

Pathways Newsletter

The Pathways for People newsletter is published twice a year and shares trail stories and updates, events and local news on infrastructure work happening across Norfolk County



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PROMOTINGpathways
FOR WALKING AND CYCLING IN NORFOLK

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Pathways Newsletter

WE WANT GOOD ROADS

“Anything that facilitates intercourse between people tends to civilize them. Nothing helps so much toward this end as perfect highways”

Submitted by Rob Luke
Turkey Point Mountain Bike Club

The cycling phenomenon in the 1890's was much more than a way to get exercise and have fun. The Canadian Wheelman's Association (CWA) positioned changes that were beneficial for all of society and the advancement of modern Ontario we know today. The CWA and Hal Donly, as editor of the Simcoe Reformer had a platform to sway public opinion and effect change. In the 1890's roads in Norfolk were like roads anywhere else; they were lousy and in poor repair because the automobile had yet to arrive and they were used mainly by poor people walking to town or riding their horse and for the more wealthy and prosperous, a horse and buggy. My Grandfather used to tell me stories of making money on the Hillcrest Road, outside Simcoe by pulling stuck cars out of morasses with his heavy workhorses during the depression era. The roads were muddy and culverts and ditches were nonexistent so when it rained erosion was bad.



The CWA petitioned the Provincial Government to improve the road system in Ontario because lousy roads made for lousy cycling. There was no conformity and some sections of road were maintained well while other sections were abandoned and dismal. The road system at that time was maintained by farmers whose land abutted the road as was the law upon receiving the original land grants in the time of John Graves Simcoe in 1796. The farmers were not all interested in keeping up a good road except to get his product to market, which by 1895 was done mostly by the railroads. The battle cry went up! “We Want Good Roads” and Hal Donly would feature that banner in the Simcoe Reformer in April 19, 1897. The CWA even made an economic case by explaining that it would benefit the farmers and all society as well. The cheese industry in Ontario at the time was a \$9,000,000 a year business and the CWA argued that it would be good business and more cost efficient to the farmers to have a modern transportation system.

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The farmer only spent monies and expended the time and energies he felt that was needed for the roadways. This was more taxation and interference by government in many people's minds. The CWA countered in a Jan. 3, 1898 editorial that stated "Anything that facilitates intercourse between people tends to civilize them. Nothing helps so much toward this end as perfect highways". They often cited the Romans and the role good roads played in building the Roman Empire but tongue in cheek commented that "the Romans roads are still in better condition than the roads in Ontario". Ironical today, the CWA even cited the better roads in Quebec and how they should be held up to a model for Ontario (CWA Jan. 3, 1898).

The movement resulted in the creation of the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA), an organization that is relevant and active today as it describes itself today: "Working for Municipalities".

The OGRA is one of Canada's largest municipal associations. The organization represents the transportation and public works-related concerns of 445 municipalities and also First Nation communities of Ontario. The OGRA has existed for more than 100 years, and continues to advocate, educate, and provide services to the municipalities as they provide transportation systems to the residents of the province.

Learn more about the OGRA here, www.cbj.ca/ontario_good_roads_association.

The OGRA has the following five mandates:

- To advocate for sustainable funding for municipal infrastructure.
- To advocate the collective interests of our members through policy analysis, legislative review and consultation.
- To provide affordable and accessible education and training services.
- To promote leadership with regard to infrastructure asset management.
- To develop plans, programs and partnerships for the delivery of services that meet the needs of our members.



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Ironically, delegates to the first OGRA conference had to take the railroad to get to the first meeting. In the November 16th, 1896 edition, the CWA gazette ran a contest that asked readers to send in a photo of the worst road in Canada. Winning picture was worth \$10 and 129 years later, the Toronto dailies run the same contest to bring awareness of the worst potholes in the City of Toronto!

So the next time as a motorist you are cursing a cyclist or marveling at the great road and highway system we have here in Ontario; remember to be thankful to the early cycling movement for having the foresight to bring this about.

The OGRA recognizes this fact on their website by stating: "In 1894, the year OGRA was founded, the horse and wagon still reigned supreme, as they had since Roman times. However, Ontario roads were in a sorry state of disrepair compared to those built by Caesar's legions. Cyclists and Wheelman's associations were the first to lobby for better roads".



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Alex Dobias
Grand Erie Public Health

In the spring, Pathways hosted a walk in Long Point at the Bird Observatory (Old Cut Station). Despite the rainy weather, there was a great turnout of folks excited to learn more about the history of the observatory, bird banding, bird population, and conservation. This was a guided walk through the trail at the bird observatory and an opportunity to learn more about what the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) does.

Pathways would like to sincerely thank Birds Canada and the LPBO for the important work that they do and allowing us to host our Spring Walk at the observatory.

In case you missed it, the LPBO is located at 13 Old Cut Blvd. and is open to the public! Residents are welcome to visit and take a walk through the trail. To learn more or keep an eye out for exciting events at the LPBO visit, <https://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/long-point-bird-observatory>.



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Outdoor recreation and adventure sports like mountain biking are powerful—they build confidence, community, connection to nature, and positively contribute to one's physical and mental health. For people with disabilities, however, many trails, bikes and programs are still inaccessible. That's why the growth of Adaptive Mountain Biking (aMTB) — riders using handcycles, e-assist adaptive bikes or other modified cycles is so important.

In May, some of our members had the opportunity to attend an information session about aMTB, part of a 3-day camp held at Long Point Eco Adventures. It was a great afternoon of learning!

As a relatively new sport in Ontario, the camp aimed to educate people on the sport, attract more riders, and facilitate an opportunity for people with disabilities to try the different types of adaptive bikes in a supported environment.

Interested in learning more? Visit, <https://ontariocommunitychangemakers.org/chang.../jen-gadoua>



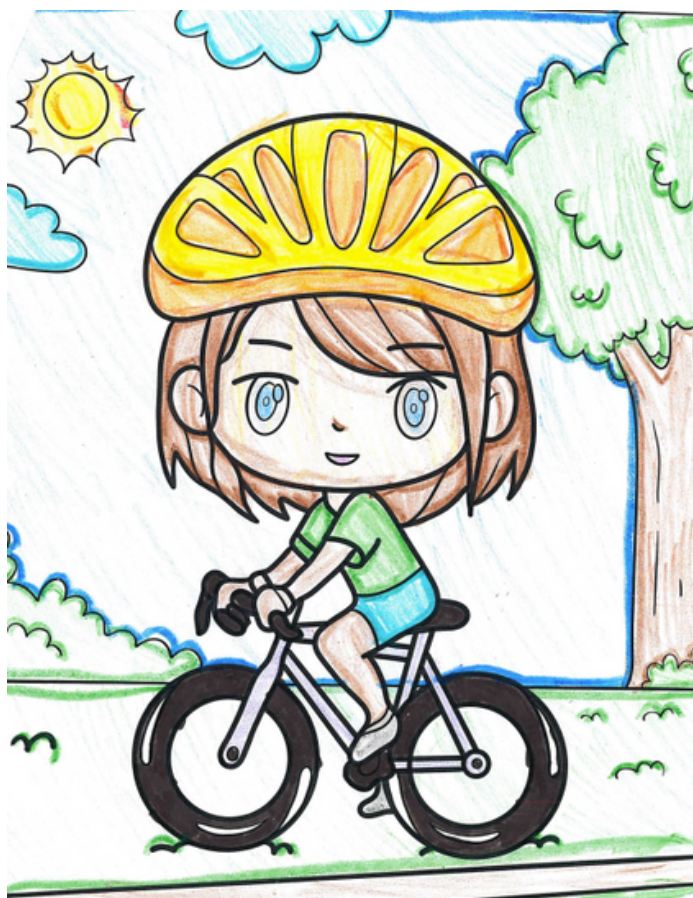
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In June, Pathways attended a Norfolk Community Days event at Long Point Eco Adventures. We started with a morning walk and ended with interacting with residents about pathways initiatives and organizing a colouring contest!

Check out some of the entries!



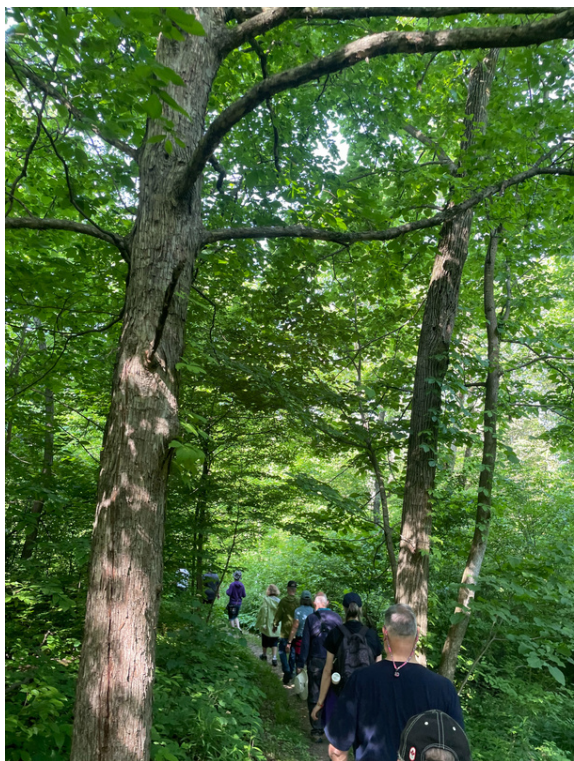
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Long Point Eco Adventures has a beautiful trail system with signage throughout sharing insights into Norfolk's unique ecosystem.

Interested in exploring? Visit the walking map here, [LPEA-WalkingTrails-12x5.55-Map-2023](#).



UPCOMING FALL WALK

Alex Dobias
Grand Erie Public Health

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures drop, many people begin to feel the effects of the winter blues—a dip in mood and energy that often comes with the darker months. Reduced sunlight can disrupt our body's internal clock and lower serotonin levels, leading to fatigue, irritability, and a general sense of sluggishness.

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One of the most effective ways to combat these feelings is through physical activity, especially getting outside for a walk. Even a brisk 20-minute stroll can boost mood, improve circulation, and increase exposure to natural light, which helps regulate sleep and hormone balance. Walking outdoors also provides a valuable mental reset—fresh air, changing scenery, and the simple rhythm of movement can ease stress and clear the mind.

Whether it's a lunchtime walk, a weekend hike, or a few laps around the neighborhood, consistent physical activity is a natural and accessible way to stay energized and positive throughout the colder season.

So bundle up, step outside, and let movement be your medicine against the winter blues!

Coming up on Saturday November 1st, Pathways is hosting our fall walk. This will be a historical walk through the town of Simcoe led by Andy Blackwood (Norfolk Historical Society) showcasing significant landmarks.

The walk will begin at 2pm starting at the Carillon Town – Norfolk's War Memorial on Norfolk St. N Simcoe.

All are welcome!

**CHECK OUT THE
POSTER ON
PAGE 11!**



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WATERFORD HERITAGE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Submitted by Frank Woodcock
Waterford Heritage Trail Association

I met a Fairy Godmother on the trail one day but I was oblivious. Andy, head of the Shadow Lake Group and I were posting signage on a newly developed section of trail when a woman came along. A Norfolk County girl, she had recently moved to Waterford, loved the trail and wanted to get involved. We invited her to a meeting.

The meeting had only been going for 15 minutes and she was impressed with how we ran the meeting and how we had ongoing projects. She asked that if we had the money were there any ready-to-go projects. We told her we were expanding out to Hwy 24 and over to Conc 7 as well as installing a tiled pad in the Memorial Grove with 2 metal benches and circular area for some plantings. She wanted to know the costing of the projects and we related the different expenses with dollar values and she said...wait for it... "I'll give you \$10,000 for each project." If you know the British term "gobsmacked" then you understand the look on our faces, which eventually morphed into smiles of disbelief.

The upshot of this tale is that the money was in the bank the very next day and benches were ordered, a landscapist found, a bulldozer and roller ordered and we had no time to live happily ever after.



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FALL WALK POSTER



WALKERS WANTED!

JOIN OUR FALL WALK, THROUGH
THE TOWN OF SIMCOE

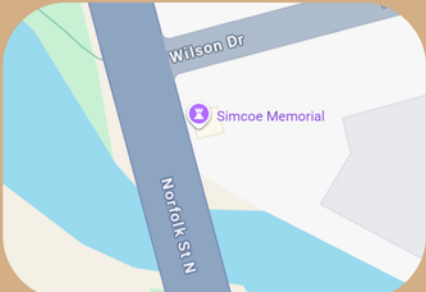


**Saturday,
November 1st**
from 2 to 4 P.M



**Norfolk War Memorial
Carillon Tower**
201 Norfolk St N Simcoe

- A historical walk through the town of Simcoe led by **Andy Blackwood, Norfolk Historical Society**
- Rain or shine
- All are welcome!



**STREET PARKING AVAILABLE
ALONG WILSON DR**



Questions?
Contact Alex Dobias
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