



Newsletter: January 2019

The Conservators continue restoration work with Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) and partners.

Funded by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), a 5-year drawdown of the West Marsh started in 2017. This is designed to remove cattail overgrowth, create more open water and repair wildlife damage to the ring dyke. Repairs to the West dyke were initiated late in 2018 and are currently ongoing. A temporary parking area is being expanded.

During 2018 a severe windstorm caused severe damage to a section of the boardwalk near the elevated look-out. Work is underway on the frozen Marsh to assess how this can be repaired. Stay tuned for updates.

To create additional cattail-resistant areas of open water to enhance amphibian and wetland bird populations, over \$83,000 was raised in 2018 from federal and provincial governments, the Township and the public. Large ponds and connecting channels are now being dug in the Main Marsh, south of the visitors centre. Another will be in front of the blind by the west boardwalk, close by the visitors centre.

Our popular fundraising social events will continue in 2019 with the *Spring Fling and Silent Auction* on May 26th and the *Wine and Cheese* on October 6th, both from 2.00-4.00pm. The AGM will be held at the visitors centre on Sunday, March 10th at 2.00pm.

Volunteers have been busy at the native plant botanical station and wildflower nursery at Cooper Marsh. This project is led by Dr. Philip Fry with Chris Critoph. Wildflowers are being grown from seed and planted in the meadowlands by Route 2 by St. Lawrence College students. To ensure good pollination 2 bee hives were installed in 2018 by Chelsea Hope.

Sandhill Cranes nested again in 2018. As a result of the drawdown in the West Marsh, Black Terns nested at Cooper Marsh for the first time in many years. They should again be visible this coming summer from the West Marsh blind.

Funding was also raised to install a monitoring station by the main gate to the Main Marsh. This will enable us to get more accurate numbers on attendance at Cooper Marsh. This will help with our funding applications for future conservation work. Since 2012, the Conservators have raised over \$600,000 for the restoration of Cooper Marsh. Our thanks to all our donors, especially Dundas Power Line Ltd.

Restoration of the wildlife educational displays in the visitors centre includes the recent acquisition of a Snowy Owl and a Fisher. An Otter will soon be available. Additional local species will be installed in the future. This was made possible by funding from Enbridge (\$3,950) and Ontario Power Generation (\$1,000) as well as many donations from the public. Plans are being made to install new large glass display cabinets as well as new windows to prevent UV damage to our displays. We thank taxidermist Gary Bray for his excellent work.

Educational classes at Cooper Marsh run by the River Institute and RRCA for children/students of all ages, were a great success with over 1000 kids visiting Cooper Marsh.

"The Legacy of Cooper Marsh" is a document about the history of the Marsh's creation, its wildlife and the work of the RRCA and Cooper Marsh Conservators and many other local volunteers, including the Cornwall and Area Birding Club who act as interpreters at the visitors centre. It was conceived by the Conservators and written by them with staff at RRCA. It will soon be available online at our website (go to "rrca.on.ca/conservators") and on sale (for fundraising) as a booklet at the visitors centre.

For more information, visit rrca.on.ca and click on Cooper Marsh. You can also contribute to the Conservators restoration work with secure electronic, tax-deductible funding at rrca.on.ca, clicking on *CanadaHelps*. Include your name, address and e-mail so we can recognize your contribution to Cooper Marsh and send you an official tax receipt and keep you updated. If you are interested in joining the Cooper Marsh Conservators, please call Robin Poole at 613-347-7673.