



What's Inside

Page 1 – Message from the Board of Directors

**Page 2 – Invasive Species – *Phragmites australis*
Volunteer Opportunities**

**Page 3 – Bald Eagle Buffer Zone
In Memory of Tom Jackson
4th Annual FOH Dinner and Auction**

**Page 4 – 2016 Pheasant Challenge Results
New Wildlife and GIS Technician**

**Page 5 – Hullett Trailblazers
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
2016 Youth Pheasant Hunt**

**Page 6 – 2016 Duck Report
Photo Contest**

**Page 7 – Waterfowlers Workday
Prairie Grass Survey Report
Small Game Regulation Changes EBR**

**Page 8 – Annual General Meeting
Vanessa Palmer Award**

Scott Austin has accepted his contract for 2017 and will guide the summer students and volunteers that we hope will continue to help out at HPWA. Scott has also been seeking sources of potential funding for “good fit” students. These students will assist Scott in the many tasks around the office and property.

The BOD has approved the 2017 budget which will include a second full time employee for the 2017 season. At present, we have Alaina Vandervoort replacing Sarah Hubbert, who has moved onto a permanent GIS position in Sault Saint Marie for the OMNRF. The BOD and its members would like to thank Sarah for her achievements and dedicated service this past season, and also wish her all the best in her new endeavours. As for Alaina, she received an excellent turn over from Sarah and has been proceeding along with ongoing programs as well as looking into 2017 projects and new ideas for the marsh.

Finally, I would like speak about volunteerism. Hullett has been fortunate enough to have a strong pool of diverse volunteers that have run and completed many programs and projects at HPWA. This, of course, could not have taken place without the leadership and direction of our dedicated staff. FOH has been very fortunate and appreciative of the efforts from both of these groups, and we hope this continues.

In closing, I hope to see many of you at the upcoming **AGM on Sunday May 28**. At the AGM, we will be able to report on present and future projects and programs at HPWA, as well as update the members on financial and operational issues. This is also the time in which the FOH members have the opportunity to participate in the democratic process and vote for the 3 open positions on the FOH Board of Directors.

From The Directors

Hello FOH members and friends. I would like to thank the BOD, staff and most importantly, **Hullett Volunteers** for their past efforts throughout 2016.

Old man winter came in with a vengeance to 2016 but has somewhat disappeared for now. We have, however, received some cold temperatures to keep the marsh frozen enough for our staff and volunteers to get out and maintain our many nesting structures, while gathering the necessary data to determine the success of each structure. From the pictures posted on the website and on Facebook, some of the findings are quite surprising.

**Duane Inkpen
Chairman
Board of Directors**



Phragmites australis

***Phragmites australis* is an extremely invasive plant which does not provide any food or habitat requirements for wildlife, and kills native vegetation in the vicinity. Friends of Hullett have applied for funding through several avenues, and hope to remove all *Phragmites* this year.**

Phragmites australis is a growing issue across Ontario. The plant is listed as restricted in Ontario, which means the species is well established and the province is making efforts to prevent further spread. Also known as common reed, the plant releases toxins through its roots, killing the native vegetation around it. Although it thrives in marsh-like environments, the roots can reach depths of more than 2 meters, allowing it to grow in virtually any environment.

Many Phrag stands are present in the marsh, and we have been taking GPS location points at each stand we find to compile a detailed map. We have also submitted a funding application through the Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program provided by the OMNRF. This was a very tedious application which consumed many man hours to write and plan, and we are now waiting patiently to hear if our submission was approved.

An application was also submitted to the National Wetland Conservation Fund through Environment and Climate Change Canada, as well as to the OFAH. FOH will hire a contractor to spray all stands this summer, then site visits will begin to evaluate the effectiveness of the spraying, determine what stands need to be sprayed again, and watch for signs of native vegetation appearing and wildlife using the areas once again. The map we have created will continue to be updated with results throughout the process.



Volunteer Opportunities

As the Friends of Hullett are always seeking volunteers to help in managing the property, we encourage you to volunteer as an individual or with a friend for a task that interests you.

Our Trail Ranger Program currently needs volunteers to adopt sections of certain trails. The Hullett Waterfowlers Association has interest in the Zone A and a core group of regular volunteers do the majority of the work in Zone A.

FOH is also very proud to announce the increase in volunteer hours over the past few years.

2014 - Volunteers donated 1160 hours

2015 - Volunteers donated 1354 hours

2016 - Volunteers donated 2160 hours

Earth Day was celebrated in 2016 with over 80 local students from Hullett Public School visiting the marsh to clean up garbage. Excluding the hours solely on Earth Day, 2016 still had a record high of **1730 hours donated!**

FOH can always use help in the collection of items for our 2 annual fundraising dinners. **The FOH Board of Directors and staff would like to thank everyone for their valuable time in helping make Hullett Marsh a better place for all.**

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

Volunteer donations of lumber, fence posts and paint are always very welcome. Charitable tax receipts are issued for all such donations.



Bald Eagle Buffer Zone

FOH established a **400-meter buffer zone** in the fall of 2013 to protect the eagle nest from human disturbance. Our resident female is banded and now over 10 years old. Seven eaglets have fledged since the spring of 2013.

Please respect the privacy of the eagles and the perimeter around the nest site during the posted time period.



In Memory of Tom Jackson

As the owner of Uplands Pheasantry, Tom Jackson has supplied quality pheasants for the HPWA release program for many years. We were very saddened to hear about his sudden passing this past December and his smile will be missed around the Marsh. In his memory, FOH donated to the Lambton Youth Pheasant Hunt as Tom loved to mentor new hunters and especially the youth. Tom was very supportive of FOH fundraising events by both donating and attending. His family will continue his dream of raising game birds at their farm.



Tom's name will be added to the **Hullett Memorial Plaque** in recognition of his support of the HPWA.

4th Annual FOH Dinner

This spring marks the fourth year for this fun filled evening and very important fundraiser for the FOH. This exclusive event will begin with a reception at 4 pm, dinner at 5:30 pm and a live auction to follow at 7 pm.

The atmosphere at the Albion Hotel is second to none, and owner Kim Muszinski always has a few tricks up his sleeve. There are **only 60 seats** available for the event and there are amazing food and prizes to be had including a silent auction.

If you are interested in attending or supporting the event, please contact Scott or Alaina at 519-482-7011 or by email: fohoffice@tcc.on.ca

Tickets include your FOH membership, on sale now!

Early Bird Prizes!!

Purchase your ticket by Saturday, April 1st and you will be automatically entered to win one of 3 prizes.

- One night's stay at the Albion Hotel in Bayfield with continental breakfast, value \$200
- 1 of 2 Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH) memberships as a draw prize

To continue with the success of 2014, 2015 and 2016, we are seeking **your help** in the collection and donation of prizes for the live and silent auctions. Charitable tax receipts will be provided for all donations.

A limited number of rooms are available at the Albion Hotel. If you choose to spend the night, please contact the hotel directly to book: [www.http://thealbionhotel.com/](http://thealbionhotel.com/)

Tickets are selling quickly!

Contact us today to reserve your seats!

2016 Pheasant Challenge

FOH would like to thank all hunters and non-hunters who supported the Pheasant Challenge by purchasing tickets in 2016. \$1570 was raised in 2014, \$2120 in 2015, and a record \$3160 this year! Over 30 of the 100 banded birds released were reported to FOH in 2016. The past pheasant release costs the FOH **\$8000 plus labour, administration, fuel and license costs annually.**

To release 1000 pheasants again in 2017 the projected cost will be over **\$10,000** with an increase in bird costs.



This year's winner of the Generac generator donated by Ideal Supply is **Oscar Signoretti** of Toronto! Congratulations!

The **Ideal Supply** hunter orange hats were very popular in 2016 as band prizes. **Ideal Supply** was generous enough to donate once again, as the business supplied the grand prize and sold tickets at 6 of its local stores.

Parking Lot Barrier Repairs

As many of you noticed this past summer and fall, some of the Hullett parking lots received a facelift with the replacement of damaged and rotten barriers. FOH purchased a used post hole auger and this project will continue in 2017.

New Staff Member

As Sarah has moved on to a GIS Data Technician job with the MNRF in Sault St. Marie, Alaina has stepped in to fill the Wildlife and GIS Technician position here at Hullett.

Alaina is a recent grad from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, where she has received an Honours Bachelor of Environmental Management with a specialization in Wildlife Conservation and Management. She completed an undergraduate thesis using drones and thermal imaging to detect hazard trees in Quetico Provincial Park, and has strong GIS and mapping skills. She has been a member of the OFAH for many years, and has a strong passion for hunting, fishing, and conservation, making her a great fit here at Hullett.

She has previously worked with the MNRF through Ontario Parks, in both maintenance and park warden positions widespread across the province. As Alaina hopes to maintain a career in wildlife biology, FOH is providing her with many opportunities to help build her resume and acquire new skills. If you're in the area, make sure to stop by the office to say hello!

Alaina has proven to be a very passionate worker for FOH leading many projects including the complex Phragmites removal plan. She works very well with all users of the property as well as our partners MNRF and DUC.



Hullett Trailblazers

On October 27, the **Trailblazers** hosted their 5th annual fundraising dinner at the Kinburn Hall. **Municipality of Central Huron** provided the hall free of charge.



\$1916 was raised for the FOH with proceeds coming from the meal as well as the silent auction. This was the most financially successful dinner to date!

187 volunteer hours were logged for this event including all the footwork needed to gather prizes.

FOH would like to thank the local merchants who donated many of the prizes and also the continued efforts of the **Trailblazers** in their promotion and fundraising for the Hullett Marsh.

OFAH

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is the oldest and largest non-profit, non-government fish and wildlife conservation organization in Canada. With more than 100,000 members its mandate supports many conservation projects while honoring the traditions of fishing and hunting. Hullett Marsh is located in **Zone H**.

To learn more visit: <http://www.ofah.org>



2016 Youth Pheasant Hunt

Once again HPWA was the host property for the Huron/Perth YPH on November 18/16. **This popular event is very important for the development of young hunters between the ages of 12 and 15.** The YPH volunteers organize the entire event. Firearm safety, hunter ethics, shooting skills and bird cleaning were some topics covered.



Conservation Officer Deane Waite is pictured above speaking to the youth hunters and their mentors.



To learn more about the YPH or register for 2017 please visit: <http://www.loop-perthhuron.ca/>

Duck Report

Duck season opener at Hullett Marsh attracted a total of 64 hunters who occupied 28 hunting stakes throughout the day, and harvested a total of 114 waterfowl.

In 2015, 96 hunters harvested 302 birds, and in 2014, 85 hunters harvested 264 birds. Hunter and harvest numbers were very low this year. In both 2014 and 2015, each hunter harvested an average of 3.1 birds. In 2016, this average was 1.8 birds per hunter.

Hunting stake #23 proved the most successful on opening day, as an average of 8.5 birds per hunter were harvested—17 waterfowl were harvested here by two hunters.

From the 64 hunters who participated in the 2016 duck opener at Hullett Marsh, 37 mallards, 30 green-winged teal, 17 blue-winged teal, 14 geese, 2 wood ducks, and 14 other species of birds were harvested. No black ducks were harvested at this time. The ratio of species harvested in 2016 remained fairly consistent when compared to the average ratio of species harvested between 2003 and 2015.

Why are the harvest numbers much lower this year than in previous years? This is a difficult question to answer. Studies on waterfowl populations in North America estimate stable and steady populations. Hullett Marsh had an abnormally dry summer, which lowered water levels in our ponds, which may have enticed fewer birds. Less hunters participated in opening day as well, which could have contributed to fewer birds harvested, as less calling and fewer decoys would be present. There are too many factors to determine the sole reason for the reduced harvest numbers for 2016.

For more details and data trend charts, read the 2016 Duck Report here: <http://tinyurl.com/gwvlpqw>.

Snowmobiling at Hullett

Snowmobiles are permitted within the HPWA on registered Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club (OFSC) trails only. The North Huron Trail Groomers club are responsible for Hullett trails and surrounding areas.

Snowmobiles leaving the marked OFSC trail create a safety concern and disturb wintering wildlife as well as other users of the property.

To learn more about OFSC visit: <http://www.ofsc.on.ca/>

Photo Contest

Friends of Hullett are proud to announce our first annual photo contest! Every picture from Hullett Marsh submitted counts as an entry into the contest, and one randomly drawn winner will receive a free FOH membership. By submitting an entry, you are allowing us to share the image (with photo credit) on our social media outlets.

The contest has been a success so far. We have received quite a few pictures, and have started sharing them for all to see with excellent feedback! See the poster at the end of the newsletter for more information.

The contest ends March 31, 2017, so e-mail us your favourite pictures from Hullett Marsh!



Waterfowlers Workday

On January 14 HMWA volunteers took advantage of the cold snap to spend a day on the ice at the marsh. Data was collected on all Mallard nesting tubes and many duck boxes. Most volunteers were recently trained and certified to “work on ice” to MNRF standards accompanying those without certification. Tubes were all transported back to the office for grass repacking and duck boxes were cleaned and refreshed with wood shavings.

A special thanks goes out to Bruce Wilbee for operating and donating his ARGO for the day!



Membership Renewals

We would like to remind you that all Friends of Hullett memberships expire on December 31 each year. The FOH membership grew substantially in 2016 with many “first time” members.

Prairie Grass Survey Report

To offset the habitat lost from Northland Power’s solar project in Burk’s Falls, 60 acres of native grassland habitat at Hullett Marsh was created. Site preparation began in the spring of 2014, and the area was planted in the fall, with an additional seed application in spring of 2015. Managed by Ducks Unlimited Canada, the focus of area is to maintain the habitat requirements for the Eastern Meadowlark and the Bobolink.

In June of 2016, the first habitat assessment surveys were conducted by a consulting company. Three points in each of two plots were established, and sightings of meadowlarks and bobolinks were recorded on three separate days of surveying.

Through initial observations, it appears the grassland habitat is becoming successful, as several bobolinks were already present, and meadowlarks were beginning to find refuge there. More meadowlark should use the area once the preferred grasses and forbs become established.

Small Game EBR

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has proposed several changes to the small game hunting regulations to streamline seasons, hunting areas, and bag limits (EBR Registry Number 012-9170). One of the proposed changes is to streamline the pheasant hunting bag limit with the ability for a landowner to release up to 10 pheasants and/or chukars per season for their own hunting purposes. As the current daily bag limit for pheasants is 3, increasing this to 10 could be detrimental for Hullett’s Pheasant Release Program.

FOH hopes to subsidize 50% the cost of releasing pheasants through fundraising and donations, but an increased bag limit will cause a higher demand than we are able to supply. To stop this change from happening, public input is encouraged.

FOH has written a statement letter which was posted on our website, Facebook page, a link on our Instagram account, and sent out through e-mail, which informed our friends and members and gave them an opportunity to submit our letter themselves if they agreed. We have received some very good feedback on this letter, and many of our users have supported our stance. For more information and to read public comments submitted online, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/h6zyomv>.

Annual General Meeting

Join your fellow FOH members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). By attending this meeting you will have a chance to voice your opinion and make a difference!

We will start by discussing the current state of the marsh, including habitat programs, and provide and provide an update on recent projects like the establishment of 2 new field hunting stakes, grassland habitats and infrastructure improvements such as our new concrete privy. Service awards and the Vanessa Palmer Award will be presented, followed by an open discussion with all members and then director elections. We will close with a guest presenter.

After this meeting, members are welcome to join for a delicious barbeque lunch provided by the Friends. All members are welcome to come out and enjoy the company, marsh news and food!

Elections for (3) four Board of Directors (BOD) positions will take place on Sunday May 28 2017. To run for the BOD you must be a member of the FOH and you are required to submit a letter expressing your interest to run for the BOD to MNRF Guelph Area Office. Letters expressing intent to run for the BOD must be received at least two weeks prior to the AGM. Nominations will not be taken from the floor.

The AGM will be held on Sunday May 28, 2017. The meeting will be held at the HPWA Office Complex, located at 41378 Hydro Line Road. The meeting will start at 10 AM with a free lunch to follow. All members are strongly encouraged to attend this event.

AGM Agenda

- 1/ Introduction of Board of Directors and Guests
- 2/ Report from Marsh Staff
- 3/ Financial Report
- 4/ Report from the Ministry of Natural Resources And Forestry
- 5/ Report from the Friends of Hullett Board
- 6/ Presentation of Vanessa Palmer Award
- 7/ Questions, Comments and Suggestions from The membership floor
- 8/ Election of officers to the Board of Directors
- 9/ **Guest Presentation: To Be Announced**
- 10/ Lunch

Vanessa Palmer Award

FOH have created an award in honour of Vanessa Palmer. The Award was created in 2005 and is awarded to deserving youth on an annual basis. The award demonstrates exceptional environmental awareness achievement.

In 2002, Vanessa was elected to sit on the Friends of Hullett Board of Directors. She was instrumental in developing and creating the Interpretive Centre located at the HPWA. Unfortunately, the center is now closed due to moisture damage. Since the centre opened in 2003, hundreds have visited, including youth groups such as school classes and Scout troops.

In recognition of Vanessa's outstanding commitment and achievement to environmental awareness and education, FOH are proud to offer an award in her name. The award will be presented to students exhibiting an outstanding awareness of the environment through achievement or contribution. This award is ideally suited for students starting post-secondary education next year in any type of environmental studies. The successful applicant will be present to receive the plaque and \$200 honorarium cheque at the FOH Annual General Meeting.

Please contact us if you know a deserving youth.





REGISTRATION FORM

FRIENDS OF HULLETT MEMBERSHIP

HELP MAINTAIN THE MARSH... BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!
Income tax receipts will be issued for a donation of \$25.00 or more annually!

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

POSTAL CODE _____

E-MAIL _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF:

- WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU LIKE TO DO AT THE MARSH?
HIKE___ BIRDWATCH___ HUNT___ CANOE___ HORSEBACK RIDE___
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____
- IF YOU ARE A HUNTER WHAT IS IT YOU LIKE TO HUNT FOR?
PHEASANT___ DUCKS___ GEESE___
OTHER(PLEASE SPECIFY) _____
- WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER DAYS AT THE MARSH? (i.e. Construction of needed structures, maintenance, events help...)
YES___ NO___
- ARE YOU CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF A CLUB OR ORGANIZATION THAT MAKES USE OF THE MARSH AND ITS FACILITIES?
YES___ NO___
(IF YES, PLEASE LIST NAMES OF CLUBS OR ORGANIZATIONS)

IF YOU HAVE ANY **COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS** PLEASE TAKE TIME TO SHARE THEM WITH US AS WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS!

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT!

Payment Options Below:

PLEASE MAIL CHEQUE TO: FRIENDS OF HULLETT, P.O. BOX 1520 CLINTON, ON N0M 1L0

Please make cheque's payable to ***"Friends of Hullett"***

For a fast and easy payment please send an email money transfer to fohoffice@tcc.on.ca

PHOTO CONTEST 2017

Friends of Hullett

Working in harmony with nature.

We want to see your pictures of Hullett Marsh! From nature walks to family fun, scenery, wildlife, and hunting shots, send in your pictures for a chance to win!

Send us your pictures of Hullett Marsh to fohoffice@tcc.on.ca!*

Images must:

- Depict safe practices
- Not contain gore
- Be in focus

Please help us out by using your name in the file name!
(John_Smith.jpg for example)

CONTEST ENDS:
MARCH 31, 2017

Every photo submitted is an entry to win a FREE Hullett Membership!

