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From The Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Hullett I would like to welcome you to the Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area.

If it's your first time visiting the wildlife area, take some time to review the user guide so that you are familiar with the rules and regulations associated with HPWA. **If you have been here before please check the map section as well as the rules and regulation section located on page 3 to 5 for any changes that may have taken place since your last visit.** Also don't hesitate to check out our newly improved website for more information on the HPWA and upcoming events.

The Friends of Hullett Inc. is a strictly volunteer group of men and women from around Southern Ontario who spend hundreds of hours outside of their "regular jobs" to direct the management of day-to-day operations at the wildlife area. The Board of Directors meets monthly and corresponds almost daily.

The BOD administers a large agricultural contract, which along with generous donations from the public, provides the funds for maintenance of marsh, grounds, and buildings, the funding for new and exciting projects, and the hiring of employees.

Our employees are carefully chosen based on their educational background, patience, and insight. We have been most fortunate to have employees that are "self-starters". The nature of their jobs necessitates the ability to not only see the work at hand, but to work outside a "game plan". This year we were extremely lucky as we have renewed our contract for the third year with Marsh Manager Scott Austin who is a long time local resident and founding Director of the FOH. For the most part Scott has been working alone for the past two years as we had to secure funds to pay for the new office complex. Now we have freed up funds and have hired Sarah Hubert to assist Scott with the day to day activities. Sarah has become very comfortable at Hullett and with her excellent computer skills has redesigned our website and developed our new Facebook account. Sarah studies focused on GIS mapping and Woodlot management which will certainly be an asset as we move forward trying to expand and manage our hardwood forests.

Scott has also managed to obtain four summer student employees through various Federal and Provincial programs. Three of these positions have been dedicated to maintenance and upkeep around the marsh. They have been working on many priority jobs this summer such as replacing parking barriers and redoing hunting stake signs. The other position was filled by a recreation and event coordinator which helped engage youth and public with Hullett.

Partnered with the O.M.N.R. and Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Board of Directors continues to manage this amazing 2200 hectare wetland complex in Huron County. The success of our operation however, depends on much more than the three senior partners. Our employees of course are indispensable as are the volunteers that manage many of our projects at Hullett and show up for workdays, either impromptu or planned. If you have an idea for improvement to the area, or a program you might want to see at Hullett, don't hesitate to bring it to the attention of the staff or directors.

The senior partners, the Board of Directors, our employees, and our volunteers all recognize Hullett as a "jewel" tucked away in Southern Ontario.

If you are new to the Hullett area, or are a frequent visitor, you can participate in the "Hullett Experience" by hiking, hunting, horseback riding, canoeing, or simply volunteering some gratifying time to the marsh. Regardless, you won't be disappointed.

Duane Inkpen
Chairman
Board of Directors



Hullett Marsh Late Summer Water Levels

The drought of 2016 has certainly had an effect on water levels moving into the fall hunting season. Mother Nature has not been kind to the marsh this summer. We have experienced the driest/hottest summer on record. **The water levels in all of the pools are very low - way below the board levels on all of the water controls that hold water back.** D.U. staff were helpless as they watched the marsh slowly dry up.

20 hunting stakes are currently dry. 30 have at least some water nearby. In the dry areas, the vegetation has grown high and thick. Launching boats at the 3 launches will be difficult if not impossible. Carrying/carting along the dykes may be the only option. **We have seen lots of birds; so, with careful scouting and a good dog, there will still be some good shoots.**

Ed Allen, HMWA

Pheasant Release Program



The poster for the Pheasant Challenge at Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area features the Ideal Supply logo and the text "The People to Ask!". It includes the NAPA AUTO PARTS logo and a photograph of a pheasant in flight. The text reads: "Pheasant Challenge at Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area", "From Opening Day to the End of Pheasant Hunting Season", "ENTRY COST \$10.00", "Receive a Blaze Orange Hunting Hat for Every Band Returned", and "Tickets Available at Hullett Office or Goderich, Wingham, St Marys, Exeter, Stratford & Mitchell Ideal Supply locations".

Once again FOH will be releasing 1000 pheasants in Zone B at regular intervals during the fall of 2016. We would like to thank **Ideal Supply** for their corporate support of the program. Please refer to our new User Guide and posters on each map box to see how and where you can purchase your tickets to ensure a pheasant release in 2017. **Please remember it is illegal to hunt in standing crops (ex. Corn and Beans).**

Zone B Fallow Field Mowing

This fall you will notice much less mowing in Zone B fallow fields. The mowing of the fields was funded by the Ontario Bird Dog Conservation Association (OBDCA) for many years but they did not hold a fall trial in 2016.

OBDCA also released 200 pheasants in early September each year. FOH will continue to mow timber and shrubs to meet the objectives set out in our Habitat Management Plan.

Hullett Marsh Youth Waterfowl Clinic



On September 16 and 17 the Friends of Hullett and the HMWA hosted the first ever Waterfowl Heritage Day youth hunt and clinic in celebration of **Canada's National hunting, trapping and fishing heritage.**

Initial partner funding was provided by Wildlife Habitat Canada. Many other organizations such as the Huron Fish & Game, DUC, OFAH and Delta Waterfowl joined in to support this initiative to pass on knowledge to youth hunters.

Many donors provided swag for the youth to take home free of charge such as decoys, calls, and shotgun shells.

10 youth were paired with 10 experienced waterfowl hunting mentors for this two day event. Firearm safety, hunting ethics, calling, decoy placement, species ID and duck cleaning techniques were some of the skills shared with the youth.



All participants agreed that the event was a success to open the young minds to the magical world of waterfowl hunting!

Recreation and Event Coordinator

Hello Hullett users, my name is Becky Adams and I was lucky enough to spend my summer at the Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area as the Recreation and Events Coordinator. Currently, I am studying Marine and Freshwater Biology at the University of Guelph and am passionate about aquatic ecosystems and wildlife. This job was a great opportunity for me to gain experience and knowledge about this unique ecosystem. As the 2016 Recreation and Events Coordinator, I planned and attended several events throughout the summer at the Marsh. This year, the Friends of Hullett staff and volunteers have hosted many events to raise awareness and fundraise to promote the Hullett Marsh.

For the first time, the Hullett Marsh was the venue for an Ontario 3D Archery event. On June 17-19 2016, a 3D Archery course was setup within the marsh and 60-100 archers of all levels of experience shot realistic targets throughout the marsh. It was a hot weekend, but everyone had a blast and really enjoyed the beauty of the marsh.

The Seaforth Scouts spent a couple nights camping at the Marsh and during their stay, they put up 28 bluebird boxes. Every scout constructed their own bluebird box and mounted them in a grassland area, which is the perfect habitat for blue birds. Due to many factors including invasive and competitive birds and habitat degradation, bluebird populations are declining. The time and effort spent by the Scouts will hopefully create a new place for bluebirds to live and help to increase the declining population.

At the Clinton Foodland, staff and volunteers hosted a Hotdog Fundraiser BBQ to raise funds for new handheld tools for maintenance on the trails and also to promote and spread awareness about what the Hullett Marsh has to offer. We raised a total of \$225.56. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us and to the volunteers who helped make the BBQ successful.



This fall, Friends of Hullett and Hullett Marsh Waterfowlers Association (HMWA) is hosting a Youth Waterfowl Clinic. During the clinic, youth will attend seminars on gun safety, duck calls and decoy placement. On the second day, the youth will be paired with an experienced waterfowler and their dog, and set out on a hunt throughout the Marsh. After, they will learn how to prepare and cook their waterfowl. For the ten youth that participate in the clinic, this is a great experience to learn more about the Marsh, have fun, and become more knowledgeable waterfowlers!

I've had an amazing time working at the Marsh and am sad to be done my summer position! The staff and volunteers that support the Hullett Marsh are dedicated and passionate about protecting this special environment, and I have learned so much throughout this experience! The Hullett Marsh has so much to offer and if you have not visited the area before, I strongly recommend it! You will not regret it!

Becky Adams

Recreation and Event Coordinator

Summer Students at Hullett Marsh

This summer FOH hired Quintin Sjaarda as our maintenance coordinator, Bailey Van Massenhoven and Cecil McMichael as our maintenance workers under provincial and federal funding. This team spent 8 weeks this summer working on numerous projects around Hullett to help including the Zone "A" infrastructure. This team took lead on replacing hunting stake signs in the marsh and on parking barriers, changing out old parking barriers and numerous other projects.



This team's work ethic has been inspiring in hot summer temperatures. They have been able to develop their mechanical and hands on skills as well as continue their passion for hunting in the marsh. Two of the team members are participating and helping with this year's Heritage Waterfowl Day!



Thank You to Municipality of Central Huron!

As many of you have noticed this summer, the interior roads at the HPWA are in great shape compared to past years. By keeping our roads closed during the winter and early spring they have a chance to dry out before the spring traffic causes further damage. This is also a safety issue as our roads are not maintained in the winter months.

The roads department from the local municipality has been very generous to the HPWA by grading our roads last fall and once again this spring! The municipality has donated 500 tonnes of gravel and spread it throughout our parking lots, roads and agricultural accesses.

This year Central Huron partially funded the construction of our new privy at the Sugar Bush hiking trail, parking lot 80602. Board member Bill Dineen took the time to coordinate its completion. **Thanks Bill!**



The yearly support of the Donation Fund allows us to build and maintain the marsh to higher standards!

Hullett Marsh Waterfowl Association

This volunteer subcommittee within the FOH, continues to put waterfowl first. Again in 2016, waterfowlers have devoted hundreds of hours of volunteer work towards producing, attracting, and improving the hunting of ducks and geese.

- The Jon Boat is ready to be an integral part of marsh maintenance.
- Wood Duck Boxes have been surveyed, cleaned and prepared for the 2016 hatch as have the Mallard Tubes.
- The cleaning of ditches and water controls, constantly being plugged by beaver, is never ending.

But, it does insure that water levels are kept close to where they should be.

- New reflective hunting stake numbers have been donated and are being placed in the A Zone.
- New parking lot barrier numbers have also been donated and placed
- Burns Line Parking Lot has been completely rebuilt.
- After Board approval, the baited area has been moved back to the Pintail Pool with appropriate signage.
- Stake # 2 through #5 have been placed in the area of the Mallard Pool again with the appropriate signs.
- Bait will be placed in both baited areas again in 2016.
- Two new field hunting stakes have been located in the A Zone, to be hunted after crop harvest beginning at dates set by the FOH.
- Stakes #18 and #19 have been relocated to provide safer and more enjoyable hunts.
- Dialogue has begun with government agencies and various groups, in hopes to stop the spread of Phragmites, a very dangerous threat to Hullett and all wetland areas.

None of this volunteer work could be done of course, without the organization, guidance, and help of our staff and the FOH Board of Directors.

If this type of volunteer work specific to waterfowl, interests you, then contact the FOH office or Ed Allen lallen11@cogeco.ca to be put on the waterfowler's mailing list. Both organized workdays and impromptu ones will be organized though out the year, even in the winter months.



Message from the Hullett Trailblazers

Spring is eagerly anticipated by the Hullett Trailblazers, as it is a reunion time for the regular walkers and it's also a time to welcome new walkers and show what the Hullett has to offer. When the weather permits we start our walks, usually mid-April and with binoculars, and cameras in hand we eagerly head to the dykes to see what is new. We look for the return of the Sandhill Cranes, Blue Heron, the many ducks, Tundra Swans, and even if we are lucky the Hullett Bald Eagles. As we start our weekly walk we wonder what will be the highlight of the night, will it be the white pelican, great horned owl, white egrets, or will it be the elusive bittern. This year it was seeing the White Lady Slipper Orchid in bloom. It is great to have families with young children come and join us as their excitement is contagious when they see a beaver, goose nests filled with large eggs, turtles laying eggs or the Monarch Butterfly cocoon for the first time. What would spring be without a walk through the Maple Sugar Bush where the trilliums, dog-toothed violets, jack in the pulpits and the many other wild flowers that carpet the ground with colour? We feel very fortunate to have this natural classroom in the area.

The marsh is a great place to enjoy the changing seasons. We track the progress of geese from the nest to goslings into adulthood. We follow the changes in vegetation from bare trees and shrubs to lush green growth to the beauty of the fall colours. A fall walk is so relaxing as we enjoy the sound of the rustling leaves and take in the tapestry of the trees in their fall colours. Winter has a beauty all its own. The serenity of walking, snowshoeing or cross country skiing in the Hullett is unsurpassed; you may come across some of the inhabitants such as deer, or wild turkeys. It is a great place to check your knowledge on the different animal tracks, kids love to try and guess what animal made the track. Hullett is also home to many birds, plants, and reptiles that are at risk. It is important to not touch any amphibians such as frogs and toads if you have insect repellent on your hands as this will transfer to the amphibians and they will die as their body absorbs it.



We are all stewards of the Hullett and therefore have a

responsibility to help maintain it. Vandalism is a major problem as well as a costly one, if you see anyone vandalizing the Hullett in any way please report it. A grocery bag tucked in a pocket is handy for putting garbage in that you come across. If you share a love of the outdoors and nature come out and join us. There is no better way to end the day than to watch the beautiful sunsets that only the Hullett can offer. If you are interested check the web site for details, or call me at 519-482-5762.

A note to all users in the Hullett, the "Baited Area" is being moved from the Mallard Pool to the Pintail Pool, it will be posted NO ENTRY, once this change is complete by the fall if you are in this area you can be fined.

*Dale Ann McKichan
Director*

Baited Area

This year the north baited area was moved from the Mallard Pool to Pintail Pool. Signage has been installed and a 400m NO ENTRY zone has been placed around the area. The only people allowed entry to this area are the people listed on the baiting permit, FOH staff and volunteer workers.

Main Viewing Stand Roof

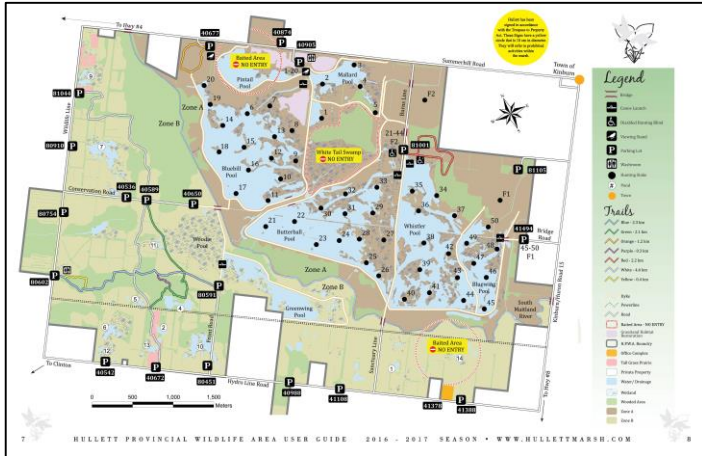


The main viewing stand has received a new steel roof to protect the structure of this legendary Hullett icon. This \$8000 project was paid for with FOH funds.



New User Guide Map & Hunting Stakes

This year's User Guide will sport a new map in the middle pages. This is to help users better understand Hullett and any restricted areas as well as better define Zone "A" and "B".



There will be **two new hunting stakes** this year which will be named F1 & F2. The parking for them are defined on the new map. These stakes will be opened for hunting once crops are harvested, please refer to the hunting page on our website for details.

There have been some movement of the permanent hunting stakes this year, so be sure to check the new map before heading out into the marsh.

Phragmites

Hullett marsh is a heavily used area, with multiple types of recreation and disturbances. With all the different types of activities it opens the marsh up to exposure of invasive species. An invasive species is a plant or animal that establishes in an area that is not native to and starts to have damaging effects on the local species. Invasive species can alter soil chemistry, change conditions more favorable for their growth and out complete native species.

Here at Hullett FOH has targeted one specific species called Phragmites. This plant is known for taking over wetlands and rendering them unsuitable for animal habitat, native plants and recreation. With the help of the MNRF and DU, Friends of construction a management plan to eliminate the Phragmites before it becomes a major issue. There are already large and small plots scattered throughout the marsh that are currently being mapped and documented. FOH hopes to have a plan in place to deal with this issue in 2017.

Other species of invasive plants around Hullett are:

- Purple Loosestrife
- Buckthorn
- Dog Strangling Vine
- Garlic Mustard
- Brown Knapweed

These are all of concern and we will all have to contribute if we are going to keep Hullett healthy! Please don't bring in any foreign terrestrial or aquatic vegetation. In some cases when invasive aquatic plants establish a population, they can render waterways unpassable.

Hullett Marsh Web Site

Our new web site was launched this past spring to help Hullett users get more access to information about the marsh. If there are any issues you find, please bring it to the attention of FOH by email or phone so it can be fixed.

The website is a great place to research the HPWA, learn about FOH and also stay informed. On the events and news page you can see the upcoming events, safety issues and road closures. The News page will contain the most up to date information on activities here at Hullett Marsh. There are quick links with the most useful information on the homepage for easy navigation.

FOH website: www.hullettmarsh.com



2016 Huron Perth Youth Pheasant Hunt



The youth hunt is hosted by the Huron – Perth Youth Pheasant Hunt Committee and is open to youth between the ages of 12 and 15.

This year's date is Saturday November 19 2016.

The Hullett Provincial Wildlife area is the host property for the event. Please visit the link below for more information.

<http://www.loop-perthhuron.ca/youth.html>

Volunteer Opportunities

The Friends of Hullett are always seeking volunteers to help us manage the property. We encourage you to volunteer at a task that interests you. Our Trail Ranger program is in need of new volunteers to prune and blaze trails. The HMWA has interest in the A Zone Waterfowl Area.

You can volunteer as an individual or with a friend as there are always tasks that will improve the Hullett Marsh.

We also have organized work days promoted via email. Feel free to offer your help at any time by contacting Scott or Sarah at fohoffice@tcc.on.ca or 519-482-7011.

Please find attached a membership form to renew your support for Hullett Marsh on the last page of this newsletter.



Be sure to like us on Facebook!

