



Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Photo by David Penny

ONTARIO RIVERS ALLIANCE

2018 – 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

19 October 2019

Prepared by: Linda Heron, Chair



ORA Board of Directors

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A BIG thank you to ORA's Board of Directors for your dedicated service!

Letter from the Chair

Over the last year the Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) has continued to collaborate and work with its members, partners and the public to fulfill its mission to protect, conserve and restore Ontario riverine ecosystems.

Through our strong advocacy, strategizing and collaboration, this organization has achieved many important successes:

- Collaborated with partners in the completion of the Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project
- Received a \$30,000 3-year grant from Lush Cosmetics to increase our capacity
- Raised \$7,519.07 through crowd funding for the Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project
- Collaborated with partners in the completion of the Rudd Dam Removal Project
- \$25,000 Great Lakes Community Fund grant for the Rudd Dam Removal Project
- 24 sites on 12 Ontario rivers were protected from hydroelectric development
- Energy East Project - terminated
- \$35,000 Mountain Equipment Coop grant to develop ORA's website and 5-year Strategic Plan

ORA has also been very active commenting on policy and legislation, as well as risky development proposals. You will find links to all our submissions within this Annual Report.

Additionally, ORA has been reaching out to owners of old and unsafe dams to advocate for their removal. As you will have noted above, ORA and partners have been successful in the decommissioning of two dams within the Province to date. To achieve our goals, we have partnered with the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited Canada, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Conservation Authorities, municipalities, members and stakeholders.

ORA is a member of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, which is a large network of environmental organizations that include the Canadian Environmental Law Association, Environmental Defence, Freshwater Futures, World Wildlife Federation Canada, and many others, that advocate for relevant protective legislative and policy changes within Ontario and Canada.

This collaboration of partners provides diverse expertise, but most importantly, a much stronger and more compelling voice.

ORA is currently in the process of reviewing and renewing our 5-year Strategic Plan.

What follows is a list of ORA's submissions, projects, and activities. Please click on the live links embedded in the text of each item to access those documents on our website.

Yours in Conservation,



Chair, Ontario Rivers Alliance

About ORA:

Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) is a Not-for-Profit grassroots organization with a focus on healthy river ecosystems all across Ontario. ORA is a voice for a number of member and partner organizations, stewardships and associations, as well as many other private and Indigenous citizens. We have come together to protect, conserve and restore healthy river ecosystems, and to ensure that development affecting Ontario rivers is environmentally and socially sustainable and responsible.

ORA has a broad overarching perspective in our approach to conserving and protecting Ontario's freshwater resources. We collaborate with other organizations, individuals and Indigenous citizens throughout the province to share, communicate, assist, and join our voices, experience and strengths in a coordinated effort to address risky or threatening developments and unhealthy river ecosystems. ORA's success and accomplishments are entirely the result of the efforts of dedicated volunteers and members.

Since our beginnings early in 2011, ORA has worked tirelessly to address risky developments, influence policy, process and legislation, to improve the environmental assessment and approvals process, to increase public awareness of the impacts development is imposing, and the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring riverine ecosystems.

ORA works to raise awareness through our website, E-newsletter, Action Alerts, public speaking engagements, and other communication and outreach initiatives and campaigns in order to build a strong engaged network of like-minded individuals and organizations.

ORA has assisted numerous individuals and groups in advocating for river protection, conservation and dam removal and restoration. This wouldn't be possible without the assistance of our network of volunteers and partners which provide scientific and technical expertise and advice.

ORA has a solid track record of providing science-based and reasoned advice on policy and development that affects Ontario rivers.

Challenges to Ontario Rivers:

ORA is concerned with all issues affecting Ontario rivers and lakes, including the cumulative and ongoing negative effects of hydroelectric, waste water treatment facilities, mining and industry releasing effluent into our waterways, diminished water quality and water quantity, forestry impacts, blue-green algae, invasive species, overdevelopment of our shorelines, endangered species, threatened fisheries, old dams that no longer serve any useful purpose and block our waterways, and the most daunting challenge of all, climate change.

Healthy rivers provide drinking water, food, flood protection, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and economic benefits to local and First Nation communities. They are a vital part of our heritage and are sources of community identity and pride. In an era of global warming, effective long-term protection for rivers must begin at the headwaters and encompass the entire watershed.

For an overview of what ORA has achieved since our inception in 2011, you can check out our previous Annual Reports and website Blog, located [here](#).

ORA Activities – October 2018 to October 2019:

1. Provincial Regulatory Submissions:

- 3 January 2019 - ERO-013-4124 – Proposal to establish a hunting season for double-crested Cormorants in Ontario
- 17 January 2019 – ERO-013-4239 – Bill 66, Schedule 10 - Open for Business Competitiveness Act, 2018 and New regulation under the Planning Act; and ERO-013-4125 – Bill 66 – Schedule 10, Open for business planning tool
- 20 January 2019 – ERO-013-4234 – Bill 66 – Schedule 5, Repeal of the Toxics Reduction Act, 2009; and ERO-013-4235 – Bill 66, Schedule 5, Planning and reporting changes under toxics reduction program and OR 455/09
- 28 January 2019 – ERO-013-4208 – A Made in Ontario Environment Plan
- 15 May 2019 – ERO-013-5033 – 10th Year Review of the Endangered Species Act: Proposed Changes
- 24 May 2019 – ERO-013-5101 – Discussion Paper: Modernizing Ontario’s EA Program and ERO-013-5102 – Modernizing Ontario’s EAA
- 11 June 2019 – Consultation – Improving the Provinces Resilience to Flooding

2. Federal Regulatory Submissions:

- 28 April 2019 – Discussion Paper: Proposed modifications to the Application for Authorization under Paragraph 35(2)(b) of the Fisheries Act Regulations

3. Hydroelectric Submissions:

- 25 January 2019 – Minister’s response to ORA’s Part II Order request - Ivanhoe River, The Chute & Third Falls GS – MECP rejected proponent’s ER
- 25 January 2019 – Minister’s response to ORA’s Part II Order request – Frederick House River - Wanatango Falls GS – MECP rejected proponent’s ER
- 5 February 2019 – Bala Falls Small Hydro Project – Permit to Take Water
- 21 August 2019 – Calabogie Generating Station Upgrade EA – Madawaska River

4. Dam Decommissioning:

- 31 May 2019 – MECP decision on ORA’s Riverside Dam Part II Order Request
- 12 September 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project
- 10 October 2019 – ORA Response to Howson Bridge & Dam Committee

5. Joint Submissions:

- 5 February 2019 – Bill 66, Schedule 10
- 4 March 2019 – ERO-013-4143 – Review of the Endangered Species Act, 2007
- 13 March 2019 – Reaching out to MPPs – Endangered Species Act, 2007
- 20 March 2019 – Honourable Catherine McKenna response to 15 October 2018 joint letter – Re: Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- 20 March 2019 – Uphold the Spirit and Intent of the Endangered Species Act – Joint
- 23 April 2019 – The Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program - Joint
- 18 May 2019 – ERO-013-5033 – Review of the Endangered Species Act - Joint
- 21 May 2019 – ERO-013-5018 & 4992 – Conservation Authorities Modernization Operations & Permitting – Bill 108, Schedule 2 - Joint
- 27 June 2019 – Consultation – Improving the Provinces Resilience to Flooding
- 19 October 2019 - ERO 019-0279 – Provincial Policy Statement Review

6. Issue Campaigns:

- 13 January 2019 - Bill 66 – Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act – 2018, Schedule 10 (119 signatures)
- 19 January 2019 - Bill 66 – Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act - 2018, Schedules 5 (38 signatures)

7. Funding Campaigns:

- 20 December 2018 – Lush Grant Application submitted
- 16 January 2019 – Lush Grant Budget Update
- 30 May 2019 – Lush Grant received - \$30,000 over 3 years
- March 2019 - Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project Phase I - raised \$2,244.97
- July 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project Phase II – raised \$4,275.00

8. Media Releases:

- 28 February 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase I
- 3 July 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase II
- 19 July 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase II
- 24 July 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase II
- 8 August 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase II
- 12 September 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Phase II

9. Media Coverage:

- 2 March 2019 – Crowd-Funding Campaigns Aims to improve fish habitat on Guelph's Hanlon Creek – Guelph Mercury
- 2 March 2019 – Hanlon Creek Weir project seeks public support – Guelph Today
- 8 July 2019 – Guelph environmental groups crowdfunding for brook trout – Guelph Mercury
- 31 July 2019 – Hanlon Creek Crowd Funding Campaign extended to save brook trout habitat – Guelph Today
- 8 September 2019 – Community fills 3 tonnes of sandbags to kick-start Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project – Guelph Today
- 12 Sept 2019 – Guelph-area Conservation Groups pull off Hanlon Creek Weir Removal – Guelph Mercury

10. Other Publications:

- 2017 – 2018 ORA Annual Report
- February 2019 - River Run E-News
- July 2019 - River Run E-News

11. Presentations:

- 22 Nov 2018 – University of Sudbury, Indigenous Studies

12. Hydroelectric Updates:

Since our inception ORA has engaged in the Environmental Assessment (EA) process of several proposed waterpower developments and potential dam removal projects. The purpose of the EA process is to determine best options, and the potential impacts and risks to the environment.

As a result of the cancellation by the Ford government of 758 green energy projects, 15 of these were hydroelectric projects. If we thought this was the end of new hydroelectric projects for now – we were wrong. In August of this year a new hydroelectric project was proposed on the Bonnechere River; however, the proposal was withdrawn by the proponent. This made it evident that the provincial government is still considering new waterpower projects. There have also been proposed hydroelectric upgrades of older facilities, such as the Calabogie GS on the Madawaska River and the Nairn GS on the Spanish River. ORA has registered as a stakeholder in each project.

There could also be others proposals; however, there is no central registry that lists all new proposals or upgrades – something that ORA will address.

13. Subscribe to ORA's online news sources:

- ORA Website: <https://ontarioriversalliance.ca/blog/>
- E-newsletter: <https://www.ontarioriversalliance.ca/take-action/-join-our-newsletter>
- ORA Paper-li Daily Newspaper: [https://paper.li/OntarioRivers/1523792563#/#/](https://paper.li/OntarioRivers/1523792563#/)
- RSS Feed: <http://feeds.feedburner.com/ontarioriversalliance/KpBY>
- Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/OntarioRivers>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OntarioRivers>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/OntarioRivers>

In Conclusion:

ORA has been advocating for several other potential dam removal projects, and we are hopeful our labours will bear fruit.

ORA will continue to build on its successes and explore innovative ways to better serve our membership and Ontario Rivers.

A big thank you to all those who have assisted ORA by way of membership dues, donations and volunteer work! We couldn't do what we do without your continued support!

Yours in Conservation,



Linda Heron
Chair
Ontario Rivers Alliance
OntarioRiversAlliance.ca