



**ELORA CATARACT
TRAILWAY
ASSOCIATION**

Fall 2024 Newsletter

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THE ELORA - CATARACT TRAILWAY - ONTARIO

The breeze among the trees

While cycling down the trailway, observing and listening to the falling leaves, I'm reminded of how beautiful fall is and how peaceful it is to be in nature.

As I ring my bell, I enjoy the glances, smiles, and cordial greetings from others on this multipurpose trail. Along its winding journey through eight municipalities, singles, couples, families, friends, and acquaintances socialize. The Trailway furnishes us with a retreat from the pressures of modern life.

A determined group converted an abandoned rail line into a recreational trail corridor 31 years ago. They bought the 47-kilometre CPR Elora to Cataract rail corridor with two conservation authorities, the province, and enthusiastic locals. It showed how different levels of government and community organizations could acquire and subsequently manage a former railway right-of-way following its conversion to a recreational trail.

Thousands of people have enjoyed our Trailway, a true gem. As the new chair of the Elora Cataract Trailway Association, I plan to protect this treasure for future generations, much like the trailblazers who came before me.

Upon joining the Board, what encouraged me to accept the role of Chair? As a former municipal councillor and GRCA Board member, I supported the Trailway because of its importance to the communities it serves. I bring 24 years of human resources leadership and management experience specializing in organizational development, helping turn a 75-person consulting engineering firm into a 450-person global leader. I serve on Centre Wellington Township's Healthy Communities Advisory Committee and its Environment and Active Transportation subcommittee, which is participating in developing the Township's Active Transportation and Mobility Master Plan.

With a fresh perspective and the expertise of a consultant, I have devoted the last six months to learning about this organization, analyzing its governance records, board materials, newsletters, and archive resources from the 1990s. I have cultivated collaborative ties with my CVC, GRCA, and Centre Wellington Township contacts, conducted a visual survey of the Trailway, interviewed trail users at various sections along the Trailway, and distributed and reviewed our recent online trail user survey.

With this understanding, I know the direction we need to take. The journey requires a steady hand, adaptability, collaboration, and strenuous effort. There will be trials and disappointments, some already experienced, but calm seas never make great sailors. Barriers present opportunities to learn and use new ways and approaches. Unless repeated, mistakes are learning opportunities. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I adhere to my clan's motto, "Fortitudine," and my mantra, "Dare to Care."

Imagine if we all exercised "Dare to Care" by carrying out what we bring in, including our dog's litter, leashing our dogs when near people, slowing down on our bike when approaching people, ringing our bell to notify them of our presence, and stepping aside to let others pass—in short, respecting every trail user's right to enjoy the trail. These simple activities require little effort yet provide so much for us and others. Help me make this part of our trail culture.

I've said enough. It's time to begin our journey together and see where our new path leads us.

Take care,

Ian



Photo by Carolyn Crozier

OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

CREDIT VALLEY CONSERVATION AND GRAND RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Credit Valley Conservation, founded in 1954 by Credit River watershed municipalities, turned 70 this year. Much like the GRCA its mandate is to address growing issues about water quality, flooding, and soil erosion from changing land uses and deforestation. Visit <https://cvc.ca/governance/70-year-anniversary/> for details.

Credit Valley Conservation is helping to create the 100-km Credit Valley Trail from Orangeville's headwaters to Lake Ontario in Mississauga. There are 32 kilometres of connected path and 68 to go. This link provides more information about this worthwhile project: <https://creditvalleytrail.ca>.

The Grand River was recognized as a Canadian heritage river 30 years ago this year. Events were held across the watershed to celebrate.

ECTA assisted Water Cycles (<https://www.bluerangelabs.org/water-cycles-expeditions>) to promote and organize their successful August 24 Bikes and Blues Festival at the Wellington County Museum & Archives, celebrating the 30th anniversary and connecting communities and water through cycling.

Information about the Grand River's historic designation may be accessed at <https://www.grandriver.ca/our-watershed/heritage-river-designation/>.

TRAILWAY HISTORY



Photo by Ian MacRae

We continue to fine-tune our kiosks at Gerrie Road, Beatty Line, the Shand Dam, and Orton. Along with our revised map at each location, on the reverse sides, you'll note some classic vintage photos illustrating that particular community and the C.P.R. trains that served it. The above kiosk showcases Orton.

The second recent photo at Beatty Line shows our new map holder containing our current maps. Battery-free and easy to read regardless of lighting conditions. Please help yourself to one and inform us at info@trailway.org if it is empty. There is also one at Gerrie Road, with additional ones to follow at Shand Dam and Orton.



Photo by Rick Goodfellow

All Aboard! The Railways of Peel" is at Peel Art Gallery Museum + Archives from October 5, 2024, to October 12, 2025. Peel's railways and their relationship with associated communities are examined in the show. Railway historians Ralph Beaumont and Thomas McIlwraith collaborated on the exhibit. Cataract is located in Peel Region; hence, the Elora Cataract Trailway is listed. For more information, visit <http://pama.peelregion.ca/exhibitions/all-aboard-railways-peel>.



Photo by Ian MacRae



Photo by David Strang

VANCOUVER ISLAND RAIL TRAIL

The recently constructed rail trail between Parksville and Coombs on Vancouver Island runs for seven kilometres along the right of way of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway (E&N Railway).

The railway was originally built by Sir Robert Dunsmuir, a Scottish coal miner who came to BC indentured to the Hudson's Bay Company and became a coal baron, member of the Legislature, and the wealthiest man in BC.

The E&N was given land grants to aid its construction, which amounted to about 20% of Vancouver Island. This would account for the principal difference between the Coombs to Parksville trail and ours.

While the multi-use trail looks much like the original Elora Cataract Trailway, 3 meters wide with a stone chip surface and drainage into ditches on either side, the trail does not run on the original rail bed like ours. It runs on the wide E & N right of way next to the rail tracks that have been waiting, now for 15 years, for a

commuter train, with no date in sight.

The Coombs to Parksville trail has been described as not very scenic, except for the bald eagles overhead.

The morning trail user begins in Parksville by turning their back on the sun as it rises over the coastal mountains, casting its light on the waters of the Straits of Georgia and the Parksville beachfront.

The trail proceeds through woods and meadows before ending at Coombs, where the big attraction is the goats grazing on the roof of the local grocery store.

Unlike our trail, there are no views of rich Southern Ontario farmland. There is no need to continue the comparison. If they extend the trail to 38 K BC, it would be scenic. Indeed, the E & N right of way could accommodate a genuinely spectacular trail should a process be found to build one over its entire length.



Photo by Jermaine W, Pixabay

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS ACT

The ECTA Letters Patent (Articles of Incorporation) amendment to conform with the Not-For-Profit Corporations Act and the approval of the related amendments to the by-laws will be addressed at the next annual meeting.

Owing to a lack of quorum, these matters were not addressed at the special meeting in September.

The Act provides that when a corporation's articles have not been amended to conform with the Act, the

provisions of the Act will apply in the event of a conflict.

By-laws amended by the Board apply until the next membership meeting, when they must be approved or rejected.

While we would like to have met the statutory deadline for making amendments to the articles, waiting until the annual meeting should be equally satisfactory.

THE TRAIL BECOMES A STREAM

Your editor embarked on a long walk on the trail without checking the weather forecast and found himself caught in a downpour. Standing on the grass buildup on the side of the trail and looking at the trail surface, I saw that it had transformed into a stream an inch or so deep with a significant current, even though the trail at that point was, to a walker, relatively flat.

Could this explain the ruts that have appeared on parts of the trail where the grade is more pronounced?

David



Photo by Pixabay

REPORTING TRAILWAY ISSUES

The Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) are dedicated to keeping the Elora Cataract Trailway safe and secure for all users.

You may help in this process by reporting any safety concerns you encounter, such as a fallen tree, a stretch of washed out trail, encroaching vegetation, etc.

Gather the following information and send it to info@trailway.org. Your observation will be added to our registry of reported concerns and forwarded to the appropriate conservation authority. ECTA has initiated a registry of reported concerns to monitor all concerns, focussing on recurring problems.

1. What? Describe the issue.
2. Location? (for example, between KM marker x and y, between gates x and y (every GRCA gate is numbered) or approximate distance and direction from nearest road. See GRCA map showing gate locations.

Reminder:

The CVC-owned section of the Elora Cataract Trailway between Hillsburgh and Erin is closed until June 2025 due to the Erin Wastewater System project. More information and up-dates can be found at www.cvc.ca/park-advisories/ and www.erinwastewater.ca.

GRCA service disruptions are listed at <https://www.grandriver.ca/who-we-are/service-disruptions/>.

TRAILWAY RE-WIDENING



Photos by GRCA

The ECTA, through the GRCA, widened and restored approximately 5.3 kilometres of trail surface lost to encroaching vegetation. On October 30, 2024, the work began with a tractor pulling a TrailPro, followed by a compactor. The GRCA's contractor restored trail sections between Gates 9-12, 14-15, and 20-21.

The sites were chosen based on trail user survey responses from this

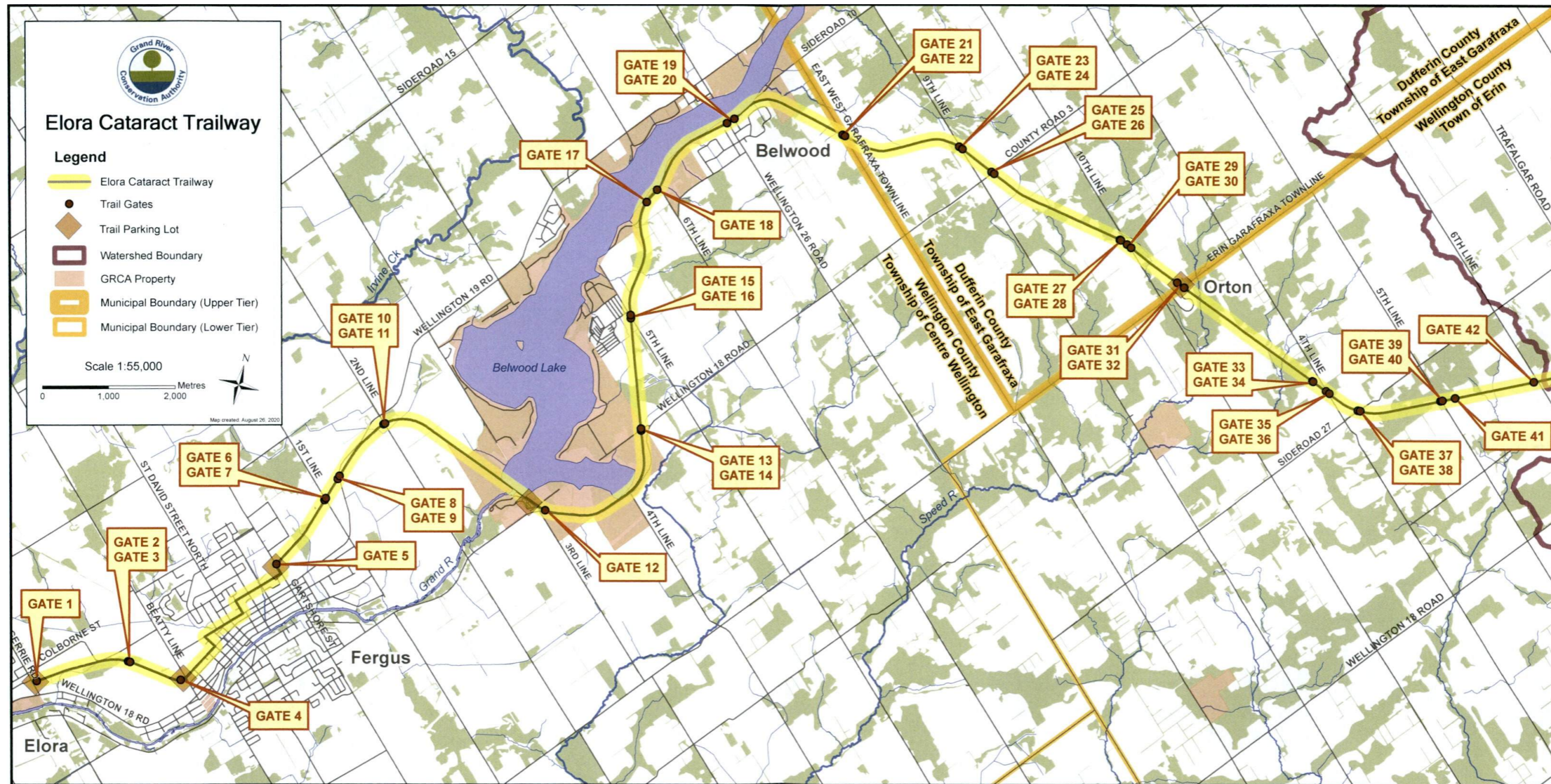
summer and observations from ECTA Board members and GRCA employees. We are grateful to the Township of Centre Wellington, Nexans Canada Inc. of Fergus, the GRCA, and private donors for providing financing to complete this year's project.

Please consider donating to our ongoing trail-widening program. Please refer to our membership and donation information page.



Photo Gate 9, November 17, 2024 by Ian MacRae

Locations of GRCA Gates



Map courtesy of the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Note: Credit Valley Conservation gates are not numbered. CVC uses the nearest road for reference purposes.

BLYTH TUNNEL COMPLETED!



Photo from <https://www.g2grailtrail.com/capital-projects>

Here in Southwestern Ontario, we are fortunate to have relatively easy access to several trailways for recreation and safe travel between communities.

Indeed, frequent users of our E.C.T. also enjoy our neighbouring G2G Trail, stretching 132 km between Guelph and Goderich. The eastern portion of this route offers straightforward access for cyclists and walkers from Centre Wellington, whether joining just west of Guelph or at West Montrose.

The G2G is similar in many ways to our E.C.T. Both were former C.P.R. lines and, as a result, link urban and more rural areas. Both trailways are vehicle-free except for periodic road crossings.

In this regard, we'd like to extend our congratulations to all the folks at the G2G following the successful completion of the Blyth Tunnel Restoration Project. This project enables users west of Blyth (east of Goderich) to avoid a challenging and busy road crossing. As with all such projects, it took time, the efforts of many, and both public and private financing, large and small, to bring it to fruition.

In a similar vein, E.C.T.A. is supporting and actively consulting toward the establishment of a new and improved route through Fergus. This route will enhance safety and access for frequent users and visitors to Centre Wellington, who will benefit from a more straightforward route through Fergus.

We will keep you posted.

Rick

TRAIL USER SURVEY



Photo by Arlette Greau

Association volunteers and Board members conducted pop-up trail user surveys at several locations along the entire length of the Trailway during July and August. Our team interacted with 396 trail users of which 181 chose to complete the online survey. This very impressive number of responses confirms the vital nature of our trailway to its users.

Elora's The Friendly Society restaurant (<https://www.friendlysociety.ca>) donated a \$100 gift certificate as an incentive to complete the online survey. The above photo shows ECTA Chair Ian MacRae presenting Ron Jasiuk with his gift certificate.

The ECTA Board and its conservation partners appreciate very much the feedback received from trail users. Their experiences and advice will help form a new Trailway strategy,

The survey feedback was shared with the Township of Centre Wellington, who are now engaged in identifying a new route through Fergus to connect the east and west sections of the Trailway.

Although our survey is finished, we are always listening. Please send your comments to info@trailway.org.

CYCLING 4 CHEMO CHAIRS



THANK YOU!

GRAND RIVER HOSPITAL & FOUNDATION

10x21: Cycling 4 Chemo Chairs has raised enough funds to support the purchase of **8 new chemo chairs** for Grand River Regional Cancer Centre. The new chairs will offer patients greater comfort and functionality during their treatment while also addressing the ergonomic needs of health care providers delivering this important care. Your involvement, support and generosity has made this fundraiser a tremendous success. I appreciate you so much!

Cyndy McLean

- 6 Community Ambassadors
- 343 Individual Donors
- 28 Members of "The Cycling Posse"
- 28 Sponsors, Partners & Corporate Donors
- **Fundraiser Grand Total \$59,433**



Congratulations to Cyndy McLean and her team for completing ten 21-kilometre bike tours and raising \$59,433 for eight new Grand River Regional Cancer Centre chemo chairs.

Cyndy's ten rides included sections of the Elora Cataract Trailway on September 22nd and 26, 2024.


ECTA Vice Chair Rick Goodfellow and his wife Nancy cycled with Cyndy during her September 26 ride.

Cyndy's attention has shifted from her completed campaign to assisting a group dedicated to linking Woodlawn Road to the Silvercreek Road G2G trailhead via a safe and accessible off-road connection. We wish her and her group much success in establishing this link.

Photo courtesy of Rick Goodfellow



ECTA MEMBERSHIPS & UPDATES

	Elora Cataract Trailway Association Membership Application Form	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership	No. in your household _____
Name: _____		Telephone: _____
Address: _____		City: _____
Pr: _____ Postal Code: _____		email: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25—1 Year <input type="checkbox"/> \$100—5 Years		
Please make a cheque payable to "Elora Cataract Trailway Association" and mail to: P.O. Box 2931, Elora, ON, N0B 1S0 or send an e-transfer to payment@trailway.org .		

If Paying By Cheque

Our bank is refusing cheques that do not include the Association's complete name. Please ensure you make the cheque out to: **Elora Cataract Trailway Association**.

When Does My Membership Expire?

If you look at your envelope (or email), above the address field and to the right, you will see "Membership Expiry:" followed by a year. For example: Membership Expiry: 2023 indicates your membership expires 12/31/2023.

Please Renew Your Membership

Renewing your membership indicates your support for the Association's ongoing advocacy and work to maintain the trailway and to provide much needed revenue for projects such as widening the trailway and replacing worn signage. Please consider renewing your membership for \$25 a year or \$100 for five years.



We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter as much as we enjoyed creating it. With this edition, we will stop producing printed versions in favour of providing more images and material. Our newsletter will be available on our website, where you may discover both current and prior versions. If you sign up for our newsletter, we will send you a link and a notification when our latest newsletter is posted.

DONATIONS

The Elora Cataract Trailway Association serves as the eyes and ears of our two conservation authority partners, Credit Valley Conservation and Grand River Conservation Authority. We track trail activity and usage, perform trail user surveys, and lobby for operational, maintenance, and capital upgrades from our two partners. We also interact with the municipalities through which the trailway traverses. An example is current discussions with Centre Wellington Township to establish a new route through Fergus, connecting the east and west sections of the Trailway.



Photo by Adriano Gadini, Pixabay

We fundraise for trailway capital improvements (e.g., trail re-widening and full restoration), projects (e.g., signs, new kiosk map boards, and heritage photos), and safety incentives (e.g., bike bell giveaways to encourage cyclists to notify their passing on the trailway).

This fall, for \$10,500, we reclaimed another 5.3 km length of trailway surface from encroaching vegetation.

Given our non-charity status as a non-profit, we direct all donations to the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation (CVCF) or the Grand River Conservation Authority Foundation (GRCF), depending on the fundraising endeavour. All donations designated for the Elora Cataract Trailway (ECT) benefit the trailway's improvements and major initiatives. Both foundations will issue tax receipts.

To give, please make a cheque payable to one of the foundations above and mail it to Elora Cataract Trailway Association, P.O. Box 2931, Elora, ON N0B 1S0.

You can also donate online by going to <https://cvcfoundation.ca/donate> or <https://www.grandriver.ca/who-we-are/grcf/make-a-donation/>. If you choose CVCF, please pick **Area of Greatest Need** and write **Support for the Elora Cataract Trailway** in the **Special Notes** box. If you decide on GRCF, please select **Other** from the dropdown box under **Fund** (please specify in the comments section) and write **Support for the Elora Cataract Trailway** in the **Write a private message to us** box.

Please consider donating today to support this aging treasure.



www.trailway.org



"Thank You!"

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