

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NIAGARA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB  
QUEENSTON HEIGHTS PARK, NIAGARA ON THE LAKE, ON  
MAY 25, 2025**

**Board Members Present:** Janet Davey, David Kelly, Marion Hanover, Marinus Koole, Ellen Savoia, Joanne Krupa, Sharon Summerhayes, Trevor Price, Kristin Hanson, Jessica Ranalli, Rick Waters, Alan Laver

**Regrets:** Sam Rutherford, Kathleen Orth, Tammy Morris, Robin Garrett, Lynne Mitchell

President Janet Davey opened the meeting at 3:05 pm and welcomed 47 members. Prior to outlining the agenda, Janet honoured indigenous people through land acknowledgment statements. The members of the board of directors were introduced.

***A motion to accept the agenda was made by Trevor Price and seconded by Lauren Doig. Carried.***

***A motion to approve the minutes from last year's Annual General Meeting held on April 27th, 2024 was made by Kristin Hanson and seconded by Ellen Savoia. Carried.***

AGENDA:

- 1) Janet introduced Michael McDonald, Chief Executive Office of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, who gave an overview of BTC as a top environmental fund developer; properties recently purchased in the last couple of years and new incentives for fundraising
- 2) The volunteer awards will be presented at the annual volunteer recognition event in the fall.
- 3) DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

**President – Janet Davey**

This will be my last general meeting as Club President. I want to thank my fellow board members for their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to making this club so successful. My successor, Ellen Savoia, has already demonstrated what a great asset she will be to the club. This year we welcomed a new board member to the team – Lynne Mitchell as Marketing Director. We are also celebrating the work of retiring members, Faye Perkins and Rick Waters.

Thank you to the chairs and volunteer members of the Badge, Biodiversity and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) committees for all of the work they do for the club. Their work may not always be easily recognized, but is so important.

At last year's Annual General Meeting, I reported that the Board was committed to advancing the goals of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's 2030 Strategic plan. We've created a report card to measure how our club is performing against the goals and I'm pleased to say we're doing very well. You'll hear more in the directors' reports about all the amazing work that has been done this past year.

However, we can't do any of this without the support of our members and volunteers! If you know someone who is not already a member of the club, please encourage them to join. The membership fees you pay go towards maintaining and developing this wonderful ***ribbon of wilderness*** that we all enjoy.

***See you on the trail!***

**Past President - vacant**

**Vice President - Ellen Savoia**

I have the privilege of serving the club with Janet and the rest of the Board of Directors. Through monitoring the club's email I have been able to connect with many people who are curious about joining and I am happy to report I have met many of them later along the trail.

Over this last year, I have ensured the club's perspective on road work studies like the Niagara Region's Escarpment Crossing project was provided to the Region via the BTC. This is a long-term project that is at the earlier stages. In September, we hosted delegates from the World Trails Conference on a hike in Queenston. There were delegates from the UK and Taiwan as well as BTC staff and volunteers from the Iroquoia club. These outreach opportunities are an amazing way to build connections with other hikers and trail organizations from around the world.

Lastly, there are minor housekeeping amendments proposed for the club's by-laws. These proposed changes are primarily to address changes to titles to more accurately reflect the roles. The proposed change to the term of the past president. The role of the past president provides guidance to the incoming president and continuity. The primary assistance is primarily needed the first year. The proposed changes to this role will allow flexibility after that first year.

***A motion to accept the amended bi-laws was made by Judy Pihach and seconded by Jessica Ranalli. Carried.***

**BTC Representative - Robin Garrett**

It's an honour to serve as your Niagara Club Nominated BTC Director! We are making good progress towards our goals as outlined in our [Annual Report](#).

Urgently protecting land continues to be a top priority. We secured 10.5 kms of the Bruce Trail's Optimum Route, and 1.1 kms was removed from roads. 71.9% of the Trail is now permanently protected (up from 70.6% the previous year). In Niagara, we secured Vineyard's Edge Nature Reserve – 11 acres and 505 metres of Trail with iconic bench escarpment features and a mature deciduous forest.

Restoration and care for the Niagara Escarpment Lands is a growing focus for the BTC. Seventeen new protected areas were established within our conservation corridor adding 942.2 acres to the permanent protection of our ribbon of wilderness. The forest canopies along the Trail were restored with 37,067 tree plantings.

The BTC staff are talking with Clubs about the thru-hike experience and overnight rest areas and/or making it easy to find accommodation.

I had the opportunity to attend the World Trails Conference in Ottawa last October and learned that many trails struggle with securing funding and volunteers. BTC has a lot to be proud of – we are well

funded, have an abundance of volunteers, and have an outstanding team! I learned that trails: foster cultural, spiritual, and socio-economic value; connect the ground, the stories, the community and the people we meet along the way; and trails are a gateway to health. Healthy trails = healthy people!

I serve on the Governance Committee and have worked with my peers on evaluating our Board effectiveness, improving communication with our Clubs, and recruiting fabulous new Board members. Clubs can play an important role in helping to identify future Board members based on the required competencies. This year we are looking for one director at large and are keenly interested in recruiting expertise in conservation as this part of our mission continues to grow.

Thank you for sharing your love and support for Canada's oldest and longest marked footpath. Together we are creating a lasting legacy – preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone, forever.

Our impact:

- 71.9% of the Bruce Trail now on permanently protected land
- 1,375 km of Trail maintained and ready to explore
- 17 new protected areas established within our conservation corridor
- 91 species of conservation concern recorded on BTC land

Our Growth:

- 1,251 new Canadians became BTC members with the Canoo app (up from 336 the previous year)
- 1,761 hikes led by BTC Clubs across our trail system – most of them in Niagara!
- 12,573 members across our nine Bruce Trail Clubs
- 63 legacy gifts confirmed
- 11,214 unique donations were received from our community of donors

### **Media Relations Director - Lynne (Lynskie) Mitchell**

This position helps organize booths and /or tents to promote the Niagara Bruce Trail Club. With that objective in mind, I am open to suggestions for events that you, the members, think will be beneficial for us to attend.

Since taking on the role last November we have attended the Lincoln Active Living Fair in Grimsby, our President has spoken at the Grimsby Garden Club, Angela Lytle set up a booth for Lincoln Earth Day, we had a booth in Thorold for Earth Day, and we were slated to attend the Earth Day celebration in Pelham (but due to weather cancelled that event). We will be attending Summerfest in Pelham, the Balls Falls Thanksgiving weekend event and of course Bruce Trail Day (first Sunday of October) at Niagara College. None of these events can happen without the help of our wonderful volunteers. So, thank you for being proud members of this amazing club.

Another important aspect of the role is promoting the club online via Facebook and Instagram. With the help of Elaine Low Aldridge we have interesting “posters” to be shown on FB, Instagram and on our website and in our Grapevine Newsletter. Thank you Elaine! We also have many authorized contributors to our FB page. So many of you and the public at large like to see our hiking pictures. A big thank you to the FB editors.

We still have red shirts, green shirts, bumper stickers and neck scarves for sale. Please consider buying them as gifts for your family and friends.

### **Hike Coordinator - Alan Laver**

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club continues to offer hikes to meet all of the needs of our members. This includes Leisurely short hikes for our new and less energetic members as well as more challenging and longer hikes for our more seasoned members. Hiking offers many benefits to our members including physical health, mental health, camaraderie and a clean and fresh air environment and I would encourage you all to reach out to your friends and bring them along to one of our hikes.

Over the last year we have been blessed with some extreme weather, some hot, some cold, lots of snow and lots of rain. All of these varied conditions whilst making the trail more challenging also adds to the exhilarating experiences for our hikers. Remember, it's just as much fun hiking in the snow, wind, sweltering heat and rain as it is in the sun.

At this point I would like to thank all of our wonderful hike leaders for their dedication and commitment offering a diverse range of hike types and locations. Without these hike leaders there would be no Niagara Bruce Trail Club and each one of you would no doubt be 10 pounds heavier. If you would like to join our hike leading team sign up for our next hike leader training which will be offered in the next few months.

Event hikes are an amazing fundraiser for the club and also offer hikers supported challenges. Event hike participants and finishers for the last year are as follows:

End to End. Participants 117 Finishers 91  
Laura Secord. Participants 63 Finishers 51  
Merritthon. Cancelled  
Fort to Fort. Participants 73 Finishers 56

Thank you all once again for attending today and looking forward to seeing you on the trails.

### **Landowner Relations Director - Sam Rutherford**

Our annual Landowner Appreciation Celebration was held to connect with our landowners to express our thanks for allowing trail access across their private properties. An open house social/drop-in event was held in the Glen Elgin room of the Balls Falls Conservation Centre on Sunday September 15, 2024 from 2-5 pm. The celebration was a showcase of many club activities such as the biodiversity table, landowner stewardship, nature hikes, NBTC merchandise and raffle draws. Each landowner was presented with a native tree/plants to take home. Food was catered by Chef Tim of Smoke and Barrel Niagara and our talented baking volunteers provided many delicious desserts for all to enjoy. We were entertained by the musical talent of Brad Boland. Of the 140 in attendance, nearly 50% were Niagara landowners! The celebration was an overwhelming success and we look forward to our next one in the fall of 2025.

Many thanks to our hard working planning committee, all the volunteers, BTC staff and the NPCA for making this day a special one for our landowners.

This year our team of Landowner ambassador volunteers were able to confidently connect with landowners, distributing the 2025 Bruce Trail wall calendar packages to Niagara's approximately 130+ landowners, whether private, business, institutional or municipal:

Landowners allowing access to the Main Trail, Side Trails, and/or on the Optimal Route all received calendar packages.

Thank-you letters and handwritten cards expressed our deep gratitude for continuing to provide Trail access.

**Many thanks** to this year's team of Landowner Ambassador volunteers, without whom these crucial relationships with landowners would not be maintained:

Michele Altobelli  
Jim Arcangeletti  
Ineke Brinkman  
Debbie Demizio  
Mary Ann Enns  
Irma Giese  
Elaine Kelly  
Anne Kubu  
Robert Maclellan  
Terry Mactaggart  
Vince Mayne  
Fran Mortiboys  
David Munford  
Judy Pihach  
Lorraine Rodrigues  
Matt Staples  
Graham Summerhayes  
Cassandra Wilson  
Jean Wong

This past year we continued to build on our past successes and connected with our landowners through three to four touchpoints; Spring biodiversity visits; Summer landowner appreciation invitation delivery; Fall at the Landowner Appreciation Celebration and Winter calendar delivery. Clearly our focus is on building positive relationships with landowners, with the immediate goal of maintaining good relations and the long-term goal of land securement.

Finally, miscellaneous activities included: responding to landowner queries, requests and concerns; working with others to understand local trail issues; working with Conservancy staff on various matters; and other outreach activities.

### **Treasurer - Marinus Koole**

Thanks to all our volunteers for another great year! **This year we could again forward \$41,000 surplus funds to the Conservancy.** This could not be done without all the generous volunteers in our

club for events and trail maintenance. This year we changed our financial tracking to Quickbooks, matching the majority of Bruce Trail Clubs, so you may notice a difference in the reports from last year.

While we did not run the Merrithon Hike in the fall of 2024, our event hikes generated over \$17,000.

We again received a significant donation, this year \$12,000 from the St. Catharines Roadrunners & Walkers, so generous and committed to “safeguarding the Bruce Trail for future generations”! Thanks so much!

There were other large and small donations from local supporters making our total direct donations received \$20,542, including \$917 received specifically in thanks for our Trail Angels. Thanks Diane, our new Trail Angel co-ordinator Amy, and Team!

Badge and Merchandise sales continue to provide funds for maintaining and improving the trail, almost \$7,000 this year.

Finally, as demonstrated on the Balance sheet, we still maintain a good reserve to keep our club activities operational through the coming year.

We could not do any of this without your support and encouragement, both as active volunteers and other support. We thank all of those renewing their memberships throughout the year!

We encourage every member to share our story and invite others to become members. There are benefits for you too, take advantage of the [BTC Refer a Friend Program](#)

Thanks for joining in.

***A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Ellen Savoia and seconded by Trevor Price. Carried.***

### **Land Acquisition - David Kelly**

The last year was very successful for the Bruce Trail Conservancy as a whole with 10.5 km of the Optimum Route (OR) being secured. A total of 1.1 km of the trail was removed from roads and onto new trails this past year. This means that 71.9% of the Bruce Trail is now on permanently protected land. The chart below summarizes the excellent progress in securing conservation land along the Bruce Trail for the Conservancy\*. Several properties in the Niagara section are also being actively considered for potential securement.

In the Niagara Region, the Niagara BTC has embarked on a project to install QR code signs along the Bruce Trail. There are now three side trails with QR signage which provide hikers with biographical information honouring the volunteers for whom the side trails were named (Bert Lowe, Jim Rainforth and Margaret Reed). A QR sign was also installed at the Niagara Seed Garden.

Thank you to the NBTC Board, volunteers and members for your continued vision, hard work and collaboration.

CONSERVATION CORRIDOR GROWTH	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
Acres of Niagara Escarpment preserved in the year	942 acres	445 acres	1,039 acres
Number of new protected natural areas established	17	6	14
Total acres stewarded by the Bruce Trail Conservancy	15,212 acres	14,304 acres	13,932 acres
Total acres the Bruce Trail Conservancy has been involved in preserving	20,460 acres	19,637 acres	18,889 acres
Length of Bruce Trail's Optimum Route secured in the year	10.5 km	3.59 km	10.9 km
Percentage of Bruce Trail's Optimum Route on permanently protected land	71.9%	70.6%	70.2%

## **Land Stewardship Director - Trevor Price**

It's been an interesting first year as the Land Stewardship director for the Niagara club. I've learned a great deal from many people, including our local stewards, Vince, other stewardship directors, BTC staff, and other Niagara board members. Thank you.

A big shout out to the Niagara land steward volunteers who completed their fall inspections on all of the Niagara BTC managed properties. Your hard work overseeing the preservation of these properties is very much appreciated. We definitely have a dedicated team watching over things. I look forward to continuing, and hopefully expanding, this work in the coming year.

## **Director Trail Maintenance & Development - Rick Waters**

### Trails

Total distance of the main Bruce Trail Queenston to Grimsby in 2024 - 81.8 km

Total distance of the Side Trails in 2024 - 47.4 km

Total number of Side Trails 24

Trail Captains 36

Trail Monitors 4

The last 12 months there have been several projects on the Niagara Section.

A NBTC trail maintenance work party of 14 volunteers spent 5 days removing and replacing a set of stairs that was part of the main Bruce Trail at Balls Falls pioneer village.

A boardwalk between Mewburn Rd and the QEW was washed away by heavy rain in August and replaced and secured by a NBTC work party in September

Two new boardwalks were built on the Jim Rainforth ST with money supplied by a generous Niagara BTC member

A new boardwalk was built over a perennial wet spot on the main Bruce Trail along side 20 Mile Creek not far from Glen Rd

Wooden stairs were built replacing stone steps at the 19th Street end of the Jim Rainforth ST

NBTC hired a tree arborist in June to remove leaning trees on the trail not far from Park Rd

Steps going down the escarpment towards Cherry Ave from Cave Springs were repaired and refurbished by a work party of 8 volunteers in November

April 29 to June 19 there was a main Bruce Trail reroute from Dorchester to Concession 6 in Niagara Falls because of Roadwork on Concession 6. The re route was through Firemen's Park.

### New Trails 2024/2025

Upper Falls ST at Balls Falls ST-24 a 1.7 km loop

### New Trail Captains

Matt Ezerin Sect 22 Park Rd

Vince Mayne Sect 14 Louth CA

Geoff Lillico ST-8 Jim Rainforth Side Trail

Janice Johnston ST-5 The 12 Side Trail

The NBTC appreciates all the time and effort put in by the retiring Trail Captains and we look forward to working with this new group of Trail Captains

### Projects 2025/2026

Reroute the main Bruce Trail from Warner Rd to Woodend Conservation Area. This will take the main Bruce Trail trail off of Warner Rd.

Royal Niagara Golf Course has requested chain link fencing in several locations along the Golf Course. This is to stop hikers from wandering onto the Golf Course. This installation will occur Spring/ Summer 2025

A new Side Trail will be open sometime in 2025 from Jordan Hollow to the Bailey Bridge on 21st Street. The Twenty Mile Creek river bank has been rebuilt and re-enforced at Jordan Hollow. There is parking on 21st street and at Jordan Hollow. Hikers will have safe access to the Village of Jordan and the Museum in Jordan from 21st street and from King St in Jordan Hollow as well as access to the main Bruce Trail.

### **Newsletter Editor - Kathleen Orth**

The Grapevine appears quarterly: Spring 2024, Summer 2024, Fall 2024 and Winter 2024/2025.

The Editor thanks the board members and all contributors to the newsletter for their support that ensures the success of The Grapevine. The informative stories and many great photos show a dynamic and incredibly productive club.

NBTC's Board of Directors supports the newsletter by providing updates and photos that keep members informed of BTC and club activities, awards, maintained. Regular features include the President's Message, Trail Maintenance, Hiking 101, Volunteer Awards Nominations and AGM Reports.

The Grapevine runs ads in every issue for Brown Rabbit Cabins and DeNure Tours. Both advertisers will continue for 2025.

Fundraising acknowledged and thanked with a photo to recognize the \$10,000 donation from the St. Catharines Road Runners & Walkers.

April 8, 2024, once-in-a-lifetime total solar eclipse. The Summer issue's front page photo showed the hikers wearing special "eclipse-safety glasses."

NBTC announced new badges: Niagara Black History Hiking Badge, and a Biodiversity Badge. The newsletter features updates on technology: Bruce Trail App, and other apps of interest, such as Naturalist, and stories on the QR Codes being installed at some sites on the trail.

In 2024, contributors included hike leaders and board members: Helen Hermansen, Ellen Savoia, Alan Laver, Sheila Massey, Faye Perkins, Debbie Demizio, Alicia Aitchison, Angela Lytle, Lauren Doig, Mary Ann Enns, and Margaret Northfield.

Hikers submitted stories too: Nicole De Almeida, wrote about her son who started hiking at age six, and Deb Wells, submitted "A Thank You from One of Our Hikers."

The Summer Issue included a Hike Log Template designed to fit in the reference guide, contributed by Frank Hagar.

Two big events in the fall: the Landowner Appreciation Event, organized by Sam Rutherford, and held at the Balls Falls Centre for Conservation. The St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre was the location for the Volunteer Appreciation Event, with keynote speaker Adam Shoalts.

Congratulations on a successful year!

### **Membership/ Volunteer Coordinator- Jessica Ranalli**

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club now has 1136 members, compared to 1214 from last year. This marks a 6% decrease in membership for the NBTC, compared to the BTC average of a 3% decrease across all clubs. New members receive a welcome letter from the club and are added to the club email distribution list to keep them informed with news and special events. In early 2025 the BTC launched a member referral program which awards referring members with badges to collect, and comes with a free set of digital maps for the newly referred members.

The past year there were 163 active volunteers across the club, filling 369 individual roles. The NBTC are very grateful to each and every one. This is down from 183 volunteers last year, marking an 11% decrease. Many of the club's volunteers hold multiple roles, volunteering at club and community events, on various committees, leading hikes, and contributing to the successful operation of the organization through trail maintenance, landowner relations, land stewardship to name a few.

On November 17th, the club held the first annual Volunteer Appreciation event. The event was held at the Welland Canal Museum in St. Catharines. The event served as an opportunity to bring volunteers together to thank them for their contributions to the club. Attendees enjoyed a presentation by guest speaker Adam Shoalts, author and explorer. As a token of appreciation, each volunteer who attended went home with a handmade wooden NBTC ornament.

Each year, three volunteers' outstanding achievements are recognized through the annual Volunteer Awards. The recipients are chosen from nominees submitted by current club members. In years past,

the NBTC would present these awards at the AGM. In 2025, the board has decided to move the award nomination process to the fall. This is to align with the Volunteer Appreciation event, where the awards will be presented this year.

### **Social Events Director - Joanne Krupa**

2024 was a fun filled year both on and off the trail. Our members embraced the opportunities to foster & build on the sense of community that the Niagara Club enjoys. Every hike, every post hike picnic, every Event Hike, all of these make the NBTC family what it is. Here are a few events in which Sharon and I were actively involved.

The 2024 AGM, we tried something different at the social, by inviting our members to demonstrate their culinary prowess at a Chili Cook Off. The objective was to invite our members to actively participate in the event. We had even more Chili Cook Off volunteers than needed to feed the group! It was fun, delicious and a bit of friendly competition.

The Niagara E2E post hike celebratory light lunch included “Bruce Trail” cookies. Aside from being a tasty treat, the cookie baking was an opportunity to work together off the trail.

The Landowner Appreciation Event had a lot of us working together to create a special day for our Landowners. Collectively, we created a fun video expressing our gratitude to the Landowners. Our members also provided a wonderful assortment of dessert treats for the Landowners to enjoy.

And finally at the Volunteer Appreciation Event we enjoyed an afternoon of camaraderie and a guest speaker, Adam Shoalts. We invited Adam with the intent to really thank the volunteers by providing them with a relevant, interesting and entertaining guest speaker. The event was at capacity and was very well received.

None of these events would be possible without our bench of volunteers.

We hope you enjoyed these special events in 2024 and we are looking forward to more in 2025.

### **Member at Large/ Archivist/ Website - Tammy Morris**

The Archives for the Niagara Bruce Trail Club are housed at Brock University Library in Special Collections and Archives. Anyone can access them, and an appointment must be made to view the collection. The archives are updated every two years, the next update being May, 2026.

The NBTC website is updated regularly including latest news, hike information, and blog posts with the goal of keeping members and non-members up to date on NBTC happenings. The website will be re-designed with branding guidance from the Bruce Trail Conservancy, expected sometime over the next year.

### **Member at Large - Kristin Hanson**

The official responsibilities of the Director-at-Large are to take on special non-recurring projects as needed and assist with the activities of the board. In my first year in this role, I helped with event

planning and became the unofficial “bartender” serving beverages at the Landowner and Volunteer Appreciation events. The board works hard to make the club function well, and I’ve enjoyed learning from my colleagues and getting involved.

I also joined the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging committee of both the Niagara Club and the BTC. It’s been great to brainstorm with the other passionate members of the committee ways to make our club more welcoming and work toward introducing our club and our trail to more folks in Niagara.

### **Secretary - Marion Hanover**

The Board of Directors of the Niagara Bruce Trail Club meets monthly with the exception of July and August. Minutes of all meetings are shared with the BTC. The Niagara Board stores club documents including meeting minutes on its own Google Drive. This allows for greater access for board members and succession planning.

Hikers achieving goals and being awarded with badges (as set out in Niagara Bruce Trail website) continues to be popular. In the last fiscal year 680 badges were issued in contrast to 666 in 2023/2024; 630 in 2022/23; 711 in 2021/22; 314 in 2020/21; and 238 in 2019/20.

### **Angela Lyttle, Chair DEIB Committe**

About the DEIB Committee:

The Bruce Trail Conservancy through its Strategy has established Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals and objectives. The Niagara Bruce Trail has identified where the club can further these goals and objectives. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is established to undertake actions to assist the club in fulfilling Club identified actions.

Purpose:

- To advise the Board of Directors on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- To develop DEI strategies, and initiatives within the organization.
- To promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the club and within our communities.
- To assess and help remove systemic barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the club.

### **2024 Report**

2024 was the first full year of work for the NBTC DEIB committee, which was established at the end of 2023, growing out of a year-long participation process in the BT Conservancy’s inter-club DEIB committee.

The objectives of the committee in 2024 included:

1. Converting the ad hoc committee to a functioning committee with a minimum of 4 core members, including an NBTC Board Liaison.
2. Publicizing the aims and focus of the DEIB committee to the club membership.
3. Building relationships and partnerships to further inclusion and to promote diversity within club activities.

To that end, DEIB committee members engaged in a series of outreach activities to promote the DEIB committee and to recruit participation, including:

- Publishing articles in the Grapevine about the committee and its work;
- Participating in NBTC events to talk to hikers and members about the initiative, such as Bruce Trail Day;

- Designing and printing a poster promoting the DEIB initiative to be utilized at NBTC events (see below)
- Held conversations with community members and organizations to explore potential partners

Additionally, the DEI committee wrapped up 2024 with the creation of a strategic plan to promote engagement and increase impact in 2025, with the following objectives now underway:

1. Open Meetings: We have decided to open up every second DEIB committee meeting to 'guests' - anyone can come to learn more about what we are doing, share ideas, give feedback - this is now underway. We are planning to hold a special "open meeting" conjoined with a hike this summer to build community and promote open conversations about DEIB with interested parties as follows:
  - a. Sun, July 20: DEIB Hike & Open Meeting: Meet at Malivoire for a gentle hike on the Bruce Trail behind the vines (9:30 - 11:00) followed by our Open Meeting on Malivoire's patio from 11 - 12. Registration will be via the NBTC calendar. Don't miss it!
2. Overcoming Barriers: We are working with the Board, hike leaders and members to gather information on what barriers people face in becoming hike leaders, leading hikes, or participating in group hikes. This will result in recommendations and ideas for the Board and inform efforts to overcome those barriers. Watch for a hike leader survey soon!
3. Partnerships and relationships: We are focussing on building community partnerships and relationships that will enhance our ability to engage with communities and individuals that may be under-represented within club activities and/or on the Niagara Bruce Trail. Some partnerships in exploration include PFLAG Niagara (LGBTQIA+ inclusion); Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre (engaging with Indigenous histories and knowledges around the forthcoming Sho'harison park in Lincoln) and other Indigenous organizations and Knowledge Keepers active in the region.

Marinus announced the 2025/2026 board of directors.

Janet presented awards to outgoing directors: Rick Waters, Faye Perkins (absent)

A motion to accept the directors reports was made by Dian Wright and seconded by Roberta Blackie. Carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Arcangeletti and seconded by Dian Wright. Carried.