



ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Wye Marsh

2016

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FRIENDS OF WYE MARSH

'Fostering Environmental Stewardship'

Our Directors

Sean Diening, President

Anne Lorriman, Vice President

Barry Bergey, Treasurer

Matt Bergey, Secretary

Bill Byrick

Jim MacMillan

Helen Malloy

Our Staff

Paul Beauchamp

Maintenance Manager

Tom Goldsmith

Raptor Trainer & Program Facilitator

Darlene Lenehan

Bookkeeper

Cathy Lewis

Visitor Services Coordinator

Beryl Loxley

Volunteer Store Manager

Tracey Patterson

Event & Volunteer Coordinator

Sonya Stemerink

Education & Reservations Coordinator

Sara Street

Executive Director

Katelyn West

Captive Wildlife Care Technician



REFLECTING ON 2016—A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

What an exciting year 2016 has been. We have had a visiting exhibit from the Canadian Canoe Museum, replaced our Boardwalk (the heart of the marsh) and so much more. All of what we do here at the marsh would not be possible without the dedication and passion of our staff, volunteers, members, donors and sponsors. We are so thankful to be supported by each and everyone of you!



This year also saw the collaboration of so many individuals in the creation of a new mission and vision for the marsh. This sparked us to update our offerings—do what we do but do it even better! We offered a new set of educational seminars this summer to compliment the canoe exhibit and this fall launched a new Marsh by Moonlight Canoe program. The program was very well received and we plan to offer it again in 2017! We are currently undergoing some renovations. Our landlords Canadian Wildlife Services, a division of Environment Canada are supporting this renovation. The construction includes updating the lighting in the building to all new LED fixtures, renovating the washrooms and replacing the ceiling panels throughout the visitor centre. As the saying goes there will be some 'short term pain for long term gain' and we appreciate your patience during this time. We are very fortunate to have the support of CWS for these capital projects and we are looking forward to showing you the new visitor centre when things are all finished in the spring.

2017 will also be host to some other changes in our visitor centre—including a focus on the species at risk the Monarch Butterfly. We will be creating a new exhibit area to focus on this species at risk and on how everyday people can help them! We will also be hosting a variety of pollinator and monarch friendly events and renovating our little bee house to be a bit more inviting! The muskrat loop boardwalk is on the docket for replacement, the Scout's Cabin is looking for a face lift and the Canoe Dock Bridge will be repaired! From a program perspective there are lots of great new ideas coming up in 2017, including the Marsh by Moonlight Snowshoe edition, our Winter Pursuits program, the Dinner on the Boardwalk event and also bringing back the Owls on the Prowl experience! So much to look forward to all while celebrating Canada's 150th birthday. 2017 is shaping up to be just as exciting as 2016 if not more. Please be sure to join us this year for some exciting and adventure filled experiences. Cheers! - Sara.





PRIVELEGED TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE...

The year 2016 was a definite year of change and challenge. The winter that was short for skiers was probably good for those customers that enjoyed walking trails that were not snow and ice covered. The boardwalk installation helped rejuvenate interest in the Wye Marsh and its occupants. New signage enabled customers to venture beyond the regular hiking trails to the ski trails during the summer season. The new bird enclosure ensures our feathered friends are kept safe and not crowded. Looking forward to more renovations that are coming in 2017.

It is an honour and privilege to look after customers who appreciate The Wye Marsh and its significance to our environment, education and tourism. To all nationalities who have visited THANK YOU!! - Catherine.



"What a great way to learn about nature!" We have stopped here many of times but the birds of prey demonstration is our favourite memory. Its inside in the winter and outdoors during the summer months and we enjoyed both atmosphere's Please if you are interest in nature put this on your list for things to do with the kids..

TripAdvisor review by ashandadaisy



CANOE TRIPPING ...

We had a rocking party in April to celebrate the arrival of the Canadian Canoe Museum's travelling exhibit—the Canoe a Canadian Cultural Icon. With many events and special seminars offered to compliment this exhibit it was a wonderful addition to our annual operating. The Canoe Tripper's Rendezvous was a huge success and would not have been made possible without the help of so many volunteers—you know who you all are! A huge heartfelt thank you from all of us here at the marsh!

PROGRAM—2016 IN REVIEW...

We believe that learning while having fun encourages immediate and long term involvement in environmental stewardship. 2016 saw our team of passionate and enthusiastic staff & volunteers share their knowledge with students, families, community organizations and tour groups. Each season brought unique opportunities for our visitors to escape, explore and experience!

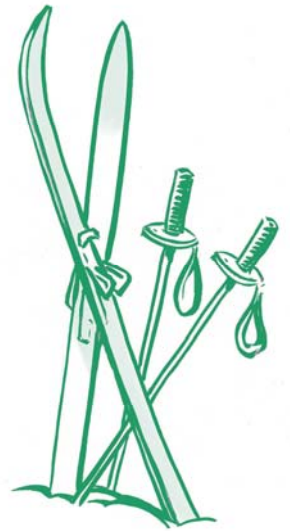
Throughout the winter months our residential programming was in full swing! Operating yet again at full capacity, we were busy delivering programming to overnight guide and scout groups who were eager to earn their winter camp badges by learning how to snowshoe, cross-country ski and animal track! 'Badge Days', an extremely popular event for guiders & scouts to earn up to three badges in one day, was also a huge success with representatives of 9 different units from Simcoe County and beyond!

The spring of 2016 was particularly busy as we saw double the amount of Simcoe County District School Board Gr. 4 & Gr. 7 students due to the need to re-schedule the trips from the previous fall's work to rule action circumstances. Participants were extremely impressed with the new dip net station! This spring was also an opportunity to launch a new and improved method for teachers, group leaders and tour operators to request a booking through our website.

With the Canadian Canoe Exhibit as our backdrop, we had the opportunity to integrate some cultural history into our summer public programming this year. Visitors not only had the opportunity to take a guided tour the exhibit within our Display Hall, but to also make connections to its content by experiencing a guided voyageur canoe tour, by observing the restoration of a birch bark canoe or by registering for several workshops including leather beaded pouch making workshop and moccasin making workshop.

Wye Marsh Day Camp had a very successful summer, with an increasing number of weeks sold out! As a result, we are working to implement additional spots for one of our most popular options, Kinder Camp. Given the popularity of our camps and our dedication to improve upon our programming, we plan to review our Day Camp pricing for the upcoming 2017 session.

The development of a new experience series was met with great success with the launch of Marsh by Moonlight. Participants were given the opportunity to experience the Marsh while paddling a canoe by the light of the moon and the twinkle light lined bridges of the boardwalk. Stay tuned for this experience series to include a Marsh by Moonlight snowshoe edition, as well as Spring Marsh by Moonlight paddling edition.—Sonya



UPDATE FROM THE BIRDS OF PREY...



2016 has seen a number of exciting new developments and additions to the Wye Marsh's Birds Of Prey area. With an unending commitment to enriching the lives of the animals in our care, our Captive Wildlife Care Team has been working diligently towards getting our entire team of birds flying

free. Their continuing efforts has and will add a great deal to the quality and value of our shows and most importantly, our bird's physical and mental fitness moving forward.

2016 also saw the addition of two new Ontario native raptor ambassadors. First came Hannibal our new great horned owl in September and more recently, we have added a young female Merlin to our stable of raptor ambassadors. The Merlin has yet to be officially named, but came to us after she was deemed unrealisable by The Owl Foundation due to a serious collision with window. Both birds are now very healthy and should serve as excellent education tools with regards to our native Ontario species and their role within the biodiversity of this province.

All of our new team members are fitting in very well into perhaps our most exciting development, The Bird House. This seven enclosure building, primarily constructed by our own Paul Beauchamp, is a state of the art facility. It is designed to house our winter hearty species. Exposed to the elements as they are in this building, they are expected to thrive and behave more naturally to the changing weather and climate as they are meant to do.



Looking ahead, in addition to continuing to raise the bar with regards to the highest quality animal care possible, we will be decorating each animal's enclosure with a constant eye towards physical and mental enrichment. These natural furnishings will have the added benefit of educating visitors to the typical habitats and requirements of each species in the wild. –Tom

VOLUNTEERS KEEP CONTRIBUTING TO WYE MARSH SUCCESSES ...



As a non-profit, charitable organization Wye Marsh relies on a large group of volunteers to provide many of the services that make a visit to the Marsh such an enjoyable and educational experience. From our front admissions desk to the farthest hiking trail, volunteers do whatever tasks are needed to ensure our many visitors, school groups, and residential groups have the opportunity to engage with nature. Our volunteers donate thousands of hours of their time every year, bringing unique skill sets and passions to their duties. We truly could not operate without our dedicated volunteers!

This past year has been a busy one. Based on responses to the volunteer survey administered in the fall of 2015 we have worked towards improving our volunteer management. In conjunction with the Wye Marsh re-visioning process this year we held a Volunteer Summit to give all our volunteers the opportunity to share their ideas and suggestions on what changes we could make to ensure volunteers continue to find their time commitment worthwhile and engaging.

Volunteer de-brief meetings have been held after special events to get feedback on what went well during the event and what areas there are for improvement. Also, we are on the way to instituting more volunteer Committees, starting with the creation in the summer of a volunteer Outreach Committee. With improvements to our volunteer management database and ongoing updates to our volunteer practices, we are continuing to work towards building a strong volunteer base.

With regards to special events, our 25th annual Sweetwater Harvest Festival in March was a roaring success, with almost 90 volunteers donating hundreds of hours of their time so almost 2600 people could experience the Wye Marsh. A unique Canoe Trippers Rendezvous event in April, a successful first annual Tay Township Lasagna Fundraising Dinner in May, the August Get Outdoors Festival, ongoing artisan workshops throughout the summer and fall, a highly enjoyable annual Fundraising Dinner in September, the always popular Marsh Monster in October and Christmas at the Marsh in December rounded out this busy year. All of these events would not be possible with the work of our many volunteers and we truly thank you for all that you do.



2017 is once again full of exciting special events – Sweetwater Harvest Festival March 25 & 26, Tay Township Lasagna Dinner May 12, Bird Banding event August 5, Get Outdoors Festival Sept 9 & 10, Fundraising Dinner Oct 20 and Marsh Monster Oct 28. We look forward to everyone joining us for these fantastic events!

Thank you once again to all of our many talented and dedicated volunteers who so generously donate their time and skills so that Wye Marsh can continue to instill a love of nature in thousands of children and adults alike. - Tracey



LOOKING BACK ON 2016 WITH OUR EDUCATIONAL AMBASSADORS...

Earlier in the spring, I was welcomed into the position of the Outreach and Captive Wildlife Care Technician. Although I was always on my feet, and extremely busy completing the daily animal care tasks for over a dozen reptiles and up to 9 different species of birds of prey, I was having the time of my life all while learning invaluable knowledge.

As I was figuring out my animal care routine, spring turned into summer and the Wye Marsh was greeting more visitors daily. Students rejoiced as summer break began, the Marsh's day camp was filling up, and our helpful team of Jr. Naturalists were back on the scene with their fearless leader Courtney Lockhart. We are always very thankful for all of the hard work the Jr. Naturalist do in the display hall, and I'm sure the turtles are too as the Jr. Nat's supervise them as they explore our lawn on sunny days! All the while, the attendance of our 1:00pm Wet n' Scaly shows on Saturday and our classic 1:00 pm Sunday bird of prey shows were steadily increasing as people from the community and from all over the world came to be educated about our reptiles and raptors.



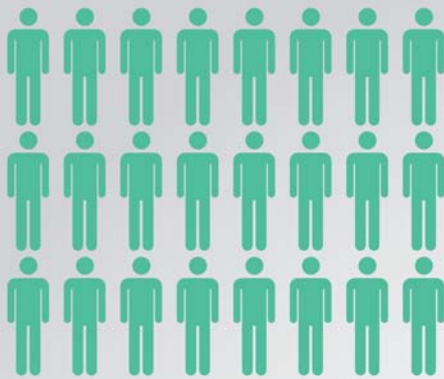
In August our animal care team grew, with the addition of Tom Goldsmith. Tom is an irreplaceable asset to the Wye Marsh, with decades of knowledge about the care of birds of prey, and his passion for these birds is evident every time he speaks about them. Throughout the remainder of the year our team has excelled in the care of our raptors, with the addition of a brand new enclosure and two new native species to our feathered family, we are very happy and proud with how far we've come!

Our team of educational ambassadors were involved with many off-site shows throughout our local townships and all across Simcoe county. We were welcomed by various day camps and other family events in Victoria Harbor, and also greeted by over 100 people when we visited two different public libraries across Barrie. Our birds of prey spread their wings for audiences at Waypoint Centre of Mental Health Care in Penetanguishene and also for the residents of Woods Park Care Centre Retirement Residence in Barrie. Alice even had the chance to introduce a feature film about birds at the Galaxy Theatre in Midland. Overall, thousands of people were educated about birds of prey, but our favorite shows will always be the ones we are able to do on our home turf at our birds of prey field!

Denise Graham remains active as the Wye Marsh's beekeeper. Denise led weekly educational talks about bees and our hives throughout the summer at the bee house, and also instructed a successful beekeeping workshop. I believe that our bees had a very successful year producing 240 jars of honey, which is still available for purchase in the Wye Marsh Gift Shop! - Katelyn



THE WYE MARSH 2016 STATS



32577
VISITORS



→ **600+** →
MEMBERS



→ **230+** →
MEMBERSHIPS



280 VOLUNTEERS



240 JARS OF HONEY
PRODUCED BY THE WYE MARSH BEES

2+ HOURS

AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON SITE



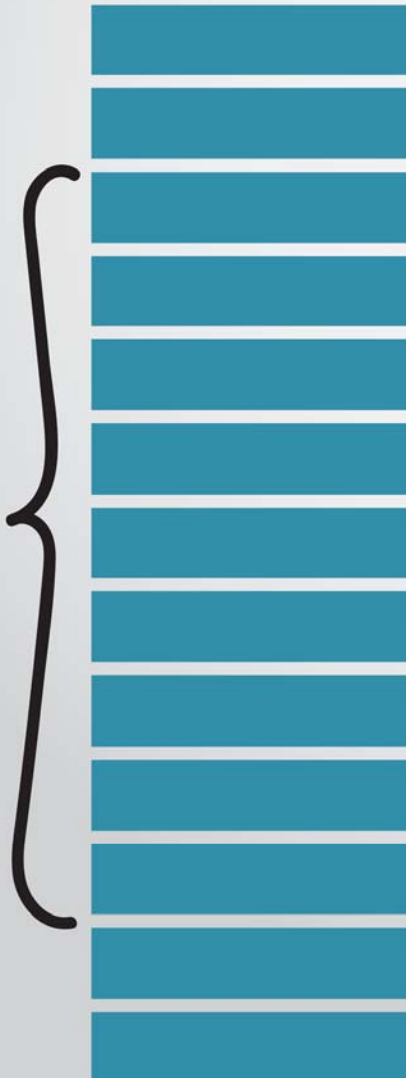
63 SWANS

RECORD # ON FEBRUARY 16, 2016

7 YEAR ROUND STAFF
13 SEASONAL



491 FEET OF BOARDWALK RESTORED



THE EVER BUSY AND CHANGING WORLD OF MAINTENANCE OF THE MARSH...

Paul and the maintenance team (Patrick our seasonal Maintenance Assistant) have had a busy year.



- The new boardwalk was installed and completed—thanks go out to GLS Welding and Fabricating for completing this project!
- The canoe dock was emptied of water and now floats much higher!
- Canoes were outfitted with the lights for our special Marsh by Moonlight Canoe program this fall.
- A new pump was installed in the front pond and the waterfall was again flowing this summer..
- The garbage was removed from the William Street access point with special thanks to the Stewardship Rangers, GLS. Patrick Lenehan and Paul Beauchamp for completing that stinky job. Once the garbage was cleaned up we had a gate installed to prevent further garbage from being dumped at the end of the road so close to the marsh!
- We created a new defined smoking area for our visitors—including a picnic table, butt stop and new sign.
- Lastly but certainly not the least important was the replacement of all the outdoor aviaries with our new “Bird House”. This construction was completed entirely under the steady hand of Paul with the help of Eric Pauze Construction, RM Custom Concrete, and Miken Electrical. This new aviary houses 7 of our birds of prey and is constructed to provide them with ample space and allow us to provide the best care possible.

These projects would not have been possible without the support of so many donors, private foundations and grants. Thank you to all those people that helped to make these projects a success!



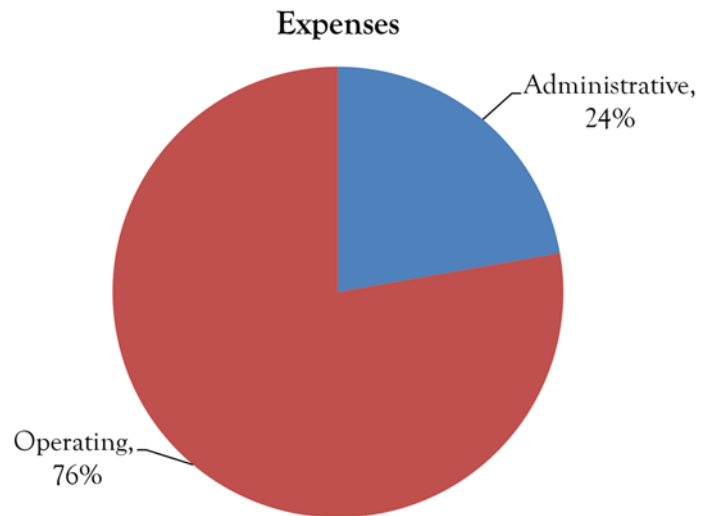
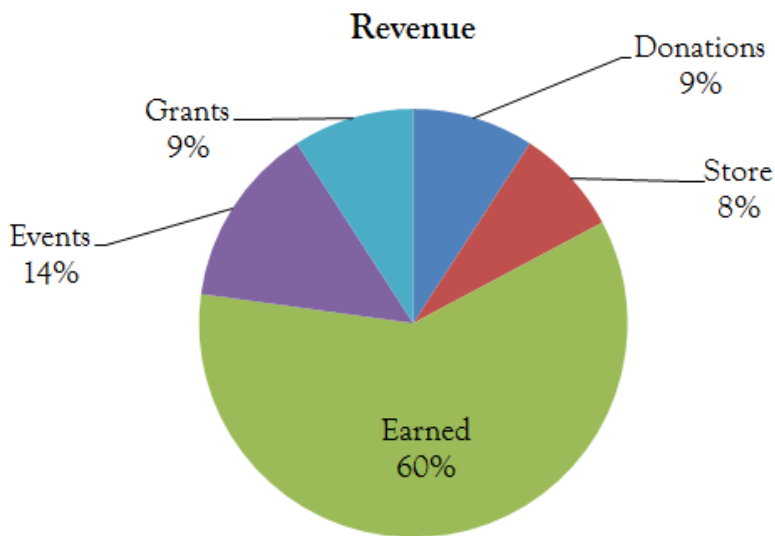
“A very interesting experience with nature!!” What a treat to see nature so close....Bees in a cross section of a hive, a baby trumpeter swans, huge snapping turtles sunning themselves, the outdoor hike and the exhibits inside the pavilion....Time just flew by with so much to see.... The Boardwalk hike is a must do and we ran out of time for a canoe tour of the marsh....Great for kids and the whole family.....

Visited June 2016 - TripAdvisor review by Dave H

AN EXERPT FROM THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FISCAL 2016...



Statement of Operations		
Year ended October 31, 2016		
Revenue	2016	2015
General Admissions & Membership	143,276	133,807
Educational & Recreational Programs	190,598	169,568
Store Operations + Bob's Book	53,815	56,541
Fundraising Events/Programs	91,364	74,541
Donations & Gifts	61,182	76,407
Grants	61,054	23,401
Investment Income	28,997	-1,940
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	37,688	33,206
Total Revenue	667,974	565,531
Expenses		
Administrative	158,673	164,054
Operating	555,161	509,126
Total Expenses	713,834	673,180
Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year	-45,860	-107,649



Please see the full Audited Financial Statements for more details. The above is provided as a summary only.



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COMMUNICATE YOUR TRUE NATURE



A special "thank you" to all of our sponsors
and donors! Please support the organizations
and businesses that support

WYE MARSH



This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada.

The Friends of Wye Marsh would like to thank all of the above companies that support the Wye Marsh throughout the year and on a per project basis. There are so many to thank we were not able to put them all on here. Without their help we would not be able to continue to reach over 30,000 visitors annually.