

HULLETT NEWS



SPRING 2024

Board of Directors *Message from the Board*

In 2024 the Friends of Hullett (FOH) are putting efforts into the **health of our forest ecosystems** with studies, invasive species control and native tree plantings with a focus on species diversity. We have entered into a new **5 year Agricultural Agreement** with Flynn Farms for 2025 to 2029 **after a public tender process**. These funds are the core of the operational budget for FOH, allowing us to have staff and vehicles to take care of the property.

2024 marks the 26th anniversary of the Friends of Hullett as an incorporated registered charity within Canada, caring for this unique property. **We hope to see you at the AGM on May 26 (page 5).**

HPWA is a **“Multi-Use”** property and respecting each other’s activities safely is important. FOH has published [hunting](#) and [hiking](#) “tip sheets” to help you research, understand and enjoy your visits!

I would like to thank the volunteer Board of Directors, staff and most importantly, the membership and volunteers for their efforts and donations. **Special thanks goes out to Mike Cardinal for 25 plus years of dedicated service on the FOH Board of Directors.** Mike is an original founding Board member since FOH incorporation.

Looking ahead to the summer, Scott and Ben are building a team of students and volunteers to work at the HPWA. We have 1 funded **Canada Summer Job** position for 2024. **The last few years we have had 3 positions however the Federal Government has cut back for 2024.**

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 of the Board

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Water Access Restrictions

Water access (for any purpose) is **not permitted** in the HPWA from **May 15 to July 31** 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.

Turtle Nest Protection

Our nest protector boxes are in the process of being installed 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**.

It is important to protect these turtles and their eggs because it takes turtles about 10 years to reach sexual maturity!

We will keep everyone updated on this project as it progresses through our social media.



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.



Charity Dinner 2024

The **9th Annual Charity Dinner and Auction** has come and gone and was an overwhelming success. This was our second year hosting this event after a 3-year hiatus, and we couldn't have done it if it weren't for strong support from our membership and their many **generous donations**.

This year:

- 81 tickets were sold
- More than **30 door prizes** were generously donated
- **Over \$13,000** was raised to help maintain and improve the HPWA
- Fun was had by all with many interesting items up for auction
- A **special thanks** goes out to – **Clinton Sporting Goods, Bluewater Golf Course, West Coast Leisure Sales, and Pineridge BBQ** for helping to make our event a success

If you missed out on attending this event, keep an eye on your email later in the year as **Friends of Hullett** looks to host it once again in the **spring of 2025!**

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. Click the images below to visit us on Facebook, Instagram or the Hullett Marsh website!



Membership Renewals

As of December 31, 2023, memberships that were purchased prior to September 1st, 2023 have **expired**.

There are various payment options available, including cash in our drop box at the office gate, cheque (made out to **Friends of Hullett**), e-Transfer (auto-deposit, no password required) to fohoffice@tcc.on.ca and PayPal!

Please complete the **new simple** auto-fill enabled [Member Form](#) on our website!

Summer Volunteers Needed!

Trail Maintenance/June to August:

- Pruning, trimming, cleaning and paint blazing
- Firewood gathering

Nesting Mallard Tube Retrieval/August and September

- Using waders, kayaks and canoes to bring in the tubes after the nesting season

Zone A Hunt Stake and Canoe Channel Maintenance/August and September

- Cutting and marking walk-in trails to hunting stakes
- Repair and cut shooting lanes at accessible hunting stands
- Canoe channels to ensure proper signage and navigability

If you would like to help out with any of the above tasks please **send us an email** to fohoffice@tcc.on.ca to get the ball rolling!

Returning University Student

My name is Emily Dearing and I just completed my second year at the University of Guelph. I started off in Biological Science and working at the marsh last summer inspired me to change my major to Wildlife Biology and Conservation. Last summer I really enjoyed seeing and working with wildlife every day. I had the privilege of running the turtle nest protection program, collecting data from duck boxes and mallard tubes, leading hiking groups, monitoring bird boxes, and helping maintain the marsh.



This winter I came back to volunteer during my reading week and helped Ben collect data from mallard tubes and duck boxes. I got to drive a snowmobile for the first time and it was so much fun!



Working at the marsh also inspired me to get my PAL and hunting licence last summer. This spring, my boyfriend and I went turkey hunting for the first time and got a Jake with a crossbow!

This summer, I am very excited to lead more hikes, run the turtle nest protection program, monitor bird boxes, coordinate volunteer work, lead a bus tour for Huronview residents, continue to help upkeep the marsh, and participate in Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority's Envirothon as a guest judge.

Emily Dearing

Event Coordinator

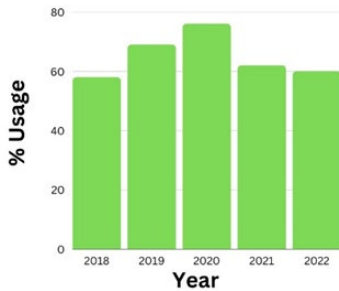
Nesting Programs

There are various nesting programs that the Friends of Hullett oversees. Unfortunately, due to such a mild winter and unfavourable ice conditions, FOH staff were unable to collect data from many mallard tubes and duck boxes this year. However, we would like to take this opportunity to talk about this amazing program. Monitoring species nesting and offspring success rates is essential to understanding the overall health of not only the species being examined but of the entire marsh.

Duck Boxes

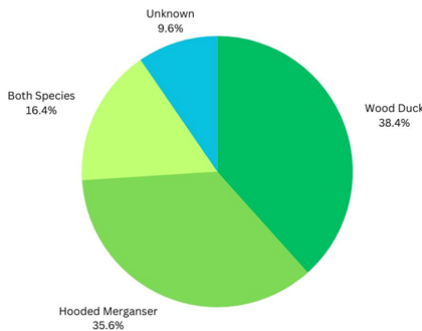
FOH has been collecting duck box data from 2004-2023 inclusively. Over the years, boxes have fallen down and the size of the program has shrunk from 165 boxes in 2004 to 118 boxes in 2022. As boxes have fallen down, staff have made decisions based on previously collected data to determine whether they should be replaced or not. The data FOH has collected over the years shows an average usage rate of 66% since 2018.

Duck Box Usage Rates



It should be noted that these usage rates only reflect the number of confirmed usages, whereas the real number would be somewhat higher as there are many cases where usage is unknown. This number includes both wood duck and hooded merganser usage. There are also instances where there is usage from both species.

Usage By Species

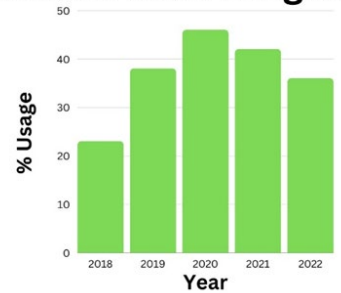


Mallard Tubes

Much like duck box data, FOH has been collecting mallard tube data from 2004-2023 inclusively. The size of the mallard tube program has also shrunk over the years. Starting out with 53 mallard tubes throughout the marsh in 2004 and 33 mallard tubes in 2023. One of the main reasons for this decrease is because some of the original tubes were placed too close together and nesting mallards prefer to be far away from other mallards.

The average usage rate of mallard tubes since 2018 is 38%. The average rate of successful hatches between 2018 and 2022 is 26%, with 2020 having the highest success rate of 43%. However, the true success rate is likely higher than that because in many instances, the hatching outcome is unknown.

Mallard Tube Usage Rates



Our nesting programs are made possible through the continued support from our volunteers who contribute significant portions of their time towards the success of these programs. We hope to have better ice conditions next year and will see you all again in the 2024 season.



If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact us at fohoffice@tcc.on.ca for more information.

2024 Fall Pheasant Release

Based on available funding, the 2024 hunt will see **1000 pheasants** released throughout the fall season! Friends of Hullett is appreciative of the continued support from hunters and other supporters of the program as they are what makes this hunt possible.

To support the 2025 release, you can easily purchase your **Pheasant Challenge** tickets [here](#) via **PayPal with your credit card** or buy them in person at **Clinton Sporting Goods**.

Big thanks goes out to our sponsors

<https://clintonssporting.com/> and
<https://www.sommersgen.com/>

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. **Hunters; the future of the pheasant release program is in your hands!**

Vanessa Palmer Award

Every year, FOH recognizes a dedicated student who is pursuing post-secondary education within the environmental field. Students are to submit a letter to FOH stating their contributions and/or achievements, plus a reference to validate their contributions.

This year, there were unfortunately no applicants for this award and thus there was no recipient. We encourage students who display impressive knowledge, passion and awareness for the environment to apply for this award next year.

As part of being a recipient of the Vanessa Palmer Award, the students will receive a **Certificate of Recognition**, plus \$200.00 to go towards their education. Their name will be added to our Vanessa Palmer Award plaque. Student will receive their award on the day of the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

Join us 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 and current projects followed by an open discussion with all members and then elections for **three (3) Board of Directors (BOD)** positions. We will close with a presentation on the history and changing ecology of Hullett Marsh by staff members **Scott Austin** and **Ben Elliott**.

After this meeting, members are welcome to join for a Subway lunch provided by FOH.

The AGM will be held on **Sunday, May 26, 2024** at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be at the HPWA Office Complex, located at **41378 Hydro Line Road** outside of Clinton.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Agenda

- 1/ Introduction of **Board of Directors and Guests**
- 2/ Report from Marsh Staff/**Scott Austin and Ben Elliott**
- 3/ Financial Report/**Chris Ambrose**, Treasurer
- 4/ Report from the Friends of Hullett **Board of Directors**
- 5/ Past service award presentation/**Duane Inkpen**, Chairman
- 6/ Presentation of Memorial Plaque/ **Scott Austin**
- 7/ Questions, Comments and Suggestions from **Membership floor**
- 8/ Election of officers to the **Board of Directors**
- 9/ Guest Presentation/**Scott Austin and Ben Elliott**
- 10/ Lunch provided for all/**Subway**

Photo Contest

March 31st marked the deadline for submissions to our 2024 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 once again created an online poll to let the community vote for their favourite photo. Your participation led to a very close race, here are your winners for the 2024 photo contest:

1st Place: Doug Gordon



2nd Place: Bob Hayes



3rd Place: Doug & Susan Johnson



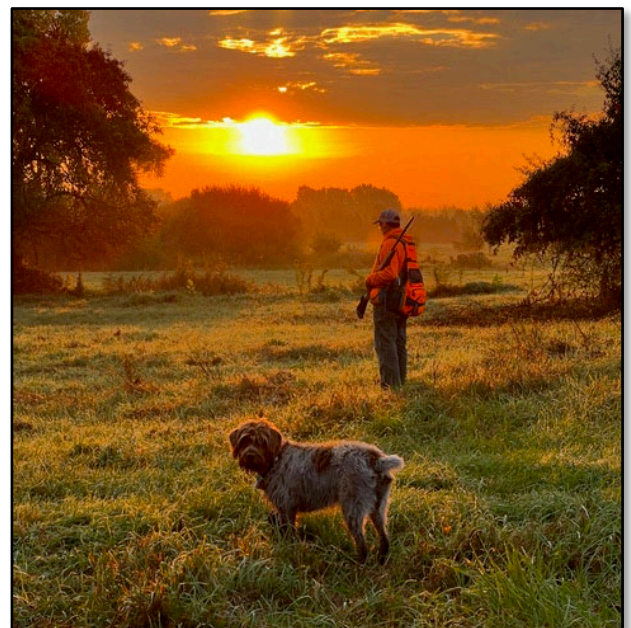
4th Place: Mike Poole



5th Place: Deb Johnston



6th Place: Robert Meyer



Limited Edition 25th Anniversary FOH Hats

Last year marked the **25th anniversary of Friends of Hullett** becoming a registered charitable organization. To commemorate this momentous achievement and celebrate all the hard work of past and present staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors, FOH commissioned **4 unique styles of ball caps**. A few of these hats are still available and can be purchased at the Hullett Office (**41378 Hydro Line Road**) for a price of **\$25 each or 2 for \$40**.

Available styles include:

