

# HULLETT NEWS



## SPRING 2020

### Board of Directors

#### Message from the Board

Hello friends and members,

The spring of 2020 has been an eventful start to the year, to say the least. The COVID-19 health crisis has led to the cancelation of many of our events, programs, and partnerships.

As most of you know the Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area was closed to all public use on April 3, 2020 to comply with guidelines set by provincial public health officials. I thank you for your patience, understanding and respect of this closure. Agriculture, trapping, and bee keeping contracts remained operational on the property as essential services.

**The Saturday May 9 opening of Hullett Marsh was announced immediately on our social media platforms and emailed to our membership database. Please practise physical distancing. Viewing stands and privies remain closed for the time being.**

FOH has been very fortunate over the past few years to have a core of volunteers throughout our community that have been willing to offer their time to help with activities and tasks around Hullett Marsh. We are hopeful to be able to move forward with volunteer help and coordination as we ease out of this health crisis.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors, staff and most importantly, the membership and volunteers for their efforts and donations since the end of 2019.

**We hope you enjoy this Spring Newsletter. You can click any of the links at the bottom of each newsletter page to be directed to their affiliated media platforms.**

Duane Inkpen  
Chairman

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## Water Access Restrictions

Water access (for any purpose) is not permitted in the HPWA from May 15 to August 1 in Zone A and May 15 to July 15 in Zone B annually to minimize the disturbance to nesting waterfowl. This includes retriever training activities, wading, canoeing, and kayaking.



## Horse Access

Hullett Marsh is a beautiful area, and from the back of your equine partner it is even more so. Horses are allowed all over Zone B and the dyke systems but there are limitations. Between the months of October and May, the dyke systems are soft and can be dangerous for horses. **Therefore, horses are not permitted in Zone A between October 1 and May 1.** Please abide by the set rules and regulations to help maintain the HPWA and reduce wearing of the trails and dyke systems.



## Eagle Buffer Zone



FOH established a 400- metre buffer zone in the fall of 2013 to protect our resident eagle nest from human disturbance. Our resident female is banded and now over 10 years old. Over 10 eaglets have fledged since the spring of 2013. Please respect the privacy of the eagles and the perimeter around the nest site.

**THIS BUFFER ZONE IS IN EFFECT FROM  
FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> TO JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>.**

## Brake for Turtles

As temperatures are on the rise, so is activity of snakes and turtles throughout Hullett Marsh. Hullett is home to a variety of different species of turtles, snakes, and amphibians. A majority of these species are listed as Species at Risk in Ontario.



## Turtle Nesting

Unfortunately, we will not be able to take volunteers for the turtle nesting program this year due to COVID-19. We are still planning to install 20 nest protectors throughout the marsh over nests to help increase the survival rate of their eggs. Nest protectors help defenseless eggs of our two known native species in the marsh, Common Snapping Turtles and Midland Painted Turtles.



We will keep everyone updated on this project as it progresses and will update our media platforms if there is any possibility that volunteers will be able to help. The marsh is currently open so if you happen to find a turtle nest in the marsh on your travels you can email us the location at [fohoffice@tcc.on.ca](mailto:fohoffice@tcc.on.ca).



## Spring Fundraiser Early Bird Prize Winners

As part of our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Dinner and Auction, individuals who purchased their tickets before March 6, 2020 were entered into an early bird draw. Congratulations to our three lucky winners:

**\$50.00 Gift Certificate to Clinton Sporting Goods - Rob of Hensall, Ontario**



**\$50.00 Gift Certificate to Maelstrom Winery - Gabriela of Seaforth, Ontario**



MAELSTRÖM

**\$50.00 Gift Certificate to River Road Brewing and Hops - Josh of Sarnia, Ontario**



## Volunteering

Currently, due to COVID-19, **we will not be taking any volunteers at the marsh working along side staff.** We are hopeful that by **June 15** we will be able to have volunteers out at the marsh to perform duties independantly or as a family unit in order to maintain a safe distance from others.

Staff we be able to guide volunteers and assign tools needed for tasks such as trail pruning and marking at safe outdoor distances. Communicating via email and telephone will provide guidance.



## Connect with Us

Friends of Hullett continues to use various forms of Social Media to communicate with our users! Keep informed by checking out our website, Facebook or Instagram. Links to these accounts can be found at the bottom of each page of this newsletter.



# Friends of Hullett

## Past FOH Permanent Staff Achievements

Friends of Hullett have had many different full-time staff members over the years. FOH recruits young graduates with environmental science backgrounds and a true passion for the outdoors.

Employment with FOH exposes staff members to many different tasks and responsibilities. FOH invests in these young conservation professionals by providing necessary training and experience to develop their skills and enable them to work safely. Their resumes outline achievements while employed by FOH that help them launch their careers.

We are very proud to provide a steppingstone to full time positions with other organizations as these staff move on with their careers. Our new employee **Alex Morrow** was selected from over 100 applicants.

In the fall of 2016 **Sarah Hubbert** moved on to become a full-time GIS technician for Algonquin Zone with MOE Conservation and Parks. Sarah also operates Hubbert Maple Products with her family in Sundridge, Ontario.



In 2017 **Alaina Vandervoort** left FOH for a position with MNRF in Guelph. After her time in Guelph, Alaina moved to Wawa where she worked as a Resource Management Technician and then a Bear Technician. Alaina is currently in Marathon, Ontario where she is working as a full time PR and Marketing Coordinator for Nawinginokiima Forest Management Corporation.



Early in 2020 **Greg Urquhart** secured a full-time position with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority as a forestry technician. Greg will not be forgotten after 21 months of dedicated service with FOH and the HPWA is a better place due to Greg's passion and work ethic.

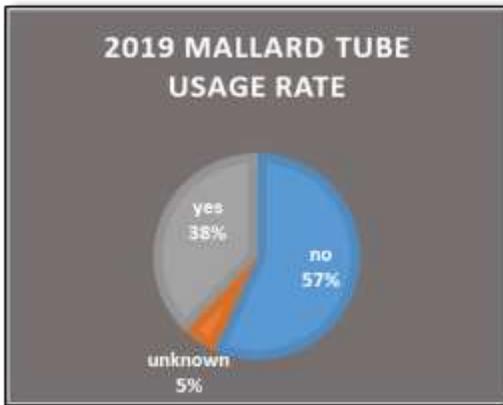


## 2019 Nesting Season Report

Another nesting season has come and gone at Hullett Marsh and we have continued to see our Mallard Tube and Duck Box Nesting Programs thrive. This data is invaluable to us at Hullett and allows us to better understand what the birds are looking for in nesting grounds, as well as to better position boxes and tubes to allow for the highest possible usage and success rates. We would like to thank all of those who help to make these programs so successful year after year, without your help this would not be possible.

### Mallard Tubes

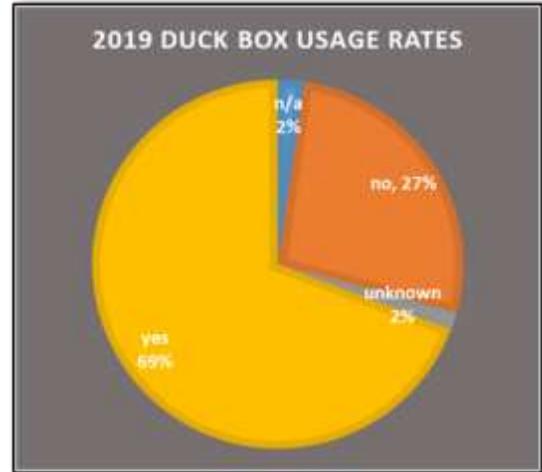
The Friends of Hullett observed a 38% usage rate in our Mallard Tubes during the 2019 nesting season. This is an 15% increase from last years' usage rates. 30% of the 37 tubes that were placed in the marsh were considered successful nests. These tubes have been replaced in the marsh and hopefully we will continue to see an upward trend in usage and success in the 2020 season.



### Duck Boxes

The Friends of Hullett observed a 69% usage rate in our Duck Boxes during the 2019 season. This is an 11% increase from last years' usage rates. 26% of the 130 boxes were considered successful nests. Of the boxes that were used, it was found **that 31% were used**

by Wood Duck, 37% were used by Hooded Merganser and 32% were used by both species. This is an even split of the different nesting possibilities and a very positive result.



With the continued help of our amazing volunteers, we will make sure that these ducks have ideal nesting grounds for years to come, and in doing so, ensuring that there will be stable populations of these birds for all outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy. We hope to see you all again in the 2020 season.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact us at [fohoffice@tcc.on.ca](mailto:fohoffice@tcc.on.ca) for more information.



## Membership Renewals

As of December 31, 2019, memberships that were purchased prior to September 2019 have expired.

With the renewal of your membership, Friends of Hullett will have the financial resources to continue the maintenance of the property, as well as host educational, recreational and youth events.

There are various payments options Friends of Hullett offers. These include cash, debit, cheque, credit card, e-transfer and PayPal!



A blank Membership Form can be found [here](#) or on the last page of this newsletter. This form can be sent via email to [fohoffice@tcc.on.ca](mailto:fohoffice@tcc.on.ca). Memberships can also be mailed or placed in our Hullett Dropbox located at the entrance of the Hullett Office Complex.

## Annual General Meeting Election

As you all know, the Annual General Meeting had to be cancelled this year due to health concerns surrounding COVID-19. An email was sent out to our membership on April 22<sup>nd</sup> with an invitation and application to run for one of the three open director positions on the FOH board.

MNRF has advised FOH that no new applications were submitted from the FOH membership. Ryan Bayne, Jim Bayne and Wade Beaudoin will remain on the board after submitting their applications. We are looking forward to having Ryan, Jim and Wade on the board to continue to help steer the marsh towards a brighter future.

## Wildlife and GIS Technician

**Hello Hullett members, my name is Alex Morrow and I am very excited to be the new Wildlife and GIS Technician at Hullett Marsh.**

My interest for the outdoors began in high school when I took my first environmental science class. From there I went on to take the 2-year Fish and Wildlife Technician course at Fleming College where that interest grew into a passion. After the Fish and Wildlife program I took a Post Graduate course in Aquaculture.

I worked in the aquaculture industry for two and a half years, first at a shrimp farm in Aylmer, Ontario called Planet Shrimp. After Planet Shrimp I went to work for a trout farm in Hanover, Ontario called Cedar Crest Trout Farm. After those two and a half years in aquaculture, I realized that this was not the career for me and I wanted to pursue what really made me happy, the outdoors!

This is my first job in the Fish and Wildlife field and although I have not been here long, I am loving it. I could not imagine a better place to get into this line of work than Hullett Marsh. It is such a unique area and I am looking forward to getting a chance to experience everything that it has to offer and teach.

I am excited to get a chance to meet and talk with members and to explore this beautiful space.

See you in the marsh!  
Alex Morrow



## Spring Foraging

Spring has finally sprung in the marsh and with spring comes new life and the opportunity to forage. Hullett Marsh offers some wonderful foraging opportunities with a variety of species that can be found throughout the marsh.

One of the most sought-after species that can be found in the marsh are Morel Mushrooms. Morels are known as one of the tastiest mushrooms in the woods and can be found by those with a keen eye and good patience. Morels are often found at the base of trees along the edge of forested areas.

Another common species to forage for are Fiddleheads. Fiddleheads are the coiled ends of Ostrich ferns and can be found at the beginning of spring in wet, low lying areas in or near forests. It is essential to know what you are harvesting as other types of ferns can be toxic to eat!

We recommend that those wanting to forage bring along a field guide to properly identify the plants you are wanting to harvest. **When in doubt, leave it out.** Make sure to practice your ID skills and if possible, accompany an experienced forager if it is your first time trying this fun spring activity.

## Youth Waterfowl Clinic

The youth waterfowl hunt is currently on hold until further notice. Due to concerns with COVID-19, as well as the possibility of the federal government changing the date of the Waterfowl Heritage Day. We will keep everyone informed on this matter as it develops, and we will keep our fingers crossed that we are able to host some form of event in the fall.

Stay tuned to our website and social media pages for details and updates and feel free to email us at [fohoffice@tcc.on.ca](mailto:fohoffice@tcc.on.ca) if you have any questions.

## Vanessa Palmer Award

Every year, FOH recognizes a passionate student who is moving on to pursue a post-secondary education in the environmental field. Students are asked to submit a letter, outlining their contributions and/or achievements in the environmental field, as well as a letter of reference to validate these achievements. We would like to thank all those students who submitted a letter this year.

This year, we have the honour of awarding 2 students with this award, both of whom have showed exceptional knowledge and passion for the environment. The FOH would like to congratulate our two recipients:

**Kaori Ono/ Blyth, ON (Right)**  
**Courtney Geddes/ Brucefield, ON (Left)**

As part of being a recipient of the Vanessa Palmer Award, each student will receive a Certificate of Recognition, plus \$200.00 to go towards their education. These recipients will receive their award via mail this year, as unfortunately the AGM has been cancelled due to continuing concerns surrounding COVID-19. Names of each recipient will be added to our Vanessa Palmer Award plaque.



## Photo Contest

March 31<sup>st</sup> marked the deadline for submissions to our 2020 photo contest. We would like to thank everyone who participated in this contest and would like to congratulate everyone on your amazing photos.

This year, FOH modified the way that winners were chosen and let the community vote for their favourite photo. Your participation led to a very close race, here are your winners for the 2020 photo contest:

**1<sup>st</sup> Place: Deb Johnston**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Place: April Wade**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Conrad Kuiper**



**4<sup>th</sup> Place: Melody van Dorp**



**5<sup>th</sup> Place: Melissa Oosterbosch**



**6<sup>th</sup> Place: Jesse Lambert**



## 2020 Fall Pheasant Release

**The Friends of Hullett are pleased to announce that we will be releasing 920 pheasants for the 2020 fall hunting season!**

Partial funding for this release came from the generous support of the **Pheasant Challenge** ticket sales last year, a record of 559 \$10 tickets were sold! We also received direct cash donations from hunters totalling \$895.

\$3,000 from the 2019 spring fundraiser Dinner and Auction and a \$507 supplement from FOH top up the funds to cover administration and \$9.75 per bird costs.

**This year we will print the pheasant challenge tickets early so that sales can start at the beginning of the summer to help offset the lost revenue from the cancellation of the 2020 spring fundraiser Dinner and Auction.**

This will allow pheasant hunters more time to purchase tickets towards the 2021 pheasant release. We are hopeful to keep this program going in the future with the number of released birds being based on financial support from pheasant hunters. The future of the pheasant release program is in your hands, hunters!



## Species Profile: Muskrat

*Ondatra zibethicus*



The muskrat is a medium-sized, semiaquatic rodent that is native to North America. Muskrats average 40-70 cm in length and can weigh anywhere from 1-4 pounds. They

have a short, thick brown fur that helps to protect them from cold water. Their tail is scaled much like a beaver, but unlike the beaver, whose tail is flattened horizontally, their tail is flattened vertically, which helps them swim. Muskrats have large, semi-webbed hind feet that they use to propel them through the water.

Muskrats preferred habitats are wetlands. These wetlands provide the muskrat with ideal food and shelter. Their favourite foods include cattails and yellow water lily; they are omnivorous and are known to eat mussels, frogs, fish and even small turtles as well.

Muskrats are extremely territorial creatures and will often fight one another during the breeding season for territory and mates. A female Muskrat can breed 2-3 times a year



and can produce 6-8 young in each litter. To protect themselves and their young, muskrats will build one of two kinds of shelter, depending on the habitat they are in. In ponds, streams or lakes, muskrats will burrow into the banks to make their dens, leaving the entrance to the den either partially or completely submerged. In marsh areas, muskrats will construct push-ups, which are piles of mud and vegetation that are formed into a den. The controlling of muskrat populations is necessary in Hullett as their burrowing tendencies destroy our dyke systems.

Anthropogenic influences led muskrats to be introduced into Europe because of their importance in the fur trade for their warm, soft fur. Their populations rose exponentially, making them an invasive species causing terror on important water structures, much like the issues within Hullett Marsh.

## Donor Appreciation

Friends of Hullett would like to thank our amazing donors for the fundraiser dinner this year. Even though the dinner did not happen, we will be holding on to all donations and using them for the dinner next year.

Here is an acknowledgment of all those who donated to the dinner this year. We at Hullett would like to thank you for your generosity and support.

- Bluewater Golf Course/ Bayfield
- Clinton Sporting Goods/ Clinton
- Northern Exposure Sporting Goods/ Hillsburgh
- Dianne and Don Freeman/ Clinton
- Urquhart Farms Ltd./ Kirkton
- Gordon Mackay/ Collingwood
- Sills Home Hardware/ Seaforth
- Canadian Tire/ Exeter
- Jim Bayne/ Sarnia
- The Ashwood Inn/ Bayfield
- The Spotted Cow/ Bayfield
- Los Puntos Cantina/ Sarnia
- Stone House Brewery/ Varna
- Scott Phillips/ London
- Rona Moffatt and Powell/ Exeter
- Ryan Beauchamp
- The Garlic Box/ Hensall
- Bob Milligan/ Bayfield
- Munro Honey and Meadery/ Alvinston
- Pet Valu/ Exeter
- Hyde Park Equipment/ London
- Watson's Home Hardware/ Goderich
- Delta Waterfowl
- Robert Q Travel/ Clinton
- Jason Bayne/ Sarnia
- Bill Dineen/ Goderich

- Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- Jarrod Munro/ Corunna
- The Pink Flamingo/ Bayfield
- White Squirrel Golf Club/ St Joseph
- Bad Apple Brewing Company/ St Joseph
- Dublin Mercantile/ Bayfield
- Erie Gold Sportfishing/ Port Burwell
- Exeter Game Farm
- Steve Darymple
- The Outdoorsman/ Sarnia
- Sharkskin Weathergear/ Sarnia
- Verbeek's Farm and Garden Centre Inc./ Clinton
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunter Zone J
- Main Street Optometric/ Bayfield
- Maelstrom Winery/ Seaforth



## In Memoriam

### Tom Lobb

Arguably the most knowledgeable naturalist/biologist in Huron County, Tom Lobb passed away suddenly on January 7, 2020. Tom was a long-standing supporter and member of FOH. Tom conducted spring frog surveys at Hullett Marsh



every year. He was eager to share his knowledge with FOH staff and volunteers. His interests were the turtles and snakes indigenous to our area and he has done a great deal of research and conservation in this field. His knowledge of plants was almost encyclopedic, and his love of nature knew no bounds. Tom will be missed around the marsh.

### Bob Pegg

It is with profound sadness we announce that Bob Pegg passed away on March 20, 2020, at the age of 71, after a brief battle with cancer. Bob was a fixture on the backroads and bushes of Huron County and will be greatly missed by those that knew him. He worked for the MNR for over 38 years, 36 of those



as the local Conservation Officer. He had a tremendous passion for family, friends and the great outdoors and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and trapping with anyone and everyone.

Hullett Marsh held a special place in Bob's heart. He had the utmost respect for the Friends of Hullett and the managers of the marsh. He looked forward every fall to walking the pheasant fields with his children, grandchildren, and good friends. He understood and valued the true treasures of Hullett. Bob's smiling face and little red truck tucked in the corners of the parking lots will forever be missed.

Bob was a friendly and humble man with a great zest for life. For those who met him, you have known a great man and for those who loved him, cherish the memories.

**Tom Lobb and Bob Pegg were cherished members of the Hullett community and will be missed by all. Their names will be added to our memorial plaque along with Calvin Van Massenhoven, who passed away last year.**

## FOH Charity Dinner and Auction

Unfortunately, due to public safety and health concerns presented by the COVID-19 virus, our 2020 Dinner and Auction was canceled. FOH would like to thank all that purchased tickets for showing your support for this wonderful evening.

A refund program was initiated and has been completed. We would like to thank everyone for their patience and support during this time. FOH staff understands that it has been a difficult time for all, but we are hopeful that with proper social distancing and safety precautions that things will start getting back to normal soon and we will be able to host the dinner next year without any issues.

**We look forward to seeing everyone at the dinner fundraiser next year and are reminiscing of the great times had at previous dinners. Please keep your eyes peeled to your email and Social Media for a posted date for next year.**

## Turtles are disappearing from Ontario's wetlands, but you can help save them

**By: Cristen Watt, Species at Risk Field Coordinator, Huron Stewardship Council**

**Photos Taken by: Paul Parsons**

Turtles are a vital part of our local ecosystems. They hold an important role in food webs and help clean our local waterways by eating decaying fish. Unfortunately, they are the most threatened group of animals on the planet. Ontario is no exception; all eight native species are now listed as species at risk.

The turtles we see today look remarkably like the ones we would have seen in North America nearly 90 million years ago. They have been the ultimate survivors, but this is changing before our eyes.

The loss of turtles and the decline of our wetlands have gone hand-in-hand and turtles must now travel long distances between wetlands. Turtles are also slow-moving and very susceptible to road mortality. No area in Southern Ontario is more than 1.5 km from a road, and turtles must traverse this dangerous landscape to find nest sites, mates, or new habitats. Predation rates of eggs and turtles are also inflated across much of Southern Ontario. With high mortality from roads and predators, only a few are lucky enough to reach maturity, which for a Snapping turtle is 15 – 20 years of age. On average, she will be nearly 60 years old before she produces a single offspring that will survive to replace her.

### ***What can you do?***

Help turtles cross the road, especially from late May until early July when females look for a place to lay their eggs.

If you see a turtle trying to cross a road, carefully and safely help it across in the direction it is moving. If you find an injured turtle, call the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre immediately at 705-741-5000.

Consider installing a wire protector around turtle nests on your property. Email us at [huronstewardship@gmail.com](mailto:huronstewardship@gmail.com) if you are interested in purchasing an assembled nest protector (\$20) or a kit (\$15). Artificial nesting mounds (i.e. small gravel / sand pits) can also provide turtles with a safe alternative to gravel roadsides and fields. Contact us for any advice about making your property more turtle-friendly.

The loss of any turtle—especially an adult female—is a major blow to a population. Saving just one can make a big difference.

*The Huron Stewardship Council has been working to recover local turtle populations across Huron County for over fifteen years. Some of our projects include monitoring of local turtle populations, the incubation of vulnerable eggs and release of hatchlings, and nature-based outreach and education programs. For more information, call 519-524-8394 ext. 3286 or email [staff@huronstewardship.ca](mailto:staff@huronstewardship.ca).*



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_

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!**

**PLEASE MAIL CHEQUE OR CASH 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 OR by PayPal on our website: [www.hullettmarsh.com](http://www.hullettmarsh.com)

