



ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Wye Marsh

2014 IN REVIEW

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FRIENDS OF WYE MARSH

Our mission:

'Fostering Environmental Stewardship'

Our Directors

Sean Diening, President

Anne Lorriman, Vice President

Michael Riggan, Past President

Barry Bergy, Treasurer

Vernon Cottrell

Christopher Murray

Robert Thompson

Heather Eland

Colin Harper

Our Staff

Sara Street

Executive Director

Paul Beauchamp

Maintenance Manager

Denise DeVillers

Animal Care Technician

Darlene Lenehan

Bookkeeper

Cathy Lewis

Visitor Services Coordinator

Beryl Loxley

Volunteer Store Manager

Laura Thomas

Marketing & Development Coordinator

Melissa Rullo

Membership & Customer Service Coordinator

Sonya Stermerdink

Education & Program Coordinator

(On Maternity Leave)

Follow us on



A Message from Sara Street, Executive Director

Another year passes us by and we wouldn't be here if it weren't for the help and support of many. I would like to thank all of our staff, Paul Beauchamp for the projects that he completed this year, Denise Graham for the loving care of all of our animals, Catherine Lewis for ensuring that each and every guest has a positive experience while they are here, Beryl Loxley for stocking the store and keeping it current with new products, Darlene Lenhan for crunching all the numbers, Sonya Stemerink for her work with our clients and educational programming, and Laura Thomas for making sure that Wye Marsh is present in the media and community. Of course this doesn't include everyone - there are still so many more to thank - thank you to all our seasonal and contract staff, board of directors members, volunteers, donors, members and sponsors. We really couldn't be here if it weren't for the joint efforts of all the Wye Marsh supporters.

This year we were able to add a position to our facility - we welcomed Melissa Rullo as our new Customer Service and Membership Coordinator. We are very excited to have her join our team and we look forward to engaging and developing our membership base! Our new membership structure launched along side with the start of Melissa and we've had very positive response to the seasonal memberships that we are now able to offer. Speaking of new and exciting additions - thanks to an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant we've launched our new and exciting website. This site is very easy to use and has wonderful graphics/photos to entice more visitors to come and see us in person. We have also installed a camera on the tower and hope to be able to show a live feed in our lobby sometime in 2015!

As we enter into another year - we are faced with tough times. But we are confident that with the help of all the supporters of the marsh we will be here to talk about our successes this time next year! Please join us in 2015 for our 24th annual Sweetwater Harvest Festival March 28th and 29th and our 2nd annual Get Outdoors Festival August 8th and 9th. This year for the Get Outdoors Festival we are pleased to announce that we will be able to demonstrate song bird banding as well as the very successful hummingbird banding! Visit the marsh in 2015 and join us in discovering your marsh memory.



Creating a Stronger Foundation

Growing and sustaining our members

2014 was an exciting year for our membership program! Membership benefits have been refined to give customers a concise picture of the advantages of being a member. Within these benefit changes members are now offered free general admission to special events such as the Sweetwater Harvest Festival. Members are now offered 35% off equipment rentals, as well as 35% off workshops, tours, and camp fees. This is not only an excellent incentive to become a member but a great opportunity for members to get more involved in additional Wye Marsh activities! As in previous years, we have continued to offer a ten percent discount in the Wye Marsh gift shop, a copy of Marsh Matters, and one voting privilege at our AGM.

We are now offering the option of seasonal memberships for winter and summer. Seasonal memberships have a set start and end date; October 1st to March 31st for the winter membership and April 1st to September 31st for summer memberships. In just the short amount of time these memberships have been offered, they have already shown great success and good customer feedback.

In the last couple months of 2014, strides were made to devise a solid plan for the future of Memberships at the Wye Marsh. Research into our current and past members, as well as collection of feedback and information from staff, volunteers and current members was necessary to fully understand what areas needed greater focus. Our new Membership development plan will define attainable goals for the next five years and provide a detailed description of how those goals will be achieved. It will also highlight the importance of good customer feedback with continued emphasis on excellent customer service as a whole.

Melissa Rullo, Customer Service & Membership Coordinator

Visitors Came From Near and Far To create their own 'Marsh Memories'



2014 was another exciting year! People from all over the planet came to visit and enjoy everything that Wye Marsh has to offer from birding, guided walks/canoe tours, reptile and amphibian presentations, and birds of prey demonstrations. Skiing and snowshoeing were the major highlights this winter season as Mother Nature gave us mounds of snow. Workshops added to the interest enjoyed by visitors. It is the enthusiasm of volunteers and staff that make their visit memorable, keep up the good work! Hoping the enthusiasm continues into 2015!

Catherine Lewis, Visitor Services

*"Wye Marsh would not exist without its Members.
They are our foundation - our supporters - our volunteers - our donors - our advocates."
Sara Street, Executive Director*

"Our favourite place for a family walk/ski/snowshoe/bike/hike. One of the best places to visit if you're looking to reconnect with nature or just go for a stroll and unwind. Staff and volunteers are excellent and always friendly and helpful and the trails and buildings are always in top shape. Great place to introduce your kids to nature!"

Ryan Adams, Wye Marsh Member



Stewardship of the Marsh

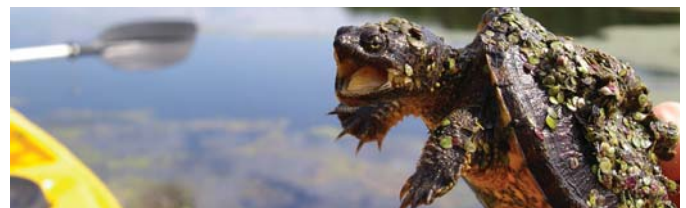
In 2014 I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the Trumpeter Swan Symposium in Easton, Maryland, USA. I sit on the board of directors of the Trumpeter Swan Society and was able to carpool with Kyna, Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program lead volunteer, to make the fees much more reasonable. There were people in attendance from all over the globe. I got to hear many presentations about the successes of swans all over the world as well as their struggles. In 2013 Wye Marsh collected (from around Georgian Bay) 9 swan carcasses - 4 of which died from lead poisoning or complications due to lead and 1 which died due to a hydro line collision. Many other countries struggle with lead, hydro line collisions and similar issues that our swans face here in Ontario so it was a wonderful opportunity to network and discuss our work with like minded people. This year we only collected 1 swan carcass and we have not received the final necropsy results on it yet. But still it would seem that 2014 was easier on swans than 2013.

Our wood duck nest boxes were reasonably successful with 5 producing nests out of 13 boxes. We did however lose a few nest boxes to the marsh this year and will need to work to replace them in winter 2015. Our bluebird and tree swallow boxes were cleaned and we recorded which boxes are in need of repair and in 2015 we will be replacing those boxes that need it with new boxes that we have in storage.

During the summer of 2014 we were able to complete some turtle research we managed to measure, weigh and notch 10 turtles. Three were snapping turtles and the rest painted turtles. This research will help the marsh in future years - providing a baseline of data on which to compare future data and to help us determine trends as they immerge. We are hopeful to get out and capture more turtles in 2015 - maybe even an elusive species or two. Of course part of the research we are completing includes visually surveying the habitat and the changes over the years. There has been an increase in the number and size of the invasive species in the marsh - so we have some work ahead of us determining the best steps to mitigate the future risk for the habitat of the valley.

All in all the marsh animals seemed to weather 2014 in good shape and we are hopeful for an even better 2015!

Sara Street, Executive Director



Wye Marsh was Buzzing with Activity

Our animal educators continue to engage and inspire visitors.



It was nice to come back to work in April after spending a full year on maternity leave but 2014 was a difficult time for animal care;

Honey bees: The start of the honey bee season looked positive with all 3 hives surviving the winter, 3 new queens were ordered and our observation hive was ready for installation. After a good spring clean in each hive I found foul brood in one and had to destroy it and all equipment that came in contact with that particular hive. So that brought us down to 2 hives who, on the bright side, proved to be strong and I was able to split them both and utilize 2 of the 3 ordered queens (my dad generously donated both). One of the splits went inside our observation hive and all staff and visitors were happy to see a new and familiar face in the display hall. I conducted a Beekeeper for Beginners workshop on July 5 and our 10 participants, plus those on staff that day, had the chance to see the observation hive swarm. It was very exciting and challenging to catch the swarm but we did it (see newspaper write up for more details). Catching the swarm brought our numbers up to 5 hives. The previous year's honey supply was an amazing 180lbs with only having 3 hives so of course my spirits were high with the thought of having an even better honey crop but unfortunately the weather was not in the favour for the honey bees, with many wet and cool days throughout the summer our honey crop only brought us 118lbs. It was a challenging and exciting year with the honey bees and I'm hoping that this year will bring even more adventure and better weather.

Birds of Prey: I really enjoy working with the birds and I was so excited to finally be working with Kaia (American kestrel), our newest addition to the team who came to the Marsh when I was still on maternity leave. She was so sweet and so easy to work with, her training went smoothly and she proved to be an even better bird for our demonstrations, a definite crowd pleaser. By the end of the summer, just before free lofting her for her molt, Kaia "crashed". With an emergency trip to North Simcoe Vet, Kaia was given fluids but unfortunately passed away just moments after. A post mortem was conducted and her body was sent to Guelph for necropsy, results were inconclusive. Loosing Kaia was difficult and she will be hard to replace. Not only did we lose Kaia but we also lost our other falcon Stanley. During one of his flight exercises, Stanley was spooked by some Canada geese and flew in the wrong direction away from his trainer. Stanley was missing for 2 full weeks until we received a phone call that someone had spotted him over on Rumney Rd. and they had him in their car. A huge sigh of relief when we saw him still all in one piece. With food and water we were sure he would be back on his feet in no time but due to dehydration and lack of daily nourishment Stanley past away the next day. His body was also sent to Guelph for necropsy.

Reptiles and Amphibians: While still on mat leave, Sara called me to ask if I wanted to paint our new snake enclosures, and of course I love a new project especially when it involves painting! With the liberty of painting whatever I wanted I went straight to work painting unique backgrounds for each enclosure. After many hours sitting inside a 4'x2.5' enclosure, the pens were ready for the final touches and ready for the snakes to have a new home. Everyone really loves to see them exploring their enclosure and having all that extra room to climb and stretch. Although it is very difficult to separate the snake from his perch when it's feeding time it's still really awesome to have such nice enclosures specially built just for them. Other new projects happening in the display hall is the relocation of the diorama of the trumpeter swan. It will be nice to have all that extra space so that we can include interchangeable displays from other organizations like us.



Denise Graham, Captive Wildlife Care Technician



Many Hands Make Light Work

Volunteers donate 10,000 hours

2014 was a great year for volunteerism at the marsh - our volunteers helped us with just under 10,000 volunteer hours! In just under 50 hours at Bingo this year our energetic bingo volunteers raised over \$3,000 towards the operations of the Wye Marsh. That works out to \$60/volunteer per hour.

This year we also started a volunteer Gift Wrapping Committee and had a very successful event, the volunteers on this committee worked diligently to ensure that we had the right supplies, enthusiastic volunteers and good fun while we wrapped presents for the community. This event raised just over \$1,000 for the marsh operation during a season where the money is very tight!

Thank you to all our volunteers in 2014! We are thankful for your contributions to the marsh and we look forward to seeing you at our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on April 18th!



Frank Seyforth (pictured left), Alfred Scott (pictured second from the right), Roger Flint (pictured right), Dorothy Harper, Helen Riggan, Cathy Moore, Patrick Lenehan, Courtney Lockhart and Kevin Kemmish received Volunteer Service Recognition Awards. Thank-you all for your years of commitment and hard work.



Buidling a Better Future

Maintaining the 'bricks and mortar' of Wye Marsh

Over this last year our maintenace crew has been busy. A new fence was built around the Birds of Prey aviaries and buid-ing. The fence was built to comply with Canada's Accredited Zoo's and Aquariums standards to ensure that the birds are safe from predators and other potential threats. During the birds of prey fence project we took the opportunity to landscape the birds of prey demonstration area. Overgrown brush was removed, an aviary and the bleachers were moved to make the area more user friendly and easier to maintain.



Work was also started on a new fence near the swan treatment centre. The new fence will allow for a larger area for the swans and will make access to the feeding stations easier for volunteers. The project will be completed in the Fall of 2015.

Many of our canoe and kayak docks were replaced this year as well. Changes came indoors as well. Our cabins had a facelift this year with new floors, paint, bunk beds as well as new mattresses.

Paul Beauchamp, Maintenance Manager



Expanding our Reach

Through partnerships and collaboration

Over this last year there have been several exciting opportunities for expanding our reach and ability to connect to more people. Most notably, is the redesign our new website. With financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation we were able to launch a new website in December. The new site has already seen an increase in number and length of online visits. We know that with the new more intuitive design, the website will make it easier for visitors to access the information they need as well as see all the other opportunities available for them at the Marsh. Other exciting new features of the website is that it is now mobile and tablet friendly (responsive), allows us to upload images and videos more easily and best of all allows are members to purchase or renew their memberships online.



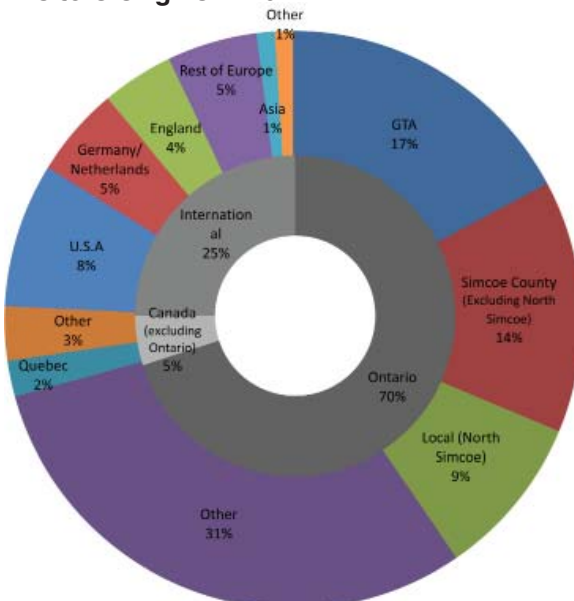
This year has been a pivotal year for tourism in North Simcoe with the development of Tourism Action Plan (TAP) Committee under the Economic Development Committee of North Simcoe. The TAP committee was formed to strengthen the tourism industry within Tiny, Tay, Midland and Penetanguishene, which I, as a representative of Wye Marsh sit on as the vice president and ecotourism chair. The TAP committee has already begun the work to develop a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), much like Muskoka Tourism or Barrie Tourism. The creation of our DMO, The Heart of Georgian Bay will benefit Wye Marsh by increasing awareness of Wye Marsh, particularly to larger markets as well as make partnerships and funding opportunities more accessible.

A great example of how this area is working together is the partnership we have created between the S.S. Keewatin, Martyr's Shrine & the Huronia Museum. The four attractions have come together and created a package tour that allows groups the opportunity to visit all four sites for one price. The impetus of the package came from the opportunity the S.S. Keewatin created with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to hire four sales people on a four month contract to sell this package. The project is still being developed but is expected to bring new groups to Wye Marsh to escape, explore and experience.

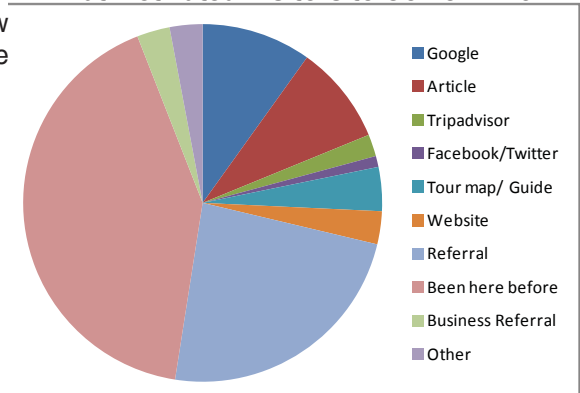
With these new developments we are also working on gathering better data on our visitors, for example where are they coming from and how they heard about us. With this data we are improving how and who Wye Marsh is marketed.

Laura Thomas
Marketing & Development Coordinator

Visitors Origins in 2014



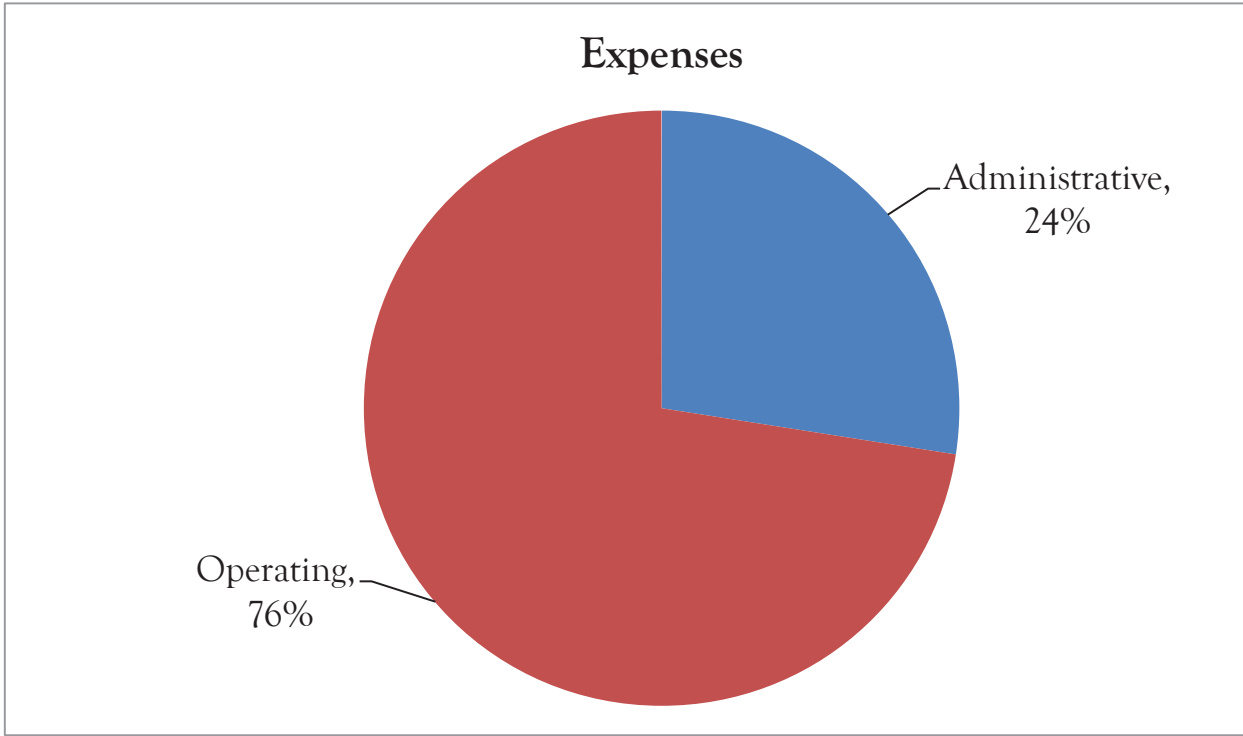
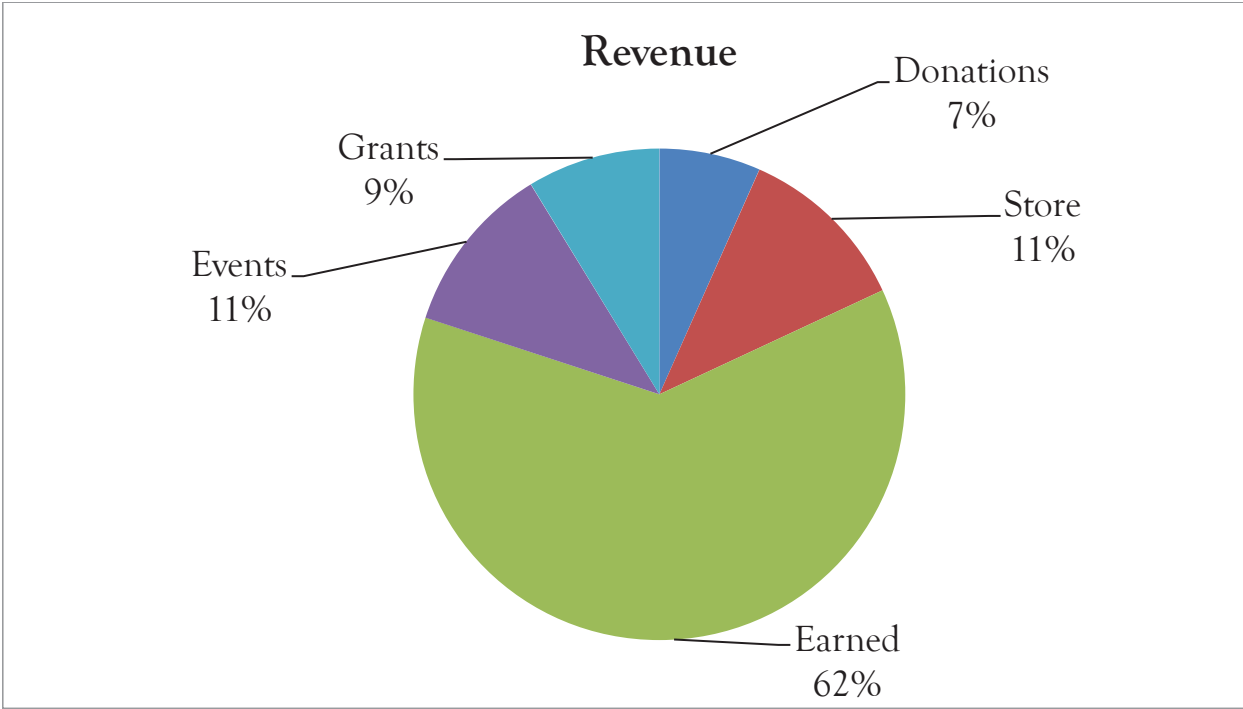
What Motivated Visitors to Come in 2014



Balance Sheet as at October 31, 2014

| Assets | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Current | 200,796 | 159,992 |
| Capital Assets (NBV) | 220,451 | 240,484 |
| Long Term Investments | 293,707 | 403,232 |
| Total Assets | 740,624 | 803,708 |
| | | |
| Liabilities | 2014 | 2013 |
| Current | 100,193 | 177,122 |
| Long Term | 170,913 | 153,791 |
| Total Liabilities | 271,106 | 330,913 |
| | | |
| Net Assets | 469,518 | 472,795 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | 740,624 | 803,708 |

| Statement of Operations | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Year ended October 31, 2014 | | |
| Revenue | 2014 | 2013 |
| General Admissions & Membership | 123,889 | 119,291 |
| Educational & Recreational Programs | 176,064 | 191,899 |
| Store Operations + Bob's Book | 68,465 | 113,798 |
| Fundraising Events/Programs | 67,399 | 81,725 |
| Donations & Gifts | 40,061 | 58,788 |
| Grants | 52,588 | 46,675 |
| Amortization of Deferred Contributions | 31,661 | 35,264 |
| Investment Income | 18,550 | 17,678 |
| Realized Gains on Investments | 381 | 0 |
| Unrealized Gains on Investments | 22,569 | 25,854 |
| Total Revenue | 601,627 | 690,972 |
| Expenses | | |
| Administrative | 166,207 | 160,202 |
| Operating | 438,697 | 597,429 |
| Total Expenses | 604,904 | 757,631 |
| Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year | -3,277 | -66,659 |



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 ORGANIZATIONS & BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT WYE MARSH

pagegraphics
COMMUNICATE YOUR TRUE NATURE

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KINDRED

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ELCAN
Optical Technologies

Compu-SOLVE
TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET SOLUTIONS

MEC

THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
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LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

LabX
AUCTIONS, CLASSIFIEDS & NEW PRODUCTS

HURONIA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
COMMUNAUTAIRE
DE LA HURONIE

BrokerLink

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!