

Waterfront Partnership 2009 Accomplishments

December 2009



“People understand the importance of what is being done on the waterfront today. They understand the unique historic opportunity that the waterfront gives this metropolitan city. And the care, indeed the passion, with which they have presented their views and ideas to the Commission says they will accept nothing less than the best we can do—that they want it done right. That the chance to do it right will not come again for a long time....they also registered a strong faith in what could be done to make things better.”

David Crombie, 1989 Interim Report, Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront.

Twenty years later, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and waterfront communities proudly bring people to the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River waterfront. The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure shows people the good work that has been done by the communities and conservation authorities to create a waterfront that is “open, accessible, public and human in scale”. Their success is applauded and appreciated but the achievements also galvanize people’s desire to see continued improvements.

To them the priorities for the Waterfront Trail are clear: close the gaps, make connections, move it to the water’s edge and preserve and protect natural habitats. The Trust’s infrastructure program addresses these priorities. Our work is now concentrated on bringing senior orders of government to the table to contribute to the \$12.5 M program. Fifteen local municipalities are on board and together they will commit 70% of the investment needed to reach the Waterfront Trail’s next milestone.

2009 Highlights

- Waterfront Investment Program: Phase II under consideration by Provincial and Federal Governments
- 252 people ride the 2009 GWTA
- Mayor and Councillors Ride the Trail
- WRT Promotes the Trail in Quebec
- Web site visits up by 400,000
- 12 new Waterfront Trail Projects complete
- Expansion of Bike Train to other Waterfront Trail communities

Starting Line at Fort George, Niagara



*Cobourg Mayor
Peter Delanty*



World Music Concert, Venifest

Great Waterfront Trail Adventure 2009

91% see the Waterfront Trail as an important part of regenerating the waterfront.

On July 3rd, 252 cyclists from all over Canada and the US arrived in Historic Fort George in Niagara on the Lake for the 2nd Annual Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA). This year's event once again demonstrated the Waterfront Trail's tourism potential by promoting waterfront communities and generating repeat visits.

The impact of the GWTA goes well beyond the registrants. It attracts the notice of cyclists from around the world. We have received calls from people living in Scotland, New Zealand, Hungary and many US States prompted by the GWTA to pursue self-guided rides of the Trail.

The GWTA also inspires active living and reconnects people to the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River shoreline. We are indebted to our 100+ community partners and sponsors who developed an outstanding itinerary to showcase the very best of our waterfront.

Who Came ...

Thanks to a very successful first year and word of mouth, the 2009 GWTA sold out, reaching the stated limit of 250 participants well before the closing registration date of June 1, 2009. Of the 250 registrants, the majority came from Ontario (83%) and chose to ride the full 8-day Adventure (80%). Riders came from six different states in the US and five Canadian provinces. The youngest rider is Dylan, aged 4, who rode with his father from Niagara to Toronto. Our oldest rider is 77.

In its second year, the GWTA confirms what we learned in year one. It appeals to a broad cross-section of people and seems split evenly between experienced cyclists and those new to multi-day cycling tours. Forty-three percent of the participants make the GWTA their first multi-day cycling tour. This number is down due in part to the high number of repeat participants from 2008.

Press Coverage ...

Information about the Waterfront Trail reaches hundreds of thousands of people throughout the Province as a result of the extensive media coverage. Positive press coverage in major and local print, radio and some TV outlets include: Ottawa Citizen (2 articles), Toronto Star (2 articles), Toronto Sun, Metro News, St. Catharines Standard, Hamilton Spectator, Windsor Star, Vancouver Sun, a listing in Toronto Life, Cornwall Standard, Belleville Intelligencer, Trentonian, La Presse (Montreal), Brockville Recorder and Times, CKTB (St. Catharines) New Talk 1010 (Toronto) and CHEX (Peterborough).

2009 GWTA Participants ...

- 83% come from Ontario
- Average age is 45
- Evenly split between men and women
- 12% aged 19 or under
- 44% describe themselves as somewhat fit
- First multi-day tour for 43%
- 100% had a great time or a pretty good time
- 88% will recommend the trip to others
- 86% will consider other cycling trips
- 51% likely or somewhat likely to use the Trail for commuting
- 80% to return to a waterfront community that they had not previously visited prior to GWTA
- 65% likely to ride their bike more often
- 53% surprised at how far they could go.



The youngest rider in the 2009 GWTA

New to the 2009 GWTA

Several new features and partnerships were introduced in 2009. Among them:

- Three new overnight stops in Pickering, Port Hope and Trenton.
- Promoted 60+ accommodations, restaurants, bike shops, attractions and clubs on the Trail
- Hosted a 50 km family ride on Day 2 (Burlington GO station to Ontario Place)
- An OPP escorted “next milestones” ride on HWY2 between Trenton and Belleville to call for an active transportation connection linking the two communities
- Partnered with Ducks Unlimited to recognize the coastal wetlands theme
- Partnered with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to develop a healthier menu for the GWTA
- Promoted GWTA at the Montréal Bike Show and in Quebec cycling club newsletters
- Promoted nationally through Get Out There (circulation 300,000)

Peter Delanty, Mayor of Cobourg, Jennifer O’Connell, Councillor for Pickering and Vicki Schmolka, Councillor for Kingston all completed the Adventure from end to end. Along the way they met with 11 elected officials to ride sections including Ajax Mayor Steve Parish who rode end to end in 2008 and over 12 others who greeted the Tour at rest stops. The participation of mayors and councillors underscores the political support the Trail receives locally and without which the Trail would not exist.

The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure has become a rich source of information for us with respect to the Trail and priorities for its enhancement. Results affirm the Trust’s long-term vision for a dedicated off-road path as close to the water’s edge as is environmental feasible. The results also indicate that the Trust and the waterfront partnership are addressing the issues that most concern the public with respect to the Trail, that is, achieving a continuous route by closing the gaps.

GWTA Participants Views¹

On The Trail:

- 92% like that the Trail is near to water
- 61% don’t like that the Trail is not all off-road
- 93% feel safer riding on a secondary road if there is a paved shoulder
- 65% rate the Trail as excellent (16%) or very good (49%) for cycling

Priorities For The Trail:

- 87% close the gaps
- 47% establish connections into towns and other trail systems
- 46% move the trail closer to the water’s edge
- 46% more signage

Waterfront Issues That Most Concern Them:

- 57% loss of natural habitats
- 53% lack of connected public access
- 51% lack of walkable/cycleable routes to and from the waterfront
- 46% the disappearance of coastal wetlands
- 36% poor water quality



Pickering councillor
Jennifer O’Connell &
CIBC manager
Uros Jovic

¹ Respondents were provided a list of priorities & issues to choose from. Space was provided for people to add their own options. Respondents could select more than one issue, therefore, the results will not total 100%.

The Waterfront Investment Program—Phase II (Closing the Gaps)

The Trust has submitted an application to the Provincial and Federal governments to fund 25 new waterfront projects involving 15 partners. If we receive news soon, the project would commence immediately and wrap up by March 2011. The project represents a total waterfront investment of \$12.8 million. The Province and Federal governments have been asked to contribute \$1.9 each to the program. Together the projects will accomplish the following goals:

- Move the Trail closer to the water's edge in 12 areas
- Build 22 kms of new trail
- Establish community and major regional trail links
- Create 2 new waterfront parks; improves 16 others
- Restore 4 habitats
- Improve universal accessibility
- Construct 2 bridges and improve 2 others
- Interpret cultural or natural habitats in 11 areas
- Address two critical safety issues (Bayly Road in Whitby and Fairfield Park in Loyalist)

Since November 2008, the Trust and its Board have met with several Ministers and officials in the Province and Federal governments to present the Waterfront Investment Program.

Promoting the Trail in Quebec

On February 20 to 22, the Trust joined 4 other exhibits from Ontario to present Montréalers with Ontario's cycling offerings. This was the first time that the popular Salon du Vélo Expodium featured Ontario cycling routes. Based on responses to the Trust's poll at the Montréal Bike Show, there is a great deal of opportunity in the Quebec market for Ontario, but first we need to build awareness.

Our poll of Montreal cyclists showed us that:

- Only 20% said that they knew about the 730 km Waterfront Trail in Ontario before attending the Bike Show
- 23% said they knew about the connection with La Route verte
- 100% say exploring the Waterfront Trail is a good reason to visit Ontario
- 44% prefer an organized tour of the Waterfront Trail, as opposed to a self-guided tour (39%)

Our efforts resulted in a major increase in participants from Quebec to the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure. We also have to thank one of our volunteers, Alain Gautier and his wife, Sylvie for their help in promoting the ride in Quebec.

Map Book-New Edition

Dun-Map released a new compact edition of the Official Map Book of the Waterfront Trail. Available at Mountain Equipment Co-op and a growing list of other retailers as well as from Dun-Map's website. Sales from the book subsidize map updates on the Trust's website.

Website

The website continues to receive hits in the millions annually. In 2008, the site received 5.5M hits and 189,000 unique visits. By August 2009 the site had received 4.7 M hits and 131,000 unique visits. This represents an increase of 400,000 hits over the same period in 2008. Updated maps and a French version of the GWTA content were posted in 2009. By the end of 2009 we will have well over 5 M hits.

Two thirds of the original Great Lakes coastal wetlands have been lost and the remaining wetlands are highly threatened by continued development pressure and regulated water levels. As a result, we are facing a serious population decline of many species of birds and amphibians. DU-Ontario is thrilled that the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure is focused on coastal wetlands to help raise awareness and support for these vital habitats.

Lynette Mader - Ducks Unlimited Ontario

Greenway Projects

The Trust partners with organizations that share complementary mandates on projects that support our goals.

Transportation Options has launched three programs that involve the Waterfront Trail to develop cycling tourism in Ontario. The Trust is a partner in two of the three. The projects are the: Ontario Cycling Tourism Conference, the Niagara Bike Train and Welcome Cyclists.

The **Ontario Cycling Tourism Conference: Cycling is Growing** gathered a diverse group of tourism professionals and cycling advocates province-wide to consider the potential of cycling tourism for our economy. To inspire the group we heard from European, American and Quebec organizations, which shared generously their best practices and data to support an economic case for active transportation infrastructure. As a reminder that we were not starting from zero with respect to cycling tourism, several organizations from Ontario shared how they were developing the emerging cycling market in their communities. Among them, the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure, Greater Niagara Circle Route, Niagara Bike Route, City of Toronto's Bike Plan, the City of Ottawa the Rideau Heritage Route, St. Lawrence Parks Commission, Tour de Greenbelt, the Ontario Bike Route to list a few. Presentations and the agenda are available at www.ontariocycletourismforum.ca

Niagara-Toronto Bike Train: the Greenbelt Express Expanding to Other Waterfront Trail Communities

With funding from the Greenbelt Foundation, the Trust serves as project administrator for the award-winning Bike Train initiative. Running between Niagara, St. Catharines and Toronto, the Bike Train brings about 1,000 people to the Niagara Region for multi-day visits. Becoming an attraction/experience in its own right, the Bike Train is drawing cyclists from the U.S. and Quebec to the Niagara area.

- In its third successful year, the Bike Train has:
- cultivated new partnerships among businesses to service vacationers with bikes. For example Cycle and Stay Niagara was established by eight accommodations along the Greater Niagara Circle Route to shuttle luggage for cyclists from hotel to hotel.
- published 40,000 multi-page trip planning guide which includes the Waterfront Trail.
- expanded the service to include eastern Waterfront Trail communities. The Bike Train is consulting with Cornwall, Kingston, Leeds and Grenville, Brockville and Northumberland County. Funding for this initiative comes from Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Welcome Cyclists Program

Piloted in Niagara last year, the Welcome Cyclists program is expanding to regions across Ontario including many Waterfront Trail communities. This is a tourism industry standards and product knowledge training program delivered through workshops, industry networking and marketing.



The Bike Train is expanding to other Waterfront Trail communities. Transportation Options developed & installed signage to guide cyclists from the train station to the Trail. Signs were installed in Kingston this summer.

Bikes + Transit

Bikes+Transit.com is an active living, local tourism and green transportation awareness project aiming to kick-start a new bicycle and transit travel model in Ontario.

Bikes+Transit.com uses social marketing tools such as twitter and the web to encourage cycling by offering itineraries to naturally beautiful and easy local cycling destinations many of which are on the Waterfront Trail. For more information visit www.bikesandtransit.com

Spark for Healthy Kids

The Trust is very pleased to be a partner in the Heart and Strokes Spark for Healthy Kids campaign. In spite of 30 years of education and outreach programs aimed at encouraging healthy living, North America is facing an alarming increase in obesity rates in children. The Waterfront Trail is a significant piece of the green infrastructure needed to make it easier for families to pursue an active lifestyle. The GWTA, uniquely designed to support families, is a fun and unique way for families to experience a different kind of road trip—on a bike.

Conferences and Exhibits

The Trust presented at the following:

- Ontario Cycling Tourism Conference
- Toronto Bike Show
- Montreal Bike Show
- Tourism Burlington's Take Time Out
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Canada Square development
- Lincoln Rotary Club
- Niagara Free-Wheelers Cycling Launch
- A Path Forward: Town & Rural Planning Workshop for the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, Eastern Division
- Ontario Bike Summit
- Caring for our Coast by the Carolinian
- Canada Coalition Forum: Envisioning a Lake Erie Community Stewardship Trail Network

Ontario Bike Summit

Share the Road Coalition convened a group of 150 cycling advocates from all over the province

to discuss how to improve cycling in Ontario. Among the topics covered over the 2-days were policy and legislative changes, infrastructure requirements, education and awareness campaigns, cycling tourism and promotions. Share the Road commissioned two surveys: one to learn about people's views on the safety of cycling and the second polled advocates about priorities for next steps. Presentations are available on the website and are well-worth checking out.



Regeneration In Action

Waterfront Trail communities continue to invest in their sections of the Waterfront Trail. This year the following projects have been completed:

- Port Weller Waterfront Trail Extension, St. Catharines
- Rhododendron Gardens Waterfront Trail realignment, Mississauga
- Mimico Linear Trail from Norris to Superior Park, Toronto
- The Blue Edge Waterfront Trail in front of Ontario Place, Toronto
- Three new wave decks in Central Toronto
- New bridge over Unwin in the Port Lands, Toronto
- Trail behind St. Augustine Seminary, Toronto
- Western Gateway First Nations Trail, Pickering
- Education Decks installed in Presqu'île Park, Brighton
- Detour around Murray Canal on CR 64.
- New trail alignment in Iroquois routed closer to Waterfront
- Installation of 12 km of paved shoulders for cyclists in South Lancaster
- Brighton Waterfront Plan Approved

- Prescott presents Draft Waterfront Plan to the public.

Delta Hotel and Resorts Employees name Waterfront Trail as a Toronto Hidden Gem!

Toronto's Waterfront Trail was selected as one of Toronto's hidden gems by Delta Hotels and Resorts under the Delta Recommends program. Delta Recommends is an employee-driven initiative that gives staff a way to share their interests, tastes and experiences of Toronto with hotel guests.

Other Great Lakes News

Lake Erie Trail Network

The Carolinian Canada Coalition and Parks Canada are spearheading work to develop a trail system around Lake Erie. The initiative will protect and restore important ecological features and support landscape and species recovery. The connection from the Waterfront Trail to Lake Erie is in place through the Greater Niagara Circle Route.

In 2010...

The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure 2010 (July 3-10) route has been selected with Cobourg, Picton and Ivy Lea becoming new overnight stops along the route. The 2010 GWTA will also feature a pre-paid meal plan addressing an important concern expressed by our community partners.

Working with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Trust will focus the theme on healthy eating and wellness. To accomplish this, we will:

- Improve the nutritional value and variety of GWTA meals and
- Recruit local fitness experts to lead the group in warm up and cool down exercises.

The 2010 GWTA Itinerary:

July 3—Fort George to Confederation Park, Hamilton (80 km)

July 4—Hamilton to Pickering (105 km)

July 5—Pickering to Victoria Park, Cobourg

July 6—Cobourg to Picton (125 km)

July 7—Picton to Ivy Lea (120 km)

July 8—Ivy Lea to Grenville Campground, Johnstown (70 km)

July 9—Johnstown to Cornwall (85 km)

July 10—Cornwall to Rivière, Beaudette



Spadina Wave Deck, Toronto

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust produces Accomplishments annually as a report to its partnership of municipalities, conservation authorities, regional governments, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada as well as corporate and community partners. The Trust's 2008-2010 work program focuses on three main areas: securing public and private infrastructure investment for the waterfront; bringing people back to the waterfront; supporting projects that support greenway objectives.

Thank you to the 2009 GWTA community partners and sponsors

- Friends of Fort George
- Fort George
- Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Niagara Peninsula CA
- Niagara Region
- Pillar and Post
- Venifest
- City of St. Catharines
- Niagara Region
- Rotary Club of Lincoln
- Town of Lincoln
- Liberty Bicycles, St. Catharines
- Town of Grimsby
- Niagara Freewheelers
- August Restaurant – Beamsville
- Twenty Valley Tourism
- Grimsby Friends of the Waterfront
- Grimsby Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Hamilton
- Cycle Chic
- Starbucks-Burlington
- MEC Burlington
- Burlington Tourism
- Town of Oakville
- Cycle Path, Oakville
- Port Credit BIA
- Gears Bike Shop
- Ontario Place
- Starbucks-Toronto
- Durham Region
- City of Pickering
- Toronto Region Conservation
- Town of Ajax
- Whitby Heritage Community Ass.
- Friends of Second Marsh
- Ganaraska Freewheelers
- Town of Whitby
- City of Oshawa
- Central Lake CA
- Beech Street Spinners
- Municipality of Clarington
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Ruth Clarke Activity Centre
- Born Yesterday
- Hill and Dale Manor
- The Hillcrest
- Penstowe B&B
- Town of Cobourg
- Township of Alnwick Haldimand
- Northumberland County
- Cramahe/Colborne
- Tourism Cramahe
- Dougall's Restaurant – Brighton
- Trenton BIA
- Brighton Rotary Club
- Kingston Velo Club
- J & J Cycle
- City of Quinte West
- National Air Forces Museum
- Quinte West OPP
- City of Belleville
- Belleville City Police
- Trenton Lions Club
- Wellington & District Business Ass.
- County Grapevine
- Bloomfield Cycle
- Bloomfield BIA
- Picton BIA
- City of Belleville
- Bergeron Estate Wines
- Loyalist Township
- Bath and District Lions Club
- TI Cycle
- Tourism Kingston
- City of Kingston
- Town of Gananoque
- 1000 Islands Kayaking Company
- Brockville Tourism
- United Counties of Leeds & Grenville
- 1000 Islands & Seaway Cruises
- St. Lawrence Parks Commission
- Upper Canada Village
- Iroquois and District Lions Club
- Frontenac Arc Biosphere
- Prescott BIA
- Blue Heron Inn
- Fort Wellington NHS
- Edwardsburgh/Cardinal
- Township of South Glengarry
- South Dundas Township
- Kinsmen Cornwall Lift-Off
- City of Cornwall
- Cornwall & Seaway Valley Tourism
- First Canada Inns
- St. Lawrence College
- Raisin River CA
- South Glengarry Fire Department
- Sam's Place
- Gite Angell B & B



- Niagara-Toronto Bike Train

Feedback from our 2009 GWTA Participants

Fabulous experience...one of my all time favourite holidays.

Incredible to visit the 41 communities along the route.

Feeling of wellness, interesting people and discovering what a beautiful waterfront we have in Ontario

Well organized and very, very safe. Seeing the Waterfront Trail by bike was breathtaking and something that could never be enjoyed as well by car.