

FRIENDS OF HULLETT

MINUTES FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 30, 2026 @ 7:30PM – Mitchell municipal building (meeting moved from Mitchell Arena due to construction)

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

Guests: Justin Johnson, Ben Elliot, Emily Dearing, Ally Gibson

Regrets:

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM.

- Mat Chaired meeting.

1. Elect Executive

- Executive roles for the next year are unchanged: Duane as Chair, Mat as Vice-Chair, Mario as Secretary, Ryan as Treasurer.

2. Review minutes from previous meeting, May 24, 2026

- Corrections: none
- Minutes of the May 24, 2026 meeting were approved as presented (unanimous)

General Comments re: the AGM

The Board agreed the AGM went well, and commended the guest speaker

***NO NEW ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING (June 30, 2026)**

Actions from May 24 meeting

- **ACTION 8:** Proceed with installing concrete blocks in parking lot (#40650) – Justin is getting quotes.

COMPLETED: all concrete blocks have been placed (see Marsh Report item #13)

- **ACTION 9:** Look into what it will take to get the roads repaired (cost, process). Justin is getting quotes.

COMPLETED: all roads are now in good shape – gravel added in places and graded. User feedback has been very positive (see Marsh Report item #14)

Actions being carried from May 24 meeting for reporting at future meetings

For July 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.

For October meeting

- **ACTION 4:** Membership sub-committee has talked to Scott and will finalize the proposal prior to Jan.
ONGOING: Sub-committee will develop an implementation plan for this Fall.

3. Treasurer's report – Ryan Bayne.

Ryan distributed on June 30, 2026 by email an Excel file that included the following information:

- Total assets \$316,780
- Surplus \$301,676
- F2026 net income (loss) \$103,737

Ryan further noted we are in a very healthy position with respect to cash reserves – they are in line with expectations

VanDriel excavator work as per emails – discussed in New Business (Agenda item 8)

Some minor expenses are anticipated, no major ones are expected. Capital Asset plan shows we will need to replace truck and snowmobile in 2028, and a computer in 2027. Mat asked whether we need another vehicle to move people around. Justin indicated we can manage with current vehicles. Mark suggested we keep an eye out for potential truck deals in case something comes up that we should consider ahead of 2028.

4. Report from the Marsh – Justin Johnson

June 25, 2026 – June Marsh Report

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

Stewardship

1. Grassland Conversion

- Working with Jake Lozon of Ontario Nativescapes on land conversion
- Flynn has agreed to rip up the fields, FoH staff have been working to prepare the spaces
 - Hoping to complete the conversions ASAP
 - Flynn has said he intends to get at the fields by the end of June.
 - Justin to follow up.

➔ Justin indicated that we may have to move to another contractor if Flynn cannot deliver on our expectations.

2. ISAF Grant

- We were awarded \$2000 from the Invasive Species Action Fund to build a biochar kiln.

- Also funds a workshop and hands-on woody invasives removal.
 - Looking to organize the workshop/workday for August.
- Kiln to be installed at the 1-20 parking lot; co-opted into Meadow Management Plan.

➔ The August workshop/workday is one of the requirements of the grant.

3. *Phragmites Control*

- ABCA approved for \$90,000 from the Invasive Phragmites Control Fund.
- Funds to go towards Phragmites control throughout the Phragmites Management Area.
- Justin is working with ABCA to prepare permit application for review by MECP.
- MNR has said they will need to prepare an Environmental Assessment of the proposal.
- Control to be completed by Janice Gilbert and the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre.
- Drone applications of Habitat Aqua planned for **August 4th, 2026**.
- FoH is only required to place "Sign F"'s in parking areas; pending MECP review.

4. *1-20 Parking Lot Meadow Management*

- FoH staff have been developing a partnership with Nick Peat of EcoStrategyPEC.
 - Nick coordinated RX-100 course in April staff attended; been in contact since.
 - Nick is passionate about burn management; working to become a burn boss.
 - Nick is connected in the Prescribed Burning network; joined a burn with NCC.
 - Recently created a new business; working to make burning more accessible.
- Since the workshop, we've been discussing the 1-20 meadow project with Nick.
- Ben and Justin took Nick on a site tour on June 6th to discuss the project/vision in detail.
- Nick has produced a workplan based on our conversations and plans.
- **He wants to work with us to get staff the experience to make burn management sustainable at Hullett. We would become a center for burning in southern Ontario.**
- Nick has reviewed our 1-20 Implementation Plan; is addressing phases 1 and 2.
 - Nick believes we can get a burn in as soon as next spring.
 - Designs already in the works; will be released if the BoD chooses to support work.
 - Designs to be approved as "burn ready" by certified Burn Bosses.
 - Designs to include planned infrastructure outlined in 1-20 Implementation Plan.
 - FoH staff to assist Nick in the creation of burn brakes; Nick to build infrastructure.
- **These actions will put Implementation Plan *more than two years* ahead of schedule.**
 - **ACTION** – Will the BoD support Nick's work? (see attached workplan for costs).
 - If approved, Justin will begin targeting funders to support the work.
 - If approved, Nick would like to meet the BoD in person to discuss the project.

MOTION: Board approve funding to establish burn brakes to a maximum expenditure of \$10,000 (supporting Phases 1 and 2 of the draft plan).

Moved – Steve, Seconded – Mark. Carried (unanimous)

5. *Plantation Management*

- Justin finally visited the plantations to conduct some surveys and assess their progress.
- Issues are discussed in the prepared Plantation Management Plan document.
- This space will require a lot of work; looking to some of our dedicated volunteers to assist.

➔ Biochar kiln could be useful here – Duane suggested we communicate with the local fire department to keep them posted.

Hunt Management

6. Hunter's Workshop

- Mouse (Larry Dolmage) is getting a knee replacement and is unable to do the workshop on July 18th
- He is eager to host the workshop this year, aiming for a fall delivery.

7. Hullett Trappers

- All trappers have returned their reports on time; here's a summary for their 2026 harvests:
 - Doug Vincent – 5 beavers, 12 muskrats
 - Matt Duncan – 12 beavers, 13 muskrats, 1 mink
 - Everett Smith – 2 beavers, 23 muskrats, 2 raccoons
- Justin to coordinate a meeting with all the trappers and renew agreements with all.

➔ History of harvests from previous years is not known, there was not rigorous reporting. That has changed.

Fundraising/Development

8. Auburn Riverside Retreat

- FoH was selected as recipient of donation from Auburn Riverside Retreat fundraiser.
- Ally attended the event on June 13th to speak about FoH, the Marsh, and our programs.
- \$1,478.80 was donated to FoH. Will be used to upgrade trail markers at the Marsh.
- Auburn Riverside Retreat was offered a half-page ad in the HUG as a thank you.
- Will distribute the guide from their office to campers in Auburn.

9. KC's Streeteats

- Colin Gaulton will be raising some funds through fry sales out of the food truck again.
- Has committed to giving \$500 for last year's fundraiser.
 - Hoping the weather cooperates this year; fall rain impacted the success.
- Advertising space was given in the HUG to promote KC's fundraiser for FoH.

10. 12th Annual Charity Auction and Dinner

- Date already set and confirmed with Bluewater: **April 17th, 2027.**
- Pineridge has been contacted to cater; quote is \$6977.75.
 - This is ~\$300 more than Devin last year and ~\$700 more than Pineridge in 2025.
 - Pineridge BBQ to throw in some donations for the Auction as well!
 - Full quote attached and sent to BoD
 - ACTION – Will the Board approve of the payment to Pineridge BBQ
- Already sold three tickets!

MOTION: Board approve proceeding with Pineridge for the next dinner.

Moved – Donna, Seconded – Doug. Carried (unanimous)

Financials

11. Current Financial Summary

- General Donations to Date - \$553.00
- Membership Donations to Date - \$5,442.09
- Donations to Pheasant Release Program to Date - \$65
- Hat Sales to Date - \$69.30

- Pheasant Challenge Ticket Sales: \$1,154.48 (117 tickets; 9.75% sold)

Maintenance

12. Butterball Dredge

- Ben and Justin met with Derrick VanDriel to discuss dredging the Butterball.
- Derrick won't provide a quote for dredging work (too much uncertainty).
- Did not provide an estimate but said the whole project could cost upwards of \$80,000.
- Mulching will be completed *ad hoc*, creating openings to reach the long arm through.
- Mulching could take upwards of two weeks; given Derrick's pricing it could be \$15k

ACTION: Ryan will get notes from Ben re Pintail and do a comparison and propose a maximum amount to spend.

➔ This action is no longer necessary – decision on this issue was made in New Business (this meeting).

13. Concrete Blocks

- 80 parking barriers have been replaced in Hullett, barriers deployed on June 24th
- All priority 1 lots have had barriers installed; this includes:
 - Orange Trail Parking Lot
 - The parking lot on Wildlife immediately south of Conservation Road
 - Final parking lot on Conservation Road
 - 1-20 Parking Lot
 - Burns Line Parking Lot
 - Homestead Parking Lot
- Barriers to be paid for out of Lotto Fund; expecting an invoice from Merner's soon.

➔ Some parking lots will be sprayed when weather permits.

14. General Maintenance

- Land Planer has arrived and has been put to good use
 - Ben has already graded all Hullett interior roads; grade again later in the summer.
- Emily has been painting gates, will make her way through all gates at the Marsh.
- Calen has been cleaning up pheasant pens and keeping the lawn cut.

15. New Trail Signage

- Plan for upgrades to Hullett's trail markers and blazes; includes arrows to indicate turns.
- Using donation provided by Auburn Riverside Retreat (see item 8 above).
- Modern UV-resistant plastic signage that will not deteriorate.
 - Upfront investment means less staff/volunteer time dedicated to trail blazing.
 - See them here: [Trail Direction Signs \(A18xx\) - various colours – Chrismar.com](#)

MOTION: Use funds from Auburn to purchase plastic trail markers (estimated \$1400).

Moved – Mark, Seconded – Steve. Carried (2 dissenting)

Outreach/Communications

16. Hullett User Guide

- Ally has been working on a revitalized and modernized version of the Hullett User Guide.
- Current Revenue from the 2026 HUG: \$5,465; 37 advertisers in all.

- Will need to pull ~\$1400 from CHDF <<Central Huron Donation Fund>> to cover off the estimated costs this year.
 - Remaining \$800 from CHDF to be used for new banners and signage.
- Draft distributed to BoD for review; will only be adding 2-4 pages for new content.
- Hopeful that new content will make HUG more desirable for advertisers in future.

➔ There are a few less advertisers than last year. There is some new content – kids activities, Hullett time line, articles, quotes from users.

- Send feedback to Ally.

17. Website Launch

- New Website was launched on June 8th, 2026.
- Reception has been positive; sales have been flowing through without issue.
- AI chatbot GeeGee has been fielding many interesting questions.

18. Birding Events

- Fifth and final planned tour to be hosted June 27th
- May host an owling tour in the fall.

Miscellaneous

19. Key Performance Indicators

A summary of staff progress on 2026 KPI's has been submitted to the BoD.

➔ Justin reviewed KPI document.

5. Reports from the OMNRF/Ducks Unlimited

- DU will be coming in to do some work on the dikes
- They are currently processing the invoice for some spring mowing

6. Website, Newsletter & User Guide

- Nothing new to discuss – see Marsh report #16 and 17

7. Pheasant Challenge, Youth Waterfowl Clinic

- Youth Pheasant Hunt will take place on November 14 and 15, 2026

8. New Business

Mat reminded Directors that they could claim their annual costs (\$400) at this time, Justin will circulate claim form via email.

Steve will produce a pheasant release schedule later this summer

Justin

1) thanked Doug for his deft handling of the response to comments made by Dave Meade. Justin also thanked Steve for helping out with some of the communication from FoH.

2) made a request to the board to support first aid training for Emily, Ally, Calen for an estimate cost of \$1200.

MOTION: Board approve costs for the first aid training of contract staff.
 Moved – Donna, Seconded – Craig. Carried (unanimous)

3) Justin explained how Ben's computer was in need of upgrading and asked Board to approve purchase of a new one, with estimated cost of \$1200.

MOTION: Board approve purchase of a new computer.

Moved – Donna, Seconded – Mark. Carried (unanimous)

4) Justin and Ben will be getting quotes for drum mulchers.

Doug discussed the idea of a photo contest for 2027 – it will be more robust than the current contest, have different categories, bigger prizes and also have a judging panel. Getting sponsors will happen once the contest has materialized.

Ryan provided background from earlier dredging work to help guide the decision on how best to proceed with the current need for dredging. Previously, to dredge 700 m, the cost was less than \$12k, but costs have escalated since. The proposed work will involve removing some brush in addition to dredging the Butterball access from the access point to as far as allocated funds will take it.

MOTION: Board approve allocating a maximum of \$25k (including taxes) for brush removal and dredging of the Butterball pool from the canoe access up to 500 m, whichever comes first.

Moved – Ryan, Seconded – Craig. Carried (unanimous)

9. In camera if needed

- There was no in camera meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27PM

Next meeting is on July 28, 2026 in Mitchell. Venue will be communicated.