

FRIENDS OF HULLETT

MINUTES FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Jan. 27, 2026 @ 7:30 PM – Teams meeting

Present: Mat Shetler, Steve Dalrymple, Mario Coniglio, Donna Taylor, Craig McDonald, Ryan Bayne, Doug Gordon, Duane Inkpen (Chair)

Guests: Justin Johnson, Ben Elliott

Regrets: Mark Penhale

Meeting called to order at 7:32pm

1. Review minutes from previous meeting, November 25, 2025

- Minutes of the November 25, 2025 meeting were approved (unanimous)

Action items from November 25 meeting – COMPLETED

- **ACTION:** re. Shrub Buffer Transplanting – Justin to report back to John Haak.
- **ACTION:** Contact TD re FEF Turtle Project (Justin)
Justin and Ben built 5 launches/ramps)

Action items being carried over to February 2026 meeting

- **ACTION:** BoD should assign members to 2026 Dinner Committee – IN PROGRESS
- **ACTION:** Justin to look into thinning out pine and firs in the identified plantations – IN PROGRESS, ONGOING DISCUSSION
- **ACTION:** Proceed with installing concrete blocks in parking lot (#40650) – Justin – WAITING FOR WEATHER IMPROVEMENT
- **ACTION:** Could a chisel plow work re. burn and plow with Steve Flynn? Justin will discuss how to proceed with this issue with the Stewardship Group. – JUSTIN WILL REACH OUT AND REPORT PROGRESS
- **ACTION:** Look into what it will take to get the roads repaired (cost, process) – Mark – DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING

NEW Action items – this meeting

- **ACTION 1:** Ryan to update 2026 budget projection in light of year-end financial reporting.
- **ACTION 2:** Ryan to work with Scott and Janis to determine how much we can carry forward comfortably as surplus.
- **ACTION 3:** Ryan and Justin to determine costs to support construction of duck feeders.
- **ACTION 4:** Subcommittee (Doug, Steve, Ben) to report on progress re. potential changes in membership fees and structure at the next (February) meeting.
- **ACTION 5:** Justin to approach Munro with proposal to raise contract amount to \$100 per yard and report back on reaction.
- **ACTION 6:** Justin to reach out to Nick and David to get the operations meeting set up.
- **ACTION 7:** Justin to add additional details to newsletter re. pheasant release dates for FoH members.
- **ACTION 8:** Mat to update personnel policy with the revised sections.
- **ACTION 9:** Mat to work on KPIs and have a revised proposal for the next (February) meeting.

- **ACTION 10:** Duane to check with Scott re. what has been done for the service awards.

2. Treasurer's report – Ryan Bayne.

Ryan reviewed end-of-year budget files sent by email prior to this meeting. Ryan reported that we have a strong surplus going into 2026 (~\$19k), resulting from contract revenue and fundraising. We hit target, more or less, for MNR spending. Increase in assets over 2024 due to renewal of Ag contracts.

- **ACTION 1:** Ryan to update 2026 budget projection in light of year-end financial reporting.
- **ACTION 2:** Ryan to work with Scott and Janis to determine how much we can carry forward comfortably as surplus.

3. Report from the Marsh – Justin Johnson, Ben Elliott

January 22, 2026 - Marsh Report

➔ Designates points of clarification/amplification related to submitted Marsh Report

Stewardship

1. Tree Purchase

- Purchased as planned, costs to be shared 50/50 through Huron Clean Water Project after presentation to HCWP committee in February.
- FoH cost ~\$550

2. Exterminator Training

- Ben and Justin to continue exterminator training before Core expiry (Feb 25th)
- Justin to complete Industrial Vegetation (for parking lots & public rights-of-way)
- Ben to complete Forestry and Industrial Vegetation
- Exams scheduled for Feb 4th in Ridgetown. Cost of training is \$576.

Hunt Management

3. Pheasant Challenge

- 1189 tickets were sold: a sales record for the PC (\$11,645.21 after RBC fees).
 - Scott distributed PC financials for the BoD to review on January 12th
 - Draw occurred at Clinton Sporting Goods on January 21st
 - **ACTION** – How many birds do we plan to release in 2026?

Discussion of the pheasant program focused on determining appropriate release numbers for 2026, its sustainability/cost recovery, and how success could be measured. The BoD agreed that the number of pheasants could be increased this year to 1200 (advertise as 1189 to reflect 2025 Pheasant Challenge ticket sales), thus encouraging continued participation/support of the pheasant hunt.

MOTION: Release of 1200 pheasants for 2026 – moved Steve, seconded Craig, approved (unanimous)

Science

4. 2025 Duckbox Report (see Attached)

- Justin finally had time to complete the 2025 Duck Box Report
 - Success like years past (33%) but lower than other programs (~80%)
 - Predator Guards increased success likelihood, quickest short term solution
 - Data suggests boxes should be lowered, condition ranked on a 1-5 scale
 - Further spatial analysis is required to parse out other causes of failure
 - Proximity to large wetlands/interactional effects?
 - Nest dumping influence on abandonment?

5. 2025 Macroinvertebrate Report (see Attached)

- Macroinvertebrate survey reveals measures and influences on Hullett water quality.
 - Homogenization of tolerant taxa – “fair” water quality means less diversity
 - Downstream ecological effects, poss. impacts waterfowl forage
 - Temperature appears to be a factor influencing water quality
 - Most pronounced in wetland areas that are adjacent to ag land.
 - Improvements to riparian buffers and continued phrag control could mitigate effects of run-off.

Fundraising/Development

6. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (\$5,000 ask)

- Submitted grant to improve trailhead signage at 11 access points throughout the Marsh
- Funding to springboard a collaboration with Maitland Trail Association + MTA volunteers
- Trailhead signage to be AODA compliant/incorporate Parks Canada Trail Classification
- Bootbrushes to be affixed to signs to limit spread of invasive species/educate visitors.

7. Central Huron Donation Fund (\$2,950 ask)

- Submitted for regular HUG support, road grading, and 5 loads of gravel
- Asked for support in updating our outreach signage as discussed.
- Includes: new pop-up poster, banner, and booth.

8. OFAH Community Conservation Fund (\$10,000 ask)

- Planning to submit an ask for duck feeders again as OFAH was interested in 2025
- Planning to ask for maximum, proposal already drafted.

ACTION 3: Ryan and Justin to determine costs to support construction of duck feeders.

9. 2026 Charity Dinner and Auction

- See current dinner tracking sheet attached
- Tickets sales are starting to pick up, but there are many spaces left to fill
- Dinner committee, please begin canvassing for items in your respective areas!
- Cowbell, Delta Waterfowl, OFAH have already confirmed support
- Waiting on larger sponsors; Vortex Canada seems promising.

→ update: 75% sold (22 tickets remaining). Justin will be canvassing more aggressively in the next few weeks.

10. Maintenance

- Weather has been hampering on the property activity:
- Ben has been doing a lot of snow removal
- Walk-in markers have been retrieved
- Repairs needed for some signage, will complete when weather allows
- Sleds are prepared for nesting structure maintenance when weather allows
- Transfer pump has been repaired.

Financials

11. Current Financial Summary

- General Donations to Date - \$0
- Membership Donations to Date - \$1868.27
- Donations to Pheasant Release Program to Date - \$65
- Hat Sales to Date - \$20

12. Changes to Membership Fees and Structure

- Based on surrounding club/organization fees, FoH is around average in membership fees.

- **ACTION** – Consider increasing membership fee to \$40 in 2026?
- **ACTION** – Consider tiered fees
 - Base Membership - \$35 for basic individual membership benefits.
 - Restoration Membership - \$75 per year targeting specific projects (selected by members?)
 - Pheasant Membership - \$90 cost of base membership plus three birds
 - Family Memberships - \$50 per year
 - Groups – [MTM](#) has a good breakdown by group size. Consider similar pricing

→ Justin led discussion on potential changes to membership fees and structure. Given the complexity of this potential change it was decided to strike a sub-committee to examine the issue more thoroughly and report back to the BoD its recommendations for proceeding. The sub-committee consists of Doug (chair), Justin, Steve.

ACTION 4: Subcommittee (Doug, Steve, Justin) to report on progress re. potential changes in membership fees and structure at the next (February) meeting.

Contracts/Agreements

13. Munro Honey

- Currently priced at \$50 per yard, 2026 contract has not been presented to Munro.
- **ACTION** - Should we increase our prices and/or offer contract opportunities to local competitors?

ACTION 5: Justin to approach Munro with proposal to raise contract amount to \$100 per yard and report back on reaction.

Outreach/Communications

14. Newsletter

- Nearing completion, draft sent to BoD along with January Marsh Report.

15. Website Upgrades

- Justin and Ben to demo the site for the BoD; almost ready for publication.
- Some limitations but a whole lot of benefits for users/administration.

→ The new web platform appears on all counts to be superior (capability, customizable user interface, accessibility) to what we are currently using. Cost is also cheaper - \$450/3 years. We should expect to have to deal with bugs at the start and some Board members will be invited to test it out before formally launching, expected to be in June 2026.

16. Birding Events

- Justin is planning to organize a series of five (Feb – June) introductory bird tours in the Marsh
- Series offered for free to members, \$25 for non-members. Capping attendance @ 12

→ To sign up, individuals interested in participating should email Justin directly. Next year, we expect to be able to use the website to sign up. First date is Saturday, February 21.

Other/Misc

17. Tiny Marsh – See message sent along with Marsh Report.

→ Mat covered this topic in his pre-meeting email.

18. Dead Deer Post - Our biggest post ever; 551 (update 553) likes and over 36,000 views...

→ This educational video is good exposure for the Marsh.

4. Reports from OMNRF/Ducks Unlimited

- We should set a date for the operations meeting.

There has been no communication related to the setting the date for the operations meeting.

ACTION 6: Justin to reach out to Nick and David to get the operations meeting set up.

5. Website, Newsletter & User Guide

- Spring newsletter deadline?

Newsletter is ready to go but we should add some additional information related to benefits for pheasant hunters vis a vis knowing release dates ahead of time.

ACTION 7: Justin to add additional details to newsletter re pheasant release dates for FoH members.

6. Pheasant Challenge, Youth Waterfowl Clinic.

- Record sales for 2025

Proceeding again for 2026

7. New Business

Mat: Policy updates – Doug spoke on this – okay with changes made.

ACTION 8: Mat to update policy with the revised sections.

Mat: KPIs. Mat sent out by email a list of potential KPIs earlier in January.

- Parking lot improvement
- Removal of old stakes and garbage from the marsh, clean up the goose barn
- Install new nesting structures (turtle, osprey, bee, other)
- Improve trails (signage, repair washouts, reroute around eroded areas etc)
- Perform a test burn at the 1-20 parking lot in a manner that doesn't need an MNR permit
- Improve the ditch along Sanctuary Line to help the washout
- Remove the Pheasant pen

Additional KPIs for consideration were suggested at the meeting:

- Outreach
- Funding

ACTION 9: Mat to work on KPIs and have a revised proposal for the next (February) meeting.

Justin: raised for future consideration whether we should run a possible bottle drive to raise funds.

Duane: raised the topic of service awards for Chris Ambrose and Barb Orchard. No one was clear on the progress of this initiative.

ACTION 10: Dwayne to check with Scott re. what has been done for the service awards.

8. In camera issues - none

Meeting adjourned at ~9pm

Next meeting in February 2026 (via Teams).