

## CHARLOTTENBURGH MARSH

# A wetland jewel is restored

A short drive east of Cornwall, Charlottenburgh Marsh is a provincially significant wetland in an important waterfowl habitat region in eastern Ontario. In recent years, however, structures that help manage water levels in the marsh eroded and the towering invasive plant, phragmites, was choking out native plants that support wildlife.

After a year of work with local partners, this natural sanctuary along the busy St. Lawrence Seaway has been restored. As people return to the trails, boardwalks and viewing towers, they'll be greeted by a vibrant and healthy wetland ecosystem.

Part of the Cooper Marsh Conservation Area, the marsh is a popular destination for school groups, birders and families to enjoy outdoor and educational activities. The busy education centre showcases the environmental knowledge of the property owners, the Raisin Region Conservation Authority, with that of local birding and nature groups.

"Outdoor education is a major focus here," says Robin Poole, on behalf of the volunteer-run Cooper Marsh Conservators. "It's a pleasure to share the wonders of wetlands and wildlife in the marshes with a new generation, including exceptional sights like nesting Sandhill cranes."

Signs of the project's success are already evident. Dr. Poole notes that black terns, a species of concern in Ontario, returned last summer to nest after a lengthy absence.

"DUC played a pivotal role in the creation of Cooper Marsh Conservation Area," he says. "They have continued to be a wonderful

partner and provide invaluable expertise and assistance with restoration projects. For this, we are extremely grateful as are our visitors who love all that has been achieved by this partnership for our beloved wetland jewel."

The restoration is part of DUC's ongoing care and maintenance of its many large wetland habitat projects in Ontario. This scale of work is only possible through the generosity of our partners.

"We're fortunate to have many partners who share our commitment and support conservation projects that benefit wildlife and communities," says DUC's chief executive officer, Karla Guyn. "Charlottenburgh Marsh showcases the relationship between conservation and recreation."

Partners who supported this project include Axalta Coating Systems, the Crabtree Foundation, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. The project also benefited from grants through the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* for habitat projects in Canada that restore and enhance vital waterfowl habitats.



**Top:** Black terns nested at the marsh last summer after a lengthy absence. **Above:** Ruddy duck drake. **Below:** A view of Charlottenburgh Marsh. Photos ©DUC

- + **Charlottenburgh Marsh** is a 303-acre (122-hectare) riverine wetland that was implemented in 1991.
- + The restoration repaired and improved 925 metres of the earthen-dike infrastructure and the invasive phragmites was sprayed to control its footprint where it infiltrated the wetland.

## Birds abound in the habitat

The bird checklist for Cooper Marsh Conservation Area contains 130 species of common and rare birds. Birds sighted at the marsh include waterfowl, osprey, great egret and black-crowned night heron. Amphibians and reptiles like American toads, spring peepers, painted and snapping turtles, and many mammals also make the marsh their home.

