

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE WYE MARSH WILDLIFE CENTRE.
OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, "MARSH MATTERS", WILL KEEP YOU UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT IS HAPPENING AT WYE MARSH!



Listen for Ziibi's new call the next time you visit Wye Marsh.



CELL PHONES
WANTED



DRAMA AT THE MARSH!
Become a Wildlife Detective.
Learn to "CSI" any set of tracks, scat & broken twigs to unlock the hidden mysteries at Wye Marsh on Sat. Feb 25. \$25 per person. Register in Advance [HERE](#)

Please donate an old cell phone & charger to support Wye Marsh research and special events. Must have WIFI capabilities. Simply drop it off @ Front Desk.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While January might not have felt like true winter, it looks as though February is going to make up for it! The snow is falling gently outside my window as I write this, turning the world into a beautiful snow globe. It's perfect snowshoeing weather!

Unfortunately HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) continues to exert a presence in Ontario, and as a result, we are still unable to engage in a favorite Wye Marsh winter activity – hand-feeding the chickadees. We are just as disappointed as you, and appreciate your assistance in keeping our wild birds safe. More information about HPAI can be found on the Government of Canada website.

We are looking forward to a number of exciting workshops and programs this month, including Marsh by Moonlight snowshoeing, campfire cooking, clay sculpting, animal tracking, and a Family Day full of fun. We look forward to seeing you at Wye Marsh in February!

Kim Hacker, Executive Director



Take on a new role at Wye Marsh.
Train up to be a Volunteer
Sugar Shack Outdoor Educator!

Call: 705-526-7809 ext 217
Email: hkeery@wyemarsh.com



Photo by Brandon Güell

© Brandon Güell

PHOTO CONTEST CLOSING MARCH 12

Share your captivating images of the natural world for a chance to win a Nikon camera kit, courtesy of Henry's! Enter the Royal Ontario's Museum's competition. Post your wildlife image on Twitter or Instagram AND include @ROMtoronto & #ROMwpyON (or ROMwpyJR for ages 13-17). SEE last year's winning images at the ROM before April 23. Use the promo code WYEMARSH to save 15% on admission!



MEET SAM

SPECIES
Common Snapping Turtle

AGE: 36+

**WHY SAM
LIVES @ WYE MARSH:**
He was taken out of the wild in 1987 to use for education under OMNR Authorization, then transferred to the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre in 2007.

FUN FACTS: Snapping Turtles are the largest freshwater turtle in Canada. They are considered a Species at Risk due to the loss and degradation of habitat, poaching, and road mortality. Snapping Turtles can be identified by the boney ridges on their tail called osteoderms.

Sam is currently available for "adoption"!



FEBRUARY SPECIAL

Wye Marsh Members
SAVE 20 % off all Ornaments
& Non-Members
SAVE 10%

**2022 Environmental
Champion Awards**



You inspire us!
Nomination open until
March 3, 2023

FAMILY DAY FUN!

Winter Scavenger Hunt ~ Button Making ~ FREE Snowshoe Trials (9 -10 am)
Let's Talk Turtles @ 10 am ~ Trumpeter Swan Discovery Hike @ 11 am
Snow Painting @ 12 pm ~ Birds of Prey @ 1 pm ~ Tracking Hike @ 2 pm
Snowshoe Challenge - Bring your own or rent a pair for this challenge!



Nominations are open to Environmental Champions in the Towns of Midland and Penetanguishene, and in the Townships of Oro-Medonte, Georgian Bay, Severn and Springwater!

Visit: <https://www.severnsound.ca/Pages/Award-Nomination-Forms.aspx>

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our recent weather is reminding me so much of winters in England - grey, wet, gloomy, and miserable - which is one reason why I left! Unfortunately, for reasons totally outside our control, the conditions of the snowshoeing and cross-country skiing trails are less than ideal, and will continue that way until the ground freezes. Nevertheless, our regular trail system is still perfectly accessible, and can definitely be enjoyed with a good pair of boots and maybe a stout walking stick or trekking pole. Please remember that all the ice in the Marsh is currently extremely treacherous; do not venture off the marked trails, nor let your dogs off-leash.

Thanks to the sterling efforts of our staff and volunteers, the water at Swan Landing has been kept open by bubblers, and regular feeding has ensured that there is a strong nucleus of overwintering waterfowl which you can visit and enjoy (although, like the Birds of Prey enclosure, we do ask that you not bring your dogs into this area).

The days are getting longer again - come and enjoy your ever-changing Wye Marsh!

Alasdair MacLean, President of Friends of Wye Marsh Inc. Board of Directors



IT'S TIME TO NEST!

Of the five owl species that are native to our area, Great Horned Owls are the earliest nesters, and usually start the process in early February.

The first step is to establish their territory, which is why you might notice that there are a lot more owl calls this time of year. (Both the males and females are very vocal!)

Just like with people, this species likes to "check out the neighbourhood" when selecting a place to call home.

They like to scope out potential sites before others migrate back to the area. This makes it easier to steal nests, because when the previous owners arrive and see the "Tigers of the Sky" have moved in... they simply go elsewhere to avoid conflict.



Great Horned Owl pairs may roost together near possible nesting sites for months before laying eggs.

They prefer nests used by other large birds like hawks, crows or herons. However, an inviting tree cavity, owl box, platform, broken off tree stump, or even a windowsill flower box will also suffice.

While some birds' reproductive cycles are influenced by temperature or time of year, these factors don't seem to have any impact on Great Horned Owls. Instead, they have their own biological clock that dictates when it is time to start looking for a mate.

Great Horned Owls are the largest owl species in Ontario. It takes them longer to incubate their eggs and raise their young, which might also explain why they start the process earlier than other owls.

Their eggs are about the size of a tennis ball, and there are usually 3-4 per "clutch". Once they hatch, in mid-March, the chicks are about the size of a soft ball. Just one month later - the owlets reach their full size, but they still depend on their parents for food. By Autumn, they are ready to spread their wings and leave the nest.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

As a life-long environmental activist, Cate Root knows how important it is to protect Wye Marsh. "It cleans our water, provides habitat for fish and wildlife, and it's beautiful!" she declares. We are all connected in this web of life and being part of an active caring community can be so rewarding.

Cate loves facilitating "wow" moments for visitors to Wye Marsh, as a Front Desk Volunteer, and keeping them up to date on the latest sightings, as well as the organization's special events and workshops.

She also enjoys helping us out by volunteering at special events, roasting Bannock, and has led the occasional guided hike, too. Last year, while taking a birding ID workshop, she was amazed to see freshly hatched snapping turtles on the berm. They were only about an inch in size, she says, "I had no idea. They were so vulnerable."

Protecting the environment and building health communities is really important to Cate.

She remembers when Friends of Wye Marsh was planning the official opening for the main boardwalk. It was around the same time the Township of Tay was planning to host its "Tay Bike Day". Cate suggested the two organizations work together, and hold their events the same day to generate a little media attention. Synchronizing the dates worked beautifully, as Glen Murray, then Minister of Environment and Climate Change, decided to attend!

However she can help, Cate is ready to take action.

Cate sits on the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Water Protection Region Committee, coordinates a Breakfast Club for children in Coldwater, and volunteers with Huronia Hospice as well as the Huronia Community Foundation and Human Voice Bank. She loves volunteering because, "It's always neat to learn new things... and use new skills."



Last year, she was one of a handful of people who braved the cold wet rain on Earth Day, to help out with a restoration planting project along the Return Trail at Wye Marsh. "I didn't know you could just stick those (Willow and Dogwood cuttings) in the ground, and they would grow," she said. It was a revelation she shared with family. "I told my daughter, and now she is doing it on her farm," reclaiming even more natural habitat for wildlife.

"That's the beauty of volunteering. You learn a whole lot of new skills!" said Cate.

And WE learn a lot from you, too, Cate. Actually, we are quite lucky at Wye Marsh. We learn a lot from all our volunteers. For that we say, "Thank you!"



Applying Garlon RTU
one sapling at a time.

WYE MARSH BUCKTHORN UPDATE

You might have noticed a lot of blue marks on saplings at Wye Marsh, and wondered what is going on. Well, we have hired "Restoration Artists: The Invasive Species Experts" to help us address our Buckthorn issue - because they are committed to improving the environment and helping native ecosystems thrive.

European Buckthorn is a fast-spreading transformer species that out-competes native vegetation for sun by leafing out earlier, and holding onto its foliage longer. They also reduce biodiversity by secreting chemicals that actually inhibit the growth of other plants, and they cause changes in soil nitrogen. Simply put, Buckthorn is destroying marsh habitat and food sources for local wildlife.

Removing this damaging species is essential to the long-term health of the Wye Marsh. That is why Restoration Artists are hand-painting Buckthorn saplings with the herbicide Garlon RTU to kill them this winter. It is a very targeted process, and low impact strategy.

For more information please visit <https://rest-art.ca>



WHAT'S ON AT WYE MARSH



BECOME A WINTER CAMP CHEF!

12 pm - 3 pm on Saturday, February 4
Forget the hot dogs. Let's look at how good nutrition, a meal plan, safe food storage, and the right stove can help you curate the perfect Winter camping experience!
\$25 per person
Must pre-register [HERE](#) on Eventbrite.



SNOWSHOE FUNDAMENTALS

1 pm - 3 pm on Saturday, February 18
Discover the FUNdamentals of snowshoeing with this family-friendly outing. Learn the basics of this lively winter activity. Explore our winter wonderland. Try out our obstacle course . Warm up with hot chocolate afterwards, and then spend the day on our trails soaking in some Vitamin N(ature) this family day weekend!
\$20 per person OR \$65 for Family of 4
Must pre-register [HERE](#) on Eventbrite.



FAMILY DAY @ WYE MARSH

9 am - 3 pm on Saturday, February 20
Step out onto the trails, enjoy the beauty of nature, and make new memories together this Family Day! Experience the best of winter fun by learning all about animal tracks, scats & signs. See some of our raptors & reptiles up close and learn what makes them unique, and SO MUCH MORE!
All activities included in the price of admission!



ANIMAL TRACKING WORKSHOP BEYOND FOOTPRINTS

12 pm - 3 pm on Saturday, February 25
Unlock the hidden stories left behind by wildlife as we trek through a variety of amazing habitats! Refresh the fundamentals of animal tracking before departing on a hike to discover the drama of animals' lives left behind in their trails.
\$25 per person
Must pre-register [HERE](#) on Eventbrite.



2023 SWEETWATER HARVEST FESTIVAL

9 am- 4 pm on March 18/19 & March 25/26
Celebrate an uniquely Canadian tradition in a distinctively Canadian landscape. Escape to a time when maple syrup was made over an open fire, experience our history and explore nature at its best.
Must buy tickets in advance! Tickets on sale SOON. Visit [HERE](#)



SPRING INSPIRED STONE CARVING

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 2
Take in a Wye Marsh Birds of Prey Show at 1 pm. Find your inspiration. Let your imagination soar like an eagle. Hold ancient stone in your hands, and carve away the excess, to reveal the beauty within, under the tutelage of Lisa Harpell, owner/founder of Creative Madness Art Studios.
\$70 per person. Materials included. Must pre-register [HERE](#) on Eventbrite.



WYE MARSH TRAILS SYSTEM

16160 HIGHWAY 12 EAST, TAY, ON | (705) 526-7809

- 1 Visitor's Centre
- 2 Birds of Prey Field
- 3 Sugar Shack
- 4 Log Cabin
- 5 Canoe Dock
- 6 Waterfowl Monitoring Station
- 7 Observation Tower
- 8 Bee House

Open Land/ Forest
 Wetland/Open Water
 Building

LEGEND

Hiking Trails

Boardwalk

Trail closure due to repairs

Marsh March 1.9km
(Wheelchair & stroller accessible friendly)

Hardwood & Return Trail 0.4km

Muskrat Loop 1.6km

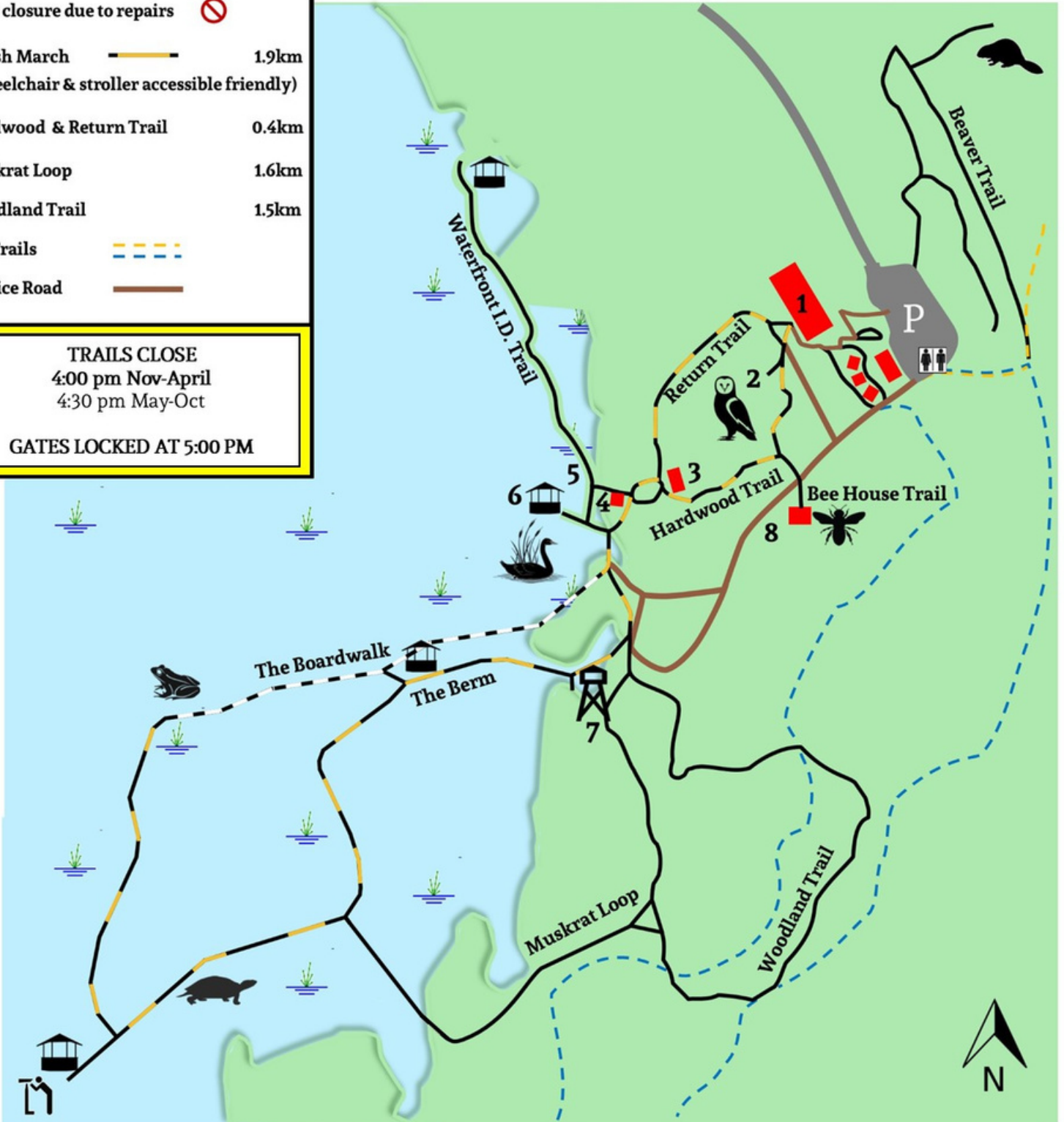
Woodland Trail 1.5km

Ski Trails

Service Road

TRAILS CLOSE
 4:00 pm Nov-April
 4:30 pm May-Oct

GATES LOCKED AT 5:00 PM



Please use caution on all trails, walkways, boardwalks, waterways and property of the Wye Marsh. Appropriate hiking footwear is recommended. Slippery conditions exist when wet. Be aware that plant roots and loose rocks can create natural trip hazards when extending above paths. Immediately exit the trails if foul weather conditions threaten.