

President's report to the AGM

August 14th, 2025

Reflecting on the past couple of years of Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club achievements I am proud to have been associated with the board. I believe the club membership should likewise be impressed with the board's successes.

I will point to the turnover of board volunteers. Several members including me are stepping away from their board responsibilities this August and will be replaced by new members who will bring different perspectives and ways of achieving club goals. This process of turnover and renewal is essential for the ongoing success of the club and its role in achieving the Bruce Trail Conservancy strategic priorities of protecting land, inspiring generosity, caring for escarpment lands, improving trail experiences and supporting people and culture.

Many of those leaving the board will continue to support the club through their involvement in the growing number of non-board teams running or supporting previous activities managed by the board. Trail Angels, volunteer recognition awards, special hike events, and the biodiversity committee are just some examples.

The process of establishing permanent off board teams to organize and manage club activities is essential if the board is to relieve work pressures on its members. It allows board members to evolve toward oversight and management. Also, it is critical that the large number of members wishing to become more involved in club activities be provided meaningful volunteer opportunities that utilize the breadth of their skills and experiences.

Club progress made in outreach to new communities is heart warming. Engaging with new communities is not easy and results are seen in small steps. However, the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association has requested a repeat of their first introduction to hiking event and this time they want to include members of the very successful Shelburne cricket club. Our first Indigenous smudging and water walk held on mid summer day has resulted in requests for repeat opportunities. Shelburne town council wishes to become more involved with the club and has asked for an on-trail introduction to DHBTC lands and trails exclusively for Shelburne residents.

New approaches to old events, such as 'Music on the Trail' Bruce Trail Day, introduction to BTC lands and experiences 'Walks' rather than hiking, teams to address club communications and social media activities, a managed volunteer database consisting of over 150 members looking to volunteer with club, have created a solid base and offer the opportunity for others to bring their ideas to continue the growth and evolution of our club.

Club members can expect to see continued innovation and exciting opportunities to engage with the Bruce Trail Conservancy in Dufferin.

John Dickason