



2025 AGM Delegate Package

 **ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**

October 8, 2025 | 10:00 A.M.

Ontario 

WELCOME!

Welcome from Meghan James , Chief Governing Officer of the OHTO Board of Directors

Welcome to our 2025 AGM!

Spring saw many changes, uncertainties and challenges for Canada, most of which were due to the unknowns involved with our neighbours to the south. People were hesitant to commit to plans, spend money, and invest in our economy.

This led to a slow start to the tourism sector for so many businesses in Ontario but once school was out, and the climate calmed, many across our region welcomed so many visitors from all over the world to share in our special piece of Ontario. The summer was incredibly busy for many operators, which brought excitement, new faces and opportunities. Summer may have started slow, but it sure went out with a bang.

This year, Ride the Highlands was once again a huge draw to our region, bringing people from all over Ontario, Quebec and the U.S. to experience our hospitality, windy roads, hidden gems, and must ride routes. Their eagerness to explore, laid back approach to travel and their infectious sense of adventure makes them the most perfect travelers to welcome to our communities. The Ride the Highlands program has seen a resounding amount of growth over the past few years, and is becoming known by riders all over North America.

Meanwhile, Travel Trade also played a part in this summer's success. Last minute bookings from all over Europe with people keen to explore Ontario and Canada this summer, provided an injection of revenue for so many of our operators, on and off the beaten path. Our region was also fortunate enough to host a few FAM Tours this summer as part of the Travel Trade Partnership, and what a great summer it was to show off our beautiful region.

Lastly, cyclists have continued to be an important part of the tourism landscape of our region. With so many municipalities investing in cycle routes, dedicated lanes, rest stops and more, you can see that this is one sector that has only just started to rise, and over the coming years, the growth will be key to the success for many operators in our region., and more, it is clear that this sector has only just begun to rise. Over the coming years, growth will be key to the success of

As we enter the slower months of the year, I hope we all take some time to reflect on the past year, its challenges, growth, and opportunities it gave us. Have a restful fall and winter, and spend some time connecting with family, friends, and exploring our beautiful region.

Sincerely,
Meghan James

WELCOME!

Welcome from Nicole Whiting, Executive Director of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization

This year, we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of working with more than 800 members, 6 counties and 45 municipalities in the region to strengthen our communities through responsible tourism. Through the regional tourism organization model, we have had the privilege of collaborating with the tourism sector to increase our destination profile and improve the experiences offered to our guests.

Whether it's one on one coaching, educational webinars, consultation on tourism plans or sharing our stories in the ever-evolving digital landscape, the OHTO board and operational team are committed to leveraging the incredible work being done in our rural region to make Ontario's Highlands a destination of choice for visitors and more importantly a source of community pride for our residents.

We are looking forward to sharing with you the highlights of this past year and some of the innovations that we think are going to accelerate what we can achieve together.

Thank you for joining us today and for your curiosity and contributions towards making Ontario's Highlands a best-in-class responsible tourism destination.

Sincerely,
Nicole Whiting



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 | 10 AM to 12 PM

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|-----------------|---|
| 10:00 AM | Welcome Address from the Board of Directors and Land Acknowledgement |
| 10:05 AM | Annual General Meeting Begins |
| 10:35 AM | Executive Director Report Presentation |
| 11:00 AM | BREAK (10 minutes) |
| 11:15 AM | Travel and Tourism: A Powerful Economic and Social Driver for Canada
Guest Speaker: Johanna Griggs, Executive Director, Tourism Development,
Destination Canada |
| 11:50 AM | Closing remarks and final message from OHTO |
| 12:00 PM | Wrap-up for the 2025 OHTO AGM - Thank you! |



EVENT INFORMATION & DETAILS

EVENT ACCESS INFORMATION

The OHTO AGM is hosted using Zoom. Below is the meeting access information and you can use a desktop or laptop, smart device or tablet to download the Zoom app to log in to this event.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84027800036?pwd=Z7T8UyPQ7x6Cy85prZVsnhH0HSbrRZ.1>

Meeting ID: 840 2780 0036 // Passcode: 012209

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kcAtvFknuo>

Please note the event will open to participants starting at 9:55 a.m. on Wednesday, October 8 and the Annual General Meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. We kindly request that you log on early to ensure that your Zoom app is running correctly, that you can successfully log in and your audio/video connections are performing correctly. If you have any issues with logging in, please contact [Kasey Rogerson](mailto:kasey.rogerson@ohto.ca) at 613-629-6486 x203.

Important

If you will be joining the meeting by phone, please send us your name and phone number in an email to kasey.rogerson@ohto.ca **as soon as possible**, so we can expect to let you into the Zoom meeting.

Disclaimer

The event will be recorded using Zoom for future marketing and promotional purposes, if you do not give permission to be recorded, both for video and audio purposes, please ensure you keep your microphone muted and your camera turned off.

QUESTIONS DURING THE EVENT

During the event if you have questions, please submit them in the Chat within the Zoom app. Staff will be monitoring the Chat for questions and will notify the speaker at the appropriate time. If you are phoning into the event, please keep your phone muted until the appropriate time during the event when the speaker asks participants for questions.

AGENDA

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 10:00 AM | Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement and Welcoming Remarks |
| 10:10 AM | Adoption of Agenda |
| | Approval of <u>Previous Meeting Minutes</u> |
| | CGO's Report |
| | Presentation of <u>2024-25 Financial Statements</u> & Appointment of Auditor |
| | <u>OHTO General Bylaws</u> Amendments |
| | Presentation of Slate of Nominees to Board of Directors |
| 10:30 AM | Executive Director Report |
| 11:00 AM | Adjournment |

AGM Documents

Link to the Previous Meeting Minutes (downloadable PDF)

Link to the 2024-25 Financial Statements (downloadable PDF)

Link to the OHTO General Bylaws 2024 (downloadable PDF)

NOTICE: The Slate of Nominees information for the 2025/26 Board of Directors will be made available to the membership on Monday, Oct. 6 on www.oh.to.ca and distributed by email to those who have registered for the AGM.

MOTIONS

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at XX a.m.

Adoption of Agenda

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the minutes of the October 9, 2024 AGM be approved as presented.

CGO's Report

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the members of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization accept the CGO's report.

Presentation of Financial Statements

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the members of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization accept the 2024-2025 Financial Statements as presented.

MOTIONS

Appointment of Auditor

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT Baker Tilly be appointed as Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization's 2025-2026 auditors.

Amendments to the General Bylaws

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the members of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization approve the amendments to the General Bylaws.

Presentation of the Slate of Nominees to the Board of Directors

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

TO acclaim the Slate of Nominees to fill the vacancies on the Board of Directors of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization as presented.

Executive Director Report

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

THAT the members of Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization accept the Executive Director's report.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at the call of the CGO at XX a.m.

MEET YOUR 2024-25 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEGHAN JAMES | Chief Governing Officer (Somewhere Inn Calabogie)

After nearly a decade spent working in tourism, including nine years at the Pembroke Best Western, Meghan James has taken on virtually every job on the books. From restaurant manager to sales, marketing, events, community outreach, and public relations, Meghan has literally learned the industry from the ground up and continues to enjoy working in tourism as General Manager at Somewhere Inn Calabogie.

Combining a love for the outdoors with a love for community, Meghan has been set for success in the Ontario's Highlands' tourism scene and sees collaboration as pivotal to tourism growth and sustainability across the region.



CINDY JAMIESON | Vice Chief Governing Officer (Whitewater Inn, Valley Cycle Tours, Jamieson Travel & Tours)

Cindy is an entrepreneur who has worked in travel and tourism her entire life. From Beachburg, Ontario, she became a raft guide/whitewater kayaker in her teens working for one of the local rafting companies. She has travelled to many countries chasing whitewater and cultural experiences. She has two degrees from Ottawa University in Women's Studies and Religious Studies. In 1999 she started organizing group travel and started Jamieson Travel and Tours.

In 2019 she purchased a small boutique Inn in Beachburg and is now focusing on inbound travel and experiences for her guests who stay at the Whitewater Inn. A cycling enthusiast, mother of two and proud promoter of the region, Cindy loves travel and unique experiences.



VANESSA DOW | (LANARK COUNTY TOURISM)

Vanessa Dow's enthusiasm for promoting the Lanark County region is not just professional, it's personal. After moving to Smiths Falls nearly two decades ago, she has always looked to this area with the energy and excitement of a visitor. Vanessa loves to travel locally, discovering hidden and new gems in the region.

Previously, Vanessa worked with the Smiths Falls & District Chamber of Commerce managing the Victoria Park Marina & Visitor Centre and then implementing a small business development grant. Now she brings that knowledge of visitor experience and business growth to her work as the Tourism Coordinator for Lanark County.

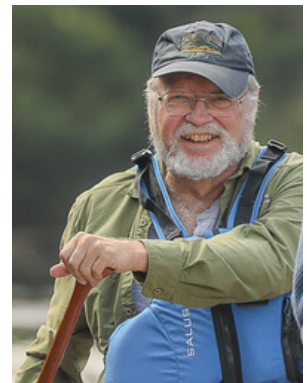


BARRIE MARTIN | (Experience / Event Consultant | Tourism Product Evaluator)

Experience Broker, Barrie Martin, was the founder and manager of Yours Outdoors, an award-winning company, now a division of Haliburton Forest tourism. Specializing in experiential and responsible tourism, Yours Outdoors offers creative learning and recreation experiences and outdoor adventures that explore and celebrate the art, nature, and heritage of the Haliburton Highlands in all seasons.

Through his work, Barrie was awarded Tourism Champion of the Year (TIAO) in 2016 and received the Sustainable Tourism (TIAO) award in 2017. Although he is now retired from Yours Outdoors, Barrie continues to be active in tourism and community development.

Barrie was also founder and co-chair of the Haliburton Highlands Tourism Stakeholders Group, Past Chair of Adventure Haliburton, an active member of the OHTO Travel Trade Partnership, Vice-president of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, Past President and current Marketing Coordinator of the Haliburton County Folk Society, past project manager for the Hike Haliburton Festival, and past founder and president of the Haliburton Highlands Trails and Tours Network.



SHANNON MCLAGGAN | Out-Going Director (Anupaya Cabin Co.)

Shannon MacLaggan is Co-Founder and Creative Director of Anupaya Cabin Co, a boutique beachfront wilderness resort in Deep River, designed to help guests slow down and settle into nature's pace. Along with her husband Pete, Shan is also Co-Founder of Anupaya Quality Goods, a lifestyle and home decor company that cleans up a pound of waste for every product sold through their 'One Pound Promise' initiative.

She also co-directs Anupaya Adventure, a thoughtful, off-the-beaten-path travel company offering authentic, culturally diverse experiences, while giving back to the communities they visit and hosting cleanups along the way. As an avid paddler, gardener and nature lover, with deep affection and affinity for this community, Shan is wholeheartedly committed to preserving these wild landscapes and passionate about helping more folks get outside to experience the rest and respite these pristine places offer us.



JEFF JACKSON | (Algonquin Fly Fishing Premium Guide Service, Professor & Coordinator at Algonquin College)

Jeff Jackson is a Professor and Coordinator of Algonquin College's Outdoor Adventure guide training diploma program at the Pembroke Waterfront Campus. He has a Ph.D. in organizational behaviour and safety management, and is considered Canada's leading expert on outdoor and adventure tourism risk management. As a consultant he has worked with the New Brunswick Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to establish their outdoor tourism accreditation standards and the Indigenous Tourism Association's operator risk management planning criteria.

He has also worked with the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario on their trail tourism policy development, and sat on the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnerships outdoor committee.

In the summer, Jeff is the owner/operator of Algonquin Fly Fishing Premium Guide Service, hosting Canadian and international fly anglers in Algonquin Park and the Ottawa Valley. Jeff was raised on a farm in the Ottawa Valley, and after a decade of adventure guiding around the world resettled here with his family for the outdoor lifestyle, tourism opportunity, and quality of living.



GREG RODGERS | Out-Going Director (Rockhill B&B)

Greg Rodgers is a newcomer to tourism but has already jumped into the industry feet first, taking over a bed and breakfast in Sharbot Lake, bolstering the local tourism community and joining OHTO's board of directors in 2020. Greg and his wife are living examples of how tourism works hand in hand with economic development to grow communities. The couple travelled throughout the Frontenac region before they decided to buy a bed and breakfast that is beautifully perched on a cliff overlooking Sharbot Lake.

When they went looking for a property to purchase, they looked at Sharbot Lake with new eyes and saw the potential there. Over the years, Greg has become immersed in the community life of Central Frontenac. He currently serves as director in the Sharbot Lake Business Group and has organized several collaborative ventures among the local tourism business community, including a local tourism business conference in 2019, sponsored by OHTO.



CHRIS HINSPERGER | Out-Going Director (Bonnechere Caves)

It is an understatement to say that Chris Hinsperger is passionate about tourism. For Chris, tourism is not only something that involves his business and professional life, it's a key component to sharing cultural stories and histories, to bring people together. It's that passion that Chris brings to his business, Bonnechere Caves, and what he brings to the volunteer work he does within the community.

Chris was one of the original founding Board members of OHTO and stepped away when he became chair of the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA). A desire to be part of growing tourism in Ontario is a big part of the attraction for Chris, but in his own words, he enjoys being around like-minded people and being on the board gives him inspiration and a source of energy that he really enjoys – which drew him back to the OHTO Board two years back.



BARBARA KRAUS | (TAMARACK LODGE COTTAGE RESORT)

After 25 years of living in Europe and another 20 years in Toronto, Barbara Kraus decided it was time to reconnect with her love of nature and the outdoors. She and her husband, Reiner Arnold, bought Tamarack Lodge, a cottage resort located on motorless Tamarack Lake in the Haliburton Highlands and have transformed the Lodge into a small-group retreat space that is a haven for nature lovers looking for a peaceful place to enjoy nature.

Barbara believes connecting with the outdoors is a quintessential part of our general health and wellbeing. Living in the Haliburton Highlands has allowed her to do this on a daily basis and to share it with others by working in tourism. Barbara continues to be fascinated by the seemingly endless splendour and beauty of the Ontario Highlands, of which the Haliburton Highlands are a part.

Her past professional endeavours have taught her that collaboration and communication are the cornerstones of successful businesses. Barbara has been a member of OHTO since joining this community and is proud to be taking it one step further by joining OHTO's board.



MIKE HAGE | (MYERS CAVE RESORT)

Mike Hage is a professional Civil Engineer who worked in Lebanon, UAE and BC. In November 2020 Mike found himself in Cloyne, ON when he purchased Myers Cave Resort under Nordic Resorts Inc., in which he is the President and CEO and part of a group of investors. Together with his wife, they reside permanently at the resort and take care of management.

Since moving to the area, Mike has become heavily involved in the community by engaging in several Township and County initiatives, participating in focus groups and attending business events. He also serves as an Executive Board member of the Land O'Lakes Lions Club in Northbrook, and has been involved in many service and community organizations worldwide over the years.

Recently, Mike was selected to serve a four-year term as a Board member of the Frontenac County Planning and Economic Development Committee.



MELISSA MARQUARDT | (Ottawa Valley Tourist Association)

Melissa has almost 30 years of private/public tourism and economic development experience. As the Manager of Economic Development with the County of Renfrew, she is responsible for management of the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association – the destination marketing organization for Renfrew County and the Upper Ottawa Valley.

She is a current director and past Chief Governing Officer for the Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization's (RTO-11) Board of Directors. Melissa is passionate about connecting people and places and uncovering the hidden gems that make a community tick. When not on the job, she can usually be found wandering the backcountry of Ontario or Québec, on water or land, with her husband and dog.



MEET THE STAFF AT OHTO

NICOLE WHITING | Executive Director

Serving for 15 years as Executive Director for Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Nicole has had the privilege of working with a fantastic team of staff, board members and tourism champions to develop partnerships and innovative tourism strategies that seek to inspire visitors to enjoy the many uniquely rural tourism experiences available in the region.

Nicole has always had a deep appreciation for the value travel experiences bring to people's lives and communities. Her diverse background as a competitive whitewater kayaker, event manager and entrepreneur, afforded her opportunities to visit, live and work in popular tourism destinations all over the world before settling down in the Ottawa Valley over 20 years ago.

NICOLE.WHITING@OHTO.CA // 613-629-6486 X 201



KASEY ROGERSON | Director of Industry Development

If there is one thing Kasey Rogerson is passionate about, it's tourism. As the Director of Industry Development, Kasey works directly with communities and businesses to foster communications between OHTO and the industry, developing partnerships and programming, and building capacity for tourism success. In her role with OHTO, Kasey is the first point of contact between stakeholders and OHTO, and provides support for the industry to Wander Sustainably with responsible tourism.

Born and raised in the Ottawa Valley, Kasey has a strong connection to the region and is big on outdoor and edible travel experiences (and not necessarily in that order). When she's not helping operators and communities, Kasey is often still immersed in tourism while staycationing in Ontario's Highlands and travelling afar with her family.

KASEY.ROGERSON@OHTO.CA // 613-629-6486 X 203



Marketing and Communications Support

DRAGONFLY COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING INC.

AMY HOGUE | Content Specialist

Amy Hogue is a communications professional with nearly 20 years of experience in media, public relations, and strategic storytelling. As the Content Specialist for OHTO, she combines her expertise in narrative-building with a deep passion for supporting local businesses and promoting tourism across the region. Amy's work focuses on strengthening the visitor economy by connecting communities, amplifying local voices, and positioning Ontario's Highlands as a must-visit destination.

Originally from the Ottawa area, Amy has called Lanark County home for over 30 years. She lived off-grid for more than a decade and was an early adopter of sustainable living, values that continue to shape both her lifestyle and professional approach.

CONTENT@OHTO.CA



FINN HOGUE | Digital Communications & Marketing Specialist

Finn Hogue is a marketing and communications professional with a passion for exploring Canada's wild spaces and embracing new challenges. Specializing in social media and digital strategy, she leverages innovative tools and platforms to foster brand awareness, audience engagement, and organizational growth. Finn's work spans diverse projects, with a strong focus on supporting non-profits and community-driven initiatives that create positive impact.

When not at work, Finn can often be found traveling with her dog in a camper van, tending to her garden, or preserving the season's harvest. Committed to sustainable living, she aspires to one day run her own self-sustaining small farm. These values not only shape her lifestyle but also guide her professional approach, inspiring her to support organizations and projects that strengthen communities and care for the land.

SOCIAL@OHTO.CA



Ride the Highlands Program

BC HUGHES

BC Hughes has been helping to create memorable travel experiences across Canada since 2006. For the past 13 years, the team has managed the Ride the Highlands motorcycle touring program, developing routes and positioning Ontario's Highlands as a premier motorcycle destination in North America. Working with more than 230 operators, including accommodations, restaurants and attractions, BC Hughes promotes over 5,000 kms of scenic, rider approved Ride the Highlands routes that showcase the best of the region.

CHRIS HUGHES

Chris's 26-year career in tourism development has seen him crisscross the country (mostly on his motorcycle) helping clients create the next great tourism experience. As a University of Waterloo alumnus, Chris was trained on the integration of business and the environment, something extremely relative in today's tourism economies. Chris specializes in developing memorable and innovative tourism experiences and thrives on working with businesses of all sizes.

Chris's mandate is simple: Develop a kick-ass visitor experience by focusing on the little details, and your customers will sell it for you.

CHRIS@BCHUGHES.CA // 519-270-8739



KRISTIN SCHAAB

Kristin understands that creating unique experiences and telling compelling stories are key to attracting visitors. With extensive travel experience and a background working with, coaching, and helping tourism businesses across Canada, she knows firsthand the power of capturing a destination's essence.

As a communications and digital marketing expert, Kristin leads the marketing for Ride the Highlands, develops and enhances motorcycle routes, and works directly with operators to ensure the region delivers an unforgettable rider experience.

KRISTIN@BCHUGHES.CA // 519-386-9685



BEV HUGHES

Bev is an experience development expert and strategic analyst, with skills that allow her to assess current trends, opportunities and business operations, looking at them under both an operational, management and visitor lens. Bev possesses the technical ability to synthesize what she has learned, analyze it and suggest actions that are strategic and beneficial for tourism operators and organizations alike.

As an experience development coach, Bev works tourism operators to determine experiential options that will benefit their bottom line, and work for them operationally. As a project manager for Ride the Highlands, Bev ensures projects are delivered on time, and on budget.

BEV@BCHUGHES.CA // 519-270-3132



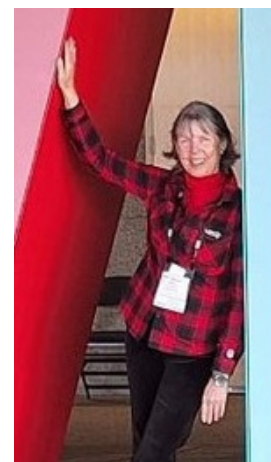
OHTO Travel Trade Partnership

HOLLY BLEFGEN | Travel Trade Specialist

The OHTO Travel Trade Partnership is an award-winning collaborative model for unlocking international tourism opportunities through a unified regional approach. Rooted in Ontario's Highlands and Kawartha Northumberland, this initiative was conceived by public and private stakeholders who shared the goal of tapping into global travel trade markets but who recognized success could only be achieved through collaboration.

This partner-led initiative is managed by Holly Blefgen, OHTO's Travel Trade Specialist. Holly's background as Owner of a Receptive Tour Operation to the Japanese market for 35 years brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding of what is expected for a Partner to conduct and 'win' business in both domestic and international travel trade and trade media. Service in tourism and hospitality is Holly's life passion and she has established a career in directing marketing and sales opportunities for municipalities, federal, provincial government agencies, individual corporations and small businesses throughout the province.

TRADE@OHTO.CA // 905-797-1070



GUEST SPEAKER: Johanna Griggs, Executive Director, Tourism Development, Destination Canada

Travel and Tourism: A Powerful Economic and Social Driver for Canada



As Executive Director, Tourism Development at Destination Canada, Johanna spearheads initiatives that strengthen Canada's tourism supply, foster strategic partnerships across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors, and promote tourism as a priority sector for the federal government.

Prior to Destination Canada, Johanna worked for the Town of Collingwood as a Manager of Economic Development.