



Newsletter : January, 2017

The Conservators continue their work to protect and restore Cooper Marsh and its wildlife.

The 5 year drawdown, to remove cattail overgrowth and recreate more open water, was planned to end in 2016 with a partial (one third) replacement of normal water levels. The summer drought, combined with a water pump disabled by beavers, resulted in an extension of the drawdown to 2017 when water levels will return to near normal.

We have continued with the restoration of breeding habitat for fish, turtles and wetland birds with the creation of further cattail-resistant areas of open water dug in February, 2016 south of the Visitors' Centre. Construction of ponds was prevented by the mild winter that prevented the heavy long-reach diggers from working on the partially frozen Marsh. Instead, a digger was mounted on a barge from which it "ate" its way into the Marsh from the southern perimeter dyke. Large ponds will be constructed in the future that will link to this channel.

The National Wetland Program of Environment and Climate Change Canada is funding the **creation of additional ponds and channels in the eastern part of the Marsh. Construction will be in January/February, 2017.** We are hoping for some very cold weather to facilitate the digging.

Three new Viewing Blinds for observing wildlife were constructed in the summer of 2016. One is located close to the Visitors' Centre and one is located on the north/south berm that crosses the Marsh. A third has been built at the entrance to the western Marsh, just west of our car park and tree haven, off County Road 2.

During 2016 we continued to enjoy much public support at the enjoyable **Spring Fling and Fall Wine and Cheese social events.** These events raise funding to support our activities throughout the year. **We encourage you all to attend the Spring Fling on Sunday, May 7th, 2017 which will include music and the very popular Silent Auction introduced last year. The Wine and Cheese will be held on October 1st, 2017, both events being held at the visitors centre (VC) from 2.00-4.00pm. Our AGM is also at the VC on March 19th at 2.00pm.**

The creation of a native plant botanical station and wildflower nursery at Cooper Marsh is currently underway. Led by Chris Critoph of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA), the project involves the transfer of Dr. Philip Fry's wildflower nursery from the Old Field Garden and Wildflower Nursery at Oxford Station near Kemptville. **Many plants have already been transferred to our meadowlands and a wildflower garden has been established opposite the visitor centre.**

Chris is also seeking funding to create new butterfly- and song bird-friendly habitat in land adjacent to the wetlands by County Road 2. **Join the wildflower volunteers by contacting Chris at 613 938 3611, ext.223.**

You can visit our website (rrca.on.ca/cooper_marshall/conservators) and find us on Facebook and contribute to our fundraising (partial tax deduction) electronically and securely on our website by clicking on CanadaHelps. Include your name, address and e-mail so we can recognize your contribution at Cooper Marsh, send you an official tax receipt and keep you updated. We were recently featured at ducks.ca/ontario **We thank the RRCA (Raisin Region Conservation Authority), the St. Lawrence River Institute, Cornwall and Area Birding Club and South Lancaster Fish and Game Club for their ongoing partnership and support of our activities. For details of other conservation and nearby eco-tourism partners see our website listings under the recently established Sharing Nature Network.**

We warmly welcome others to join the Conservators in their various activities. As you can see, volunteers can make a big difference. If you feel you can spare us some time please call Robin Poole at 613 347 7673.