



Friends of the Sanctuary

Newsletter

www.friendsofthesanctuary.org

Working today to conserve for tomorrow



Volume 2021, Issue 1

November 30, 2021

A note from the President

Ross Miller

The past almost two years have been challenging for us all. FOS has tried to keep active but has had to comply with various public health requirements. This has caused many starts and stops on our activities. We continue to plan and move forward. We successfully held our Kids Nature Zone event this past September. The event was well received and we had many happy faces and well-wishers attending. I guess you could call it the FOS come back event.

Our Board has started meeting regularly again. We have gotten together to do some trail cleanup in preparation for our upcoming Winter Program. Yes, we will be back at the Visitor Centre with our ski and snow shoe rentals starting January 2022. A lot of planning is going on for our activities for next year. We continue to be optimistic that conditions due to the pandemic will continue to improve and allow us to get back to our previous activity levels.

I would like to offer my best wishes for the coming holiday season and for the coming year. We at FOS look forward to seeing you at the Sanctuary during Winter Program.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

Covid Protocols

To enter the Visitor Centre, all adults must be prepared to show proof of vaccination against Covid 19

If anyone, volunteer or patron, is experiencing any of the symptoms associated with Covid 19, we ask that they not enter the Visitor's Center.

- Physical distancing is encouraged whenever possible.
- There will be regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
- Cashless payment is encouraged.
- Masks **must** be worn by all adults and teens. All volunteers will be vaccinated.

Capsule of Recent Activities and Improvements

The Boardwalk on the Red Wing Trail has been repaired – See **Trail Update, page 3**

Ski Trails are made ready for grooming in the very near future – **See Trail Update, page 3**

New Signage for the Friends has been erected at the entrance to the Sanctuary – **See Article on Fos New Sign, page 5**

FOS was invited to participate at the Annual River Symposium on October 27th. **See page 4**

FOS hosted Kids Nature Zone on September 23, 2021, **see page 6**

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Nature Carries On

Hans van der Zweep

Have you been to the `Sanctuary` as of late? There are many surprises awaiting observant people. As you walk the trails you will see that there are still a few hardy blossoms showing in sheltered spots, just look for the occasional red clover blossom or fall dandelion properly named mouse ear. Then there are the showy scarlet and reds of winterberries and staghorn sumac. You can still find beech trees with almost all the leaves still hanging on, although they are now shades of rust and tan. These will retain their foliage long into the winter. High bush cranberries will likely hang onto most of their fruit until many more frosts have sweetened them, allowing some robins or waxwings to feast late in winter to supplement the wild grapes and buckthorn berries that they also dine on.

Cross country skiers will be glad to know that the trails have been checked and cleared of overhanging branches and other hazards by a group of enthused volunteers in early November and signage was up-dated as well. Now we await the snow for skiers and snowshoers. Check the website and our Facebook pages after we have had enough snow, where you will find a notification as to when it has been groomed and readied for skiing. Rentals will be available again this year.

For trail walkers, please do not walk on groomed ski trails as it makes a mess of the track.

The redwing and cedar trails are excellent for feeding chickadees and other species that may include nuthatches, red-winged blackbirds and blue-jays among others. Perhaps you may see an owl. Great Horned and Barred owls are early nesters and may be on territory after the end of January while Screech owls have been known to utilize duck boxes or a hole in a tree to hide in during the day. Also, be on the lookout for snowy owls over open areas such as the meadow west of the Visitor Centre as they hunt for rodents.

Remember you have to go out to find them and they will be in suitable habitat.

Always remember **do not to feed wildlife** as they will find what is best for themselves and that will keep them safely off our roadways.

Keep checking our site for the Christmas bird count and the `Great Backyard Bird Count` coming later this winter.

Yours in Nature

Hans

Membership

This holiday season, give the gift of recreation and conservation to that special someone. The Friends of the Sanctuary are proud to offer a special Christmas gift this year. From now until December 31st, 2021 every family membership purchased will also receive a voucher valid for one (1) day of free equipment rentals for each person listed on the family membership. An optional cross-country ski lesson is also included.

During the winter season, the Friends of the Sanctuary's volunteers operate a winter program with groomed trails and equipment rentals at the Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Equipment can be rented at the Visitor Centre on weekends and includes cross-country skis, snowshoes, and sleds. For more information on this program, read the article on Winter Program, page 5.

All proceeds raised from memberships are reinvested in the Sanctuary and used to fund the winter program, boardwalk restoration, park landscaping and maintenance, and other activities that we provide throughout the year.

This Christmas, a family membership is not only a gift for a loved one, but also for the environment and community programs! Members also receive a reduced rate on equipment rentals and a free subscription to our newsletter.

To become as member, visit us at www.friendsofthesanctuary.org and submit a Membership Application. Family Memberships are offered for \$25.00 and can be purchased or renewed by e-transfer to treasurer@friendsofthesanctuary.org, or mailed to us at 5589 Parlow Rd. Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0.

We hope you consider purchasing this special gift and come enjoy the Sanctuary this Winter.

Make a Difference

From Wild Birds Unlimited

North American bird populations have declined by nearly 3 billion since the 1970s because of habitat loss, invasive species, climate change and pesticides. With a few simple actions, you can help make the world a better place for birds, wildlife and people, too. Here's a list of 7 Simple Actions you can take to help birds:

- Make Windows Safer
- Keep Cats Indoors
- Use Native Plants
- Avoid Pesticides
- Drink Shade-Grown Coffee
- Use Less Plastic
- Watch Birds, Share What You See

Trail Update

For the last 20 months the trails at the Sanctuary have been used like never before and have provided us with one of the few safe activities available to us early in the Pandemic. There have recently been some improvements made to the trail system, with more in the planning stages.

Boardwalk

After a flood and high winds moved and damaged the second boardwalk on the Red Wing Trail, much research and inspection were performed to secure the boardwalk permanently. The solution was to move the boardwalk slightly, remove a couple of sections and install 2 new observation areas at right angles to the boardwalk.

The muddy west end of the boardwalk has been surfaced with many loads of bark chips, to make the trail accessible again.

A crew of volunteers were out in November, to trim branches and put-up ski trail markers in preparation for our Winter Program. As soon as there is a significant snowfall, the ski trails will be track set.

We remind walkers that the Maple trail is track set as a Ski Trail only for the 6-8 weeks that there is skiing. We ask that walkers not walk on the ski track, as this ruins it for skiing. With the repairs completed to the Red Wing Trail, there are ample trails for all to enjoy walking and snowshoeing.

In the Longer Term

Our long-term plan is to reopen the boardwalks on the Heron Trail. We may need to renew our Get on Board campaign to raise enough funds for this project. Follow us on Facebook and our website for news of more trail work in the spring. We also plan to add more information and educational signage to the trails, so visitors can learn about the flora and fauna with whom we share the forest.

And finally, a reminder all who use our trails:
Carry out your garbage.

Dogs are not permitted on the trails at the Bird Sanctuary at any time!

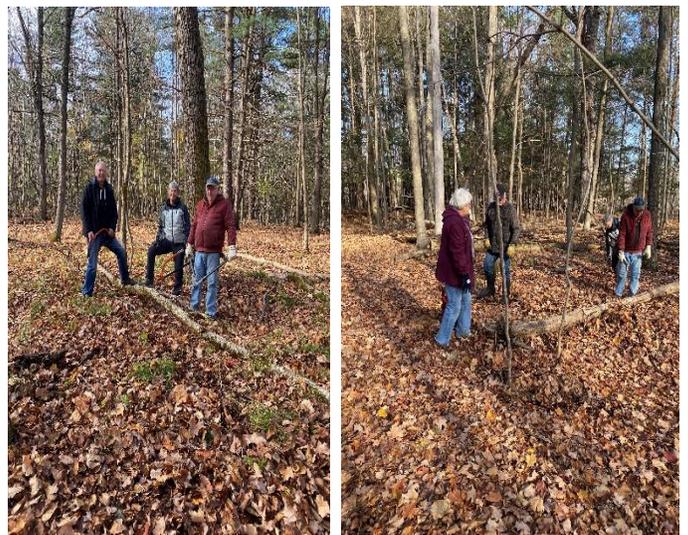
See you on the trails!



Left: Picture of one of the new viewing platforms on the repaired boardwalk of the Red Wing Trail

Preparing the Trail for Winter Program

On Saturday, November 6 the Friends of the Sanctuary were out again doing some ski trail work, putting up trail markers and cleaning up debris along the trails. This is our annual responsibility to the Winter Ski Program. Thanks to the volunteers who came out with gardening shears, bow saws and drills



Annual River Symposium

On October 27 the FOS attended the 28th Annual River Symposium "Global Challenges, Local Concerns," held at the Ramada Inn in Cornwall. We were one of the many booths set up displaying our work to support, promote and conserve the Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary and encourage an appreciation of nature. The presentations from local scientists and community partners spoke about the challenges that face our freshwater ecosystems and the ways in which we are working towards finding local solutions.



FOS Shop (Perfect Christmas gift)

Are you looking for the perfect gift for a friend who likes the outdoors? The Friends of the Sanctuary has a variety of items for sale with the added benefit of supporting our organisation. Please contact info@friendsofthesanctuary.org or message us on Facebook to order. We have a large selection of clothing items, tick keys, bees' nests, postcards, magnets, pins and crests. Additionally, you can purchase gift certificates which can be used for merchandise or any activities hosted by the Friends., We accept cash, cheque, credit, and debit cards.



KILLING WITH KINDNESS - Please don't feed the deer.

Rick Blanchard

There are many reasons why you shouldn't, but here are 3 main ones.

1. The deer become habituated to people, cars, and roadways. I personally am aware of 3 fawns killed by cars on Bird Sanctuary property this year alone. While most drivers are careful here, these same deer travel to, and across, highway 2 and to Ault Island.
2. CWD, a disease deadly to deer, is already prevalent in New York State and for that reason NY State has banned the feeding of deer. Most biologists feel that one way the disease can be spread is when deer eat food contaminated by the urine and perhaps feces of sick deer. When you feed, they eat in a concentrated area usually on the ground. So, if the disease is around, they are also possibly eating food contaminated with CWD. We would like to keep this disease out of our area.
3. A deer's metabolism naturally slows as cold weather approaches. Leaves and green plants become scarce and they normally change their diet out of necessity gradually to evergreens, twigs, and especially cedar. This slowing of their metabolism is the main reason bucks lose their horns, but it also means they need less food to survive during the winter. Feeding them apples and vegetables keeps their metabolisms higher. It's like letting children eat as much candy as they want. They love it, but they get little nutritional value out of it. And, for deer, it means they need more good nutrition to survive the winter.

For these reasons among others, the Ministry of Natural Resources recommends against feeding deer. As a result, the SLPC is following their directives and has put up signs saying that feeding deer in the Sanctuary is not permitted."

So, please don't feed the deer. We know you love to see them up close, but you are actually hurting them.

Winter Program

Plans are underway for our Winter program. The Friends will again be manning the Visitors Centre on weekends in January, February and March. The hours are noon to 4 PM and we will be renting skis and snowshoes and providing a place to warm up with a coffee or hot chocolate. Masks will be required to come inside. High school students who are interested in completing community service hours are encouraged to contact volunteers@friendsofthesanctuary.org.

Ski trails will be groomed once there is enough snow to do so. There is no charge to walk, snowshoe or ski at the Sanctuary, but we would suggest making a donation or becoming a member, to help us with costs. A reminder that the Maple Trail is closed to walkers for the ski season and we ask that people not walk or snowshoe on the groomed track.

There has been some interest in providing ski lessons for beginners, so we will be having some lessons available on weekends, as well as some Seniors-Learn-To-Ski during the week. Dates will be set once we have significant snowfall.

The Sanctuary Visitors Centre will be open on Family Day, February 21 and March Break, March 14-18 and special activities are being planned. Check out our Facebook page for ski conditions and future events.

We will again have guided Moonlight Ski/Snowshoe/Walk events on the Saturday nights closest to the full moons, so January 15th, February 12th and March 19th, meeting at the Visitors Centre at 7 PM, weather permitting, of course. To be in the forest on a clear winter evening with a full moon on the snow, is truly a beautiful and magical time.

This year, we are having a Christmas special. Buy a Family membership for Dec 2021 to March 2023, for \$25 and get a day of free rentals and a family lesson. A membership gets you discounted prices on ski rentals for two winters, so if you were thinking about trying Cross-country skiing with the family, this is a great way to start. This would be a lovely Christmas present for your family and maybe for your friends as well! More details are provided under 'Membership' on page 2.

We are looking forward to seeing many people out enjoying the winter season. Let it snow!

Ski and Snowshoe Rental Rates:

Prices shown are daily rates for skis or snowshoes. There is no time limit on rentals within our rental hours of 12-4. To take advantage of the lower rates, please consider becoming a member. See membership details on page 2.

Category	FOS member	Non-member
Adult	\$5.00	\$10.00
Youth (18 and under)	\$3.00	\$5.00
Sled	\$3.00	\$5.00



FOS New Sign

Ross Miller

In case you haven't noticed FOS has a new sign at the Sanctuary. We started talking about the need to replace our sign back in early 2019. To get to where we are now was a long, surprising and somewhat arduous process.

This whole process started with a concept. The idea being that it would represent us better and allow us to put up notices about our activities that would inform better.

Getting to where we are now required an initial design, looking for quotes, and getting numerous permits. There was a bit of sticker shock when the price quotes came in. There was also a bit of shock at the many permits that were required. I must give credit where it is due. Our Vice President Sam Schuler put in much effort and many hours getting through all the permits. She also worked through a process to get us a grant for this project.

Her efforts are really appreciated by the Friends and resulted in a successful project.

Kids Nature Zone

Hey kids! While you are out walking, skiing, or snowshoeing at the Sanctuary, why not try challenging yourself to a Scavenger Hunt.

Family Scavenger Hunt 4-8 years

Look for the following items on your walk in the trails. (Take a picture of this page (environmentally friendly option) or print this page and take it with you.

- Berries on a branch
- Moss
- Pinecone
- Piece of Bark
- Chickadee
- Animal tracks
- 2 different evergreen twigs
- Thorns on a branch
- Milkweed pod
- 2 different dry leaves

Nature Bingo

Enjoy a game of **Nature Bingo** with friends and family while on your walk. Who found all the items first?

Nature Bingo

		Any animal track		
	Any animal scat (poop!)			
		Free Play		Any animal scat (poop!)
				
Any animal track				Any sign on the trail

Kids Nature Zone Day

Once again, on September 25th, the Friends were able to hold our **Kids Nature Zone Day** with interactive learning activities for kids of all ages. We held the event outdoors using the Stephanie Grady Pavilion and tents from the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. There were 8 activities for kids to try from matching scats and tracks, to learning about ticks. Kids made bird feeders, solved puzzles and learned about Monarchs. Special thanks to Emily from Truebee Honey for bringing bee, wax and delicious honey.

With an on-site BBQ, it was a full afternoon. If the kids completed 5 tasks, their names were entered in a draw for a prize package of nature-oriented merchandise. The weather cooperated and over 50 children participated in the event. Many people, passing by on the Waterfront trail, commented that it was nice to see the Friends back out.

Thanks to all who participated.



Nature Friendly Christmas Decorations

Looks like snow is in the air and our little feathery friends will be hungry. It's time for a good old fashioned nature friendly birdseed ornament. This would be a great activity for adults and kids alike on a cold, blustery winters day!

Birdseed Ornaments (Yield 12)

Materials

- 2.5 cups birdseed (outdoor songbird mix, smaller seed works very well with just a few larger seeds)
- 2 pkgs unflavoured gelatin (2 tbsps)
- 2 tbsps corn syrup
- ½ cup cold water
- ½ cup boiling water
- 12 cookie cutters
- 3 drinking straws cut into 2" long pieces
- Twine

Instructions

1. Add ½ cup cold water to a large bowl and pour 2 pkgs unflavoured gelatin on top of water, then add ½ cup boiling water to the gelatin mixture and stir until the gelatin is completely dissolved.
2. Add syrup, stir until combined and then add birdseed and mix well
3. Place bowl in refrigerator (10 min.) so that liquid is firm and won't leak under cookie cutters
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and fill Christmas cookie cutters with birdseed mixture then press birdseed firmly with a spoon and fill cookie cutters to the top
5. Press straws into each shape and place in refrigerator overnight
6. Gently push cookie out of cutter, pull out straw and thread string through the hole

N.B. If any of the gelatin breaks when you stir it, microwave whole bowl to melt it and try again. Birdseed/gelatin mixture needs to be thickened in fridge to a consistency of a thick syrup.

Have fun!



FOS on the WEB and Facebook

To find information about us please visit our web page at <https://www.friendsofthesanctuary.org/>

You can also keep up with us on Facebook. Just search **Friends of the Sanctuary** to find us. You will find notices about our current activities and updates on trail conditions among other things.

Please like us on our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Sanctuary-414036970680/>

Search for The Friends of the Sanctuary

Board of Directors

We have a number of positions vacant at the moment for both volunteers and on our board. We would love to find people with an interest in the UCMBS who would like to take on these roles. Currently we need to recruit for the role Public Relations, Newsletter and volunteers for our winter program.

The Board of Directors meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 19:00. The usual location is the Visitor Centre at the Sanctuary. Meetings usually last approximately 2 hours at the most. Additionally, participation in some of our activities is expected. Anyone interested is asked to contact the President at president@friendsofthesanctuary.org

Contact Us:

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Web Page: <http://www.friendsofthesanctuary.org>

Newsletter: info@friendsofthesanctuary.org

Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary
Visitor Centre: 613-537-2024



*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year*