret Corner, our Club's Treasurer
 - Andrew Prochak, a dedicated hike leader
 - David Rowney, our Club's Communications Director and Halton Hills Chapter Liaison
- For this year, the Todd Bardes Award was awarded to David Rowney for his substantial contributions to the TBTC.

David Rowney's Nomination

Throughout the year in which David has served on the Club Board of Directors, David has provided impetus to keep projects moving forward, leading by example, and creating a space for others to bring their best to the table.

As the Communication Director of the TBTC Board, David Rowney has significantly improved and refreshed the Club's communication channels including websites, social media and newsletter. He has also acted as the trail captain and the representative of the Halton Hills chapter, and constantly taken part in the trail maintenance activities.

He led the Club's new website redesign project: initiating the project, forming the working team, selecting the vendor, coordinating with the Bruce Trail head office, and moving the complex project forward. David is also the primary website master and has written/edited/updated over forty articles/pages since the website launched. And, he contributed to the development of advertising strategy.

He integrated and revitalized the Club's social media. The Club's social media - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were infrequently used and rather died before 2020. After David stepped up as the Communication Director, he brought them back to life by creating content and having the social media team post identical messages over all social media three to five times a week. To provide updates about the trails, he has made frequent visits to trails to acquire firsthand information and take photos that would be used in our social media updates. Over the past two years, the followers of three social media sites have increased by approximately 20%.

B. Nina Carlisle Award

- The Nina Carlisle Award is given to a longstanding volunteer (at least five years) who is actively involved in the activities of the Toronto Bruce Trail Club. Such volunteering could be in the areas of trail maintenance, hike leading, social event planning, communications, administrative tasks, fundraising and Board service.
- This year, one nomination was received for an extremely outstanding volunteer.
- For this year, The Nina Carlisle Award is being awarded to Rose-Mary Mitter.

Rose-Mary Mitter's Nomination

2022 is Rose-Mary's 20th anniversary of volunteering with the TBTC.

She started this work as a Trail Captain in 2002, and in 2007 volunteered as the Club's "interim" Trail Development and Maintenance Director. After 3 years, she found that she couldn't attend the Club's board meetings anymore, so in 2010 she stepped down as a Director and created the position of Trail Captain Coordinator (to reduce the Trail Director workload) – a job which she is still doing today.

Over the years, Rose-Mary has trained and managed the hundreds of Trail captains who've maintained the trails. She also manages the trail inspections and Trail Status Reports that the Trail Captains must submit to the BTC three times each year. Rose-Mary herself still steps in as a Trail Captain when no volunteers are available for any sector.

Rose-Mary also still organizes many trail maintenance work parties, and has volunteered on almost all that she hasn't led herself. In addition, she continues to be instrumental in designing and developing most of the Club's new trails and reroutes built since 2007.

Rose-Mary joined the Club's Land Management Committee at its inception in 2007. She therefore probably knows more about our trails and their history than any other volunteer – Rose-Mary is a keeper of TBTC trail and land ownership information. Furthermore, Rose-Mary

does not hoard her knowledge because she is very aware of the importance of passing on historical information to new volunteers.

In 2021, Rose-Mary became the Club's Land Stewardship Director, guiding the 15 land stewards who manage the BTC's owned properties in the Toronto section. They deal with encroachment and misuse of the properties, and document species at risk and invasive species on those properties. The Club's Biodiversity Team, which is overseen by the Land Stewardship Director (Rose-Mary), works towards eradicating invasive species and replacing them with native ones.

C. Trail Maintenance Awards

Laurent Thibault awarded the 2021 Trail Maintenance Volunteer-of-the-Year award to John Borley.

Trail Captain years-of-service (longevity) awards were awarded as follows:

- Jude Keast: 5 years of service
- Peter Pritchard: 5 years of service
- Rose-Mary Mitter: 20 years of service

10. Other Business - None

Moved by Graham Allen, seconded by David Rowney, that the 2022 AGM be adjourned. Approved.

Time of Adjournment: 2:50pm

Minutes Prepared by: Rhea Raquinha

Next Meeting: April 23, 2023