



Annual Report 2006

Our Mission: To spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodlands and wildlife by creating exciting learning opportunities in a natural setting.

**Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre
Midland, Ontario**

2006 Annual Report

A Word from the Executive Director

I have been working at the Marsh now for five and a half years. My time has been challenging and at times overwhelming. However, the Marsh has come a long way towards self sustainability. This is due to effective control over expenses and creative funding opportunities as well as reaching new markets. This would not have been possible without the dedicated and enthusiastic staff that has become an integral team. Every person carries their load with a smile, never hesitates to jump in where help is needed and all go the distance for every event. I am proud of the team that we have here and with their continued support, anything is possible!

Laurie Schutt

Overview

2006 was an exciting year. Attendance reached new heights – over 46,000 visitors! In part, thanks to funding from Nature Canada for bussing (100% of bus costs covered), more schools came to the Marsh from January to March than ever before.

The centre and it's trail system continued to get a facelift with new signs installed and an interactive display about wetlands. It has been a hit with visitors. Our trilingual wands that give an audio tour of the Marsh were well used by tourists as was most of the accessibility equipment. Visitors were very pleased that we have this equipment, as we continued to make the facility accessible to all.

There are many projects close to completion after many long months of planning and fundraising. Keep your eyes peeled for another exciting year.

Staff

As with all organizations, 2006 saw a few changes in Wye Marsh staff. Julie Kee, a long time employee, decided it was time to spread her wings and move on to something totally new and different. We will miss her and wish her luck. Renee, Coordinator of the Trumpeter Swan Program, has been on maternity leave and has requested a part time position. The Swans and Staff look forward to her return in February. Unfortunately Susan, who has been working as our Sustainable Energy Coordinator, is nearing the end of her contract and funding. We would like to thank her for all her efforts and hard work in educating us and our visitors in alternate forms of energy and conservation. She also worked on various projects including the Wind Turbine, Sustainable Energy Education Programs funded by Shell, and S.H.A.R.E. coordination and grant applications related to sustainability. Luckily, Susan has agreed to return as an active Volunteer, so our farewells will be temporary. Adam has seen a successful year of camp and continues to bring in residential business on weekends; many thanks to him for his attention to the many details of "overnighting" at Wye Marsh. Chris is kept busy with the Birds of Prey Program and running the Junior Naturalist program. She is also filling in for the Stewardship and Swan program during Renee's absence.



2006

Staff con't

Accounting is Darlene's world, and nothing escapes her expertise and thoroughness; all levels thank her for this. Linda has done a wonderful job of promoting and booking our programs this year. We have seen substantial growth and thank her for her part in it. Cathy as always, continues to greet our visitors with her relentless cheerfulness, making everyone feel so welcome. Adrian has completed a full year at Wye Marsh with his infectious enthusiasm and energy. He continues to do a great job in the Programming Dept. coping with this multi faceted-world. Graham, our one man army in the maintenance department, continues to do a tremendous job of looking after the Wye Marsh property. We would also



like to thank Loretta, our General Manager, for her endless task in recruiting and organizing volunteers to fill a variety of roles. Lucky for us at the Marsh, not many know how to say "NO" to Loretta. She also does a wonderful job of hiring the right dedicated staff to keep Wye Marsh running smoothly. Wye Marsh owes Evelyn's many thanks as always for her continued efforts with our store. Evelyn has managed through constant vigilance and in spite of declining budgets, to keep our store full of lots of treasures for school children and adults alike, thank you Ev. Denise is our new employee, completing her first month here at the Marsh as our Marketer. We wish her a heartfelt welcome and good

luck with the steep learning curve she is experiencing. Wye Marsh also has the advantage of being able to call on the many talented and well informed part time staff members to augment the program dept. when needed. We are always grateful for the continued support from Stephanie, Andrea, Miriam, Heather, Lisa, Amanda, and Mike and the many volunteers. Co-op students from all the area schools continue to play a role in Wye Marsh operations. We thank the many students that have choose to do their work placement with us in 2006.

Volunteers

In 2006, 21,090.45 volunteer hours were donated to Wye Marsh. This is an increase of 1,019.45 hours over 2005 totals and equates to an additional 10 staff members. This, in spite of the decrease in the number of volunteers used for Festival. In 2005, 170 volunteers helped out with Festival and in 2006, with the scaled down version, only 30 volunteers were required. The Wye Marsh business is becoming more diverse, as is this non-paid workforce. Individuals and groups from every walk of life have rallied to our cause with astounding results. Every department at Wye Marsh is very grateful for their contribution and also considers them colleagues.

Programs

Another fabulous year of programs!

The Wye Marsh program staff were busier than ever in 2006, delivering environmental experiences to visitors from across the nation. While the bulk of staff time is spent educating students taking part in our curriculum based school programs, great effort and enthusiasm was placed on providing visitors with programs based on family nature experiences. Program is an important part of the Wye Marsh allowing us to instill the message of conservation through education to the general public and providing visitors with many reasons to return.



2006

Program con't

With 15,610 student visitors engaging in Wye Marsh programming onsite, program staff had their hands full! Though all of the 25 curriculum based school programs were booked throughout the year, staff spent much of their time teaching "Grade 4: Animal Habitats and Adaptations" and "Grade 7: Ecosystems" thanks to our Simcoe County District School Board contract. Dipnetting, forest plot studies, and beaver dress-up are all fun and interactive learning opportunities that ensure students understand the role of wetland conservation while getting their hands dirty. When not in the field teaching, program staff were busy updating programs to fit the changing curriculum. That not only keeps the students entertained while learning, but also keeps the teachers coming back too!

Scouts and Guides and other groups enjoyed our Residential facilities and programming. Groups continue to travel from all over Ontario to visit the Wye Marsh. We are continually supported by local groups that consistently book weekend visits and day programming year in and year out. Last year groups came from as far as New York to Thunder Bay to take advantage of our excellent programs and facilities. In 2006, we introduced skiing and snowshoe badge days for scouting and guiding groups, which stemmed from the success of the fall and spring badge days. Each program saw great attendance and satisfaction from all who participated with a total of 3,380 residential and badge programs.



Guided walks and canoes have always been an important part of Wye Marsh programming. Thanks to all the volunteers who help these programs continue during the summer months. Moonlight programs, Parent and Tot, and Ask a Naturalist were staple programs complemented by daily one hour themed presentations throughout the summer. Specialty workshops and events including Edible Wilds Weekend, Bee School, the Birds of Prey Workshop, Spring Peeper Walk, Adventure Race and Half Marathon, to name only a few, gave visitors more reasons than ever to revisit the Wye Marsh.



For those who could not attend the Marsh itself, we continued to take our message of conservation on the road through our outreach program. Whether in a school, or at a trade show, the Wet N Scaly reptile show and Birds of Prey wowed audiences. Growing in popularity each year, offsite programs not only provide us with a variety of venues, but are also a valuable source of revenue. Summer offsite contract programming once again included the Delawana Inn, and expanded to weekly visits at the Wigamog Inn. This year we saw over 11,350 participants in our offsite programs.

Growth in the Birds of Prey Program is steady as new birds have been acquired, and staff gain valuable experience through working with Master Falconer, Matt Lieberknecht. Weekly shows at the Marsh continue to grow adding an important draw to for visitors. Keep an eye on this program in 2007 as we are expecting big success!

New programs in 2006:

Perhaps the most successful new program developed in 2006 was *Ecotours*. This three hour canoe experience carried people deep into the heart of the Wye Marsh while exploring the importance of ongoing research, monitoring, and ecological management. Truly a favorite with staff and guests,

2006

Program con't

Ecotours focused on experiential tourism, bonding with a stewardship guide, and providing a day to be remembered. Through funding from Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Wye Marsh was able to purchase 27 Global Positioning Systems (GPS units) adding a high tech element to the programs we offer. A school course titled "Adventures in Conservation" allows students to explore the marsh with their hand held satellite guiders while learning about conservation issues faced in a modern world. These GPS units have not only allowed us to expand our school program roster, but also allowed for the design of specialty workshops for GPS training and survival courses both on and off site.



Day camp

Our day camp programs continue to attract more children and encourage those who have attended in the past to return for more learning and fun. We ran five day camp programs in 2006: Christmas Break Day Camp, March Break Day Camp, Camp Marshes and Moccasins Summer Day Camp, CSI: Day camp and Survival Day Camp. Each camp received tremendous positive feedback from both parents and campers. Camp Marshes and Moccasins Summer Day Camp was staffed by six outstanding counselors. The success of Day Camp can be directly attributed to their time and effort. Day Camp continues to play an important role in connecting kids to nature. Through the Gordon Black Camp Sponsorship Fund (initiated by a member, Margaret Black), Wye Marsh was able to sponsor day camp attendance for 22 underprivileged children.

The Wye Marsh Junior Naturalist program continues with some success. There was an increase in members in 2006 for a total of 48 youth in the 3 year period of this grant funded program. Over 3000 volunteer hours were recorded by this enthusiastic group of teenagers. The program continues to have some challenges but provides valuable training for the youth in environmental sciences and basic job skills as well as provides a volunteer resource to the Marsh. This year was the final year of funding from NSERC (Natural Science and Engineering Research Council) and a search is currently underway to ensure the continuation of this dynamic program for youth.

Facility

Two Compost Toilets were installed on the property in 2006, one off the parking lot, the other by the Scout portable. These were funded by Helen McCrae Peacock Foundation. In addition to this the Foundation covered compost stations for the Residential Program, a Vermicompost Station and signage. The bathrooms had a face lift with new counters, sinks and efficient taps. Many thanks to Franke Kindred for the donation of the stainless steel sinks.



An old loop was opened on the red ski trail with some modifications, giving us a total of 24 km of trails. Graham works hard with a volunteer crew to keep the trails groomed. These same trails were open for biking and hiking for the rest of the year with moderate use.

A field up the service road was cut and seats installed for the summer weekly Birds of Prey Shows. These were very successful and Matt Lieberknecht, a Master Falconer, did the shows using five different species of birds including a Turkey Vulture, Red Tail Hawk, Harris Hawk, Barn Owl, Eagle Owl and sometimes a Peregrine Falcon.

2006



Facility can't
As baby birds hatched and were old enough, they were also brought to the shows. The Birds of Prey Program is a huge attraction for the Marsh and will help drive additional revenues. A small barn was built on the back patio of the Centre and two European Barn Owls installed – Jimmer, the large female, and Lucy, a small male. Their antics provide entertainment and a great educational opportunity to visitors. A bird sponsorship program was initiated with three birds currently. As more birds are acquired, they will be available for sponsorship. Additional funding was received from the Kenneth Molson Foundation, allowing us to purchase much needed equipment.

Home Depot joined the Marsh as a Corporate Sponsor, covering the costs of materials and providing the labour to build 11 flight chambers for future birds. This was an amazing effort by the Home Depot staff, getting sponsors for the wood, hardware, providing tools for the building day and working a very long day in the pouring rain. Wye Marsh is extremely grateful to Home Depot.

Stewardship Department

Stewardship/Research Program

Ongoing Projects:

- The Eastern Bluebird box project initiated by Junior Civitans in 2004, saw maintenance and monitoring throughout the nesting season. Even though a bluebird was sighted in the area, the nests were occupied by other species of birds and small mammals.
- A Caring for Nature Workshop Series was developed and offers visitors a stewardship related workshop each month for the cost of general admission.

Invasive Species control:

- Glossy Buckthorn control was undertaken along the Return Trail and around the Sugar Shack, Log Cabin and Wig-pee by staff, volunteers, Boy Scouts, Cubs & Girl Guides. A total of 260 hours were devoted to glossy buckthorn removal with dramatic results. Native species were planted at removal locations.
- The Georgian Bay Get Outdoors Club removed Phragmites grass from walking the berms.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources joined in partnership with the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre staff to help educate the public regarding Purple Loosestrife and other invasive species in Ontario during Project Purple Week.
- Galerucella Beetles monitoring was continued. Data collected revealed that the population is increasing and expanding throughout the Wye Valley, making an impact on the reduction of Purple Loosestrife.



2006

Stewardship con't

Projects/Research:

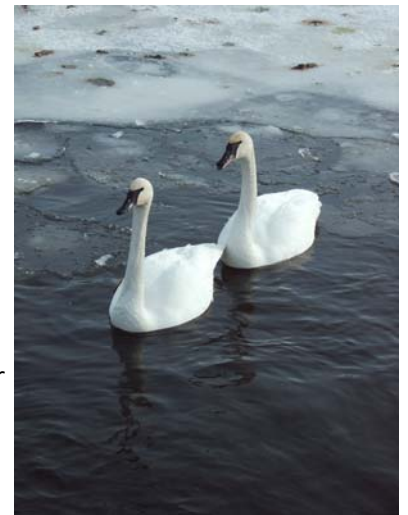
- Summer research focused on salamanders and turtles considered species at risk. Unfortunately, no target species were captured during the study period.
- The Swan Pond Rehabilitation Project, funded by Walmart Evergreen, was completed and involved rehabilitation and bank stabilization of the swan pond.
- The vermi-composting program is expanding to include programs and displays. Worms can be ordered by the pound (\$30/lb) or per kit (\$50). Kits come with bin, bedding and 1lb of worms.
- Stewardship events were organized for the following volunteer groups: Stewardship Rangers (MNR), Jr. Civitans, Air Cadets, Ontario Nature Volunteers, Rovers & Ventures, Katimivic as well as Waldorf schools.

Swan Program

For the third year, the Wye Marsh Stewardship Department was able to undertake many flights due to a Trillium grant received by Harry Lumsden. Some stewardship expenses related to the swans are also covered by this grant and administered through the Amherst Wildlife Foundation. Extensive flights over a larger area allowed us to fly all the way north to Sudbury and North Bay, and survey all the land south to the Midland-Lake Simcoe area.

There were 27 attempted nests sighted this year, with 65 cygnets being hatched. Reports show that out of 14 successful nests (the other nests were either unsuccessful or due to their remote locations they were unable to be visited again) 32 cygnets have been reported to have fledged this year. This number will undoubtedly climb as we see some of these birds show up with their offspring as the lakes and marshes in our region freeze up and the birds make their way to Wye Marsh, usually between late November and January.

Wye Marsh is currently monitoring an estimated total of 177 birds consisting approximately of 44 unmarked adult birds, 109 marked, plus 24 known unmarked cygnets, and 8 tagged cygnets. Wye Marsh staff has tagged 31 birds since February of 2006. This increased tagging success was due to a change in catch methods as most of the birds were caught one at a time by hand.



Events

For 2006 we hosted our traditional events – Sweetwater, the Fundraising Dinner, Giftwrapping and Festival but we added a 5 and 10 km run in May, an Adventure Race in August and the Turkey Trot in October. Sponsorship was from a diverse group of organizations allowing each event to be profitable.



The annual Wye Marsh Festival saw a change in format. Folk music, a BBQ and a beer garden went along with the usual Marsh activities (canoeing, walks, live animal shows) and on the Saturday evening we had an Irish Jig. A great time was had by all and the event was very successful, with less staff time and effort required to make it happen. The Annual Wildlife Carving Championships saw an amazing assortment of carvings displaying the talent of participants from all over North America.

2006

Events con't

The Fundraising Dinner was moved to October this year. Jack Lynch was the MC and addressed the tourism initiative of the Ministry. The Silent Auction was very successful and the evening in total raised just under \$12,000. The evening began with a guided walking tour of the Marsh, then a Social Hour and Silent Auction Preview. A delicious dinner was catered by Phil's Catering and enjoyed by all.

The two runs that were held had good participation and with costs covered by Casino Rama, \$1,000 was raised at each event. The Adventure Race was a new addition this year. It required participants to bike, canoe and run a total of 15 Km. Participants came as far as Toronto and really enjoyed the day. Mountain Equipment Co-op sponsored the costs for this race and we have scheduled the next Adventure Race for August 18th, 2007.



Gift wrapping was once again a success and profits from this popular event continue to rise. In 2006, a total of 80 volunteers raised \$9,770.68 net profit.

Back by popular demand the wreath making workshop was offered on both Saturday and Sunday this year. We had 72 people attend and it generated \$2,880.00 in revenue.

Wye Marsh Store

The Wye Marsh Store is often overlooked as a fundraiser. Our store Manager Evelyn faces challenges such as shrinking budgets, display space limitations and suppliers wanting to sell her a 100 items not 10. She handles all this with optimism and always an eye for the future. The store continues to have a nature based focus, always well received by our customers, and is a credit to its Manager.

Marketing

Most of the year our marketing department has consisted of German students and a part time employee, Susan Dalrymple. In the last year Marketing Consultant, Ron Taylor, has also provided support. However, with the addition of a new full-time Communications and Marketing Coordinator a focused and consistent approach can be carried forward in promoting Wye Marsh. There are many projects to be worked on, including a marketing plan, a budget, targeted media exposure, and developing and marketing new and existing programs.



2006

Marketing con't

In the last year there have been many accomplishments for example:

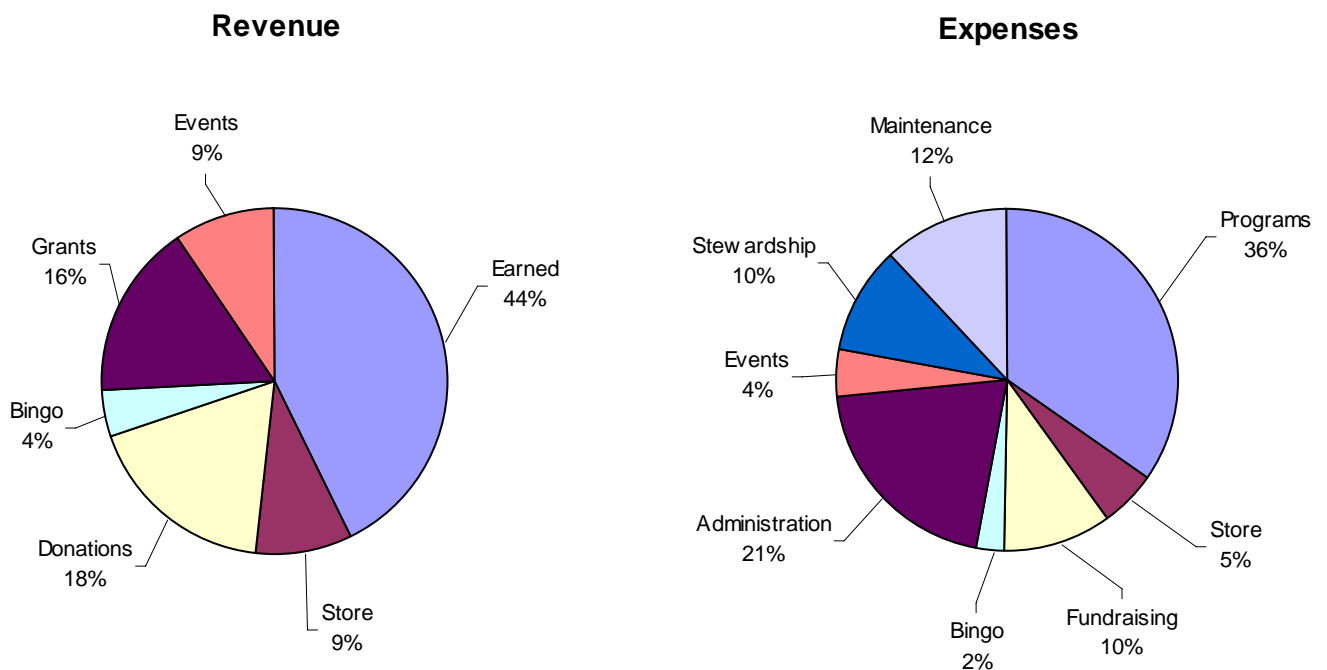
- the new product development of ecotours
- consistent website management
- updates and positioning of Wye Marsh through regular search engine optimization
- consistent detailed press release submissions
- establishing a media data-base and website submissions of press releases
- building Wye Marsh credibility by improved telling of the Wye Marsh story in both press release
- development and additions to web content
- extending the message to the Google and Yahoo click through ads and providing appropriate web content related to the ads
- improved decisions regarding traditional media placements and the corresponding media content more suited to the market segments, thereby increasing consumer demand and attendance.

Winds of Change

A feasibility study was conducted this year for the Winds of Change Project. It was determined that Wye Marsh was not ready for a capital campaign of this magnitude (3 million). With the hiring of a fundraiser in the next few months, our donor base will be developed to the point where we can plan a capital campaign for phase 1. Winds of Change, with government approval, will go ahead but in 3 phases. The concept model for the project, sponsored by Hacker Gignac & Rice, continues to generate valuable feedback.

An Overview of 2006 Finances

Increased revenues from education programs along with continued control of expenses resulted in another successful year. Wye Marsh continues to build towards total self sustainability as competition for funding is increasing.



2006

Our Thanks for Your Support

A Passion for Fashion
Accent Machinery
A-Channel
Active 2010
Advanced Foot & Orthotic Clinic
Alternative Nails & Skin
Amherst Wildlife Foundation
Artistic Dimensions
Atlas Block Company Limited
Backwater Tackle
Bank of Montreal
Barber & Haskill Ltd.
Barrie Huronia Probus Club
Bayview Wildwood Resort
Best Western Highland Inn and Conference Centre
Blair Interiors and Window Fashion
Bobbie's Fashions
Bonaire Golf & Country Club Inc.
Bonnie Bee Honey
Bourgeois Motors
Brooklea Golf and Country Club
Brumara Foundation
Bunn's Kids Trust Fund
Bushnell
Cabin Boy
Canada Helps.org
Canadian Custom Packaging Company
Canadian Tire Corporation
Carriage Ridge Resort
Casino Rama
Castle Village Gifts
The New CHAY 93.1FM
Claire's Fine Wines & Cindy Butler
Coldwater Gallery
Comfort Inn
Community Living Huronia
Compu-Solve Technologies
Copper Infused Glass Piece 'Forest Floor'
Creemore Springs
Curves
Dairy Queen
Dawson Contracting (Barrie) Ltd
Day Specialties Corporation
Delawana Inn Resort
107.5 Kool FM
Delta Grandview Resorts
Dinos
Dr. Brian Cole Dentistry
Ducks Unlimited
ELCAN Optical Technologies
Elite Fitness
Ellis Don
Elmvale and District Hort. Society
Elmvale Jungle Zoo Ltd.
Elmvale Maple Syrup
Em & Ms Flowers
Environment Canada-Canadian Wildlife Services
European Body Works
Evergreen
Explorers Café
Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Fenelon Township Public School
Foley's Furniture
Four the Love of Life
Franke Kindred Industries Limited
Garfield Dunlop MPP
Garrett's Convenience
General Mills Canada Corporation
Georgian Bakery
Georgian Bay Dredging and Excavating
Georgian Bay Get Outdoors
Georgian Bay Islands Windsurfing
Georgian Mall
Georgian Team Design Builders Ltd.
Gift Basket
Girl Guides of Canada
Good for Life
Gordon Black Memorial Fund
Government of Canada
Grass Roots
Great Canadian Superstore
Hacker Gignac Rice Barristers & Solicitors
Hallmark
Harry Huizinga & Associates Inc.
Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation
Heritage Animal Hospital
Home Depot
Homecoming
Honda Canada
Horseshoe Resort
Huron Alarms

2006

Huronian Communities Foundation
Huronian Historical Parks
Huronian Office Supplies
Huronian Woodland Owners' Association
IBM Canada Ltd.
Indulge
Industrial Filter Manufacturing Limited
Inn at Bay Moorings
Inn The Woods Bed & Breakfast
J & B Feeds
Jay Set
Jeanette Halliday
JoAnne MacDougall
Joe Springall
John & Hélène Simpson
Johnstone's Music Land
Jories
Junior Civitans
Kawartha Carving Supply
Kelsey's Restaurant
KICX 104 FM
Kiwanis Club of Kempenfelt Bay
LabX
Lalonde's
Land O Lakes Feed
Leavens Volkswagon Inc.
Lighthouse Store
Little Lake Bed & Breakfast
Liz Kain Contemporary Jewelry
Lolk Paddle Co.
Lynn-Stone Funeral Homes Inc.
Mad Michael's Café
Management Training Corporation
Margaret Black
Marketeer
Marlene Lockhart Photography
Maureen Pearce
McDonalds Restaurant
Mental Health Centre
Midhurst Stewardship Rangers
Midland Air Cadets
Midland BIA
Midland Camera Club
Midland Home Building Centre
Midland IGA
Midland Probus Club
Midland PUC
Midland Rotary Club
Midland Secondary School
Midland Tours
Midland Triathlon Club
Midland-Penetanguishene District Community Emergency Response Team
Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalists Club

Miller's Vacuum
Minds Alive
Ministry of Energy Conservation Branch
Ministry of Natural Resources
Mink Insurance Services Ltd.
Mitchinson Planning & Development Consultants
Moonstone Coffee House
Mountain Equipment Co-op
Mountainview Mall Florists
Mountainview Mall Merchants Association
Mueller Sausages
Native Woods
Natural Sciences & Engineering Research
Nature Canada
Nebs Business Products Ltd.
Norm's Garden Gallery
Norsim Equipment Ltd.
North Simcoe Veterinary Service
Northern Casket
O.F.A.H. Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program
Ontario Nature
Orillia Trim and Door
PACU Staff Mount Sinai Hospital
Page Graphics
Palmer Wellness Centre
Penetang Pets
Penetanguishene Rotary Club
Penetanguishene Secondary School
Perrin's Flower Shop
Peterborough City Soccer Assoc.
Phil's Catering
Picnic Island Resort Ltd
Pinewood District Girl Guides
Port McNicoll Lions Club
Prudential Sadie Moranis
Rama
Rasin
RBC Financial Group
Real Canadian Super Store, Midland
Rehabilitation Comcare Health Services
Rigid Tools
RIO CAN Property Services Trust
Ritchie Forest Products
Ritchies Garden Centre
Riv Bistro
Robert Barnstaple Photography
Rod Prouse
Rogers (T.V.)
Rona Building Centre
Rona Rent-All
Saint Gobin Technical Fabric
Saturday Afternoon
Scouts Canada
Serendipi Tea
S.H.A.R.E.
Shoes To Boot
Simcoe Community Services

2006

Simcoe District Co-operative Services
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Simcoe Standard Condominiums 288/289
St. Theresa's
Stoneleigh Motors
Sustainability Network
Swoon
Tay Township
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
Telequip Systems
The Crow's Nest
The Free Press
The Library Restaurant
The Mirror (Midland)
The Ontario Trillium Foundation
The Place Setting Inc.
The Running Room
The Source
Therapeutic Massage
Through the Looking Glass
Tim Hortons
Tim-Br Mart
Tiny Township
Tom Smith Chevrolet Ltd.
Tories Treasures
Tourism Barrie
Town of Midland
Township of Tay Firefighters
Trent Central Student Association
Trent Swim Club
Tripps
United Carpet
United Way Centraide
United Way Ottawa
Up North Adventure and Of Nature Trails
Valu-Mart
Villa Care Centre
Vincents Salon
W.J. Deenen Company
Walmart
Watson's Camera
Webb & Associates Financial Solutions
Weber Foundation
Wild Bird Clinic University of Guelph
Wildflower Farm
Winmar
Wye Marsh Wildflower Gardeners
Wye Marsh Woodcarvers Association
Wyebridge Country Garden
Wyebridge Whimsies
Wyebridge Women's Institute
YMCA
Zehrs



Please note this list includes businesses and organizations only, as individual names are protected by The Privacy of Information Act.



Escape...Explore...Experience...
Wye Marsh Today