

# Cooper Marsh Drawdown to Remove Cattail Overgrowth



With the assistance of Ducks Unlimited Canada, the drawdown started in August, 2011

## What is a drawdown?

Many natural wetlands are temporary, such as beaver ponds, where periodically the dam maintaining the impounded water is compromised allowing the wetland to dry out and rejuvenate. A drawdown mimics this natural phenomenon in a constructed wetland by draining most or all of the water from the marsh. This allows floating reed beds to anchor themselves, the muck substrate to settle and consolidate and the seed bank within the basin soils an opportunity to germinate. The result can be a more diverse vegetative community, better anchored in consolidated basin soils, that when re-flooded can provide enhanced ecological values.

## Benefits of a Drawdown

- Stabilize cattail mats
- Improve water clarity
- Improved habitat
- Increases vegetation diversity
- Game fish populations reported to experience enhanced populations following drawdown
- Provides an opportunity to repair docks, boardwalks, etc.
- Loose, flocculent sediments can become consolidated after the drawdown

**New open water areas with viewing towers linked to new boardwalk will be created during the drawdown**

## Temporary Effects of Drawdown

- Reduced sightings of waterfowl and some other birds
- Fish population in the marsh will disappear during drawdown

## Previously successful drawdowns

Oshawa's Second Marsh, Ontario

Sheboygan Marsh, Wisconsin

Rush Lake, Wisconsin

And many more



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## Sheboygan Marsh

The Sheboygan Marsh Wildlife Area includes over 13,000 acres. A drawdown occurred in 2002 following a flooding in 1997. Large quantities of loosened cattail mats were floating and would eventually drift to the dam and block it. Removal of the cattail blockages was an expensive job. The drawdown allowed for the cattail mats to anchor themselves to the bottom and no longer float into the dam.



## Second Marsh

Located southeast of Oshawa, this 123-hectare coastal wetland has been damaged by land clearings, the harbor, and other general misuse. In 1992, the friends of the Second Marsh approached Ducks Unlimited about rehabilitating the marsh.

The first work began in 2002. A dyke was built around the marsh, a two-way pump was installed, and a fish passage built. These actions contributed to an approximate 7-fold increase in submerged aquatic plant growth due to improved water quality. Emergent aquatic plants were also reappeared in open water areas that have previously been known to be vegetated.



## Rush Lake

Rush Lake is a 3070-acre prairie pothole situated in Wisconsin. It is the largest pothole east of the Mississippi River.

The pothole's water, wildlife and vegetation quality had declined dramatically over the years due to artificially stable and high water levels, carp infestation, and sediment runoff. A new dam was built and the water a 2-year drawdown ensued, allowing the bulrushes to regrow and allow the lake to live back up to its name.

