



Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre

1 Snow Goose Bay at Highway 220
Stonewall P.O. Box 1160
Oak Hammock Marsh, MB
R0C 2Z0

Information (204) 467-3300
Bookings (204) 467-3299
Volunteers (204) 467-3294
Fax (204) 467-9028
Net www.ducks.ca/ohmic
Toll-free 1-888-50MARSH
E-mail ohmic@ducks.ca



Hours

Public hours of operation

May to October
open daily 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Extended hours during migration.

November to April
open daily 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Centre is also open beyond its public hours for group bookings and meetings.

Visit the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre today!



The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre is a joint project of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Government of Manitoba



The Marsh Shop

The *Marsh Shop* online is a one-stop shopping centre for unique merchandise. The store offers a wide variety of items from toys to jewelry, books to clothing, decoys to an executive line and many more fine products. As of May 3, 2005 the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre's *Marsh Shop* was officially open for business. To access the *Marsh Shop* online go to www.ducks.ca/ohmic, and click on the *Marsh Shop* icon. The *Marsh Shop's* secure online payment system will ensure a worry-free purchase and prompt delivery of your order. Don't delay - place your order today!

As an introductory offer, enclosed in this issue of *The Reeder* is a coupon for \$5 off a purchase of \$35 or more (excluding taxes). This offer is valid until October 15, 2005 (one coupon per order). Revenue generated from the *Marsh Shop* online goes to support the Interpretive Centre. If you have any suggestions about items you would like to see in the *Marsh Shop* online or comments on the store, please contact us at ohmic@ducks.ca.



Employment Opportunity

The Interpretive Centre is seeking a motivated individual for the position of evening/weekend receptionist. For more information on the position, or to submit your resume and cover letter, please contact Cathy Wasserman at (204) 467-3299.



Privacy

In accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, names, addresses, or other personal information collected by Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre (OHMIC) will only be used for internal purposes such as informational mailings, membership renewals, and other communications. It will not be shared with any third party. You have the right to request that your name and other information not be used for any internal OHMIC marketing purposes. If your information changes or if you no longer wish to receive communication from the Interpretive Centre, please let us know by calling 467-3219.

Visit us for your business meetings, family barbecues, holiday celebrations, small formal dinners and birthday parties.

The Oak Hammock Café is open for marvelous meals & tasty treats. Call ahead for hours. Come out and enjoy!



Fall/Winter 2005

Volume 13 Issue 2

A flock of snow geese lift off after a rest and a bite to eat at a lure crop at Oak Hammock Marsh during fall migration



INSIDE

- Manitoba Conservation - *Piping Plovers*
- Ducks Unlimited Canada - *Family Greenwing Day*
- Activities and Events - *September to December*

New at the Marsh... *New at the Interpretive Centre...*



Membership

The Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre Membership Program

Enjoy the splendor of the wild...year-round.

The Centre's membership program is an incredible entertainment value for all. Enjoy...

- year-round admission
- personalized membership card
- invitations to special events
- 10% discount in the **Marsh Shop**
- discounts on workshops, canoe & wagon rides
- discounts on winter, spring & summer camps for kids
- home delivery of *The Reeder*
- guest admission passes – a \$40 value for \$25!
- free admission to over 20 science centres and museums across Canada including the Ontario Science Centre, Science World B.C., and the Edmonton Odysium
- reduced admission or memberships with Manitoba Children's Museum & The Manitoba Museum (to name just two)



Rates

Annual memberships:

Adult individual	\$25.00
Senior individual	\$20.00
Household	\$45.00
Senior couple	\$30.00
Grandparents	\$40.00
Sustaining	\$100.00
<i>plus GST</i>	

Daily admission:

Adults	\$5.00
Seniors & Youth	\$4.00
Family day pass	\$18.00
<i>includes GST</i>	

This...Is...Jeopardy!

Have you ever watched a game of Jeopardy and thought, "I could do better?" Well, here's your chance. Join us Saturdays at 1 p.m. in the theatre for a friendly game of Marsh Jeopardy. Impress your family and friends with your incredible knowledge of wetland features and creatures. Be the first to ring in, double your points with hidden daily doubles, and don't forget to phrase your response in the form of a question, because this...is...Jeopardy!

Before There Were Stores...

There was a time, before the arrival of Superstore and Canadian Tire, when people lived off the land. First Nations People moved with the animal herds and adapted to the changing seasons, never taking more than was needed and never forgetting to give thanks for the Earth and all its gifts. The new "Before There Were Stores" exhibit highlights some of the methods of survival before modern conveniences were introduced.

New Critters Have Arrived

A new Red-sided Garter Snake and Painted Turtle have recently been added to the menagerie in the Morrison Wetlands Hall. These specimens will be used as educational ambassadors. They will spend approximately one year at the Centre and will then be released where they were found. To help make their stay an enjoyable one, the snake and the turtle will be staying in their own watery enclosure where they are free to bask on a rock, go for a swim or find shelter behind vegetation. You can help to keep their new environment stress-free. Please do not tap on the aquarium glass to get their attention. We invite you to join one of the Centre's popular "critter feeding" sessions to see all of the live animals being fed. These are held daily between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Special Thanks

John Hodgson for his time and effort in the construction of two barbecues used in numerous outdoor cooking programs.

Great Western Containers Inc. and Chisick Metal Ltd. for donating barrels and metal, respectively, used in the construction of the barbecues.

All of the **Oak Hammock Marsh** volunteers who have assisted with the Centre's many programs.



Workshops

Manitoba Hunter and Firearm Safety Training Course

Sunday September 11
Course fee: \$35 plus GST
Time: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Instructor: David Sutton

The purpose of the Manitoba Hunter and Firearm Safety and Training Course is to promote responsible and ethical hunter conduct, to emphasize the importance of wildlife management, laws and regulations and the safe handling of hunting equipment. Students will obtain a better understanding of their obligations to resources, landowners, other hunters and themselves. Manitoba law specifies all hunters born after 1950 must successfully complete the Manitoba Hunter and Firearm Safety Training course to qualify for a hunting licence. Graduates receive a temporary certificate immediately upon successfully completing the Hunter Safety course and a permanent certificate is issued shortly thereafter. If a hunting licence applicant is between the ages of 12 and 17, they must be able to show proof of having successfully completed the Manitoba Hunter and Firearm Safety Training course. Pre-registration is required.



Volunteer Corner

Volunteer meetings are held the tenth of each month at 10 a.m. Come meet new people, catch up on the updates and stay for the fun! Enjoy good company, coffee and scrumptious goodies. See you there.

NEW! Starting in September, we will have monthly meeting quizzes with fabulous prizes.

Some of the volunteer opportunities available for the fall and winter are:

DUC Mascot / Parades	Off-site events
Canoeing	Critter Care Attendant
Exhibit Host	Critter Dipping Detective
School / Daycare Assistant	Office (computer, stuffing)

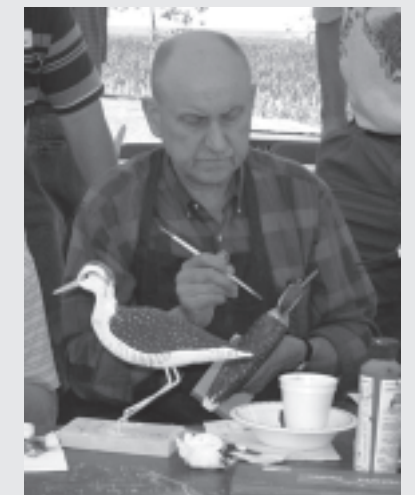
Our volunteers continue to **SHINE** and donate the "gift of time." Volunteers support the Centre in many ways, with their raffles, craft and bake sales. Volunteers have been entering their special holiday tree for the Selkirk Tree Festival for the past nine years. Volunteers welcome visitors from all over the world to the Centre, assist the school/youth and preschool groups with dipping for aquatic bugs in the marsh and help with special events like the Old Time Settler's Picnic. They also represent Oak Hammock Marsh at various off-site events in Manitoba.

Volunteers have donated over 42,482 hours since the Centre opened in 1993! Call 467-3300 today to find out how you can become a volunteer.



Looking to refine your carving skills and share in fellowship with other carvers? The Oak Hammock Marsh Carving Guild may be just the right group for you.

Every Saturday from fall to spring, carvers with a variety of skills and backgrounds gather at the marsh from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to swap carving techniques and share their common interest. The Carving Guild is open to experienced carvers who want to share in the fellowship of the guild and refine their carving skills. The Guild membership fee is \$10 plus a membership at the Interpretive Centre. **Please call the Centre for more information about the Carving Guild.**





Oak Hammock Marsh

“River Watch” Gaining Ground

Oak Hammock Marsh is working with schools on the “River Watch” program, which allows students to get some hands-on experience with water quality monitoring in and around the Red River. The program was initiated in the Red River Basin in 1995 as a pilot project with four schools in Minnesota. This is the second year Oak Hammock Marsh has been involved with River Watch. The goals of the program are to develop baseline water quality data, provide hands-on “real world” science opportunities for students and promote greater citizen awareness and understanding of watersheds and the role of watershed districts. Students have been involved with monitoring two aspects of a watershed: properties of water, both physical and chemical, and macroinvertebrate content of the water. The Interpretive Centre’s role is to encourage schools to participate in the program, to train the teachers how to use the equipment, and to loan out the equipment to schools and communities. This past spring, three Manitoba high schools participated in the program. For more information on River Watch, log on to: www.tri-college.org/watershed/riverwatchmain.htm.

PROJECT WET Water Education For Teachers

Project WET is a program for youth group leaders and educators who work with children in grades K-12. It is a collection of innovative, water-related activities that are hands-on, easy-to-use and fun!

Workshops consist of a six-hour session to introduce you to water education using the 500-page curriculum and activity guide.

For more information on Project WET call 467-3300 or 1-888-50-marsh (62774) e-mail: projectwet@ducks.ca or visit the Web site at www.ducks.ca/ohmic

Get WET with a group of 15 or more and we will bring Project WET to you! (One full day or two evenings) For a sample, book Project WET Activities on your next field trip to Oak Hammock Marsh.

Get WET Today!



School & Youth Programs

River of Dreams

Show students a fun way to explore a watershed with the “River of Dreams” program! Based on the award-winning book “Paddle to the Sea”, this program mirrors the adventures of a young Aboriginal boy who makes a wooden canoe and sends it into the Great Lakes watershed system. Students will receive a small cedar canoe to decorate and then release into a watershed system. Printed on the hull of each canoe is a six-digit identification number, a Web site (www.tri-college.org/watershed) and information about how the program works. When citizens recover a canoe, they can record the identification number on the Web site and then return the canoe to the river to continue on its journey. Students can track the progress of their canoe, discovering and learning about the parts of their local watershed in the process! For more information on how your school or community can become involved, please contact the Interpretive Centre and ask for the Project WET Workshop Coordinator.



Camp is a great way to gather precious memories and build special friendships that will last a lifetime! The Interpretive Centre offers camps for kids of all ages during each school break - Spectacular Spring, Sizzling Summer and Wonderful Winter. Call the Interpretive Centre for fees, more information, and to register.

Fundraisers

2005 Minister's Dinner

The ninth annual Minister’s Dinner was held at the St. Charles Country Club on February 19, 2005. The patron of this year’s event was The Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation. Over \$120,000 was raised for environmental education at the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre.

A very special thank you to Minister Stan Struthers and the members of the Blue Ribbon Committee: Mr. Gary Bachman, Dr. Frank Baldwin, Mr. William J. Burnett, QC, Mr. Sean Devlin, Mr. Ryan J. Downey, Mr. Ross E. Gage, Mr. Gary Garrioch, Mr. Michael Leech, Mr. Gregg Maidment, Mr. Mike Miller, Mr. Al Moon, Mr. Dale Parkinson (Co-chair), Ms. Angie Pfeifer, Mr. Jim Richardson, Mr. Mauri M. Rutherford (Co-chair), Mr. Larry Vickar, and Mr. Dave Wotton.

We would also like to thank the Dinner Committee: Ms. Diane Crowe, Mrs. Debbie Essex, Ms. Cheryl Johnson, Mr. Robert Laidler, Mr. John Milne, Mr. Don Sexton, Dr. Rick Wishart, and Mr. Shawn Yarechewski.

Below is an excerpt from the Minister’s message in the 2005 Minister’s Dinner evening program:

A MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE STAN STRUTHERS, MINISTER OF CONSERVATION, PATRON OF THE NINTH ANNUAL MINISTER’S DINNER

I am pleased to welcome everyone here this evening to the Ninth Annual Minister’s Dinner in support of the world-renowned education and interpretive programs of the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre.

This is my second year as host and patron of this special annual event, and the second year of our third 5-year partnership agreement between Ducks Unlimited and Manitoba Conservation. Although the spring and summer of 2004 were not the most favourable weather-wise, we did experience a long and enjoyable fall with record numbers of migrating birds traveling into southern Manitoba and staying with us well into the season. The Oak Hammock Interpretive Centre provided yet another strong season attracting local and regional school children, tourists from around the globe and Manitobans from all walks of life. Their wide array of educational and interpretive programs continued to grow and be strengthened by the high quality of work and dedication provided by the staff and management of the Centre.

I am particularly proud of the fact that in 2004 the funds raised from this annual event broke all previous records. Indeed we are looking forward to a successful evening again this year and hopefully one that will meet the mark of last year and, if possible, surpass it. Your presence here tonight and the continued enthusiasm and financial support that you bring through this annual event are key measures of the success of the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre. Truly, it is in everyone’s best interest to ensure the continued growth and success of the Centre’s educational programs for current and future generations.

On behalf of the Province of Manitoba I wish to offer my sincere thanks to each and every one of you for supporting the Minister’s Dinner this evening and providing your commitments of time, energy and financial support to the conservation and education of our wetland heritage.

Daily Programs



Theatre Shows

Enjoy a broad range of nature videos and slide shows in the Centre’s 120-seat multi-media theatre.

Exhibits

Explore the Centre’s interactive exhibits on your own or with an exhibit host.

Tours and Talks

Join an interpreter for a guided tour, prop talk, demonstration or storytelling in the exhibits, courtyard or rooftop.

Guided Walkabouts

Take a guided walk to experience the sights and sounds of the marsh. In winter, snowshoes are provided.

Seasonal Specials



Critter Dipping and Marsh Cart

Grab a dip net and bucket to catch marsh critters. Bring them inside to get a closer look on the micro-video. Daily, weather-permitting, until freeze-up.

Canoe Excursions

Experience the sight, sound, and history of the marsh in a voyageur-style canoe. Daily, weather-permitting, until freeze-up.

Fall Migration Talks

Enjoy the “Geese of Oak Hammock Marsh” slide show in the theatre before joining an interpreter on the rooftop to watch the spectacular evening fly-in as the geese return to the marsh at night.

Winter Snowshoe Hikes

Borrow a pair of snowshoes for a brisk walk. An interpreter will reveal the wonders of the marsh beyond the trails.

Third Annual Family Greenwing Day Held at Kelburn Farm

Like geese and ducks during migration, staff members from Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and James Richardson International (JRI) gathered their families to congregate at Kelburn Farm just south of Winnipeg on Saturday, April 23, for the third annual DUC-JRI Family Greenwing Day.

The annual event features a barbecue, hands-on activities, prizes for kids and an opportunity for staff members from DUC and JRI to mingle on a personal level.

“The purpose of the event, aside from having fun and enjoying the outdoors, is to bring the staff members of our two organizations closer together,” says Dr. Brian Gray, DUC’s director of conservation. “Through more personal events like this, our staff members are better able to appreciate each other’s organizations, which helps to strengthen our ongoing conservation partnership.”

About 60 kids and adults enjoyed the day at Kelburn Farm, JRI’s modern crop research and education facility, situated on 500 acres along the banks of the Red River. Each year, the event alternates between the farm and Oak Hammock Marsh.

During the first annual event at Kelburn Farm in 2003, families built and put up 18 nest boxes in a lowland forested area along the River. Since that first year, the boxes have produced a growing number of wood duck broods and provided safe homes for grey squirrels, flying squirrels, owls, kestrels and other wildlife.

This year, after being welcomed to Kelburn Farm by Al Raine, assistant vice-president of crop inputs at JRI, the families split into two groups. The teams alternated between building new nest boxes and bird feeders to be put up on their own properties, and checking the existing nest boxes for wildlife. Oak Hammock Marsh’s own Jacques Bourgeois and Nathalie Bays led the kids in eco-games and critter dipping, helping them learn more about the value of wetlands.

DUC and JRI partner on research that focuses on ways to improve habitat and soil and water quality. One area of the Kelburn Farm research facility, which is generally too wet for farming, will be set aside by JRI as wetland habitat. Work planned for this area includes installing a water control structure, transplanting aquatic plants into the wetland and planting a buffer zone of native prairie grasses.

Kelburn Farm is also growing in stature as an education centre. DUC and JRI have cost-shared a new critter dipping dock on one of the farm’s wetlands. This wetland, as well as the surrounding croplands and woods, is the focus of studies for a group of students from Fort Richmond Collegiate and other high schools. These teens will be studying crop breeding, as well as wetland biodiversity and water quality at Kelburn, and acting as mentors for Grade 4 classes learning about the wonders of wetlands.



Donations

The Interpretive Centre gratefully accepts charitable donations. Tax receipts are issued by Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Donors Receive:

- Mention in *The Reeder**
- Letter of thanks
- Complimentary family day pass
- Tax receipt
- Bronze plaque in the lobby for one year (\$1,000 or more)
- *you may choose to remain anonymous

Memorial Donations

- A letter of thanks to next of kin
- A memorial tree (if donations total \$100 or more)

Donations of \$250 or more are also recognized through Ducks Unlimited Canada’s sponsorship program

- Bronze (\$250 - \$499)
- Silver (\$500 - \$999)
- Gold (\$1000 - \$4,999)
- Platinum (\$5,000 - \$9,999)
- Life (\$10,000 - \$19,999)
- Diamond Life (\$20,000 - \$29,999)
- Sponsor in Perpetuity (\$30,000 - \$39,999)

All donations to the Interpretive Centre support ongoing programs or may be directed to:

- Education program delivery
- Sponsoring a class or group field trip
- Education equipment and teaching aids
- Treating a child to Oak Hammock Marsh day camp
- Specimen collection and taxidermy
- Adopting an exhibit critter
- Planting a tree
- Adopting an outdoor sign
- Sponsoring an exhibit

Items

The Interpretive Centre maintains a small collection of specimens and historical items for exhibits and educational programs. If you have an item that you would like to add to the teaching collection, please call for information.



Manitoba’s Piping Plover populations have decreased from 100 pairs in the late 1980s to fewer than 20 pairs in recent years. It is imperative to discover the reason for this sudden decline. This year, only three active nests have been found, all at Grand Beach.



April Showers Brings May Plovers Manitoba Piping Plover Stewardship Program

The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) is one of the most rare birds in Canada. Provincially, it is listed as endangered as it is “threatened to disappear through all or most of its Manitoba range”. As part of the national recovery strategy, the Manitoba Piping Plover Stewardship Program is working to monitor and protect nesting Piping Plovers and to increase public awareness about the species and its survival. The program has been conducting field searches of beaches in south and central Manitoba since the beginning of May. With the amount of rainfall this spring, water levels were higher than usual, leaving less suitable nesting habitat available for the birds. Piping Plovers prefer the sand and gravel beaches found on the shores of shallow lakes such as Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. In addition to searching traditional nesting areas, the program is also conducting surveys of beaches that, according to a geographic information system (GIS) analysis, might contain suitable habitat. Manitoba’s Piping Plover populations have decreased from 100 pairs in the late 1980s to fewer than 20 pairs in recent years. It is imperative to discover the reason for this sudden decline. This year, only three active nests were found, all at Grand Beach. Although a handful of lone Piping Plovers have been seen at other beaches, further sightings of nesting pairs have not been reported.

Piping Plovers are particularly vulnerable during the incubation period. In an effort to provide the birds with as much protection as possible during this time, the program, in conjunction with Manitoba Conservation, has been erecting enclosure fencing around the nests. The fencing acts as both a barricade and a buffer between the birds and human beach activities. At some nests, smaller enclosure cages are installed over the nests themselves to keep avian and larger mammalian predators from reaching the eggs. Between two and four eggs are usually laid. This year, all three of the Grand Beach nests had four eggs. In a month, these eggs hatched and within a couple of hours of hatching, the chicks began searching for food on their own. It is at this time that they are most vulnerable. One of the adult birds (usually the male) will remain with the chicks until they fledge 20 to 25 days later. Program staff, Grand Beach Provincial Park staff and local volunteers will continue to monitor the birds until the chicks have fledged. Manitoba’s Piping Plovers begin their migration to the south east coast of the United States and the Gulf of Mexico coastline in early August.

Anyone interested in reporting a Piping Plover sighting or in becoming a volunteer Plover Guardian, please contact the Program Coordinator at (204) 945-6817. More information about the Program and this year’s activities can be found at <http://www.species-at-risk.mb.ca>.