



One of the few remaining native Brook Trout populations in southern Ontario

ONTARIO RIVERS ALLIANCE

Celebrating 10 Years of Service to Ontario Rivers

2020 – 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

16 October 2021

Linda Heron, Chair and CAO



ORA Board of Directors

Linda Heron, Chair & CAO

Robert Huber, Vice-Chair

Terry Little, Secretary - Treasurer

Ken Buchan, Board of Directors

Karlo Bobinac, Board of Directors

Christian Laidlaw, Board of Directors

Eric Chaplin, Board of Directors

Cory Kozmik, Board of Directors

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

Letter from the Chair

Greetings everyone,

I am very pleased to report that today the Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) is celebrating 10 Years of Service to Ontario Rivers.

Late in 2010 many were beginning to hear about hydroelectric projects proposed for their local rivers. In all, there were 87 sites tagged for hydroelectric development across Ontario. Of these, there were 4 Modified Run-of-River hydroelectric proposals slated for the Vermilion River in the Sudbury area. On 19 February 2011, after networking with several other groups and individuals across Ontario working to address hydroelectric proposals on rivers in their areas, we came together in North Bay to discuss our common challenges and goals, to plan and strategize, and to share resources and expertise. At that meeting, the ORA came into being to speak up for Ontario rivers, and in that first year we formed our Vision, Mission, Values, Constitution and Bylaws. In August of 2011 we Incorporated the ORA as a not-for-profit organization. Due to the efforts of ORA and its members, none of those 4 hydroelectric dams planned for the Vermilion River were ever built, nor were 20 others that were proposed on 11 other Ontario rivers.

For over 10 years the ORA has worked as a volunteer grassroots organization to protect, conserve, and restore Ontario riverine ecosystems, and over that time we:

- Stopped more than 24 hydroelectric proposals on 12 Ontario rivers,
- Were unsuccessful in opposing 2 hydroelectric proposals we engaged in, the Bala Falls Generating Station, Moon River, and the Enerdu Generating Station, Mississippi River,
- Intervened in the Energy East Pipeline Project,
- Successfully advocated for the decommissioning of the
 - Springbank Dam on the Thames River
 - Gorrie Dam and Howson Dam on the North Maitland River
 - Upper Dam on the Eramosa River,
- Unsuccessfully advocated for the removal of the Riverside Dam on the Speed River, and the Hillsburgh Dam on the West Credit River,
- Raised funding and partnered with Conservation Authorities, MNRF, and others, on the Rudd Dam Removal Project, West Credit River, and the Hanlon Creek Weir Removal Project,
- Commented on and influenced hundreds of federal and provincial policy, legislation, and project proposals.

Back in 2011 we were informed by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario that there was no possibility of a “No Outcome” to the hydroelectric proposals, but we managed to prove him wrong.

ORA is also one of 6 partner organizations making up the Coalition for the West Credit River, working to protect one of the few remaining native Brook Trout populations in southern Ontario. ORA is also working with others to address a federal Impact Assessment for the Agnico Eagle Upper Beaver Gold mine project, proposing to divert the Misema River and dewater York Lake to create an open pit gold mine in York Lake.

What follows is a list of ORA’s Activities since the fall of 2020 up to this date. You can click on the live links embedded in the text of each item to access those documents on our website Blog, where you will find more detailed information.

Yours in Conservation,



Chair & Chief Administrative Officer

About ORA:

The Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) is a not-for-profit grassroots volunteer organization with a mission to protect, conserve, and restore Ontario riverine ecosystems. ORA works to ensure that development affecting Ontario rivers is environmentally responsible and socially sustainable.

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 a dedicated team of volunteers and members.

Since our beginnings early in 2011, ORA has worked tirelessly to address concerning 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 evidenced-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 and its dedicated volunteers have achieved since our inception in 2011, you can check out our [previous Annual Reports](#) and [website Blog](#), located [here](#).

ORA Activities – November 2020 to October 2021:

1. Provincial Regulatory Submissions:

- 23 December 2020 – ORA Feedback on Recreational & Commercial Fishery Offences
- 30 November 2020 – Bill 229 to Protect CAs and SAR
- 20 November 2020 – ERO-019-2517-Exempting dams from Permit to Take Water
- 20 February 2021 - ERO-019-2826 – MECP Statement of Environmental Values
- 1 March 2021 - Canada Water Agency – Discussion Paper
- 27 April 2021 – ERO-019-3007 – Long Term Energy Plan Review
- 28 June 2021 – ERO-019-3268, 2785, 2768 & 2972 – Strengthening our Environmental Compliance Approach
- 2 October 2021 – Agnico Eagle Upper Beaver Gold Project – ORA Comments to IAAC

2. Coalition for the West Credit River:

- 25 January 2021 – CWCR Briefing Notes
- 31 January 2021 – CWCR Quick Facts
- 9 February 2021 – CWCR Updates: Briefing Notes
- 9 February 2021 – CWCR Updates: Quick Facts
- 25 March 2021 – Concerns over Brook Trout & Fish Habitat the West Credit River
- 18 February 2021 – CWCR Questions to Town of Erin Mayor and Council
- 25 February 2021 – CWCR Designation Request for a federal review under the *IAA*
- 8 March 2021 – CWCR follow-up on 18 Feb. Questions to Town of Erin Mayor & Council
- 15 March 2021 – Coalition request to appear before the Standing Committee on Environment & Sustainable Development
- 19 March 2021 – Coalition to Mayor Alls: Invitation to Coalition Campaign Event
- 8 April 2021 – Coalition follow-up to Town of Erin: Damage to Tributary on Solmar Land
- 30 April 2021 – Coalition to Town of Erin - Assertion by Haudenosaunee
- 4 May 2021 – ORA Concerns over WCR Brook Trout and Fish Habitat
- 12 May 2021 – Coalition to Ministers McKenna and Jordan – Erin WWTP
- 21 May 2021 – Coalition to MECP: Follow-up Commitments to the ESR
- 26 May 2021 – Minister Wilkinson Decision on Designation Request to CWCR
- 7 June 2021 – Coalition to Minister Wilkinson - Inground Infiltration of Wastewater
- 22 July 2021 – CWCR to Credit Valley Conservation, Re: Water Quality Monitoring Collaboration
- 23 July 2021 – CWCR to Minister Piccini: Follow up Commitments in the Environmental Study Report
- 31 July 2021 – CWCR to Mayor Alls: Follow up to 13 July 2021 Meeting between Judy Mabee and Mark Heaton
- 9 August 2021 – EBR Application for Investigation of Town of Erin: Proposed Erin WWTP – ESR
- 10 August 2021 – CWCR to Minister Piccini & Auditor General: Application for Investigation
- 12 August 2021 – MECP EBR Office to Mabee and Heron: EBR Application for Investigation – Erin WWTP
- 27 August 2021 – EBR Application for Investigation – Erin WWTP
- 31 August 2021 – CWCR to Mayor Alls: Follow-up to 13 July 2021 Meeting

3. Joint Submissions:

- 18 December 2020 – ERO-019-2636 – Amendments to Endangered Species Act
- 16 November 2020 – Issuance of Minister’s Zoning Orders – 96 Organizations
- 25 January 2021 – Submission with Briefing Notes to Mayor & Council
- 31 January 2021 – ERO-019-2811 – Ministerial authority as part of MZO - PA
- 3 February 2021 – Bradford Bypass – Request for Designation under s.9 of IAA
- 14 February 2021 – Add “Plastic Manufactured Items” to Schedule 1 of CEPA
- 26 March 2021 – Request to remove Schedule 3 from Bill 257
- 3 April 2021 – ERO-019-3233 – Ministerial Zoning Orders
- 27 April 2021 – Expand on Protected Areas in Ontario
- 26 May 2021 – Draft of Canada’s Great Lakes Strategy for PFOS, PFOA, and LC-PFCA’s Risk Management
- 28 June 2021 – Toxic Substances, Annex 3, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
- 19 August 2021 – ORA Endorsement of a Gravel Mining Moratorium by WWW

4. Media Release:

- 29 October 2021 – Concerns Over Brook Trout in the West Credit River
- 25 February 2021 – Wastewater Treatment Plant Spells Doom for West Credit Brook Trout – Request for a Review Under the Impact Assessment Act
- 6 April 2021 - Town of Erin Pays only \$2 for 5 Hectares of Prime Real Estate?
- 26 April 2021 – Experts Agree: Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson must designate Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant for Impact Assessment
- 27 May 2021 – Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant – Federal Review Denied
- 11 August 2021 – Town of Erin Must Follow Through with its Commitments to Stakeholders

5. Dam Decommissioning Updates:

- Springbank Dam, Thames River – Decommissioning Imminent
- Riverside Dam, Speed River – Rebuild postponed until 2022
- Gorrie Dam, North Maitland River – Decommissioned in August 2021
- Howson Dam, North Maitland River – Contract awarded for decommissioning

6. Campaigns:

- December 2020 – Christmas Membership Campaign
- March 2021 – Be Part of the Action – Save the Date – CWCR
- April 2021 – Help Save the West Credit River – Take Action Now
- August 2021 – CWCR Summer Colouring Contest

7. Articles and Other Publications:

- 16 November 2020 – **TORONTO.COM** – Ontario Rivers Alliance says town has ‘dismissed’ plan to protect Credit River brook trout from Erin wastewater plant
- February 2021 - ORA E-Newsletter
- 3 March 2021 – **WELLINGTON ADVERTISER** – Local coalition asks federal government to step in on Erin sewage plant
- 27 March 2021 – **ONTARIO FLY FISHER** – Concern for the West Credit River
- 8 April 2021 – **GUELPH TODAY** – Erin mayor refutes claims of shady deal over wastewater treatment plant land transfer
- 12 May 2021 – **WELLINGTON ADVERTISER** – CWCR appealing to federal environment minister to step in on Erin’s wastewater treatment plant
- 13 April 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – ‘It sounds pretty fishy’: Local coalition highlights concerns about Erin wastewater plant
- May 2021 – **ONTARIO OUT OF DOORS** – Water treatment plant threatens West Credit
- 3 May 2021 – **SOFLY FISHING PODCAST** – The Fight to Save the West Credit – Episode 94
- 16 May 2021 – **CBC NEWS** – Key decision coming soon in fight over ‘crown jewel’ of southern Ontario trout streams
- 18 May 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – Erin Waste water treatment plant review forthcoming from federal government
- 20 May 2021 – **CALEDON CITIZEN** – Signs set up in protest of Erin wastewater plant to protect the West Credit River
- 26 May 2021 – **CBC NEWS** – Ottawa won’t order federal review of controversial wastewater treatment plant in Erin, Ont.
- 26 May 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – Federal government approves Erin wastewater treatment plant
- 10 June 2021 – **ONTARIO NATURE** – Seven things you should know about West Credit River Brook Trout
- 11 June 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – Coalition for West Credit River proposes alternative option for Erin wastewater plant
- 22 June 2021 – **IN THE HILLS** – Belfountain Under Siege
- 26 June 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – TIMELINE: Erin Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 2 July 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – This is for their benefit in the long run: Wastewater Plant necessary says Erin Mayor
- 31 July 2021 – **WELLINGTON ADVERTISER** – Group continues to look at ways to address concerns about Erin wastewater plant
- August 2021 – **ONTARIO OUT OF DOORS** – Erin wastewater plant approved
- 11 August 2021 – **WELLINGTON ADVERTISER** – Lowering the Bar
- 12 August 2021 – **WELLINGTON ADVERTISER** – Coalition files application for MOE to investigate wastewater treatment plant
- 23 August 2021 – **ORANGEVILLE BANNER** – Coalition seeking provincial intervention in Erin’s wastewater treatment plant
- Fall 2021 – **ONTARIO OUT OF DOORS** – Erin Water Treatment Plant Update

8. Subscribe to ORA’s online news sources:

- ORA Website: <https://ontarioriversalliance.ca/blog/>
- E-newsletter: <https://www.ontarioriversalliance.ca/take-action/-join-our-newsletter>
- 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 is working on two major projects at the moment, and that is stretching our capacity to its limits.

We will continue to build on our 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Heron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Linda Heron, Chair & CAO
Ontario Rivers Alliance
OntarioRiversAlliance.ca