

The Trail Times

Oxford County Trails Council

Fall/Winter 2020

Solid progress in 2020!

While Covid 19 dominated 2020 a lot was happening on our extensive trails. We saw a great influx of foot traffic and for very good reason....walking, hiking, cycling and running, while done safely within one's bubble or with six feet minimum between people, exercising outside became more important than ever for physical and mental health. We were thrilled to see our trails fill that need and hope that everyone continues to utilize what we have right on our doorstep for the duration of this pandemic and beyond.

Here's a brief roundup of 2020 developments:

Pittock Dam: Many of our planned activities were put on hold including the grand opening celebration of the dam at Pittock Lake, connecting the North and South Shore. We hope to hold these events in 2021. In the meantime be sure to take advantage of this crossing that connects trails and recreation areas on both sides of the lake and offers stunning views from the bridge during the spring, summer and fall.



Limestone Valley Trail entry portal

Hodges Pond: Our newest trail! This picturesque trail is located on Old Stage Road between Highway 59 and Sweaburg Road. A peaceful wetland setting is a feast for the eyes with all the varying vegetation, ponds, trees and wildlife. Reconfiguring the Cedar Creek water flow and planting indigenous species has resulted in a much improved, natural ecosystem. Bring binoculars and boots....depending on the weather it can be muddy.....but absolutely worth the hike.

Trails badge program

In the middle of this pandemic we decided to move ahead with the badge program and let everyone turning to the trails for exercise take advantage of logging their kilometres to receive iron-on, embroidered badges in recognition of the distance hiked! 50km earns you a bronze badge, 100km a silver badge and a warrior, or gold badge, for hiking all the trails in Oxford County. We have had hikers receive badges and certificates in all categories!! Full details can be found on the OCTC website.



Limestone Valley Trail: Carmeuse has done a fantastic job restructuring their trail using in-house volunteers and naming it in recognition of their primary product. The trail runs along the Thames River with a couple of side loops overlooking ponds and wetlands. The trail entrance is immediately across the road from the Beachville Museum. A leash-free dog park for small dogs only can be found off one of those loops. The main trail is a "in and back" and features excellent signage, icons of many decades of industrial limestone processing, pollinator gardens and bird and bat habitats.



Hodges Pond aerial view

Oxford Thames River Trail

Significant improvements were made to the 3.1km long Oxford Thames River Trail using grant money, donations in-kind and volunteer labour hours during 2020.



Raising water level of east ponds and channel erosion control for species habitat improvement.



Twinned culvert for improved floodwater management



Moving limestone blocks to build.....



.....a flood attenuation wall



Weatherproofing sealant applied to all trail structures and furnishings



New accessible viewing platform at west pond. Great for watching bird and aquatic life!



Why your membership is important

You are welcome to use trails for free but becoming a member of Oxford County Trails Council means that we will have sufficient funds for continued maintenance and improvement. The Oxford Thames River Trail only receives occasional small municipal grants and the bulk of our work is only possible because of the dedication of unpaid volunteers, your memberships and generous cash and in-kind donations from community partners. If you are a member please renew your membership now. If not please consider joining. Go to our web site for details. **Make it your trail!**

All pets on leash, please!!

Most of us on council own dogs and we know the joy of letting them run off leash. For so many reasons the trails cannot be that place...as tempting as it is. The trails are a safe place for everyone to use and we hear over and over again of people being frightened by loose dogs, children being knocked over by dogs, dogs being attacked and getting tick bites....not to mention the havoc a free running dog has on the wildlife that use the trails as their natural habitat. We sincerely ask that you enjoy all the trails have to offer with your four legged faithful companion on a lead no longer than six feet (2 meters).

Looking forward to 2021

A new accessible viewing platform at the eastern ponds, new signage at the car park, refreshed trail signage, ongoing maintenance and much more. Your membership and donations will help make them happen.



It's who we are -

come join us!



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www.oxfordcountytrailsCouncil.ca