



WYE MARSH

March News Letter

Maple Season has arrived at Wye Marsh.

Greetings!

As daylight stretches longer and sap begins to flow, the marsh moves quietly toward spring. Snow still rests along the trails, swans gather in open water, and beneath it all, the forest prepares for renewal. March is a month of transition — where winter lingers, but warmth begins to return.

This month we celebrate that shift. From Sweetwater Harvest Festival and maple-season traditions to winter recreation, conservation conversations, and community gatherings under the stars, March reflects the many ways people connect with Wye Marsh in every season.

wyemarsh.com/sweetwater

Sweetwater HARVEST FESTIVAL

Explore the sugar bush and watch sap turn into syrup at Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. Discover artisan vendors, storytelling, and hands-on cultural programming at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons

**One ticket connects both sites.
Free shuttle included.**

**MARCH
28 & 29**



*An unforgettable weekend where nature, history,
and maple tradition come together.*



A message From the Executive Director

Hello members, friends, and supporters of the Wye Marsh!

It is another time of transition here at the marsh. Winter is beginning to make way for spring through the forests and wetlands of the Wye Marsh, and the signs of this annual change are beginning to arrive.

Smoke will soon be rising from the sugar shack, as volunteers are getting hard at work tapping trees and boiling sap down to syrup in preparation for

Sweetwater Festival at month's end. The dwindling open water at swan landing is gradually widening, giving space for the 30+ trumpeter swans who have been calling the marsh home as of late. And the daily cycle of freezing and thawing that we'll see over the coming weeks is allowing skiers to enjoy quick tracks and sunshine as the forest around them comes to life.

As I begin my second full year here at the marsh, I've come to appreciate the change in seasons and the unique opportunities that come with each. I truly believe that winter is one of the most incredible times here at the marsh, with a type of quiet and peace that can seldom be found outside of snow covered forests like those we have here. But as we look ahead to what is bound to be a slow, drawn-out end to winter and are teased with the prospect of warmer days, I am excited about the opportunities this time brings. We'll soon welcome thousands of visitors to experience everything maple at our Sweetwater Harvest Festival. Our hallways, classroom, and trail will briefly come alive as children join us for March Break Camp and other activities. Early signs of spring migration will bring birds we haven't seen in months. And the longer days will be a welcome reprieve from the long winter that is showing signs of letting go of its grip.

As we all look ahead to the coming change of seasons, I hope that you'll give yourself the opportunity to enjoy the little bit of winter that is left with us. From the final weeks of snow-covered trails, to seeing (and tasting) sap transform into syrup, March at the marsh is an exceptional time. Let's all share a little bit of it together!

All the Best,

Eric



An extended winter means our snow-covered trails are still open and ready to explore.



Family Snowshoeing & Cross-Country Skiing

Extended winter means more time on the trails — and they're ready for adventure. Our forest and marsh trails are welcoming for families, beginners, and seasoned skiers alike. Kids love spotting animal tracks in fresh snow, gliding between the trees, and exploring the quiet beauty of winter. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are wonderful ways to stay active, build confidence, and create lasting memories together outdoors.

Explore the Trails

After a fresh snowfall, snowshoeing offers a peaceful way to wander through forest and wetland. For those looking for a little more movement, freshly groomed cross-country ski trails wind through wooded paths and open marsh, offering both gentle stretches and more challenging sections. Whether you're seeking calm or a cardio workout, the trails deliver both.

One of our members recently shared:

"Despite the cold this week, skiing at the Wye Marsh has been spectacular, especially today. It was a perfectly blue bird day with the sun sneaking some warmth in on this first day of February. Yes!! The days are getting longer and January, the month of Mondays, is finally over folks. A big shout out to the donors, volunteers and staff at the Wye Marsh for bringing cross-country back. It really is my happy place and I love just hanging out in the woods looking for deer and listening for barred owls."

— Debbie K

Friday Ski Social Club

Our informal Friday Ski Group has been underway throughout the month of February, bringing skiers together each week to enjoy the beauty of the marsh.

Soak up the rest of the winter season with us!

**Join us at 10:00 AM on
March 6th and March 13th**

to explore the trails alongside a friendly Wye Marsh volunteer.

Afterward, warm up with coffee and tea in the Visitor Centre.

Ski rentals are included with admission. No registration is required, but supplies are limited — arriving early is encouraged.

Don't miss your chance to enjoy these final weeks of winter on the trails.



Photos Submitted by Debbie Pearl-Kay

Community Support & Impact

LUNCH AND LEARN RECAP

Facilitating Ecological Integrity in Action

This month we welcomed volunteers and community members for a thoughtful Lunch & Learn led by Rachel, our Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Coordinator.

The session explored the overall health of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre ecosystem — where we are today, where we hope to be in the future, and how we move forward with intention. Grounded in our core theme of Facilitating Ecological Integrity, Rachel shared the guiding framework shaping our stewardship work: Learn. Identify. Intervene.

Through discussion and shared reflection, participants considered the many factors that influence the marsh's health — from habitat quality and species diversity to long-term restoration goals and community involvement. The conversation emphasized that ecological integrity is not a single outcome,

but an ongoing process that requires observation, collaboration, and thoughtful action.

Participants then stepped outside for a winter walk through the marsh, bringing the discussion into the landscape itself. Along the trails, the group observed seasonal changes, noted wildlife activity, and visited the swans at Swan Landing. Even in winter's quieter season, the marsh offers valuable insights into resilience, adaptation, and the interconnectedness of its habitats. Experiencing the ecosystem firsthand reinforced the importance of informed stewardship and collective responsibility.



Earlier in the month, on February 8, volunteers also gathered for another engaging Lunch & Learn hosted by Johanna, our Animal Care Coordinator. This session focused on the behavioural training of our birds of prey, offering a deeper understanding of the techniques, consistency, and relationship-building involved in their care. Volunteers gained insight into how training supports the birds' wellbeing while also preparing them for their important role as ambassadors for conservation education.

Together, these February sessions highlighted the many dimensions of stewardship at Wye Marsh — from ecosystem-level conservation efforts to the dedicated daily care of the animals who help us connect people to nature.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the health and resilience of the marsh. Your curiosity, commitment, and engagement are essential to the work we do.



RTO7 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Sharing Winter at Wye Marsh

This winter, we were pleased to welcome the team from RTO7 (Regional Tourism Organization 7), the regional tourism organization for BruceGreySimcoe, to the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre for two full days of filming, capturing the quiet beauty of the marsh in its snowy season.

Through matched funding and collaborative support, the RTO7 Partnership Program helps showcase the snowy trails, winter wildlife, and outdoor recreation opportunities that make Wye Marsh a year-round destination. From peaceful forest paths to scenes of seasonal activity, the filming highlighted the magic and tranquility of the marsh in winter.

These collaborations expand our reach and invite new visitors to experience the marsh in every season.



We would especially like to thank the volunteers and members who came out to participate and help make this a success. Your enthusiasm and willingness to share your time truly brought the spirit of the marsh to life on camera. We are grateful for partnerships that help share the story of Wye Marsh with communities near and far — and for the dedicated community that helps us tell it.

***“Volunteers are the heart of every strong community —
and it is through connection, shared purpose,
and collective care that places like Wye Marsh continue to flourish.”***

*Sweetwater Harvest Festival is a celebration
of maple in every form.*



tradition.
nature.
flavour.



**Tickets are available now —
grab yours early before
they sell out!**

Let the maple magic begin!

Maple Season Returns March 28th & 29th

Sweetwater Harvest Festival is BACK!

On March 28 and 29, the Sweetwater Harvest Festival returns to Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and Sainte-Marie among the Hurons — two remarkable sites coming together for one unforgettable celebration of maple season.

Each spring, as sap begins to run and steam rises from the Sugar Shack, Sweetwater invites families into a tradition rooted in land, water, and community. It marks the turning of the season — a time to gather outdoors, share stories, and welcome spring together.

Sweetwater is more than an event.

It is a celebration of place, season, and shared experience!

Visitors can look forward to:

- Maple syrup demonstrations and tastings
- Outdoor adventures and nature programs
 - A vibrant local artisans market
 - Hands-on crafts and heritage activities
- Live entertainment and family-friendly experiences

One ticket provides access to both Wye Marsh and Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, offering two unique perspectives on maple season — from wetlands and wildlife to heritage and history.

Tickets available now!

Hurry! Early Bird tickets sales end March 12. SAVE \$6/ticket!

Get Your Sweetwater tickets today!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Ski Social Club

March 6th, 13th

Join us every Friday at 10 AM to explore the marsh on skis alongside a Wye Marsh volunteer! After your adventure, warm up with a relaxed coffee & tea social in the Visitor Centre.



Sweet Water Harvest Festival

March 28th-29th

The Sweetwater Harvest Festival is a 2-day festival located in the Heart of Georgian Bay, celebrating the long standing tradition of harvesting and processing maple sap.



Summer Camp Registration Opens

March 27th, 2026 | 9am

During our Summer Day Camps your child will have the opportunity to learn about reptiles, amphibians, and birds of prey through interactive live demonstrations; explore over 25km of wilderness trails; plus, much, much more!



PA Day Camp Registration Now Open

April 24th, 2026 | June 5th, 2026

During our PA Day Camps your child will have the opportunity to learn about reptiles and amphibians through interactive live demonstrations; explore over 25km of wilderness trails; plus, much, much more!

Want to register or see what's happening at the Marsh this Month?

[Click here for more details and upcoming events:](#)

Upcoming Events

"Wildlife returns to the marsh as the marsh awakens."

FEBRUARY'S MARSH BY MOONLIGHT RECAP

An Evening Under the Stars

February's Marsh by Moonlight brought a fantastic group of guests together for a memorable evening on the trails.

Snowshoes carried visitors through moonlit paths as the marsh revealed a different kind of beauty — one shaped by stillness and shadow. The quiet of the wetlands at night created a peaceful atmosphere, allowing visitors to slow down and take in the sounds, sights, and crisp winter air in a way that daytime visits rarely allow. Guests gathered around the fire afterward, warming up and sharing reflections on experiencing the marsh from a completely new perspective.



A special thank you to Celeste for leading an engaging and informative guided tour. Her knowledge added depth to the evening, offering historical insight and ecological context that enriched every step along the trail. Through stories about the marsh's past and the wildlife that call it home, guests were able to connect more deeply with the landscape around them. One guest shared:

"It was amazing to learn about the history of the marsh. Celeste did such a great job bringing the stories of the area to life while we walked through the trails. This was our first time visiting Wye Marsh, and the experience was so

special — peaceful, interesting, and really unique. We'll definitely be coming back."

Events like Marsh by Moonlight offer a chance to experience the wetlands in a completely different way — under the glow of the moon, surrounded by winter's quiet beauty. We're grateful to everyone who joined us for this special evening and helped make it such a wonderful experience.

We look forward to welcoming you to future Marsh by Moonlight adventures at Wye Marsh.

TRUMPETER SWAN UPDATE

Another Day at the Office!

February was another exciting month for the Trumpeter Swan program. Slightly warmer weather over the past few weeks created more open water at Swan Landing, bringing in this season's highest swan counts at Wye Marsh — more than 30 Trumpeter Swans.

On February 7th, Kyna Intini and Julie Kee from Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario (TSCO), along with Dr. Nellissa Stalenhoef from the National Wildlife Centre, visited Wye Marsh. The visit gave Rachel, our Stewardship and Conservation Coordinator, the opportunity to gain hands-on banding experience and learn more about identifying symptoms of lead poisoning in swans.

Leg bands and wing tags allow individual swans to be identified and tracked over time. This work helps researchers understand how Ontario's Trumpeter Swan population is growing and dispersing, while supporting efforts to reduce human-caused threats.

We're also happy to share that U17 — a female Trumpeter Swan found in December with a broken leg — has been doing well since her release back to Swan Landing. Although she will continue to have a pronounced limp, she is flying in and out regularly.

TSCO maintains a province-wide database of Trumpeter Swan sightings — and you can help. If you spot a Trumpeter Swan, consider submitting your observation through [Report Sighting | Trumpeter Swan Ont.](#)

Interested in learning more about Trumpeter Swan conservation in Ontario? Watch the webinar presented by TSCO:

WEBINAR: [The Return of Trumpeter Swans to Ontario – YouTube](#)

Please note: Feeding and banding of Trumpeter Swans is conducted under license. For the safety of the birds, please do not feed or approach swans.



March: where winter meets spring at Wye Marsh.

Volunteer Spotlight

This month's Volunteer Spotlight is on:

Joe Eichhorn

As a not-for-profit charitable organization, Friends of Wye Marsh is grateful to be part of a vibrant caring community, and thanks everyone for contributing to our success. While this month's Volunteer Spotlight lets us highlight the contributions of one person - we appreciate everyone's ongoing support and love of nature!

"While some of our gregarious volunteers like to spend time promoting Wye Marsh at community events, or helping out with tours, we also have some very dedicated volunteers who are quietly working away, behind the scenes, helping take care of the marsh. Joe Eichhorn has been with us for six years (on & off), and does a beautiful job cleaning up around the Visitor Centre and back patio.

Joe first joined us as a high school coop student, performing janitorial duties. Since then he has also tried his hand at stocking shelves at Home Hardware, pricing items at the Dollar Tree, and helping make cookies and pies at a local bakeshop. And now he is back at Wye Marsh because, simply put, he enjoys the fresh air and "the beautiful sound of birds chirping."

Joe spends a lot of his time sweeping in the Visitors Centre and cleaning up the back patio, underneath the bird feeders. Sometimes he wears his Wye Marsh t-shirt. Sometimes he sports a Rock-Paper-Scissors-Lizards-SPOCK shirt. (He is a HUGE fan of the Big Bang Theory.) Whatever he's wearing, he says, "It's so good to get rid of messy things. Dirt & dust." When he is done he feels like saying "Bazinga. It looks great!"

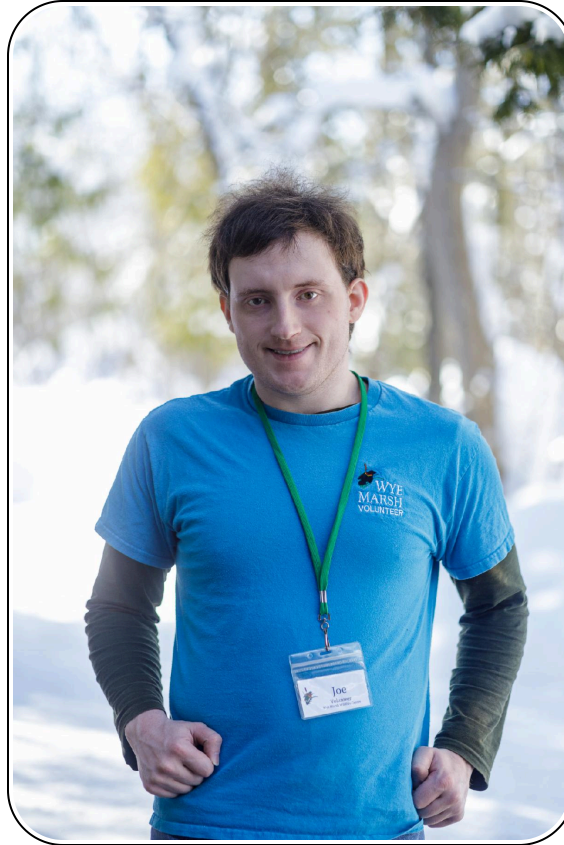
Joe is also a speedy button maker - which comes in handy when we are getting ready for a special event.

And, last summer, he took on a new role: He helped the Wildflower Gardeners get the Pollinator Patch ready for the 2025 Georgian Bay Garden Tour. The team was very happy to have him help pull weeds, rake pathways, and use the wheelbarrow to mulch the beds. With his help, everything was ready for more than 400 visitors to enjoy in just one day.

While some people only come to Wye Marsh for one day, Joe is happy to see the changes each season brings. He likes seeing people ski and snowshoe in the winter, welcome the migrating birds back in the spring, appreciate the blooming flowers in the summer and revel in the fall colours.

Joe also appreciated the chance to see the marsh in a whole new way, last June, as part of our Volunteer Appreciation Day. He and his mom took part in a “Benthic Sampling” workshop. He was surprised to find so many bugs, worms and other stuff living in the mud. Wildlife comes in so many shapes and sizes. It’s amazing.

And so is the job YOU do Joe. You do an amazing job. Thank you for that. And thank you to all our volunteers for contributing to our success in so many ways.





VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Share your passion for nature, and connect with like-minded spirits, as a Wye Marsh Volunteer.

As the snow swirls around us, it can be hard to imagine green shoots reaching for the sky this spring and the hot humid days of summer. And yet, this is the perfect time of year to sign up to be a Volunteer at Wye Marsh!

- Trail Ambassadors share their love of nature with visitors, fostering environmental stewardship at a grass roots level.
- Canoe Tour Assistants take people out onto the marsh for a turtle's eye view of our wetlands.
- Outreach Volunteers attend local festivals and events, and invite people to visit Wye Marsh all year long.
- Special Events Team make all the fun happen at Sweetwater, Music for the Marsh and other events
- Summer Camp Lunch Monitors supervisor children over lunch, and listen to stories about their morning adventures
- Pollinator Patch Champions tend our outdoor educational gardens, which are used to promote the use of native species for bees, butterflies and other pollinators to enjoy
- Invasive Species Specialists help restore vital habitat for our turtles and other vulnerable species by removing alien plants upsetting the ecosystem

- Wildlife Monitors join our Staff to conduct surveys which help shape our environmental stewardship activities at Wye Marsh

Whatever your interests and talents, now is a great time to apply. Some roles require a Vulnerable Sector Check, or Police Criminal Background Check, which can take up to 6-8 weeks. Apply now. Have fun this spring and summer!

Contact Heather at hkeery@wyemarsh.com
or call **705-526-7809 ext 217**.

The wetlands begin to stir with the promise of spring.

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