



Newsletter March, 2015

Since 2011, the Cooper Marsh Conservators (**CMC**), with the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (**RRCA**), owners of the marsh, together with Cornwall and Area Birding Club (**CABC**), the St. Lawrence River Institute of Environmental Sciences (**SLRIES**) and Ducks Unlimited Canada (**DUC**) have been working hard to restore and improve the outstanding facilities at the provincially significant Cooper Marsh Conservation Area, just west of Lancaster, Ontario. **All the old boardwalks were rebuilt by the end of 2013 in premium cedar and widened to make them wheelchair accessible.**

A five year drawdown, to remove cattail overgrowth and recreate more open water started in August 2011 with assistance from DUC. It is now in its fourth year. This explains the lack of water in the Marsh.

New ponds and interconnecting channels to restore lost wildlife breeding habitat, deep enough to resist cattail invasion, were created in January, 2014 beside the eastern boardwalk. In addition a wheelchair accessible viewing platform by the Visitors' Centre was built in 2013, together with another viewing platform on the southern perimeter dyke, offering a lovely view of Lake St. Francis.

To make all of this possible, CMC began a fundraising drive “Get on Board” in January, 2012 to revitalize Cooper Marsh. We congratulate the construction team, which included summer students together with the workcrew from the Raisin Region Conservation Authority, on an outstanding job.

A summer student will again be staffing the Visitors' Centre on weekends and some weekdays this summer and fall, to make your visit to the Marsh more enjoyable. A YouTube publicity and fundraising video has been created and is posted on YouTube and our website (see below). We thank Vince Pilon for his excellent work on the video.

Fundraising for further habitat restoration work, creating additional ponds and channels, and renovation of viewing blinds continues. Our current total fundraising goal is \$360,000, of which we have so far raised \$335,000. The support of our donors, who made this possible, is now acknowledged on Donor Posts, erected by *Sign It* of Williamstown, adjacent to the Visitors' Centre.

Applications for further funding continues. Our current focus is on the creation of additional ponds and channels for wildlife breeding habitat enrichment. These will be located by the Visitors' Centre so they can be viewed from the upper deck and nearby Viewing Platform. So far we have received \$15,000 from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and \$7,000 from TransCanada plus \$5,000 from other donations.

In the future, we will be working on restoration of parts of the Visitors' Centre and its wildlife collection.

In the summer of 2015 we look forward to welcoming all our donors to Cooper Marsh to celebrate their generosity and thank them for all their support. A date will be announced shortly.

We invite you to “Get on Board” and join us in this venture as a donor partner and/or as a volunteer. CMC is a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible. You can donate electronically and securely by entering *Cooper Marsh* on your search engine and clicking on *CanadaHelps*. Alternatively, please forward your donations to **The Treasurer, Cooper Marsh Conservators Inc., c/o Raisin Region Conservation Authority, 18045 Cty.Rd.2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2**. 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.