

# Friends of Hullett



## Winter 2026 Newsletter

### *Message from the Board*

Hello Friends of Hullett Members,

Thank you to our volunteer Board, staff, and members for another year of support. As our community grew in 2025, so did our conservation impact. Supported by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, we bolstered turtle protection with new nesting mounds and protectors. We also upgraded canoe launches—including a new Greenwing Pool access—modernized our invasive species program and installed an accessible hunting blind at Burns Line with funding from the OFAH Foundation. Education also flourished through the MarshReach Project with the University of Waterloo and Ontario Woodlot Association Master Forest Steward workshops.

Looking to 2026, we are prioritizing upland habitat, infrastructure upgrades, and the launch of our new website. We are also excited to welcome multi-year photo contest winner Doug Gordon to our Board of Directors!

### **Upcoming Friends of Hullett Event Dates:**

- **11th Annual Spring Charity Dinner:** April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, See page 4 for ticket details.
- **Annual General Meeting:** May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Full details will be shared via email in April.

Our team remains consistent with Scott Austin (Administrative Manager), Justin Johnson (Marsh Manager), and Ben Elliott (Wildlife & GIS Technician) all continuing their dedicated work.

In closing, please enjoy the winter beauty of the Marsh and consult our most recent User Guide for current regulations. Thank you for making these successes possible.

**Duane Inkpen** *Chairman*, Board of Directors

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## Membership Renewal

As of December 31, 2025, memberships purchased prior to September 1, 2025, have officially expired. You can easily renew by completing the form on our website and submitting a \$35 or more donation to FoH. As a member, you receive a vehicle decal, voting rights at our AGM, our seasonal newsletters, and exclusive access to the Columbia Employee Store in London. Members also receive a tax receipt for their donation.



Friends of Hullett



Your \$35 annual membership donation is vital to our success. These funds are used directly for property maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, habitat restoration, invasive species control, public education, and trail work—everything needed to keep Hullett thriving. 🌿

Various payment options are available:

- **Online:** PayPal or e-Transfer to [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com).
- **Cheque:** Made out to “Friends of Hullett.”
- **Cash:** Via our secure drop box at the office gate (41378 Hydro Line Road), pictured below.



## Roads and Parking Lots



Accessing Hullett Marsh during the winter months can be challenging as **interior roads, such as Front Road and Burns Line, are not maintained.** Visitors are advised **to use these routes at their own risk** and must strictly obey all road closures to ensure personal safety. To assist

with access, two primary parking lots located at **40672 Hydro Line Road** and **80602 Wildlife Line** will be plowed as staff availability allows. We appreciate your patience as our team works to clear snow from these areas. 🌨️

## Snowmobiles at Hullett

During the winter months, the **Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC)** establishes marked trails across the province to ensure safe riding. Within Hullett and the surrounding region, these trails are maintained by the **Huron Trail Groomers Club.** To ensure your personal safety and the protection of local wildlife, **please remain**



**strictly on marked paths.** It is also vital to **avoid any closed trails**, as traveling on them can cause significant damage to sensitive agricultural land. For trail maps and more information, please visit [www.ofsc.on.ca](http://www.ofsc.on.ca). 🌨️



## Pheasant Challenge '25



This year's Pheasant Challenge was a **huge success!** An equally huge thank you is due to our dedicated sponsors: [Sommers Generator Systems](#) for generously donating the generator and [Clinton Sporting Goods](#)

for providing the shotgun and facilitating in-store ticket sales. A special thanks also to **Mike Leitch** for helping to sell tickets and promote the Challenge. We are thrilled to report a **tremendous increase in sales** for the Pheasant Challenge over last year with **1,189 tickets sold this season!** This incredible growth directly impacts our ability to maintain and enhance the Marsh. **A huge thank you to everyone who participated,** and congratulations to our winners drawn on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026!:



**Stevens 3" O/U 20 ga. Shotgun:** John Flatt

**Briggs and Stratton Generator:** Barry Smith

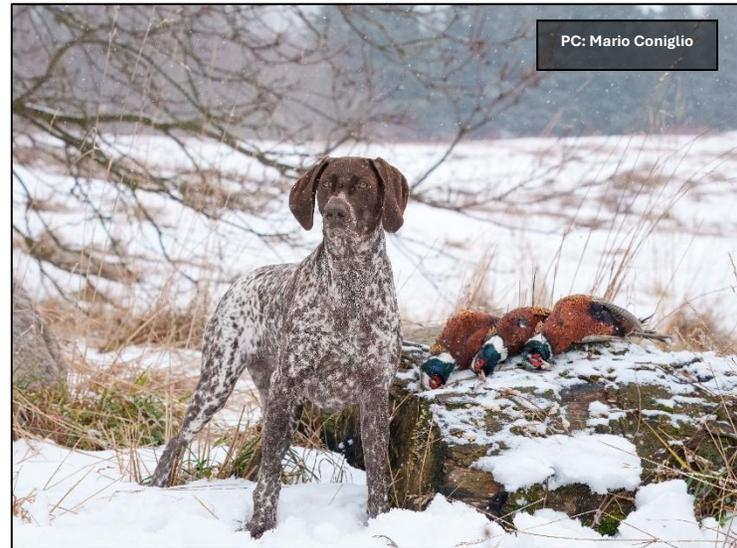
The incredible participation in this year's Pheasant Challenge directly supports the continued success of the pheasant program at Hullett Marsh. We extend a sincere thank you to every participant whose contribution ensures we can keep this tradition thriving.

Over the past season, we released 1,000 pheasants throughout Zone B between September and December 2025. This was made possible through our partnership with suppliers Andy Lancaster of [Royal Game Birds](#) and Ralph Gerber of [Creekside Pheasantry](#). Your support keeps the marsh a premier destination for upland hunters! 🦋

## Pheasant Release 2026

The release program will continue for the fall 2026 pheasant hunt! After a successful pilot year, we are thrilled to continue providing pheasant release dates exclusively for FoH members! Thank you for respecting the program and helping us improve the quality of the hunt for everyone.

Participation among users remained strong in 2025 with financial support for the program. Thanks to \$1,071 in donations and \$11,890 from the Pheasant Challenge, we are **set to release 1,189 birds in 2026 - matching our record-breaking 2025 ticket sales!** Each pheasant costs approximately \$14.50 plus administration and release costs. 🦋



## Vanessa Palmer Award

Friends of Hullett is now accepting applications for the annual Vanessa Palmer Award. This \$500 bursary is open to high school students who are passionate about the natural world and plan to pursue a career in conservation, biology, environmental science, or a related field.

To apply, students are invited to submit a letter outlining their achievements, career ambitions, and personal contributions to environmental stewardship. The recipient will be honored with a

\$500 cheque during our Annual General Meeting this spring.

If you or a student you know is interested in applying, please submit your application letter via email to [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com). The deadline for all submissions is **April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**. Help us support the next generation of environmental leaders!

For more information about the **Vanessa Palmer Award** and how to apply, click [here!](#) 🌿

## Winter Activities

Winter transforms the landscape at Hullett, offering a wide range of activities for those looking to embrace the season. While our trails are not maintained or plowed, two of our parking lots remain accessible throughout the winter, providing access for the **Blue, Yellow, White, Green, and Purple trails**.



Whether you are sticking to the trail system or exploring the interior, users can enjoy:

- **Snowshoeing and Cross-Country Skiing**
- **Hiking**
- **Hunting:** Ensure you are following all Hullett and Ontario Regulations.

Bundle up and head out this winter to enjoy everything Hullett has to offer! 🌿



## Hullett User Tip Sheets!

To ensure every visitor has a safe and enjoyable experience, Friends of Hullett staff have developed a series of helpful tip sheets. These resources are designed to clarify property rules, answer common questions, and provide guidance for both hunters and hikers navigating the Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area. 🌿

You can access these guides through the links below:

[Hullett Regulations](#)

[Hunting at Hullett Tip Sheet](#)

[Hiking at Hullett Tip Sheet](#)

## Annual Charity Dinner & Auction

Friends of Hullett would like to thank those who purchased a ticket to the **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Charity Dinner and Auction** for their overwhelming support!

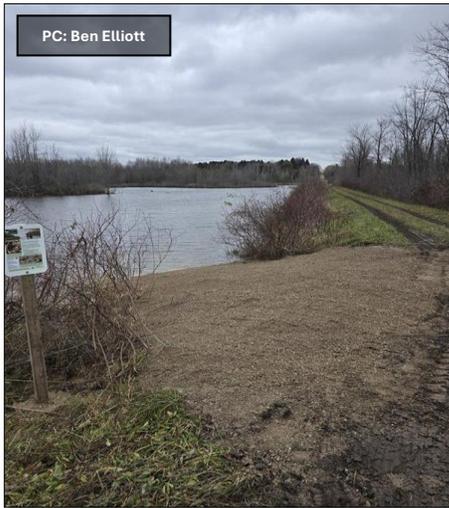
This year's event will be held on **Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Bluewater Golf Course** and Chef Devin Tabor of **Bon Vivant** will provide the meal.



With **only 22 seats remaining**, make sure to grab your ticket as soon as possible! You can also support Friends of Hullett and this great event by **donating items** for the **silent and live auctions**. We welcome a variety of items as the more unique and interesting items we have, the more fun the night will be!

If you have something that you think would make a good addition to the auction, please email staff at [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com). **Charitable tax receipts will be issued for all donations.** 🌿

## Turtles at Hullett are "Ready to Launch"



PC: Ben Elliott

Thanks to the **TD Friends of the Environment Foundation**, we have upgraded watercraft launches that double as vital nesting habitat for turtles in Hullett Marsh.

Funds allowed for enhancements at Whistler, Butterball, and Bluebill Pools, plus a **brand-new launch at Greenwing Pool**. With less than 1% of turtles surviving to adulthood, these mounds and launches give species like the Snapping and Painted Turtle a fighting chance.

### You can also help by:

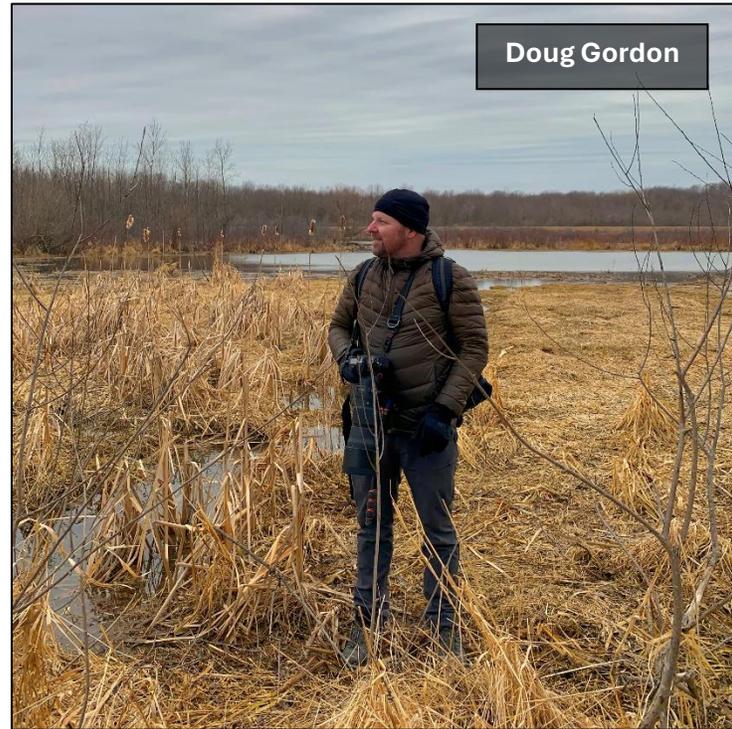
- Not using launches during water restrictions periods (Zone A, May 15–Aug 1; Zone B, May 15–July 15).
- Not disturbing nest protectors on the launches.
- Driving slowly near the Marsh, especially from April to November.
- Emailing [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com) if you spot nesting turtles 🐢

## New Board Member

Friends of Hullett is excited to welcome **Doug Gordon** to our Board of Directors!

*Without love of the land, conservation lacks meaning or purpose, for only in a deep and inherent feeling for the land can there be dedication in preserving it. — Sigurd F. Olson*

My love for the Ontario landscape began as a child growing up on a small farm north of Toronto and in the Muskokas at a family cottage. Autumns in my teens and twenties were spent walking pastures and edges hunting grouse and pheasants with my retriever or in woods stalking whitetails with a bow. Summer holidays were usually some sort of backpacking or canoe trip. When I finished high school



Doug Gordon

I studied at Fleming College to become a Fish & Wildlife Technologist. I worked on the original Ontario MNR Atlantic Salmon re-introduction research project for a couple of summers and completed two wildlife contracts with Maple District MNR before my career went down a different path. Over the years I've been employed drilling wells in Africa, bricklaying and guiding youth on wilderness canoeing and hiking adventures. For the past 20 years I've been employed as a community mental health worker with the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance.

Despite leaving the natural resource field as a professional, nature has never left my heart. My teenage passion for hunting eventually morphed into an overall love of nature. I put away my guns and picked up photography in the early 2000s. I started learning about indigenous plants and gardening about

25 years ago. My partner and I have dedicated a lot of time to building natural habitat on our small property, which is currently home for about 120 native species.

Hullett entered my life two decades ago when travelling for work brought the beauty of Huron County to my attention. I began focusing my photography around the Marsh. My initial efforts focused on plant and landscape photography. They have progressed to drones and wildlife photography from a canoe and blinds. If you are at Hullett on an April or May morning you may come across a guy out wading in one of the pools. That'd probably be me.

Last May I put my name forward to sit on the FoH Board of Directors and missed joining by a couple of votes. In October, Justin approached me as a position had opened up and the board felt it would be a good opportunity for me to sit at the table for a few months until the next annual meeting. The current Board members and staff are well-suited to their positions. They share the same passion for nature and conservation that I feel.

I'm excited about this work and for the future of the Hullett property. – *Doug Gordon* 🐦

## “Discover Birding”: Beginner Birding Series



Join **Marsh Manager Justin Johnson** for a new series of guided outings designed to introduce you to the birds of Hullett Marsh!

While birders of all skill levels are welcome, these

events focus on developing the skills of new birders. This multi-part series begins in February and continues through the peak migration in June. Our first outing “GISS and That” is planned for **February 21<sup>st</sup> 2026**.

The program is free for Friends of Hullett members, though additional donations are always appreciated to support our stewardship work. To learn more about specific dates and locations, please contact Justin directly at [justinjohnson@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:justinjohnson@hullettmarsh.com). Come see why Hullett is a premier birding destination! 🐦

## 2026 Board of Directors

**Are you interested in running for a position on the Board of Directors (BOD) so that FoH can continue in a positive direction? Email us at [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com) for an application.**

- **3 BOD positions are up for renewal/election** on Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026
- To run for the BOD, you **must be a member of the FoH** and are required to apply expressing your interest to run for the BOD.

Please email your “Application to Run for Director” to David Denyes at MNRF Vineland Field Office. Please note that applications must be received by David Denyes by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. 🐦

**David Denyes**  
**Management Biologist**  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
Vineland Field Office  
4890 Victoria Avenue North.  
Vineland Station ON  
L0R 2E0  
289-241-6872  
[david.denyas@ontario.ca](mailto:david.denyas@ontario.ca)





## 2026 PHOTO CONTEST

Show us your pictures of Hullett Marsh! From scenery and wildlife, to hunting, horseback riding, and family fun, FoH wants to see it all!  
Email your submissions to [fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com](mailto:fohoffice@hullettmarsh.com)

- Images MUST:**
- Be taken at the HPWA
  - Depict safe, rule abiding practices
  - Not contain any gore
  - Include photographer's name in the file name (eg. John\_Smith.jpg)

**1st Place Prize:**  
Free Hullett Membership and Photo featured on the cover of the **2026/2027** User Guide

**2nd - 6th Place Prize:**  
Photo showcased on the cover of the **2026/2027** User Guide

*By entering your photos, you give Friends of Hullett the rights to use them in media posts, presentations, newsletters, and public displays with photo credit.*

## 2026 Photo Contest deadline: April 30, 2026



### 2025 Photo Contest 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Doug Gordon

2<sup>nd</sup>



Conrad Kuiper

3<sup>rd</sup>



Doug & Suzan Johnson

4<sup>th</sup>



Mario Coniglio

5<sup>th</sup>



Darryl Boyer

6<sup>th</sup>



Melody vanDorp

