

FRIENDS OF HULLETT

MINUTES FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 28, 2026 @ 7:30 PM – Mitchell Arena, Activity Room

Present: Mat Shetler, Mario Coniglio, Craig McDonald, Ryan Bayne, Doug Gordon, Mark Penhale, Duane Inkpen (Chair), Steve Dalrymple, Donna Taylor

Guests: Justin Johnson, Ben Elliot

Regrets:

Meeting called to order at 7:33pm

1. Review minutes from previous meeting, March 31, 2026

- Corrections: none
- Minutes of the March 31, 2026 meeting were approved as presented (unanimous)

New Actions – from April 28, 2026 meeting

ACTION: Get more information in time for the May Board meeting on costs of acquiring a compact track loader to help address the problem of woody vegetation left behind after mowing (Ben).

Actions from earlier meetings (note: Actions 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 should be addressed at the May 24, 2026 Board meeting).

- **ACTION 1:** Duane/Justin will ask OMNRF/DU for signs or funds to purchase signs
COMPLETED: Work will be prioritized according to funding available. See Marsh Report item #15 (this meeting)
- **ACTION 2:** Duane to ask DU whether FoH is invited to the upcoming plowing match in Walkerton
COMPLETED: Duane did not get a clear initial response, but Nick is expected to follow up with Duane. See Marsh Report item #15 (this meeting)
- **ACTION 3:** Justin to report based on further research as to whether a land planer is a good investment. Justin will look into getting box grader repaired.
ONGOING: more reported on in “New Business” of this meeting.
- **ACTION 4:** Membership sub-committee to bring updated draft proposal to next (April 28) meeting for discussion
ONGOING: Sub-committee will develop an implementation plan for this Fall, and will also consult with Scott.

- **ACTION 5:** Mat will work with his GIS contact person to get 2025 air photos for the Marsh
COMPLETED: 2025 air photo collection is now up to date.
- **ACTION 6:** Justin will look into acquiring AEDs and report back at the next Board meeting.
COMPLETED: reported on further in Item #17 of Marsh Report for this meeting.
- **ACTION 7:** Justin to look into thinning out pine and firs in the identified plantations – STILL IN PROGRESS, ONGOING DISCUSSION – Justin will follow-up with David in planned operations meeting on April 23, 2026.
ONGOING: MNR is updating processes and there will be an update available in July. Justin will follow up with David.
- **ACTION 8:** Proceed with installing concrete blocks in parking lot (#40650) – Justin – STILL WAITING FOR WEATHER IMPROVEMENT – not paid for yet
ONGOING: update (if any) to reported on at next meeting
- **ACTION 9:** Look into what it will take to get the roads repaired (cost, process) – Mark – IN PROGRESS - waiting for contractors to inspect roads once they are accessible in Spring. STILL ONGOING – Mark spoke with contractors – roads can be opened for their inspection – Mark will follow-up with them.
ONGOING: update (if any) to reported on at next meeting

2. Treasurer's report – Ryan Bayne.

Ryan distributed on April 28, 2026 by email the following information:

I have not completed a full update, but Year to date (Jan - Mar)

- *Total Income \$111,718.45 (Ag Contract Payment \$98,166.66)*
- *Total Expenses \$66,805.97 (Wages \$42,701.58)*
- *Net Income + \$45,760.07*

As many of the long serving board members know, we operate a healthy surplus early in the year due to receiving the first ag contract and having relatively lower expenses.

I also have the taxes in hand and will bring them tonight along with our copies for board review.

➔ Ryan indicated tax forms have been finalized and signed-off.

3. Report from the Marsh – Justin Johnson

April 28, 2026 - Marsh Report

➔ Designates points of clarification/amplification related to submitted Marsh Report

Stewardship

1. RX100 Training

- Ben and Justin attended course from April 18-19; just outside of Belleville
- RX100 Certification was received; we can now be Prescribed Burn Crew Members
- Very good networking opportunity, strong connections were made with various orgs.
- Next step: get onto prescribed burns to begin gaining experience
 - Justin and Ben to discuss more in the meeting (a lot of moving parts here).

2. Trees from MVCA

- To be picked up on May 6th, new booking system from MVCA is awesome
- To be planted in identified areas later that day, check in with Justin if interested in helping

3. Native Plant Nursery at Office Yard

- Justin and Doug are working towards garden establishment this spring.

Hunt Management

4. Hunter's Workshop

- Ben and Justin to continue discussions with Mouse; looking to host something in July

5. Duck Feeders

- Duck feeders were picked up from Elmira on April 2nd
- Scott Dale has been contacted about building mounting platforms (floating or fixed)
- Site visit with Scott to occur in the coming weeks

➔ Two feeders are in shop at this time

➔ FoH received \$2700 from the OFAH for this project

Fundraising/Development

6. 2026 Charity Dinner and Auction

- This years' auction was another overwhelming success with a record profit of just over \$15,500
- Strong support from many members, including the last-minute donation of a \$3200 Beretta shotgun
- Fun was had by all, and staff have received positive reviews of the event from several people

➔ Board agreed that it was a good idea to alternate the dinner providers going forward

7. EASE (Enhancing Access to Spaces) Funding Opportunity - \$60,000 Ask

- Asking for an accessible path/boardwalk to the accessible blinds/viewing platforms.
- All work to be completed at Burns Line, includes two dedicated parking stalls and signage.
- Working on gathering quotes, letters of support, and finalizing the application

➔ Justin reached out to Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee to gather additional support

8. Hensall Stronger Communities Grant Application - \$10,000 Ask

- Adding on to the EASE ask; targeting an accessible canoe/kayak launch/dock.
- Many are sold as kits, would need to purchase some docking as well.

- Finalizing application for this project in the coming weeks.
- Could be delivered independently of EASE funding, would be a nice add-on if successful

Financials

9. Current Financial Summary

- General Donations to Date - \$484.20
- Membership Donations to Date - \$4817.87
- Donations to Pheasant Release Program to Date - \$65
- Hat Sales to Date - \$45
- Pheasant Challenge Ticket Sales: \$478.86

Maintenance

10. Roads

- Hullett Interior roads are now open
- Staff have been deploying gravel and filling potholes on all interior roads
- More gravel may come as a contribution from the Central Huron Donation Fund (CHDF)
- County should be in to grade the roads later in spring if CHDF successful
➔ 110 tons of gravel paid for by the Lotto account

11. Proposed Capital Projects

- Justin created some maps/documents to share with Clint (McCann's/Merner's) for quotes.
- Ten projects have been proposed so far, hoping to get quotes on:
 - Butterball canoe channel dredging – clearing our muck/debris to improve pool access.
 - EASE accessible pathways and stalls (see item 7.).
 - Pathway widening for AODA compliance at Orange Trail accessible viewing platform.
 - Pond/pothole creation at Whitetail Swamp.
 - Hazard tree removal at Gurgler and Bluebill channels.
 - Sanctuary Road repairs (water diversion from that wet hole just south of the Bendel).
 - Road grading and maintenance throughout Hullett Marsh.
 - Parking Lot Blocks/Barriers as per the Parking Lot Barrier Plan.
 - Accessible Pathway Installation in 1-20 Parking Lot.

Outreach/Communications

12. Annual General Meeting

- To be held on May 24th at Hullett Office, Libby George of UWaterloo will be our new speaker
- Meeting for breakfast at Bartliff's as normal; will follow up with details as AGM approaches
- Libby helped launch the MarshReach project at Hullett; studies environmental changes through passive public photo monitoring systems across Canada.

13. Birding Events

- Justin to provide comments on the event (third tour to be offered on April 25th)
➔ Attendance was low - only 3 people attended.
➔ Next birding outing will be May 30

14. Newsletter

- Preparation of the Spring Newsletter has begun; completed when Photo Contest concludes
- Will include a reminder that Tuckersmith is ending their email service, prompt readers to update their Friends of Hullett email contact.

➔ Photo contest concludes April 30

Other/Misc

15. 2026 Operations Meeting

- Meeting was held April 23rd at the Hullett Office Complex in coordination with DUC and MNR
- Good progress made on a variety of tasks:
- **MNR**
 - MNR to provide signage by priority, beginning with parking lot and yellow dot signage
 - MNR to begin investigating process of planation management under habitat management exemption; new process that will be released in July
 - Ben and Justin discussed our 1-20 parking lot plans with MNR, and would like to know more but are supportive at present
 - Ben and Justin inquired about the use of prescribed burning; David to ask internally
 - ➔ MNR will provide new AODA compliant signs.
- **DUC**
 - New locks are coming for water structures; 20 in all but coming in batches of 10
 - DUC to reevaluate our maintenance contract and will see if they can offer more next year
 - DUC will need to complete extensive improvements on Woodie dyke this summer as patch last year has nearly failed; first thoughts are on installing a long spillway.
 - Nick to circle back on FoH inclusion in this year's International Plowing Match
 - Nick is planning to bring folks from Alabama DNR to tour Hullett in November.
 - ➔ DUC will get back to us in July
 - ➔ DUC wants to drawdown Mallard Pool this year

16. Staffing

- Competitions for summer staff are concluded/will conclude shortly.
 - At time of writing, status of Habitat Stewardship Program funding is uncertain
 - Results of this funding may influence staffing decisions re length and scope
- Canada Summer Jobs has offer to offset costs for all three positions this year!
- (i.e., Maintenance Technician, Maintenance Supervisor, and Outreach Coordinator)

17. AED Purchasing

AED's cost ~\$1,900 - \$2,200 per unit

However, there's a bit more to it:

- Under Ontario Bill 141 (**The Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2020**), all AED's must be:
 - Provincially registered, allowing first responders access to the closest available AED
 - Installed, signed, and tested to provincially legislation
- Owners of designated public spaces are required to:
 - Have AED's on-site for use in case of an emergency
 - Must train staff within 30 days of installation
- ➔ After lots of discussion, including weighing the risks, costs and benefits, the Board made the decision to not pursue the acquisition of AEDs.

4. Reports from OMNRF/Ducks Unlimited

We will have a full report from the operations meeting.

➔ discussed earlier in Marsh Report – expecting feedback from both OMNR and DUC

5. Website, Newsletter & User Guide

➔ Emily will train new staff to take on outreach activities

6. Pheasant Challenge, Youth Waterfowl Clinic.

Ticket sales have started

➔ Takes place the 3rd Saturday in September

7. New Business

Justin: discussed the box grader/land planer initiative – summarized in the document Justin circulated prior to this meeting. Land planer with hydraulics seems to best meet our current needs. We will still depend on the township for assistance in maintaining roads.

MOTION: Research purchase of a land planer with hydraulics, moved by Steve, seconded by Mark, passed (unanimous).

Justin: re. mulching in the marsh. There was discussion of the problem presented by the woody vegetation hazard left by mowing – tractor cannot stay on top of it. Perhaps FoH should consider the purchase/rental of a compact track loader to help mitigate this issue. It was agreed that we need a plan by June 1, 2026, on how to proceed. Implementation expected for August, 2026.

ACTION: For the May meeting, get more information on costs of acquiring a compact track loader to help address the problem of woody vegetation left behind after mowing (Ben).

Mat: Vanessa Palmer Award. We received interest from two individuals – Kiera Snelling and Alaina Scheurwater. Following some discussion, it was generally agreed that Alaina Scheurwater was the stronger candidate and should receive this award.

Steve: NAVHDA started training days on Saturdays – will proceed for the next 4 weeks

Duane and Steve: Discussed pheasant release – Board agree that 1143 birds should be released next year . Steve suggested 250 birds per release and will circulate the draft release schedule with the pheasant subcommittee.

8. In camera issues

none

Meeting adjourned at 9:23pm

Next meeting is AGM on May 24, 2026 at the Friends of Hullett Office.