

# The Trail Times

## Oxford County Trails Council

Spring 2023



### **Dan Molinaro takes the OCTC helm**

*The OCTC board welcomes Dan Molinaro as our new President succeeding Brad Hertner who will stay on as Past President. Dan is a long-time resident of Woodstock and retired Secondary School Principal. He has been married to Wilma for 48 years and has 3 children and 7 grandchildren, all living in Woodstock. A trail enthusiast, runner, cyclist and gardener, he has been a member of the Woodstock Recreation Advisory Committee (WRAC) for 35 years where one of his roles is to act as trails liaison between the City and County. Dan helped to create and organize the Oxford County Trails Festival and is hoping that it can be revived for June, 2024.*

### **Progress on pollinator gardens**

*After initial preparations in 2022, the two areas on the sandhills part of the Oxford Thames River Trail, designated for planting indigenous flower and grass species, are undergoing the first of a two-part shallow tillage process to prepare for seeding. Greg Urquhart from UTRCA is guiding OCTC volunteers on this project to ensure its success. Watch for progress during this summer and fall. It can take several years before the native species reclaim the land and flourish, so please be patient! A generous donation from the Township of Southwest Oxford is funding most of the project with the balance coming from other project-specific donors. In addition to adding colour, the native species will encourage more beneficial flying insects that are the food source for many local and migratory birds. It will help offset the decline in pollinator insect populations thought to be caused by pesticides and climate-change.*



**Glen and Greg (UTRCA) discuss spring tillage and seeding at the pollinator gardens.**

### **Memberships transition to donations**

*Effective immediately we will be treating all new membership remittances as donations to simplify our accounting. The option of single and family memberships will disappear. The board agreed that the difference between being a member or a donor has become insignificant and that combining them makes sense. Donors in any financial year will have the right to attend board meetings and vote on motions so there will be no loss of privileges. Donors will also be allowed to stand or be nominated for board positions in the year their donations are received. Donations of \$25 or more, made either by cheque or e-transfer, will be eligible for a tax receipt.*



## **Flood remediation a team effort**

Spring flooding of the Thames River caused some erosion of the Oxford Thames River Trail surface. It could have been worse but proactive work on slowing and redirecting flood-water in prior years meant that remedial work could be completed in just a single day with a loader and ground team of volunteers. Approximately 4 tonnes of new materials were used to restore the trail surface.



Although spring flooding often damages the trail surface it has an overall positive effect on the local ecosystem by depositing nutrient rich sediment. Flora of all types quickly grow through the sediment layer and flourish. Flooding also replenishes trailside ponds and ditches just in time for amphibians to lay their spawn. It facilitates hatching as tadpoles and a sustainable or growing population of frogs and toads that consume mosquito lava.

## **Winter Walk for Warmth nets generous foodbank donations**

**Hosted by SWOX, OCTC and Sweaburg District Lions**



A beautiful sunny day, crisp snow and hot chocolate welcomed participants and donors to this event on February 25th. The large quantity of non-perishable, donated food benefitted local food banks.



**Northern Flickers** are common in wooded areas where they nest in cavities. Unlike other woodpeckers, the Flicker forages on the ground, feeding on ants. One of the few woodpeckers that migrates, it flies to the southern states in late fall, returning early in the spring. **Image and caption by Richard Skevington**



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