



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 11 at 7 p.m., via Zoom

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. Welcome: JoAnne Burek, President
2. Minutes of AGM, April 14, 2023
3. Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending February 29, 2024: Diann Connelly
4. Reports
 - a. President: JoAnne Burek
 - b. Membership/Donations: Jacky Rainville
 - c. Trail Maintenance: Helen Whitson
 - d. Permissions: JoAnne Burek
 - e. Trail Locations: Terry Elrod
 - f. Hikes and Website/Emails: Lee Stickles
 - g. Beyond Events: Anita Piebiak
5. Nominations and Elections: JoAnne Burek
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Order of the Laces – Announced by Lee Stickles
8. Adjournment of Business Meeting

PROGRAM

Pat Trautman
Landowner on the Battle River

Thank you to all the Waskahegan members and friends joining us tonight!

Thank you to our volunteers

Alda Watchorn
Anita Piebiak
Bonnie Guo
Brad Jordan
Cathy Mowat
Darlene Barnard
Dean Heichert
Delaney Schlemko
Dennis Nolan
Elizabeth Bagdan
Ellen Homola
Gary Davidson
Grant Stobbe
Helen Whitson
Irene and Scott Malcolm
Jacky Rainville
Jeff and Marja Allen
Jerry Shaw

JoAnne Burek
Johanna Fischer
Johanne Duchesne
John Haines
John Redburn
John Scotvold
Jon Spence
Lee Stickle
Lorna Mathews
Martha Miller
Mary MacArthur
Mary's visiting volunteer
Mike Dreimanis
Oscar Zawalsky
Peggy Funk
Sherry Kunkel
Stella Cormier
Terry Elrod

Waskahegan Trail Association

April 14, 2023 Annual General Meeting

Minutes

Present: Elizabeth Bagdan (Director), Astrid Blodgett (Secretary), JoAnne Burek, Diann Connelly (Treasurer), Terry Elrod, David Fielder, Johanna Fischer, Rosemarie Jalbert, Sandra Janzen, Brad Jordan, Sherry Kunkel, Edda Loomes, Mary MacArthur, Irene Malcolm, Martha Miller, Anita Piebiak (President), Delaney Schlemko (Director), John Scotvold (Maintenance), Lee Stickles (Webmaster), Carol Suddards, Phyllis Verhaar, Helen Whitson

Regrets: Lorna Mathews (Membership)

1. Call to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. The agenda and minutes were presented. Diann moved to accept the minutes; Mary seconded.
3. Audited Financial Statement: See report. Martha moved that the financial report be accepted. John seconded. All in favour.
4. Committee reports (see reports).

President (Anita): See report. Finances are a concern. Anita thanked the volunteers and all of those who show up on the walks.

Membership (Lorna [away]): See report. 172 members as of February 28, 2023.

Trail Maintenance: John & Helen formed a committee to replace Ellen & Sherry. There were 19 work parties; 76 km of trail; 653 hours by 21 volunteers! See report.

Permissions: JoAnne filled in in the absence of a director in this role. See report.

Trail Locations (Terry): Terry discussed the use of an app for maintenance crews. (No report.)

Webmaster (Lee): See report.

Hike (Lee): See report.

Beyond Events (Anita): See report.

5. Comment on Funding (JoAnne): See report.

6. Nominations and Elections:

The following were nominated: JoAnne (President), Diann (Treasurer), Carol (Secretary), Lorna (Membership); Directors: Elizabeth Bagdan, Terry Elrod, Brad Jordan, Delaney Schlemko, John Scotvold, Lee Stickles.

Diann moved to cease nominations; John seconded. Martha moved to accept the slate; Elizabeth seconded. All in favour.

7. Appointment of Auditors: Jeff and Marja Allen were appointed (Terry moved/Diann seconded)

8. Order of the Laces: Awarded to Sherry Kunkel
9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Helen moved to adjourn.

WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET As Of February 29, 2024 - Year End

ASSETS

Year End Feb. 28, 2024

Cash Assets:

GENERAL Bank Account Balance	28,656
CASINO Bank Account Balance	570
TOTAL Cash Assets	29,227

Investments:

GENERAL Invest. Account (Term Deposit)	0
CASINO Invest. Account (GIC's)	0
TOTAL Investments	0

TOTAL ASSETS 29,227

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities

TOTAL Current Liabilities 0

EQUITY

Retained Earnings 29,227

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 29,227

Approved for the Association by:

JoAnne Burek
President

Date: March 6, 2024

Shannon
Treasurer

Date: March 6, 2024

Audited by: 1.

Christine Allen

Date: 06 Mar 2024

^{2.}
M. Allen

Date: 06 Mar 2024

WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF INCOME - GENERAL ACCOUNT

As Of February 29, 2024 - Year End

Year End Feb 28, 2024

REVENUE (GENERAL)

Donations	4,645.50
Membership Dues	2,183.26
Sales - Pins, Crests, etc.	25.00
Sales of Guidebooks	666.00
GST Rebate	51.76
TOTAL REVENUE (GENERAL):	7,571.52

EXPENSE (GENERAL)

GST Expense	116.97
Members BBQ	113.33
Office Expense	683.82
WCB Premium	200.00
Guidebook Printing	1,294.00
Volunteer Appreciation	310.47
Website	618.83
Stripe Fees	111.09
TOTAL EXPENSE (GENERAL):	3,448.51

STATEMENT OF INCOME - CASINO ACCOUNT

As Of February 29, 2024 - Year End

Year End Feb 28, 2023

REVENUE (CASINO)

Interest earned on investment	0.00
TOTAL REVENUE (CASINO):	0.00

EXPENSE (CASINO)

Bank charges	17.50
Insurance	1,983.00
Equipment (Purchase)	0.00
Equipment Repair	1,285.41
Equipment Maintenance	294.01
Equipment Storage	975.00
GST Expense	95.47
Leases & Licences	100.00
Hauling Materials	794.20
Transportation - Work Crews	345.45
TOTAL EXPENSE (CASINO):	5,890.04

Total Profit (Loss) **-1,767.03**

President's Report AGM 2024

2023-2024 Highlights

New Membership Secretary

Early in the year we recruited a new membership secretary, Jacky Rainville. She replaced Lorna Mathews, who had to step down for personal reasons. Many thanks to Lorna for all her work with memberships, and a big thank-you to Jacky who jumped in, even though she was a very new member.

Fundraising Update

Fundraising remains one of our top priorities, especially since our next casino is not until the 2nd quarter of 2025.

In the fall of 2022 we engaged Grant Solutions to give us access to the thousands of foundations and trusts that donate to charitable causes. We wrote to almost a hundred of these. Many let us know right away that our mission is outside their scope. However, we did manage to reach two foundations that have put us on their list for regular giving. And there are still a number that have never replied, which means that we should keep trying with them.

One way to become top of mind with these foundations is to contact them regularly and give them updates about us. So, I had the intention to send an email every 2 weeks to the 24 institutions for which I had their emails.

To give you an idea of what kind of email makes us top of mind, and not a nuisance, this is what the first email was about. It had the provocative subject line "Why our landowners welcome trespassers". It described what trespassing actually means in the context of the law. And it concluded with a message about how important it is for us to build and maintain trust with landowners in order to keep the trail going. There's no selling here. It's just an interesting tidbit that might make you feel smarter.

By email marketing standards it was a success--15 opens and 6 clicks through to our website. Sadly, I only managed to send out the one email. But you can see that it's not trivial coming up with interesting content that people who don't know you or don't remember you want to read.

Garage Move

This year we lost the garage that we were renting for our trail maintenance equipment. The landlady's daughter passed away suddenly, and in the midst of burying her daughter and grieving, she also had to sell her house. In our letter of condolence, we thanked her for the utility and convenience her garage provided us over the 8 years. She replied that she could hardly believe that it had been as long as 8 years. Then she sent a donation of \$800! It's not often you hear of landlord-tenant relations that good. I'm grateful to the trail maintenance volunteers over the years for their courtesy and conscientiousness that fostered all this goodwill.

Also on the garage move, I want to recognize Diann Connelly, our treasurer for diligently checking out Kijiji every week last summer and fall while we were looking for a new space to move into.

Camrose Master Plan for Stoney Creek

Elizabeth Bagdan, Irene Malcolm and I were fortunate to speak with the consultants working on Camrose's master plan for Stoney Creek. We got on Zoom call and described how we use the trail and what's important to us. Essentially, we said don't make the bike trail side, where we walk, too nice because of the many unique plants there. But do put up better signage to let cyclists know that walkers use the trail.

Plans for 2024

Fundraising – We'll continue our email marketing approach with the funder list. We'll also start planning for the casino in Camrose.

Website - We're going to take a look at the automation of the membership renewals on the website. There were a lot of problems last year, triggered from bugs in the plugin and inadequate notification of changes the software developer was making.

Thank-you!

I would like to thank the members of the board for their dedication and support – Carol Suddards, Diann Connelly, Anita Piebiak, Jacky Rainville, Brad Jordan, John Scotvold, Terry Elrod, Lee Stickles, Elizabeth Bagdan, and Delaney Schlemko.

I would also like to thank the members for their continuing support of the Waskahegan ideals.

Respectfully submitted,

JoAnne Burek

WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP REPORT AGM

February 29, 2024

The duties of the Membership Secretary include being the primary contact for membership, mailing of the cards, guidebooks, decals, pins, and donation receipts. Keeping records and statistics are also part of the duties of the Membership Secretary.

Membership activity for year end February 29, 2024:

Memberships as of February 28, 2023	172
New Members	45
Resigned / Expired Memberships	(104)
Memberships as of February 29, 2024	113

Historical trend in number of memberships and book sales:

Trends in Membership and Guide Book Sales				
AGM in April	Members @ Feb 28/29	New / Reinstated	Resigned/Expired	Books Sold
2014/15	111	35	34	22
2015/16	107	29	33	25
2016/17	111	41	37	28
2017/18	156	56	11	56
2018/19	156	53	55	41
2019/20	129	50	79	41
2020/21	199	70	0*	56
2021/22	228	76	47	79
2022/23	172	40	96	23
2023/24	113	45	104**	28

** In April 2020, the board of directors granted members a free year of membership due to the pandemic crisis. Paid memberships resumed for 2021-22.*

***In February 2024, 52 members who did not renew in February 2023, were given a grace renewal. Paid membership resumed for 2024/25.*

Membership levels have fallen substantially during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 years. There were problems with the online renewal system that started in February of 2023. The automatic renewal option had to be turned off. Also, many members did not receive their renewal reminder.

Another problem was that several members were unable to reset their account passwords in 2023/24, making it difficult to renew online. A website update in February 2024 seems to have corrected this problem.

These issues resulted in higher than usual expired memberships. To mitigate this, 52 members who likely did not receive renewal reminders had their 2023/24 payment waived on February 8, 2024.

As of September 2023, 4 members have honorary membership status.

New casino funds will not be available to us until 2025 at the earliest.

Donations:

Sincere thank you to all our donors in 2023/24! A total of \$4,750 was raised this year. Substantial donations were received from John Maude & Susan Quinn Charitable Foundation, Alice Gable, and an Anonymous Donor. Benevity, a new online donation platform, also issued a cheque for a donation from Enbridge. An online account will be established to accept donations from Benevity by EFT.

2023/2024 Donors

Major Donors

John Maude & Susan Quinn Charitable Foundation (\$2000)
Alice Gable (\$800)
Anonymous (\$600)
Enbridge (\$300)

Dean Gamber
Anonymous

\$50 - \$99

Kevin Quinn
Terry Elrod
Lorna Matthews
Anonymous

\$100 - \$199

JoAnne Burek & Lee Stickles
Irene Malcom
Lin & Linda Keehn
Cathy Mowat
Liane Wilson

Under \$50

Rose Marie Jalbert
Kathryn Hodgins

Submitted by

Jacky Rainville

Trail Maintenance Annual Report for 2023 Season

The Trail Maintenance Crew enjoyed another year of comradery, working together to maintain the Waskahegan Trail. We continue to use the committee approach, which began last year, to plan and execute maintenance.



Our biggest challenge this year was losing our garage space, due to the death of the owner's daughter. We needed to move out in August. Brad offered temporary lodging at his farm near Millet. We have found a permanent location at the Bulldog Storage facility in east Edmonton. We will be relocating all the equipment to this new location in early spring.

Maintenance started in May with a garage day, preparing all the equipment for the trail work. We had 18 work parties and maintained approximately 83 km of trail. There were approximately 300 person-hours contributed by 21 volunteers.



Once again, we enjoyed our 4th year end maintenance wiener roast at the Hughston Stopover. Thank you to Lori and Jay Cridland for permission to use the site on their land.

Some special thank you's are in order:

Brad – for storing our equipment, extra chain sawing, and installing another section of polls and ropes on the Fort Ethier trail

Gary - for use and set up of his portable garage for the equipment storage at Brad's

Lee - for scouting the trails

John S. – for taking on the majority of the organization of the weekly maintenance parties

Ellen – for keeping our WTA e-mail list up-to-date

A big thank you to all the trail maintenance volunteers, for your commitment and enthusiasm for the trail:

- John S., John R. Sherry, Jon S., Brad, Darlene, Gary, Bonnie, Helen, Mike, Peggy, John H. Elizabeth, Ellen, Lee, Stella, Oscar, Mary, Mary's visiting volunteer, Cathy M., and Terry.

- And to Grant, for thinking of us on Wednesdays, his travel days to/from work.



Respectfully Submitted by the Trail Maintenance Committee,

John Scotvold, John Redburn, Lee Stickles, Darlene Barnard, Helen Whitson

Permissions Report AGM 2024

Trail

Over 200 km of the Waskahegan Trail runs across the properties of over a hundred landowners. If not for their generous permission, the trail would not exist.

The role of the Permissions Director is to maintain the contact information of the landowners and to be their main point of contact if they need to reach out to us. The role also includes maintaining our records of who owns what piece of land the trail runs on.

For the last three years, we have not had an official Permissions director so I have been filling in.

I have found it to be an easy and rewarding job. It's easy because the records are in good shape and easy to update. It's rewarding because the landowners are very accommodating to our requests.

Nevertheless, hikers need to remember that permissions can change at any time for any reason. That's why we urge hikers to always check the Trail Conditions page on the website before setting out on a trail.

Leases

We lease crown land for four properties, and all have come up for renewal in the last few years. Three leases are still waiting for processing with the Alberta Government.

Submitted

JoAnne Burek

Waskahegan Trail Association
Trail Location 2024 Annual Report
Terry Elrod, Director
20 March 2024

What Trail Location does

The responsibility of Trail Location (TL) is to document the Waskahegan Trail — its route, constructions (stiles, boardwalks, bridges, rope ladders), trailheads and landmarks, for use by the WTA. Almost the entirety of the trail on private land has been documented.

Putting TL information to good use

TL information has three important uses. It can be used to (1) update the Trail Guide, (2) communication with landowners about a trail issue, and (3) assist Trail Maintenance with both advance knowledge about the exact locations of trail features as well as real-time trail location information while in the field. Given that some trail sections are maintained only every other year or so, there are times when the trail is lost sight of while in the field. Having TL information in real time saves TM from delays and helps with TM planning. It also helps with keeping TL information up to date.

A search for a suitable smartphone application (“app”) resulted in the choice of AllTrails. It meets our needs while being affordable and usable on both iPhone and Android smartphones. It also has the crucial feature that trail GPS data can be shared only with designated WTA volunteers. However, the information that may be recorded in AllTrails, while adequate for our purpose, is of a different format, so TL information about trail features must be entered by hand, which is tedious and labour-intensive. Nevertheless, about a dozen frequently hiked trail sections were entered last summer. However, the TL director’s absence from Alberta for three summer months hindered gaining familiarity with how AllTrails works in the field, especially when using the app to update trail information.

Keeping TL information safe

Some hiking apps allow hikers to share information about hiking trails among app users. AllTrails is among them. While we use AllTrails to share WT information among select WTA volunteers on a need-to-know basis, *we do not, and will not, share trail information with the general public.* However, we did discover that two segments were tracked and shared by a well-meaning member of the public. AllTrails has a formal procedure for requesting that such postings be removed, which we are pursuing at this time. We are also monitoring for any other such postings that might arise. We do not want the WT to be shared indiscriminately with the hiking public.

WTA Hikes

This report covers the calendar year of January to December 2023

- **Downloadable schedule**
 - Can be downloaded at https://waskahegantrail.ca/wp-content/uploads/newsletters/WTA_Current_Hikes.pdf
 - Or on the website, look for “Resources for Hikers” on the right sidebar of the home page.
- **2023 Hike Statistics – a little better than most years**
 - 34 hikes with an average of 13.94 attendees (we are generally in the 12 to 12½ range)
 - 76 individuals & 474 attendees with an average of 13.29 members (63 individuals) & 0.65 non-member (22 attendees/13 individuals)
 - only 2017 had more attendees (563 for 36 hikes) but there were a lot more non-members that year (158 attendees/107 individuals)
 - 2017 was unique in that there were “Canada 150” promotions (e.g., free for our Elk Island hikes, WTA’s 50th anniversary) and we had set ourselves up on ‘MeetUp’
 - 76 people attended at least 1 hike (63 members, 13 non-members), with 30 attending 4 or more (& 16 attending 15 or more)
 - so many more people attending multiple hike than in the past (e.g., 2022 had 104 individuals attending hikes but 50 attended only 1 & 8 attended 15 or more)
 - 4 hikes canceled, all in the spring/summer due to thunderstorms (2) & air quality (2). No hikes were canceled due to cold weather
- **Non-Member Attendees – was less than half of what we typically would get**
 - The lack of organized carpooling has likely contributed to the decline of non-member attendees
 - historically the hike leaders would go to the carpool location to coordinate passengers & lead drivers to the trailhead
 - on the downside though, we have had to alter the starting location of a few hikes to allow for extra vehicles at the trailhead
 - several of our members have organized informal carpooling groups, but that doesn’t address non-members
 - Is organized carpooling still practical?
 - navigation systems in vehicles make it easier to find the trailhead, so fewer vehicles were going to the carpool locations (would be running the risk of not having enough ‘seats’ for those arriving via public transit)
 - fewer locations near public transit provide free parking for vehicles not going to the trailhead (or even for vehicles waiting for others to arrive)
 - we need a volunteer to coordinate carpooling (& to at least have 1 vehicle there for those who arrive via public transit)

- we are always struggling to find volunteers & the focus is on getting more hike leaders not carpool coordinators
 - not having the hike leader also responsible for coordinating the carpooling has allowed us to expand the hike leader pool to those living near a trailhead (e.g., Camrose & Ministik areas)
- **Summer Schedule (May to October) & Winter Schedule (November to March 2025) –**
 - Hike Committee Meeting was held as a ZOOM call on March 26th & we quickly filled in the schedule
 - There will be 39 hikes from April 2024 to March 2025 -
 - prior to the call 16 of 28 the hikes for April to October are already filled so we only had to address 12 & got through them quickly
 - website calendar & printable schedule have been updated
 - 13 non-hiking weeks – every other week during the winter (November to mid-April) plus some extra off weeks for holidays
 - 10 of the 11 November 2024 to March 2025 remaining to be filled (plenty of time to fill)
 - Hike Committee Meeting for 2025 tentatively booked for March 9th, 2025 13:00-14:30MT
 - afternoon in Edmonton on a non-hiking Sunday & the day the time changes
 - **Thank You to Our Hike Leaders** – Big thanks to all of the hike leaders
 - John S., Helen W., Johanna F., Sherry K., Terry E., Mary M., Elizabeth B. Delaney S., Martha M., Stella C., Anita P., JoAnne B. & Lee S., Irene M. & Scott M., Johanna D. & Dennis N.
 - New Leaders from 2023 – Sherry K., Johanna D. & Dennis N.
 - plus New Leaders already for 2024 – Alda W.
 - We are always looking for new hike leaders. Contact me if you would like to lead a hike.

WTA Website and Email – <https://waskahegantrail.ca>

- Email –
 - Google has changed how system generated emails get handled for Gmail & Yahoo accounts. It can result in more email flagged as spam or junk.
 - If you are not getting correspondence from WTA (e.g., renewal notices, password resets, hike updates) check your spam or junk folder,

Beyond Events 2023

- June 4 - WTA members Spring Social and BBQ at Miquelon Provincial Park

Beautiful weather, great hike, good food and good company. It was great to get together and visit after a long and cold winter.

- October 1 – 6

Eleven hikers joined me in Ottawa to hike in Gatineau Park in Quebec. We stayed in a large old converted barn just outside the park near Wakefield. We shared the cost of rental vehicles, lodging and groceries. Every day, we made a big breakfast, packed our lunches, went hiking and returned home for late afternoon drinks and delicious suppers. Thanks to Alice for organizing and preparing these meals! The weather was incredible – very warm! Imagine swimming in Meech Lake in October! The trails were well marked - some quite easy and others more challenging. The maple trees were changing into brilliant reds and oranges.

Check out the website for photos of this awesome trip!

- November 5 – Fall Social and Chili Lunch at the Wanisan Stopover

Nice weather and a good turnout. Thank you to Lee and JoAnne for hauling out the two big pots of chili. It was great to sit around a campfire in the late fall enjoying a hot meal with friends!

Coming Events - 2024

- May 26 – Members Social and BBQ
- October 6-11 Hiking trip to Gatineau Park in Quebec
 - Maximum 10 people
 - \$200.00 deposit by August 30, 2024
 - Groceries, rental vehicles and lodging will be shared
 - You are responsible for arranging your own flights to Ottawa
 - For more information – Call Anita @ 780-524-9817 or 780-929-2707
- October 27 - tentative date for Fall Social and Chili Lunch @ Wanisan Stopover

Submitted by

Anita Piebiak

Nominations for the Board – 2024-2025 Term

The following candidates have been nominated for the board:

Candidate	Year of term
Helen Whitson	1 st year
Jacky Rainville	2 nd year
Terry Elrod	2 nd year
Carol Suddards	2 nd year
Diann Connelly	3 rd year
Brad Jordan	3 rd year
Elizabeth Bagdan	3 rd year
Lee Stickle	3 rd year

Jacky Rainville joined the board in the middle of last year. JoAnne Burek is in her 2nd year of the 2-year President term.

If there are no changes to the above, the new board will look like this:

President: JoAnne Burek
Treasurer: Diann Connelly
Secretary: Carol Suddards
Membership Secretary: Jacky Rainville
Trail Maintenance Coordinator: Helen Whitson
Trail Locations Coordinator: Terry Elrod
Hike Coordinator and Website: Lee Stickle
Directors at Large:
 Elizabeth Bagdan
 Brad Jordan