



Mill Creek Weir Removal Project, a coldwater Brook Trout Stream. Photo by CVC

ONTARIO RIVERS ALLIANCE

2022 – 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

21 October 2023

Linda Heron, Chair and CAO



Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA)
Board of Directors

Linda Heron, Chair & CAO

Ken Buchan, Vice Chair

Terry Little, Secretary - Treasurer

Robert Huber, Board of Directors

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Christian Laidlaw, Board of Directors

Eric Chaplin, Board of Directors

Tareq AISaleh, Board of Directors

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

Letter from the Chair

Greetings everyone,

We have another busy year under our belts, and ORA is celebrating some significant wins!

ORA continues to work with five other organizations in the [Coalition for the West Credit River](#). We have come a very long way in our advocacy to protect West Credit River Brook Trout (Live Feed) from the 7.2 million litres per day of treated effluent soon to begin releasing from the Erin Sewage Treatment Plant into this sensitive coldwater stream. The Coalition was very concerned that an effluent temperature limit and an effluent cooling system were not included in the approved Environmental Study Report; however, the Coalition's strong advocacy and outreach achieved the following:

- The Environmental Compliance Approval now includes a maximum effluent temperature limit of 19°C over a 4-day moving average
- An effluent cooling system is now in the design phase and will be built into the Plant and
- Significant input into many aspects of the monitoring and adaptive management plan to protect the coldwater habitat necessary for these temperature-sensitive Brook Trout. 🐟 🐟

ORA was also successful in obtaining a \$5,000 grant to put towards the [Mill Creek Weir Removal Project](#) in Orangeville. Mill Creek and the West Credit River are two of the few remaining coldwater Brook Trout streams in southern Ontario. The weir was removed, and the stream bed and shoreline were rehabilitated during late September and early October. Check out the [restoration process here](#).

In addition, a 2022 Narwhal article revealed that since 2013, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has been selling Clean Electricity Credits, earning over \$5.5 million. During that time, OPG and the Ontario Ministry of Energy had been advertising and boasting of its non-emitting hydroelectric generators. This could not be further from the truth as peer-reviewed studies indicate that upwards of 7% of world GHG emissions come from hydroelectric reservoirs. At the same time, OPG and the Ontario Waterpower Association were tasked by the Minister of Energy to report back to him on the waterpower potential in Northern Ontario.

In response, ORA mounted a Campaign to raise public awareness, including a [Petition](#), and reminded the [federal](#) and [provincial governments](#) and [OPG](#) that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recognizes hydroelectric reservoirs as a significant source of GHG emissions and recommends measurement of these emissions, including methane, which persists for the life of the dam. ORA strongly recommended that hydroelectric with reservoirs be required to measure and publicly report their emissions and that there be no new hydroelectric with reservoirs. You can turn a gas plant off when it is replaced with clean electricity, but these reservoirs will be in place for 100 years or more and will emit methane until the dam is removed. ORA also advised that government funding should be focused on dam removal projects to reduce GHG emissions and increase stream resilience.

OPG and ORA had a very productive online meeting in May. As a result, OPG is no longer referring to hydroelectric as non-emitting and is undertaking a 3-year study through the University of Waterloo to measure GHG emissions coming from three of its reservoirs. We are still working on the provincial and federal governments' positions, but that is much more challenging and will take more time.

I am also pleased to report that we are continuing to communicate with OPG and the University of Waterloo about the 3-year GHG emission study of OPG reservoirs. Thank you for your support!

Yours in Conservation,



ORA Chair & Chief Administrative Officer
Ontario Rivers Alliance

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 and socially sustainable.

ORA has a broad overarching perspective in our approach to protecting, conserving, and restoring Ontario's freshwater resources. We collaborate with other organizations, agencies, municipalities, 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, ORA has worked tirelessly to address concerning developments, influence policy, process and legislation, improve the environmental assessment and approvals process, increase public awareness of the impacts development may impose, 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. We work to build a strong and engaged network of like-minded individuals and organizations.

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

ORA has a solid track record of providing evidence-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, wastewater 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.

What follows is a list of ORA's Activities since the fall of 2021 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.

ORA Activities – November 2022 to October 2023:

1. Regulatory Submissions:

- 17 November 2022 – Bill 23 – ORA Comments on the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy
- 24 November 2022 – Legislative & Regulatory Proposals Affecting Conservation Authorities
- 25 November 2022 – Environmental Accountability in Ontario – Consultation Paper
- 26 December 2022 – ERO-019-6161 – Conserving Ontario’s Natural Heritage
- 29 December 2022 – ERO-019-6177 – Review of a Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement
- 17 April 2023:
 - Bill 71
 - ERO 019-6715 – Building More Mines Act, 2023
 - ERO 019-6749 – Consequential administrative amendments to Mining Act
 - ERO 019-6750 – Proposed regulatory amendments to closure plan and rehabilitation requirements for advanced exploration and mine production
- 14 May 2023 – ERO 019-6647 – IESO Pathways to Decarbonization Study
- 20 August 2023 – ERO-019-7356 – Development of a Project Evaluation Policy under the Provincial Parks Conservation Reserves Act
- 11 October 2023 – ERO-019-7598 – Proposed regulatory amendments required to implement legislative amendments made through the Build More Mines Act, 2023
- 19 October 2023 – Proposal to return lands to the Greenbelt:
 - ERO-019-7561 – Amendment to Greenbelt Plan
 - ERO-019-7562 – Amendment to the Greenbelt Boundary Regulation

2. Campaign/Project Submissions:

- 8 February 2023 – Hydroelectric is not the “Pathway to Decarbonization”
 - 17 April 2023 – Response from OPG to 8 February 2023 ORA Submission
- 9 February 2023 – Embro Dam Class EA – Alternatives
- 27 February 2023 – OPG – Proposed Coniston Generating Station Life Expectancy
- 9 March 2023 – 2023 Annual Acquisition Report Feedback
- 13 April 2023 – Submission to Ministers Guilbeault, Wilkinson and Champagne, Re: Hydroelectric is not a Pathway to Decarbonization or Net Zero
 - 7 June 2023 – Response from Minister Guilbeault to 13 April 2023 ORA Submission
- 19 June 2023 – Marmora Pumped Storage Clean Energy Hub Project

3. Joint Submissions:

- 24 November 2022 – ERO-019-6160 Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System
- 24 November 2022 – CWCR to Town of Erin, MECP & WSP, Re: Effluent Cooling System for Erin Sewage Treatment Plant
- 1 December 2022:
 - ERO-019-6216 – Proposed Amendments to Greenbelt Plan
 - ERO-019-6217 – Proposed Amendments to Greenbelt Area Boundary Reg.

- 9 December 2022 – Delayed Decision to List American Eel under Species at Risk Act
 - 9 February 2023 – Minister of Fisheries & Oceans, Joyce Murray’s response
- 26 January 2023 – Ministers Guilbeault & Duclos: Expand the single-use plastic ban
- 15 March 2023 – CWCR to Town of Erin - WSP Presentation on the Effluent Cooling System
- 8 May 2023:
 - ERO-019-4219 - Project List Amendments
 - ERO 019-6693 – Municipal Class EA
 - ERO 019-6705 – Improving Timelines for Comprehensive EAs
- 19 July 2023 – Draft State of Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) and Risk Management Scope for Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances by ECCC and HC (May 2023)
- 24 July 2023 – CWCR to Town of Erin, Re: WSP Receiver Monitoring & Mitigation Plan – V6 Draft

4. Outreach:

- 31 March 2023 - Youth Engagement Event, St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School

5. Dam Decommissioning Updates:

- Mill Creek Weir Removal Project – Completed in October of 2023
- East Credit River Dam Removal Project – Grant Application - \$250,000
- Howson Dam Removal, North Maitland River – Awaiting permitting
- Springbank Dam Removal, Thames River – Awaiting removal

6. Petitions:

- Petition: Hydroelectric is not a “Pathway to Decarbonization”
- Petition: Dam Decommissioning

7. Presentations:

- 31 March 2023 – St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School – Youth Engagement
- 23 April 2023 – Indie Film Studio – Presented and Interviewed for the film - “River”

8. Information Videos:

- Is Hydroelectric a Pathway to Decarbonization?
- Damming Rivers Adds Mercury to Your Fish Dish
- Effects of Dams on Fish Populations

9. Grants:

- 27 September 2022 – Natural Infrastructure Grant Application – East Credit River Dam Removal - \$250,000 – Awaiting approval
- 2022 – 2023 - \$10,000 Lush Grant - \$5,000 towards Mill Creek Weir Removal and the rest towards funding our Communication & Funding Officer

10. Coalitions:

- Healthy Great Lakes Coalition
- Coalition for the West Credit River
- American Eel Conservation Coalition
- Upper Beaver Gold Mine – Coalition of environmental organizations and individuals

11. **Subscribe to ORA's online news sources:**

- ORA Website: <https://ontarioriversalliance.ca/blog/>
- Contact Email: info@ontarioriversalliance.ca
- E-newsletter: [https://www.ontarioriversalliance.ca/take-action/ - join-our-newsletter](https://www.ontarioriversalliance.ca/take-action/-join-our-newsletter)
- RSS Feed: <http://feeds.feedburner.com/ontarioriversalliance/KpBY>
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- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/OntarioRivers>
- TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@OntarioRivers>
- Threads: <https://www.threads.net/@OntarioRivers>

In Conclusion:

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,



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