



# ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Wye Marsh

## 2013 IN REVIEW



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Photo credit to Pamela Higgins



# FRIENDS OF WYE MARSH

## **Our mission:**

*'Fostering Environmental Stewardship'*

## **Our Directors**

Michael Riffin, President  
Barry Bergey, Secretary/Treasurer  
Colin Harper, Past President  
Robert Thompson  
Heather Eland  
Sean Dienes  
Vernon Cottrell  
Michiel Fassaert  
Kelly Henderson  
Maura Lendon  
Anne Lorriman  
Christopher Murray  
Petra Ott

## **Our Staff**

Sara Street  
Executive Director  
Paul Beauchamp  
Maintenance Manager  
Andreia DaSilva  
Project Coordinator  
Denise DeVillers  
Animal Care Technician  
Darlene Lenehan  
Bookkeeper  
Cathy Lewis  
Visitor Services Coordinator  
Beryl Loxley  
Volunteer Store Manager  
Mike Majury  
Captive Wildlife Care Technician  
Laura Thomas  
Marketing & Development Coordinator  
Sonya Stemerding  
Education & Program Coordinator

Follow us on





## A Message from Sara Street, Executive Director

**T**hank you to all our staff, volunteers, donors, members and other supporters. Without all of you the Wye Marsh would not be here today. 2013 was a great year. We were accredited through Canada’s Accredited Zoo’s and Aquarium’s (CAZA). This is great news as the CAZA network provides lots of opportunities for our staff and volunteers to learn more about captive animals and the best practices in their care. We were also privileged enough to get the opportunity to visit a number of other accredited facilities and learn more about their challenges and successes, as well as develop relationships that will benefit all our captive animals and our staff and volunteers.

Our staff, volunteers, and members helped us develop a strategic plan this year and we are looking forward to implementing and reaching (even surpassing) the goals that we have set out in the plan. We are very proud of our new mission statement, we feel that “fostering environmental stewardship” sums up everything that we are working towards and striving for in our everyday actions. Thank you to all involved in the process of developing this plan, and stay tuned for more information/news about our next steps and how you can help!

Another great success story for the Wye Marsh in 2013 has been the triumph of the Birds of Georgian Bay Book. This project has generated much needed operating funds. We are happy to announce our new online store where the book can be purchased online and we can ship it to the recipient. Thank you to Bob Whittam and all the donors and volunteers that were involved with making the book a success. I know that many birders, naturalists and nature lovers are very pleased to have the book in their home library as it is a wonderfully well written and designed book.

We hope that you will join us in 2014 – celebrating our 23rd annual Sweetwater (Maple Syrup) Harvest Festival and a new event the Get Outdoors Festival. The Get Outdoors Festival is in celebration of summer outdoor recreation opportunities (canoeing, kayaking, birding and hiking) and connecting people to nature through Hummingbird Banding Demonstrations (hummingbird dependant). Essentially we are morphing our Hummingbird Festival into this opportunity to celebrate nature. Come out and foster environmental stewardship with the Wye Marsh in 2014 – we are looking forward to seeing you here!



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## Making Connections Through Education

Working towards a sustainable environment



**I**n Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow – a policy framework for environmental education in schools, environmental education is considered to be not only about visible environmental issues but also about their underlying causes, and therefore places an emphasis on personal and social values and active stewardship.

Our programming strives to connect participants to nature with close consideration of this framework. From students and seniors to girl guides and english as a second language participants, our programming aims to emphasize one’s role in building a sustainable environment in their backyards and beyond.

In 2013 we were able to reach more international student visitors than ever, thanks to our new partnership with Nomad Travel, a Vancouver based tour company who offers adventure programs with a strong emphasis on educational, historical, and cultural content. This summer saw over 400 participants enjoying the majesty of our birds of prey and experiencing our beautiful wetland by voyageur canoe!

The development of 2 new program options has also made it easier for these larger groups to book an experience with us. Our Wetland Wonderers & Winter Carnival programs allow groups the flexibility to choose up to four different programs, resulting in the creation of not only memorable experiences for the participants but also educated and inspired stewards for the environment.

Also, thanks to yet another Nature Canada Explorer's grant we were able to upgrade our well-loved dip netting station with a new roof, bumper guards for the boardwalk (to protect our nets), interpretive and instructional signage and new viewing and dipping equipment. As dip netting is the highlight of any Wye Marsh visit, these improvements are sure to be enjoyed many budding biologists.

*"The students had a wonderful day and were engaged the entire time! The Staff were excellent and so calm with the students! We hope to be back again. Thank you so much!"*

Cheryl White – Grade 3 teacher, Fred C. Cook Public School

*"This place is a gem! There is live viewing of actual rattlesnakes, a live birds of prey show with owls and hawks, and a sanctuary for Trumpeter Swans. There seems to be a lot going on through the year, I wish I lived closer to be able to come back more often."*

Online TripAdvisor Review

*"Great walk amongst nature, swans, other large birds. Walk amongst the bulrushes. Take a canoe ride. An enjoyable place to relax."*

Online TripAdvisor Review

## Many Hands Make Light Work

Volunteering remains an important foundation for the Friends of Wye Marsh



There are no words to describe the dedication and commitment that our volunteers bestow upon this organization. In 2013, it took approximately **10,000 hours of donated time** to ensure that our visitors received the services they came here to experience.

The Wye Marsh has welcomed many student volunteers. These individuals donate time to learn new skills and demonstrate and develop current skills. The Ontario Environmental Leadership Program students helped with painting picnic tables, painting the inside of the Swan Treatment Centre, trail maintenance, gardening, and educational programs. Our youth volunteers are also responsible for aiding with animal care, equipment rentals, facilitating event activities, supervising campers, and trail maintenance. We are grateful for the ability to offer these opportunities to students in our community.

The Wye Marsh Volunteer Gazette has received positive reviews from volunteers. This quarterly publication helps the volunteers understand how their donated time helps to benefit the Marsh. The gazette has been a helpful avenue to announce upcoming volunteer opportunities. This has encouraged some volunteers to try new opportunities that they otherwise would not have known was available.

## Volunteer of the Year Award Goes to ...

### Beryl Loxley



The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Beryl Loxley. Beryl not only donates her time as the Gift Shop Manager, but organizes the silent auction items for Wye Marsh's Fundraising Dinner & Silent Auction. Beryl has been volunteering since 2005, and is one of our most avid supporters, always inspiring us to improve. Thank-you Beryl for your seemingly endless generosity and commitment to Wye Marsh.

The volunteer of the year of the award was kindly donated by another one of Wye Marsh's passionate volunteers, Alfred Scott (pictured above). Alfred is an active member of the Wye Marsh Association of Woodcarvers and has been volunteering for Wye Marsh for over 15 years!





## Animal Educators

Our animal educators continue to engage and inspire visitors.



This year was an exciting year for our animal educators because we had two new additions to the team. Lily, a Midland Painted Turtle was brought to us from the Ministry of Natural Resources as a rescue and is our youngest turtle. She and her new roommates, Speedy and Marsha get along swimmingly, and have all benefitted greatly from continued enrichment efforts like including live plant material in their tanks.

Kaia, an American Kestrel was donated to us by African Lion Safari. We are excited to have another indigenous bird of prey to help educate and inspire our visitors on the unique features and habitat needs of our native birds. Although Kaia is not yet being included in our education programs, she is adapting well to her new home and has become a beloved addition to the team. We plan to start including Kaia in our educational programs by the Summer of 2014.

Our birds of prey also had a new addition built for them. The new bird porch gives the birds a place to rest and be social while getting some fresh air. This will greatly enrich their lives and we are thankful to the staff and volunteers that worked hard in building the new addition and revitalizing our existing aviaries.



As for our little pollinators, the three hives produced over 180 lbs of honey this past fall! We were also happy to see a relatively low rate of die off in the hives this year compared to many other hives across the province, with only 1/4 dieoff. We will also be bringing back our observation hive for the display hall to allow more of our visitors the opportunity to view bees at work.

And last but not least our Captive Wildlife Care Technicians and Program Coordinator are working on developing new programs that include our birds of prey. We are hoping these new programs will inspire new and old visitors to come to the Marsh.

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## Renovation and Revitalization

### Trail repair, habitat development and enclosure improvements

Wye Marsh has a healthy population of busy beavers; in fact this past year we had beavers that were so busy they flooded our ski trail! So this summer our maintenance team worked diligently to get the trail back to normal before the leaves started to fall. Our ski season so far this year has been great – as we were able to open the trails by December 13th and we’ve been keeping up as best as we can with all this snowfall we’ve gotten.

The birds of prey are happy to have a new “Bird Porch” where they are sheltered from the elements and predators. The bird porch was constructed this summer along with two new sheds to replace our existing Canoe and Kayak Sheds. These sheds were funded by the Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation and we are looking forward to organizing the equipment in a new fashion. Once the shed is ready for the equipment this spring we will be proud to fill it with some new lifejackets funded by ADM Cares program.

In partnership with John from JFP Industries in Orillia we are working on a new solution for our compressor system at our Swan Treatment Centre. Normally we have approximately 30 feet (diameter) open water for the swans and this winter we’ve had difficulties with our bubblers breaking down and as a result we only have about 8 feet (diameter) of open water. Thankfully John is providing us with advise and helping us to source and install a new system that will be able to keep even more water open for the swans!

Plans for 2014 include the completion of the replacement of two docks – funded by the Helen McCrea Peacock foundation and the completion of some enhancements to our display hall for all of our snake species – funded by the Weber Foundation. The boardwalk is in need of repairs and we are working hard to arrange help with this project as none of the Wye Marsh machinery is big enough to be able to lift the boardwalk pieces out of the water for us to administer the repairs, hopefully we will have a solution for this sometime this summer! New arrows have been



cut, painted and labeled for our ski/bike trails and we will be getting new signs in order to help orient our visitors and to replace the signs that were vandalized this year. Looking forward to seeing you out and enjoying all the facilities that Wye Marsh has to offer!

# WYE MARSH IN REVIEW

2013

1985

Since 1985 the Friends of Wye Marsh have inspired over 1 million visitors to protect and conserve our natural heritage.

Over **200** Volunteers  **Over 10,000** volunteer hours

Over **600** Members 

**75%** of Wetlands in Ontario have been lost.

**2,281** Fans & Followers 

**31,600** Visitors 

**15** Species at Risk  
**235** Species of Birds  
**45** Species of Mammals  
**1,000** Trumpeter Swans in Ontario 

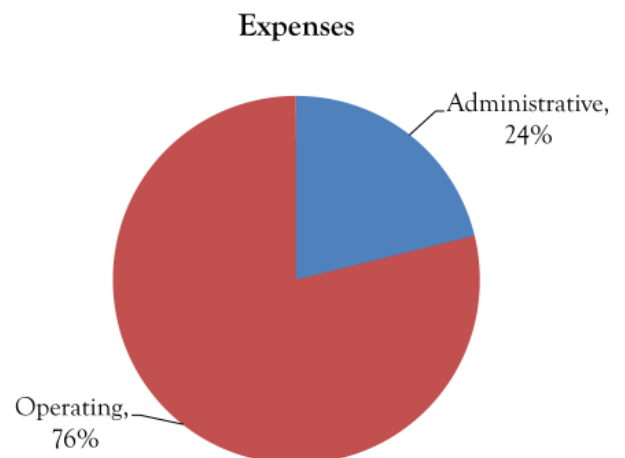
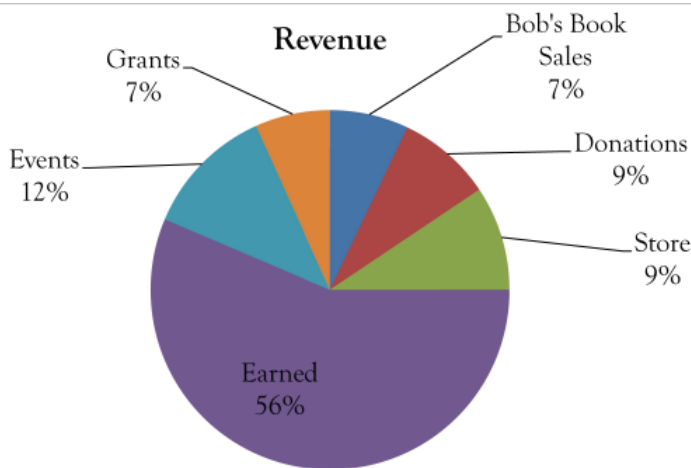
**2,884** Acres of Provincial & National Wildlife Area 

**1,230** Plant Species

### Balance Sheet as at October 31, 2013

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>2,012</b>
Current	159,992	135,933
Capital Assets (NBV)	240,484	261,508
Long Term Investments	403,232	451,682
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>803,708</b>	<b>849,123</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>2,012</b>
Current	177,122	126,270
Long Term	153,791	183,399
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>330,913</b>	<b>309,669</b>
Net Assets	472,795	539,454
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>803,708</b>	<b>849,123</b>

<b>Statement of Operations</b>		
Year ended October 31, 2013		
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>2,012</b>
General Admissions & Membership	119,291	113,210
Educational & Recreational Programs	191,899	163,102
Store Operations	64,741	50,369
Bob's Book	49,057	0
Fundraising Events/Programs	81,725	65,917
Donations & Gifts	58,788	45,807
Grants	46,675	46,208
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	35,264	39,900
Investment Income	17,678	22,857
Unrealized Gains on Investments	25,854	27,831
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>690,972</b>	<b>575,201</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Administrative	160,202	171,046
Operating	597,429	542,235
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>757,631</b>	<b>713,281</b>
Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year	-66,659	-138,080





A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS AND DONORS. WITH YOUR SUPPORT WE WERE ABLE TO RAISE OVER \$80,000 DURING OUR FUNDRAISING EVENTS.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT WYE MARSH



THE FRIENDS OF WYE MARSH THANK THE ABOVE BUSINESSES FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, ANIMAL CARE AND WETLAND STEWARDSHIP. WITHOUT THEIR HELP, WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE OVER 1 MILLION VISITORS!