

Wye Marsh Annual Report 2009

Wye Marsh Annual Report

January 2010

Wye Marsh, An Inspirational Place Second To None

As I think back on another year, I realize how lucky I am to work in a place like Wye Marsh. I am half way through my eighth year here, amazing how time flies by.

The Marsh has come a long way; new interpretive signs; wider, smoother walking trails; ski and snowshoe trails in excellent shape; we are reaching a broader market base both through formal education and tourism; and best of all we have dynamic staff who continue "to spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodlands and wildlife by creating exciting learning opportunities in a natural setting"

Yes, Wye Marsh continues to have its challenges but so do all non profits. It is a testament to who we are that we still have the doors open after 26 years, even with the changing economic climate that has forced closure of many centers like ours.

I have been fortunate to be part of the success story and truth be told, have enjoyed most of the ride. There are times when things just don't go right, but that's when I get out of the office, go for a walk and relax in this amazing place. Just last week, I was down visiting Adele at the swan treatment centre pond (the Trumpeter Swan I

raised this year) with one of our many volunteer swan feeders. I was there a few minutes and then they came. Within 15 minutes, over 25 swans made their fly bys in preparation for landing in the pond area. If you have ever been buzzed by a Trumpeter Swan, you will know it is like a 747 going overhead. What a sight, the trumpeting sounds were incredible. I came away from there that morning with a renewed awe for nature and its inhabitants. We do work in an amazing place.

So, isn't it time you came out to get inspired?

*Laurie Schutt
Executive Director*



Our Mission

"To spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodland and wildlife by creating educational opportunities in a natural setting."

An Inspirational Story

Wye Marsh launched their newest education program at Rama Central Public School in January. This one of a kind program provides a rare opportunity for students to come face to face with a live swan. The star of the show is Adele, the Trumpeter Swan, whose egg was rescued by the Wye Marsh.

Grade 1/2 students at Rama Central Public School spent an hour with Adele. They

heard Adele's story. They heard the story of the Trumpeter Swan in Ontario and about how large numbers of volunteers worked to bring this extraordinary species back from the brink of extinction.

Margaret Black, Special Education Resource Teacher and Green Team Coordinator at Rama Central Public School (and Volunteer Wye Marsh Swan Monitor) was thrilled

that students at her school were the first to experience this lively program: "This is an amazing wildlife presentation that is suitable for all ages. Our students were fully engaged in learning and sharing, via the interactive Power Point presentation, and were absolutely riveted by the opportunity to get up-close-and-personal with a live Trumpeter Swan. I wholeheartedly recommend this presentation!"



Inspired to Create

Maintaining the facilities at the Wye Marsh is a day to day job that involves many volunteers in partnership with staff.

This past year we were the recipient of two grants that inspired creativity and large comprehensive projects!

The first was funding to upgrade the boardwalk along the ID trail out to the observation blind. The vista from beyond the blind was so extraordinary that this upgrade became an extension beyond the blind,

across the berm along a canoe channel and ending at the canoe dock.

Sustainable Energy

Following on the work in sustainable energy with the wind turbines, research began to bring other buildings off grid. Along came Vern Cottrell and his home grown design to take the swan treatment centre off grid. With a grant from Shell Canada and parts from Canadian Tire, Midland, solar panels and a wind turbine were installed. Now the bubblers to maintain open

water at the swan treatment centre are run off grid.

Snowshoe Trail Opens

Graham MacDonald, our long time maintenance staff retired this fall. But before he did, he was inspired to develop a new snowshoe trail. This trail is named after Graham.

This winter use only trail travels through some sensitive areas along the edge of the Marsh where deer, porcupine, fisher and a large population of snowshoe hare can be found.



Our Story

Wye Marsh, and its interpretive centre, sits on a 3,000-acre wildlife area situated in an environmentally endowed location in Southern Georgian Bay. Wye Marsh has stewardship responsibility for this property that is anchored by its interpretive centre. It is committed to connecting people to nature and promoting an understanding of the vital role wetlands play within the environment. The Friends of the Wye Marsh are committed to conserving the Wye Marsh and the natural heritage of the Wye Valley while providing low impact educational, recreational and research opportunities benefiting present and future generations.

This year-round facility provides educational programs and excursions, maintains a

30km trail system, and a multitude of canoe channels. It acts as protector for an Important Bird Area (IBA) and a breeding ground for Threatened and Endangered Species: including Blandings Turtles, Least Bittern, Black Terns and the famous Trumpeter Swans (representing approximately one third of the Trumpeter Swan population in the province). Wye Marsh is also designated a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) and an Area of National Scientific Interest (ANSI).

The Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre was opened in 1969 as a nature reserve operated by Environment Canada. In 1985 the federal government withdrew and turned operations over to

The Friends of the Wye Marsh. The Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre has since been run as a registered non-profit.

In 1996, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) asked The Friends of Wye Marsh, to assume management responsibilities of the Wye Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area (PWA), which constitutes the majority of the land in the Wye Valley.

Wye Marsh Inspired, Art Show, Wine & Cheese is an annual celebration of how the marsh inspires creativity. Starting in 2009, artists were invited to work in the Marsh to create works of art to be sold at the art show. Here Jan Wheeler begins a piece inspired by the vistas from the observation tower.



Inspired to Steward For Future Generations

In the broadest sense of the word STEWARDSHIP means the conducting, supervising, or managing of something. Especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. A more relevant meaning to those of us here at Wye Marsh, refers to our responsibility to care for this extraordinary natural resource—the Wye Marsh and its land, wildlife and water—sustainably for future generations.

One of the most important ways we encourage stewardship of natural resources is through our extensive education programs and activities—conservation through education.

At our disposal is a 2,802 acre provincial wildlife area—an extensive wetland, and all its inhabitants—with extraordinary and diverse ecosystems. A healthy wetland is one of nature's nurseries for a diverse variety of species of plants and animals. In fact Wye Marsh is home to 595 plant and animal species. Without the Wye Marsh our community would lose many of these species.

Thanks to granting agencies such as the McLean Foundation, Eco Canada and Environment Canada Science Horizons Youth Internship Program and our donors to the Adopt An Acre Campaign, we are poised to enter a new era of stewarding the wetlands, woodlands and wildlife in the Wye Marsh.

Over the last few years The Friends of Wye Marsh have been working on a "Strategic Action Plan" to encompass the extensive stewardship work required in the Wye Marsh. With the addition of two environmental technicians, through the above mentioned granting agencies, we are working closely with our partners, and the recently revived Stewardship Committee, to complete this plan.

Over the summer one of our environmental technicians conducted a species inventory in an area of the Marsh where cattails have taken over open water. The goal of this inventory and its ensuing report will be to determine the impact of cattail growth on species in the wetland.

Work has also commenced on the development of a stewardship calendar which will enable us to prioritize projects throughout the year.

For example, this past December Wood Duck nesting boxes were monitored, repaired or replaced, numbered and GPS coordinates recorded. Most nests showed evidence of usage and successful hatching! Data is recorded and reported to Ducks Unlimited of Canada to monitor the health of this species.

In 2010 one of the objectives is to conduct timely surveys of Least Bitterns and Black Terns in the early spring (which is the optimal



time for recording these species), while also surveying for King and Yellow Rails for which there is suitable habitat but limited documentation of their existence here.

These projects would enable amateur field naturalists and staff to conduct research that will provide results for a database of biological inventories being developed that will assist with management decisions on public use of sensitive ecological areas around the Wye Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area and Important Bird Area (IBA).

In order to conduct the stewardship work in the Wye Marsh we must rely on many hands. Whether it's the Base Borden Cadets or day campers from Midhurst, Ontario removing invasive plant species volunteers are the life blood of this work.

But it is not just the old adage, "many hands make light work." It's the opportunity to educate about the impact that we have on our natural resources and how with concerted effort, education and partnership we can conserve an important wetland.

Staff member Sara Street, during a species inventory this summer, caught a rare glimpse at a newly hatched Trumpeter Swan cygnet.



Twenty five years ago there were sightings of Spotted Turtle in the Wye Marsh. However, since then it has been near impossible to conduct a survey as grant funding decisions typically come after the ice melts in early April . . . the optimal time for sighting Spotted Turtles.

That is why stewardship activities require the ongoing support from the community through the Adopt An Acre Campaign.

In Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder, author Richard Louv explores the increasing divide between children and the natural world (the "nature deficit") and examines how today's children understand and experience nature radically different than children who grew up only a couple of decades ago.

Inspired to Learn

Our school programs aim to bridge the nature deficit by providing hands on experiential learning, increasing comprehension of curriculum-linked concepts and encouraging physical activity. We continue to have success with our elementary school programming – in particular grade 4 and 7, of which we have a contract with the Simcoe District County School Board to deliver outdoor education programming to schools within this district.

One of our most popular programs – Wet 'N' Scaly,

where participants have the opportunity to get up close to and learn about some of Ontario's native reptile species – has been improved through grant funding from TD Friends of the Environment Fund. We have created a new back-drop display as well as an interactive dress-up activity that enhances our message and can be used both on and offsite.

In addition, funding through the Ministry of Tourism Development has also enabled us to translate our programs and program re-

sources into French in order to better serve our target markets.

Our team of professional and enthusiastic outdoor educators have continued to be committed to improve our programs through ongoing research and development of activities and resources that enhance the delivery of our mission - to spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodlands and wildlife through creating exciting learning opportunities in a natural environment.

2009 Fast Facts

- Wye Marsh worked with youth on badge programs with 478 Guides and Scouts.
- Birthday parties are a big hit and this year 192 children celebrated at the Wye Marsh.
- Two hundred and nineteen post secondary students learned from Wye Marsh staff.
- One thousand eighty two grade 5, 6 and 7 students participated in the off-site Energy and You Program.
- Overall there were 30,924 people who participated in our educational programs.
- Fifteen hundred members enjoyed the diverse activities, events and workshops at the Wye Marsh.



Alishia Stevens, 15 from Brampton Ontario, was thrilled to join the first Falconry Camp at the Wye Marsh. Here she gets to know Andy, the Great Horned Owl.

Inspired to Have Fun

'Encourage Your Child to Cherish the Outdoors'

Wye Marsh Day Camps (winter break, March break, and summer) successfully offered endless opportunities to escape, explore, and experience nature first hand through experiential play and investigation this past year.

In 2009, 307 children attended Wye Marsh Summer Day Camp, with some campers choosing to attend several of the camps that we offered this summer (Camp Marshes and Mocca-

sins, Kinder Camp, CSI/ Survival Camp & Falconry Camp).

New this summer was the introduction of one week of Falconry Camp, in which experienced falconers and enthusiastic camp staff came together to offer older campers a unique and educational experience with a variety of raptors. Given the popularity of this camp, as well as the 'buzz' that was created this past summer, Falconry Camp will likely be

offered for multiple weeks throughout summer 2010. Summer 2010 will also bring a long awaited new camp name and logo. Camp Marshes and Moccasins (which originated as a joint camp program with Huronia Museum in the 1990's) will be changed to Camp Wetlands and Wild Things. Our new logo will attempt to reflect Wye Marsh Day Camp as a whole, encompassing both summer and winter themes.

Inspired to Lead—OELP Students at Wye Marsh

In February 2009, Kristin Brooks, a teacher at Penetanguishene Secondary School (PSS) approached Wye Marsh to be a partner in the first Outdoor Environmental Leadership Program (OELP) along with the twenty students who applied and were accepted into the program.

The goal of OELP is to give students a chance to partner with other facilities

within the community and to gain invaluable hands-on experience within the environment.

The team came to Wye Marsh three days each week for four months. Their last project was to redesign the weathering yard (raptor display area) to make it visitor friendly and informative. Here the team proudly looks on as they put the finishing touches on

the weathering yard pond. Their work also included walkways, decorative fencing, and bleachers.

"It was a natural fit to work with Wye Marsh", said Ms. Brooks, "as this program is designed to be environmentally focused, experiential education." This is the very reason Wye Marsh is here.



Birds of Prey—Just Inspiring

This program continues to expand with the addition of birds and aviaries, allowing us to present a diverse range of educational programs. Matt the Bird Man continues to wow audiences with his skillful flying of hawks, falcons, and owls. Last year we visited 6 different resorts in Muskoka weekly, day camps, seniors homes, and the birds performed on front of

500 plus people at the AGM of the Federation of Anglers and Hunters. During winter, we fly every Sunday indoors but we move outside in May.

Henry(etta) was the latest addition – a Bald eagle who is now 8 months old. He looked like a Henry when we picked him up in June at 6 weeks. However, once he grew and we started

to train him, it became apparent that he may be a she! It will be a challenge to fly this large bird but one we are looking forward to. Because of his size, we will only be able to fly him outside in the summer. Look for him once the shows go up the hill in May.



New Things to Inspire

From hiking to skiing, dip netting to kayaking, petting a barn owl to feeding a chickadee, there truly is something for everyone at the Wye Marsh! In 2009 the program department was committed to providing active, entertaining, and educational programming to the over 60,000 patrons that visited the Wye Marsh annually. In the interest of attracting newcomers to the Marsh, as well as to entice both members and returning visitors back to the Marsh, the following pro-

grams were developed and implemented in 2009:

The Wye Marsh was OPEN LATE from 9:00am - 9:00pm Thursdays this summer. The extended hours were very well received by the public, as it is often in the evening hours that otherwise elusive wildlife could be viewed. An additional guided canoe and kayak were also offered throughout the extended hours.

The Wye NATURE WORKSHOPS were facilitated by

community experts and include topics like Wildflower Gardening, Paint Your Own Paddle, Drumming, Astronomy, Nature Photography, and Cattail Basketry.

Further development of the workshop series is ongoing with the hope of introducing new workshops to the series as well as continuing to offer those particular workshops that experienced great success.



The Middle Aged Mutant Ninja Turtles gave the Mentalists a good run for the trophy at the Wye Marsh's first annual Swamp Rally.

During this all abilities event, teams competed in six activities such as kayaking, GPS navigation and a Marsh cheer/song. The Middle Aged Mutant Ninja Turtles regaled the crowd with song and costume!



Thank you to the following who adopted acres of the Wye Marsh:

Friends of the Fens

Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation
Mike & Helen Riggan
SCHOTT Gemtron Canada
Tay Power Distribution
Cheryl and Peter Webb

Friends of the Marshland

Susan Blue
Ronan Grogan
Nancy Hunter
Ron and Joan Neville
David Donald MacRae
William & Joyce Oxford
Barry G. Warner

Friends of the Forest

Robert & Theresa Bourgeois
John Hanson
In honour of Margaret Hagerty, Potsdam NY
In honour of Alex Seaton & Paddy Hanlon
Kate & John Shepherd

Campaign Contributors

Lois and Don Dowdell
Gary and Mae Ronald

In the fall of 2009 the Friends of the Wye Marsh installed a donor wall to recognize lifetime contributions of those who over the years have been inspired by the extraordinary beauty and benefit of the Wye Marsh. We would like to take this opportunity to once again acknowledge their dedication.

The Future of the Wye Marsh Is In Your Hands

Wetlands are one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world and have an extraordinary impact on wildlife, plant life, and water quality. As a "classroom" wetlands teach about our natural heritage and our natural resources.

And yet 70% of Canada's wetlands have disappeared due to environmental stressors such as land development, upstream runoff, and invasive species.

This makes the Wye Marsh an ecological jewel to be conserved at all costs – for the quality of water in the Georgian Bay watershed; for the fourteen threatened and endangered species that

call the Wye Marsh home and; for the education of future generations.

With a new strategic action plan in process, in consultation with provincial and local government and community partners, we are poised to implement a concerted effort to conserve the Wye Marsh.

ADOPT AN ACRE

Our day to day operational expenses are met through admissions and memberships. Projects on the scale required to steward the Marsh have been dependent on grants.

In an effort to raise the funding required to conduct

stewardship projects on an ongoing and timely basis the Adopt An Acre Campaign was conceived to appeal to our community, members, donors and volunteers for their help.

Donors names are placed on an acre map in our interpretive centre which represents the 2,802 acres of Wye Marsh.

To date this campaign has funded an environmental assessment in one area of the marsh, the development of the new strategic plan for the marsh and two environmental technicians who have identified areas of study and research for the next three years.

Inspired to Give—Wye Marsh Donor Wall

Marsh Patrons \$5,000+

Amherst Wildlife Foundation
Bunn's Kids Trust Fund
Bob & Sheila Burk
Canadian Tire Corporation, Midland
Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP
Compu Solve Technologies Inc.
FS Partners
Franke Kindred Industries Limited
Volker Hahn
Glen & Laura House
Huronia Precision Plastics
IBM Canada Ltd.
Alex & Roberta Jarlette
Kingsdale Shareholder Services Ltd.
Hudson Leavens
John & Donna Lister
Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalist Club
Port McNicoll Lions Club
Rival Office Solutions Inc.
Rotary Club of Penetanguishene
SCHOTT Gemtron Canada
Alfred Scott
Telequip
Town of Midland
TD Friends of the Environment
The Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation
The Strow Foundation
Weber Manufacturing

Marsh Stewards \$10,000+

Canadian Wildlife Services
Casino Rama
Elcan Optical Technologies
Evergreen
F. K. Morrow Foundation
Roderic & Frances Ferguson
General Mills Canada Corporation
Colin & Dorothy Harper
Ed Hartley
Garfield & Mary Lorrman
Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation
HIVA Environmental Fund
HudBay Minerals Inc.
Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council of Canada
Nature Canada
Page Graphics
Right Track Cad Corp
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Rotary Club of Midland
Huronia Communities Foundation
Don McMaster
Laurie Schutt
Shell Canada Limited
Carol Szarga
The EJLB Foundation
The Estate of Dursilla Herbert
The Estate of Ms. Mildred Pereman
The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation

The Kenneth M. Molson Foundation
The McLean Foundation
Township of Tay
Robert & Valerie Thompson
Harry Voortman
Peter & Cheryl Webb

Marsh Builders \$25,000+

Canadian Custom Packaging Company
Honda of Canada Manufacturing
Midland Power Utility Corporation

Marsh Visionaries \$50,000+

Ducks Unlimited
Robbert Hartog
Ron & Mary Hunt
Ministry of Energy
Ministry of Tourism & Recreation
Robhar Investment Ltd.
The Estate of Mr. Walter Haering
Ministry of Energy
The Ontario Trillium Foundation
The Weber Foundation
White Swan
Reinhart & Alexandra Weber

Balance Sheet

As at October 31, 2009

ASSETS	2009	2008
Current	\$ 757,641	\$ 983,312
Capital Assets	1,773,214	1,678,296
Less amortization to date	1,101,704	1,022,678
Total Assets	\$1,429,151	\$1,638,930
LIABILITIES	2009	2008
Current	\$ 69,846	\$ 109,819
Long term	570,813	598,914
Total Liabilities	640,659	708,733
NET ASSETS	788,492	930,197
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 1,429,151	\$1,638,930

Statement of Operations

Year ended October 31, 2009

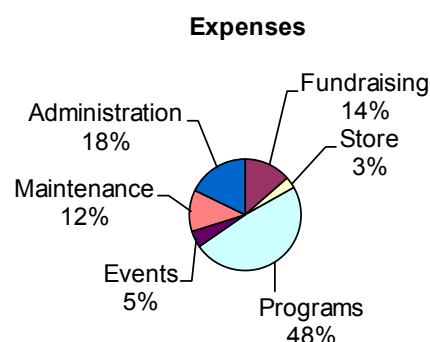
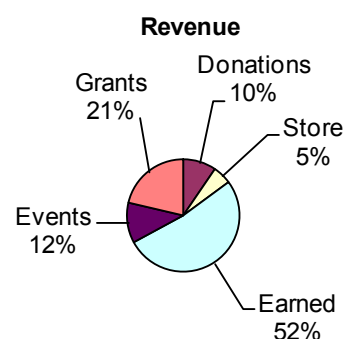
Revenue	2009	2008
General Admissions & Membership	\$ 160,478	\$ 157,129
Educational & Recreational Programs	264,404	254,675
Store Operations	45,514	59,740
Fundraising Events/Programs	98,154	80,194
Donations/Planned Gifts	80,599	1,116,677*
Grants	180,682	109,357
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	70,498	107,592
Miscellaneous	17,360	8,292
Total Revenue	\$ 917,689	\$1,893,656
Expenses	2009	2008
Operating	\$ 931,093	\$ 872,976
Administrative	128,301	140,936
Total Expenses	\$ 1,059,394	\$1,013,912
Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year	\$ (141,705)	\$ 879,744

* Extraordinary item of bequest received in 2008 only.

Note to Financial Statements

The major bequest received by Wye Marsh in 2008 has been used to acquire a new truck, computer server and network, high-speed internet connection, note payable, and bleachers. It was also used to avoid the usual bank overdraft during the winter period, as well as operating losses for 2009. It is the intent of the board that the use of the funds be generally restricted for the purposes of improving existing buildings and/or the construction of new facilities and/or other appropriate long-term investments. The board will restrict the use of these funds until an appropriate long-term plan is finalized which will be when a new lease or agreement is negotiated with Environment Canada. Environment Canada have the overall obligation for the major maintenance and upkeep of these facilities.

Colin Harper, President



Friends of Wye Marsh Board of

For Year Ended October 31, 2009

President	Colin Harper
Vice President	Michael Riggan
Treasurer	Barry Bergey

Directors:

Vern Cottrell	Damian Rogers
Pat Cowden	John Shepherd
Al MacDonald	Cheryl Webb
Peter Moody	Kirk Weldon
Ron Neville	

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Kirk Weldon from the Board of Directors. Kirk sat on the board for 10 years. He was instrumental in a number of projects over the last few years, most notably our long awaited computer/network/high speed upgrades.

The Balance Sheet and Statement of Operations have been extracted from the Friends of Wye Marsh audited financial statement as at and for the year ending October 31, 2009. The financial statements were audited by Brabant & Kretzshmann, Chartered Accountants. The complete financial statements and auditors report are available through the Wye Marsh at 705-526-7809, ext 201.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

Inspired to Make A Difference 18,549 Hours In Service to Wye Marsh

How true Margaret Mead's words are in a world where environmental issues have come to the forefront of everyone's mind.

The awakening of young minds to the understanding that wetlands and wildlife play an important role in our community and our world is an immensely rewarding experience.

At the Wye Marsh the hours dedicated by volunteers to our mission, "To spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodlands and wildlife by providing educational opportunities in a natural setting," are vital to the Centre's existence.

Whether its participating in our interpretive activities, educational programs, main-

tenance, recreational programs or at a special event each and every volunteer has made their mark.

We are truly grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who give of their time and talents. Without them we could not expand knowledge of our natural heritage and resources.



Each Halloween the 1st Wye Marsh Scout troop volunteer their time to create a haunted maze for "Marsh Monster" attendees. They build the maze and join in on the fun in their scariest best!

Inspired to Involve Others

Wye Marsh was chosen as a benefactor of the first-ever Bluewater Yoga Studio 30-day Georgian Bay Yogathon.

The yogathon – which was held at the Bluewater Yoga Studio last summer called on participants to take pledges and then perform yoga for 30 consecutive days.



Kim Romans and Laura Cascagnette – co-owners of Bluewater Yoga Studio – goal of the 30-day yoga challenge was to bring greater awareness to the Wye Marsh and The Georgian Bay Land Trust (the other recipient of this fundraising effort) and to encourage a deeper connection with the environment.

WYE MARSH



16160 Highway 12
P.O. Box 100
Midland ON
L4R 4K6

Phone: 705-526-7809
Fax: 705-526-3294

E-mail: info@wyemarsh.com
www.wyemarsh.com



Each summer Cadets from Base Borden volunteer at the Wye Marsh. In summer of 2009 they were busy helping remove 20 acres of the invasive species Glossy Buckthorn and working on the new trail along the Marsh.

Wye Marsh Staff

Laurie Schutt, Executive Director

Linda Belcourt, Sales/Marketing
Richard Black, Maintenance
Sean Bracnik*, Maintenance
Katey Buchanan*, Program Staff
Andreia DaSilva, Program Staff
Denise De Villers, Animal Care
Karen Donaldson, Bookkeeping
Loretta Hamilton, HR & Volunteers
Brandy Hussey*, Stewardship/Program
Cathy Lewis, Visitor Services
Matt Lieberknecht, Birds of Prey
Mike Majury, Program Staff
Suzanne McDonald, Fundraising
Sonya Stemerink, Program Leader
Sara Street*, Stewardship/Program

* Funded in whole or in part through grants.