



Wye Marsh Annual Report 2011

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

Wye Marsh Annual Report

April 2012

Wye Marsh, Evolving for Opportunity

2011 was a year for change at the Wye Marsh, change brings with it exciting opportunities for the future of the Marsh. The new Executive Director, Sara Street, was assigned after the tragic loss of Suzanne McDonald. With a new Executive Director in place, the Wye Marsh moved full speed ahead, starting with the sale of the "Marsh House" on Old Fort Road. The sale of the Marsh house, enabled us to keep 11 Birds of Prey, housed at the Wye Marsh full-time. We constructed a new boardwalk on the John Lucas ID Trail and completed our brand new Bird Aviary in the Birds of Prey field.

We have been selective with our advertising in hopes of discovering what works best for the Marsh, while keeping a consistent look to all of the advertising out this year. Winter was rough at the Marsh, seeing very little snow accumulation, leading to an almost non-existent skiing or snowshoeing season. Our mild winter meant decreased numbers of Swans, poor trail conditions and unfortunately the canceling of some public programs. Events and Fundraisers taking part in 2011 had good attendance and as always showed the tremendous support of individuals, donors and volunteers.

All in all 2011 brought many changes and we look forward to the opportunities to come in 2012.





Evolve and Produce

Our maintenance department has been busy this year. We had many projects on the go and we are proud of everyone of them.

The rattlesnakes had a new cage constructed which makes the husbandry and care of the animals less stressful and safer for both our staff, Buzzy and Junior. The construction and design was completed in consultation with experts from Toronto Zoo and Georgian Bay Islands National Park.

A portion of the John Lucas ID Trail was re-opened this year with the support raised in memory of Suzanne McDonald. This project was also completed in partnership with Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP). 280 feet of boardwalk were removed and re-constructed with the help of the Outdoor Education Leadership Program students from Penetanguishene Secondary School.

Our changes this year also called for a new building to be constructed to house our Bird of Prey. Paul, our maintenance manager, completed the majority of the work and coordinated the necessary trades people in order to keep the job on schedule. Many thanks to the trades people that made this project possible including, Herb Carpenter Ltd Plumbing, Miken Electric, Pauze Construction, and R M Concrete. We also have to thank the many donors and sponsors for this project including but not limited to Helen McCrae Peacock Foundation.



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 Species at Risk: including Blanding's Turtles, Least Bittern, Black Terns and the famous Trumpeter Swans. Wye Marsh is also designated 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.

Wye Marsh is very proud to be situated on a National Wildlife Area. This means that this ecosystem has been designated as nationally significant.



The Wye Marsh dedicated a section of boardwalk on the John Lucas ID Trail for former Executive Director Suzanne McDonald.

The construction of the new aviaries was a big project for the Wye Marsh, building an enclosure that allows us to keep our non-native species here all year-round.

Stewarding Evolution

Swans:

This year for the marsh saw lots of firsts:

- Wye Marsh tagged 6 swans this past season.
- We had our first swan pass away from lead poisoning in a few years.
- We've got plans to replace the shingles on the Swan Treatment Centre and to modify our existing feeding area in order to make it more swan friendly.

Research:

We had students from McMaster University visit the marsh this past summer and complete research. This research is overseen by Dr Pat Chou Fraser who has been the leading researcher on wetlands within Georgian Bay. We are very excited about the opportunities that we are able to fulfill through a partnership with McMaster University.

Some highlights of the monitoring this year were the Wood Duck Nest boxes. We had help from the Grade 4 class at Victoria Harbour School—they built new boxes for us. Our nest boxes were very successful with 9/11 having evidence of successfully hatched chicks!!

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.

Evolved to Teach

Our programs continue to deliver our mission in creative, inspiring and fun ways. Our group programming, which includes providing educational programming for school groups, guides & scout groups, senior groups, community groups, ESL groups, private groups/families, corporations and recreation clubs, is keeping us busy with over 45 program options. We strive for each of these programs to convey not only the importance of wetlands, but also the unique fact that the Wye Marsh is designated as a National Wildlife Area. In order to better serve these groups, we have developed an online booking system that will allow groups to review, request and reserve programs through our website.

Other exciting technological opportunities for our visitors have been made possible through the purchase of 30 new GPS (Global Positioning System) units! Nature Canada granted us \$4000.00 from their Nature's Explorers fund that has enable us to update our existing GPS program, which we plan to also be made available to the visiting public.

Fun as an Evolution

'Encourage Your Child to Cherish the Outdoors'

Our March Break and summer break day camps continue to be a success, with 250 campers reached! Natalie King stepped into the Camp Director role after 6 years of experience as a counselor. Not only did we feel very fortunate to have her, but the campers were also delighted to spend another summer with 'OJ'. Summer camp continued to uphold their traditions with anticipated weekly Marsh Olympics, Marsh Monster Mystery, and Family Meet & Greet Campfire Cookout. This past summer we entered into a new partnership with Dino's Deli, who provided a delicious Friday litter-less lunch (provided in re-usable containers) to campers for just \$5!

Bringing the Birds Home

The Wye Marsh Birds of Prey program has a new focus. We have downsized the number of birds and all our birds are now housed at the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. The main focus of the program is to educate the public on the habitat, diversity and adaptations of these magnificent and beautiful creatures. This program is a great way to entice the public to experience all the marsh has to offer. We hope to spark a commitment to conservation by creating exciting learning opportunities in a natural setting.

Our visitors now can view our Birds of Prey up close that they would normally see from a distance in the wild. Our captive birds have new specially designed aviaries that required special permission from Provincial and Federal governments. The challenges that the Marsh faced were around housing some of their non-native feathered friends, our Georgian Bay winters are not normal for them. Our Lanner Falcon; Stanley and Spectacled Owl; JJ, must have heated housing. The other Birds of Prey that are housed in this special aviary are: Tawny Owl; Alice, and Barn Owls; Jimmer and Casper.

We are very proud of this specialized housing that ensures the highest quality of care. The other captive Birds of Prey include Harris Hawks; Hans and Macey, Red Tailed Hawk; Rusty, Ferruginous Hawk; Guy Smiley, Eurasian Eagle Owl; Axel and Snowy Owl; Woden.

Our staff has specialized training that ensures these birds lead enriched, healthy and happy lives. The Birds of Prey program at the Wye Marsh is a big draw for our visitors, they remain a popular choice for school groups and public programming.



Evolving the Future

This year the staff of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre embarked upon a very challenging and opportunistic task of auditing our programs. This will be a yearly endeavour now that the ground work has been laid, we hope to recognize strengths and weaknesses within our programs so we can make informed choices. This audit was a joint effort by all staff; collecting data, looking at trends, assessing costs, this information was compiled and presented to the Board.

Our hopes that in the next few years we can see where our weaknesses lie and eliminate those programs over time or combine them with other similar programs. We look forward to recognizing our strong programs and put more emphasis on those programs that are popular and create revenue.

Balance Sheet

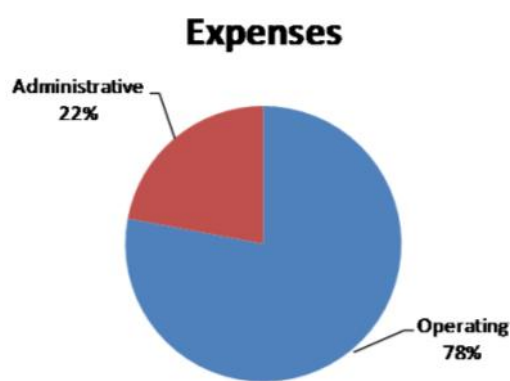
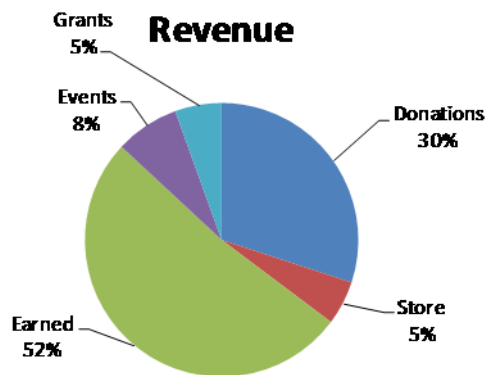
As at October 31, 2011

| ASSETS | 2011 | 2010 |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Current | \$ 143,844 | \$ 355,096 |
| Capital Assets (NBV) | 260,737 | 577,783 |
| Long Term Investments | 625,580 | 307,655 |
| Total Assets | \$1,030,161 | \$1,240,543 |
| LIABILITIES | 2011 | 2010 |
| Current | \$ 149,506 | \$ 74,543 |
| Long term | 198,281 | 492,483 |
| Total Liabilities | 347,787 | 615,996 |
| NET ASSETS | 682,374 | 624,538 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | \$ 1,030,161 | \$1,240,534 |

Statement of Operations

Year ended October 31, 2011

| Revenue | 2011 | 2010 |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| General Admissions & Membership | \$ 139,884 | \$ 154,058 |
| Educational & Recreational Programs | 192,885 | 205,205 |
| Store Operations | 50,674 | 52,702 |
| Fundraising Events/Programs | 73,775 | 90,096 |
| Donations/Planned Gifts | 292,462 | 67,338 |
| Grants | 53,645 | 98,773 |
| Amortization of Deferred Contributions | 137,609 | 82,920 |
| Miscellaneous | 0 | 18,221 |
| Total Revenue | \$ 973,513 | \$ 776,218 |
| Expenses | 2011 | 2010 |
| Operating | \$ 713,766 | \$ 817,918 |
| Administrative | 201,911 | 122,254 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 915,677 | \$ 940,172 |
| Excess of Revenue over Expenses for the Year | \$ 57,836 | \$ (163,954) |



Friends of Wye Marsh Board of Directors

For Year Ended October 31, 2011

President Michael Riggan
 Treasurer Barry Bergey
 Past President Colin Harper

Directors:
 Vern Cottrell Laurel Finney
 John Shepherd Nadine Goman
 Maura Lendon Heather Eland
 Ron Neville Rob Thompson
 Ed Hartley

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, 2011. 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.

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”

Sherry Anderson

“Don’t ever question the value of volunteers. Noah’s Ark was built by volunteers; the Titanic was built by professionals.”

Unknown

“Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud.”

Helen Dyer

WYE
MARSH



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Community Connection

Our volunteers are important fibers that hold the Wye Marsh together. Our generous volunteers donated approximately **8700** hours of their time allowing the Wye Marsh to continue to be an important part of the community.

The year of 2011 brought with it changes and opportunities. Volunteer coordination at the Wye Marsh was guided by Lorretta Hamilton for many years. In 2011 she was given the opportunity to embark on new endeavors, Lorretta is greatly missed by all volunteers and staff. Her impact on this organization was expressed through the immense gratitude and well wishes she received at her surprise farewell party. The new volunteer coordinator, Andreia DaSilva, has the opportunity to share in Lorretta's fortune in leading the volunteers. She started her career at the Wye Marsh in 2008 as an outdoor educator. Andreia is also the Health and Safety Coordinator, Herptile Care Coordinator, and continues to be part of the education team. She looks forward to connecting with current volunteers and reaching out to new volunteers.



1st Wye Marsh Scout troop volunteered their time to help the Wye Marsh celebrate Biodiversity Day. They handed out Hemlock saplings and started participants off on the Great Tree Challenge at the marsh.



Wye Marsh Woodcarvers Association assisted us with numerous projects this year. Including the re-furbishing of our 5 large canoes. Pictured above: Alfred Scott.

Wye Marsh Staff

Linda Belcourt,
Reservations/IT/Falconer

Paul Beauchamp,
Maintenance Manager

Andreia DaSilva,
Project Coordinator

Denise DeVillers,
Project Technician,

Pamela Higgins,
Social Marketing Volunteer

Ashley Larmand,
Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Cathy Lewis,
Visitor Services Coordinator

Beryl Loxley,
Store Manager Volunteer

Mike Majury,
Project Assistant

Trevor Stanford,
Resource Technician

Sonya Stemerink,
Education & Program Coordinator

Sara Street,
Executive Director