



HIBOU NEWS

News from the Friends of Hibou

Contact us: friendsofhibou@gmail.com

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Seasonal Parking Pass

Did you know that a season's parking pass gives you year round entry to all GSCA properties such as Hibou Conservation Area, Inglis Falls, Bruce's caves, Bognor Marsh and Eugenia falls?

The fee is only \$40 for the year starting Jan 1. The fee goes toward trail and grounds maintenance and protection, taxes, and facilities such as washrooms, bridges, pavilions etc.



Bob and Marie Knapp

founded the Friends of Hibou under the enthusiastic leadership of John Cottrill and Chris Hatchey in 2013.

Together they determined its purpose:

We aspire to enhance the recreational and natural appreciation of Hibou Conservation Area. Friends of Hibou is run totally by volunteers.

The committee consists of volunteers: Bob Knapp, Marie Knapp, Krista McKee, Don Sankey, Barry Lewin, Susan McGowan and Brian Tannahill



The Benefits of Wetland

Article by Susan McGowan

Historically Ontario has lost 70% of its wetlands to agriculture, and industrial and residential development. Conservation Authorities and other environmental protection agencies in Ontario help to regain, enhance and protect our wetlands. In the Grey Sauble watershed we are fortunate to enjoy the benefits Hibou Conservation Area with its recreational features as well as the 30 hectares of wetland accessible by interpretive trails.

Wetlands improve our water quality by filtering sediments, nutrients and chemicals from the Great Lakes. They act as sponges by soaking up and holding water in high flow periods and releasing water to creeks and streams in times of low levels. Wetlands are home to plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.

Our wetlands also provide recreational enjoyment in hiking, bird watching, photography, relaxation and stress reduction. Along the trail in August and September are wonderful wildflowers to enjoy. Joe-Pye weed and Boneset are two similar plants that thrive in damp locations. Both plants grow to waist height and are topped with a crown of small flowers but one is purple and one is white.

On closer examination, another difference between the plants is the leaf structure. As shown below, the Joe-Pye weed has four to seven narrow leaves in each whorl. Boneset has two rough hairy leaves on each whorl, which encircle the stem completely forming a cup for insects and humming birds to drink from!

Joe-Pye has narrow leaves while Boneset leaves form a cup. (Below)





Fall and Winter Hikes

The hikes have already begun. Bob Knapp is leading guided walks around the Interpretive Trail. Marie is leading a Forest Bathing walk on the Point Trail. Fall is a good time to hike in the woods. The mosquitoes will have left and the greenery will have begun to take on fall colours. Winter also provides outing opportunities at Hibou with guided snowshoe hikes. Keep informed by checking the website and the face book page.

Something New For Spring!

The local Optimist Club is raising funds to have a Play Area installed at Hibou suitable for 5 to 12 year olds. Watch for their fundraising events and help them reach their goal.

Please help preserve Hibou!

Take your garbage home. That includes your plastic doggie bag.

Keep your dog on a leash.

Do not build fires anywhere in the conservation area.

And of course there is **no camping anywhere** in this Conservation Area.

Thank you. We need your help.

Being in Nature Feels Good

Article by Marie Knapp

How many times over that last few months have you expressed gratitude that you live in this great part of Ontario. While others were trying to find places outside to walk a safe distance from others, we have rail trails, hiking paths, rural streets and road right of ways where we can walk safely. And we have Hibou Conservation Area.

Walking in nature, being a part of nature, has been shown to help boost mood and bring a healing relaxation that improves production when you return to your daily tasks. One study showed that people who worked at a task for forty minutes then had a break to walk in nature returned to work less angry and more positive than those who had walked in an urban area or were reading magazines and listening to music. Other studies have shown that nature walks helped reduce symptoms of depression. More studies have shown that children who live near green areas are more likely to be less impulsive and more attentive. Of particular importance in this time of Covid-19, being involved in restoring or conserving nature that is all around us gives people a greater sense of purpose and hope.

Spending time at the beach gives you an opportunity to be reflective, surrounded by nature on land and in the water and air. Consider walking on the Interpretive Trail across the road. Walk slowly and take time to appreciate the ecosystem of the wetland and swamp areas. Follow the guided tour on the brochure you can pick up under the sign as you enter. The brochure, the board walks and the gravel are examples of how Friends of Hibou have worked with the GSCA to bring this area back to life.

Down the road toward Owen Sound you will come to another parking area on your left. Cross the road and take The Point Trail on a short circuit with an opportunity to walk through lovely big trees. Take short paths out to see how the shoreline has dramatically changed with the rising water.

What a beautiful area we have so close to Owen Sound. Help us preserve this natural environment.

