



Newsletter March, 2016

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

The 5 year drawdown, to remove invasive plant overgrowth and recreate more open water, will end this year with the refilling of the Marsh over a 3 year period.

We have continued the restoration of breeding habitat for fish, turtles and wetland birds. This involves the creation of deeper ponds and channels that will resist cattail invasion. We raised \$42,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment Foundation and TransCanada: this, together with \$10,000 raised by the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA), has enabled us to initiate the **creation of new areas of open water south of the Visitors' Centre**. These will be further developed in the future. A funding application has been submitted to the National Wetland program and Environment Canada, for the **creation of new ponds and channels in the far eastern wetland enclosure of the Marsh**.

From Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund, OPG and Enbridge, we have raised an additional \$28,500 funding for **the creation of 3 new Viewing Blinds for observing wildlife**. These will be located close to the Visitors' Centre as well as by the ponds and channels built in winter of 2013/14: a third is being built in the western Marsh by the entrance to the pumping station off County Road 2

On **September 13th, 2015 we held a Donor Recognition Day** in honour of all our donors whose contributions have made the *Get on Board* restoration of Cooper Marsh possible, starting in 2012/13 with the boardwalks. The Donor Recognition Posts that stand beside the Visitors' Centre were officially unveiled. They list the names of all donors.

During the year we enjoyed much public support at the enjoyable **Spring Fling and Fall Wine and Cheese**. To facilitate operations we created a **new committee to manage social events**. We encourage you all to attend the Spring Fling on May 1st which will include a local band and a live raptor display in addition to the Silent Auction introduced last year.

Future activities that are planned for 2016/17 include the **creation of a native plant botanical station and wildflower nursery at Cooper Marsh**. This project, led by Chris Critoph of RRCA, will involve the transfer of Dr. Philip Fry's wild flower nursery from the Old Field Garden and Wildflower Nursery at Oxford Station near Kemptville. Volunteers are needed to help in this exciting new venture.

In the future we are also looking at **restoration and addition of signage and infrastructure in the picnic area by the car park and at and around the Visitors Centre**.

It was with much sadness that **we recognize the death of our chair and longterm member Judy Bobka in 2015**. We will honour her memory with a simple plaque placed beside a newly planted tree this Spring

We thank the RRCA, the St Lawrence River Institute of Environmental Sciences, Cornwall and Area Birding Club and South Lancaster Fish and Game Club for their ongoing partnership and support of our activities.

You can visit our website (rrca.on.ca/cooper-marsh) and find us on Facebook and contribute to our fundraising 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.