

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



*Celebrating 20 Years
1997-2017*

Thank you for your support in 2017!



GENERAL SUPPORT

Port Clinton Rotary Club
The Traveling Chef
Coffee Emergency
Ohio Bird Banding Association
Black Swamp Bird Observatory
Sandusky Bay Hunting Retriever Club
Huron County Retired Teacher's Assn.
Sunoco- Oak Harbor
Shirley Haar
Virginia Roquemore
Malcolm Fisher
Donna Lueke
William Stewart
Barb Wismar
Patricia M. McNichols
Brooke Schumacher
Barb Weigel
Steven Rueter
Rebecca Catrì
Marcia Hornstein
Lee Faber
Liz McQuaid
Stephen Pero
Wade Shull
Lois Kuck
Marsha Tabb

IN HONOR & IN MEMORY

In Honor of Letha Ferguson:
Constance Faddis

In Memory of Kenneth Meece:

Ida Jacobs
John & Nancy Jacobs
Tom & Chris Linke Family
Cheryl Sharp
Trevor Schultz
Josh & Nancy Shultz
Jake & Bev
Anonymous

SPECIAL EVENT SUPPORT

Ohio Ornithological Society
Green Creek Wildlife Society
Sandusky County Park District
Ohio Bluebird Society
Purple Martin Conservation Association
Troyer's Birds' Paradise
Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association
Bird Watcher's Digest
Zeppick Nestboxes
Wild Birds Unlimited
Ag Credit
Pheasants Forever
Geo. Gradel Co.
Bolte Realty
Bolte Insurance Agency
JRM Marine
Mon Ami
Simply Elegant
Starbucks
Bench Farms (Route 2)
Jet Express
Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Ohio River Foundation
Ottawa County Soil & Water CD
Williams Forestry & Associates

The Bohling Family
Pollinator Partnership
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Ducks Unlimited
Ohio Federation of Soil & Water CD
Winous Point Marsh Conservancy
Frederick Agency

REFUGE PROJECTS

Kelleys Island School
Daniel & Ruth Ann Fraser
Catherine Traxler
Greg & Aimee Arent
Rebecca Traxler
Jason Lewis
Adam Kujawski
Gary Wesenberg
Chris Barrett
Heather Hodges
Marcus Clarke
Dottie Douglass
Eric Snyder
Joy & Jeff Roth
Constance Faddis
Romaine M Stawowy
Patricia Koogler
Nancy Foth
Bill & Sue Todd
Michelle Gilford
Mark & Sandy Geudtner
William & Dianne Noice
Linda Skrzyniecki
Robert Lawrence
Peter Lungulow
Kathleen Kapustar
Lawrence & Christine Griggs
Jim & Carrol Spitalne
James & Karen Bonnell
Tom & Carol Furry
Louis McLove
David & Susan Krantz
Wanda & Marty Eberly
James Eidemiller
Joseph Wilhems
Linda Oatley
Stephen Pero
Wade Schull
Michael Feiss & Cathy Cole
Edward Patrick
Jim Crozier
Vincent Capozziello
Ron & Janice Overmyer
David & Kim Myles
Thomas Porter
Carmen Osborne
Bill & Dorothy Baker
Lori Brumbaugh
Suzanne Reddish
Cathy Allen
Letha Ferguson
Pete Schwager
Thomas Bridgeman
Rosalie Borzik
Kristine Ferris & Rick Baum
Carol Fingerhut
Angie Dale
Ann Gombash
John Memmott

Valerie Mueller
Barbara Kahler
Bart Bick
Kathryn Smith
Michele Ross
Cheryl Whipple
Kelli Routsong
Harold Brown
Dean Swartz
Kathy Booher
Kim Kaufman
Glenda Ward & Len Partin
B. Jill Bowers
Allison Shaw
Elizabeth McQuaid
Ann Shreffler
Paula Reich
Nelson Pole
Deborah Schaefer
Terri Wehrman
Terry & Brenda Weidner
Christine Juhl
Andrew Rospert
Bill & Jenni Biegala
Amy & Don Smith
Lock & Janie Zeis
Adam Marks
Angie & Erica Cucunato
Tama Schodowski
Marsha Tabb
David Kreienkamp
Patricia Holt
Joanna Pease
Tony & Jill Adams
David Williams
Janice King
William & Suzanne Switala
Wanda Apgar
Michael & Amy Krupp
Sara Sherick
Jeanette Throne
Robert Coy
Margaret Kern
William Davies
Daniel Snyder
James Reyda
John Munshower
Tom Bowlus
Harriet Alger
Sharon Kathy Edwards
Melanie Bowen-Greenwald
Charlene, Frank & Erin Patz
Margaret Trumbull
Nelson Bash
Dave and Lisa Dubbert
Greg Sage
Joe and Pat Zellia
Sharron Ferrell
Terry & Mary Breymaier
Irwin and Melinda Simon
Patrick Kelley
Beth and Steve Cagan
Henry Fortlage
Doug Johnston
Dennis Jex & Anne Belovich
Lynn Harris
Bradford Hemminger

BEST FRIENDS

Port Clinton Rotary Club
The Traveling Chef
Coffee Emergency
Black Swamp Bird Observatory
Maumee Bay Lodge
Barb Wismar
Jim Crozier
Ron & Pam Adcock
Mark Luebke
Elliot Tramer
James Huebler
Brian D. Koenig
Laura Snodgrass
Thomas Bartlett
Don Bauman & Pat Whitesides
Linda Rogers Sloan
Margaret Trumbull
Joan Buchele
Carol & David Rowland
Rebecca Traxler
Johanna Beebe
Bill & Caryn Long
Ronald Overmyer
Charles Traband
Terese Birmingham
Melinda Simon
Marcus Clarke
Deborah Kibbel
Lee Anne Briese
Jeff & Joy Roth
Margaret Debien
William Anderson
Bill and Dorothy Baker
Rick Baum & Kristine Ferris
Joe Blanda
Charles & Joan Buechele
Harry and Alma Cooper
Martha Dreier
Donna Ebert
Pat Koogler
Hallie LeBlanc
Cory Marshall
Dori Ann Meyer
Virginia Roquemore
Terry & Lori Totman
John & Eva Trimmer
Barb Weigel

TRUMPETER CLUB

Vincent Capozziello
Suzan & Jim George
Tony & Angie Romano
Barnside Creamery

SNOWY OWL CLUB

Carol Morely Beck

EAGLE CLUB

Darlene Sillick

OSPREY CLUB

The Joan Kimple Family
Anonymous (x2)

Letter from the President



2016-2017 Board President,
RONALD OVERMYER



The Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge had another very successful year in 2017. We continue to grow in membership. We grew from 571 members at the beginning of January to 790 at the end of December. Membership is a very important investment in the preservation and expansion of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. The membership dues along with other income sources help us create greater awareness and support for the refuge and all the great environmental experiences that visitors can have at the refuge.

Thanks mainly to Aimee Arent, our Executive Director, and Catherine Traxler, our Nature Store Manager, we have greatly increased our use of social media to inform people of current refuge events, current creature visitations such as the snowy owls this fall and opportunities to volunteer for the Friends group. We also send quarterly newsletters full of information to our members and key supporters. Please note that our Nature Store only stocks high quality items that have a conservation theme and reflect the overall mission of the Friends group and the refuge. I encourage everyone to become more involved with the Friends group and the refuge.

I have served two years as the president of the Friends group. It has been a fantastic experience because of the great team of our board, our Friends group employees, the refuge staff and other great people who have worked so hard to make the Friends group and the refuge a success. I look forward to the continued success under the new board president, Jenni Biegala.

2018-2019 Board President,
DR. JENNI BIEGALA



I am honored to be serving as the President of the Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge for 2018. When I started coming out to the refuge, two things stood out to me, the beauty and the people. ONWR is unlike any place I have been and provides a wonderful place to escape into nature and rejuvenate yourself. There is something for everyone here, whether it is animals, birds, flowers, or other scenery, you can find it here at ONWR. And the employees and volunteers are like no other; friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. Visitors are always ready to show you to the neat bird they just saw or help you identify what you just caught a picture of, and everyone seems to be able to get along on the refuge. I am glad I came that first day and glad I can help you experience the refuge that I love.

There are some great projects that will be coming to the refuge this year, including fishing access at the Helle Unit and kayaking at the Turtle Creek Unit. Hopefully, we can finish funding the ADA Youth Fishing Access at the Visitor Center and get that project in the planning stages soon as well. Projects like these could not be completed without our wonderful Friends members and our dedicated donors. It is sad that Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge is such a hidden gem! In 2018 we are hoping to increase awareness of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and you can help by sharing your experiences and pictures with your friends, family, and neighbors. There will also be more fun activities, speakers, and events to enjoy and share with your family. Ottawa NWR is Ohio's only National Wildlife Refuge and the Friends group members and volunteers are at the heart of it all.

Jennifer Biegala

Friends of Ottawa NWR **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

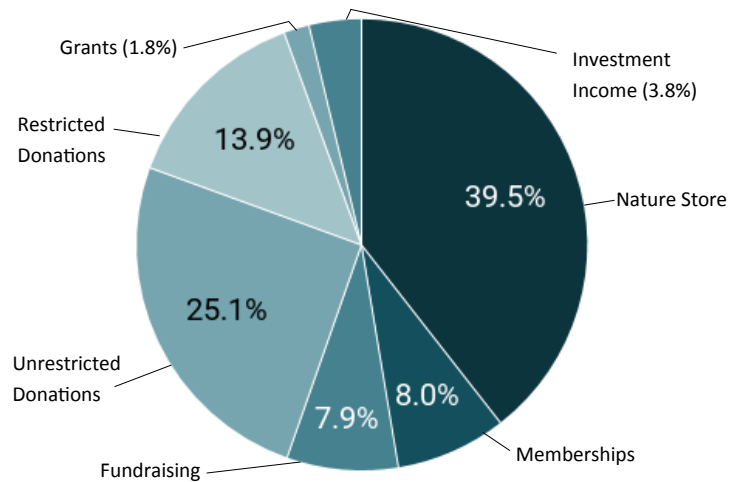
Jenni Biegala, *President*
Bill Baker, *Vice President*
Ronald Overmyer, *Treasurer*
Ginger Haar, *Secretary*
Nancy Dunlap
Jacob Worthington
Pete Schwager
Letha Ferguson
Sara Sherick
Melanie Bowen-Greenwald
Kathy Booher
Andrew Rospert
Carol Fingerhut
Justin Woldt, *USFWS Liaison*

Financials



Intern Mary Jane Walther was one of seven students supported through our Refuge Support program in 2017. The stipend for her twelve-week Visitor Services Internship was made possible by Friends of Ottawa NWR by funds raised through the Nature Store, memberships, and donations.

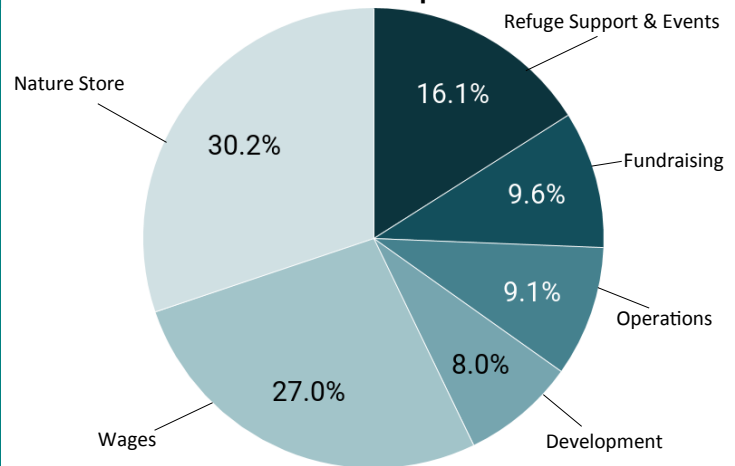
2017 Friends Revenue



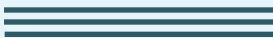
As a glance at the charts will show, profits from operation of the Rookery Nature Store continue to be the Friends' leading source of funds (\$102,457). The next largest source this year was Unrestricted Donations (\$65,297), followed by Restricted Donations (\$36,053). Our Memberships made up a significant source of our annual income as well (\$20,714). Our overall income was \$258,734.06.

Our net income in 2017 was \$69,143.

2017 Friends Expenses



The Rookery Nature Store made up the majority of Friends expenditures in 2017 at \$52,670, leaving a net profit of \$49,787. Wages for our Executive Director and Nature Store Manager made up 27% of expenditures at \$47,000. Refuge program support comprised of \$27,989. These funds were split between supplies, staff, and services in the following programs: Visitor Services at 29%, Special Event Support at 17.3%, Transportation Grants at 12.4%, Promotional Items at 9.9%, Law Enforcement at 9.7%, Refuge Operations at 9.7%, Biology Program at 9.7%, and Equipment at 2.5%. Our overall expenses were \$137,031.45.



GENERATED
\$258,734
an increase of

27.2%

over 2016

SECURED

\$54,207

in grant funds for

REFUGE PROJECTS

& GAVE

\$27,989

towards other

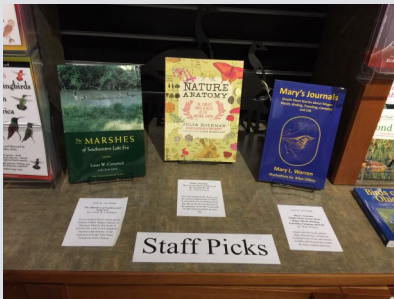
EXPENSES

The Rookery Nature Store



Thanks to all the wonderful members and visitors, the Nature Store raised over \$100,000!

The year 2017 brought many exciting changes to the Nature Store. We started selling the fluffy Cuddlekins stuffed animals, which every child visitor loves (along with some adult visitors). We helped a fellow friends group by buying their overstock after they downsized their space. Our brilliant volunteer Gary Luman created an amazing t-shirt display for us. We removed the old display and created a new space for our sweatshirts and fleeces to hang.



In 2018, the Ottawa NWR Bald Eagle sweatshirts are back by popular demand. We are also on the look out for more merchandise to enhance Ottawa NWR visitor experience. Plans to change several displays around the store are in the works, so come back soon to see if you can spot the changes.



Our total gross sales were \$102,457.25 in 2017!

It is truly amazing how a group of dedicated customers can help us reach and break our goals! We hope you will help us raise even more for the future of Ottawa NWR.



Don't forget ~ members of the Friends of Ottawa NWR receive a 10% discount on most store merchandise.

We could not do this without YOU!

Thank you,

**Catherine Traxler
Store Manager**



Friends Accomplishments



License Plate

We are very excited to share that we worked with Representatives Gavarone and Arndt to pass a bill that will allow us to have an Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge license plate. The bill was signed by Governor Kasich on December 22, 2017. Plates will be available at Ohio Bureaus of Motor Vehicles in 2018.



Grants

- ◆ \$500 Matching Grant, Toledo Community Foundation: Awarded as a Giving Tuesday match for 2016.
- ◆ \$500 Project Grant, Ottawa County Community Foundation: Funds transportation for field trips of Ottawa County students to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.
- ◆ \$3707 Aquatic Education Grant, Ohio Department of Natural Resources: Funds purchase of fishing equipment and youth fishing events at Ottawa NWR from 2017-2018.
- ◆ \$5592 Capacity Building Grant, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: Awarded to update donor management software and create a fundraising plan.
- ◆ \$50,000 grant from anonymous fund of the Toledo Community Foundation: Unrestricted grant.



Kennedy Emahiser enjoyed the new fishing equipment at Ottawa NWR this summer during a visit with her RV Volunteer grandparents Craig & Theresa Emahiser.



Celebrating 20 Years! 1997- 2017



In July, Friends of Ottawa NWR hosted Discover Ottawa Day to celebrate our 20th year supporting Ottawa NWR. Eight state and local offices were represented during the ribbon cutting ceremony: Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Congressman Bob Latta, Governor John Kasich, Representative Steve Arndt, Senator Randy Gardner, County Commissioner Jim Sass, Representative Theresa Gavarone, and Senator Rob Portman.

Giving Tuesday

As you may know, #GivingTuesday is an international day of giving on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, it is the kick off of the season of giving for many non-profits. This year for #GivingTuesday, we raised funds for three refuge projects: *a kayak access point, a bank fishing access point, and an ADA accessible youth fishing access point.* With your help, we were able to raise **\$10,598** by December 31, 2017! Look for updates on these projects throughout 2018. Thank you to all who helped to create more paces to explore.

Celebrating 20 Years



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

RANKING MEMBER

Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development and Related Agencies

Subcommittee on Defense

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies



MARCY KAPTUR
9TH DISTRICT, OHIO

January 31, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE

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Washington, DC 20515-3509
(202) 225-4146
Fax: (202) 225-7711

OHIO OFFICES

(800) 964-4699
Fax: (419) 255-9623
<http://kaptur.house.gov>

Dear Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge:

Congratulations on 20 impressive years of advocacy and support for our coastal treasure, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. In the 20 years of work, it has been an honor to be your partner in the superb transformation of the Ottawa Refuge, including a systematic expansion of the Refuge complex to more than 10,000 acres of high quality coastal habitat. Along the way, your efforts have encouraged public access and understanding of coastal ecosystems, and educated thousands of visitors about the benefits those natural systems provide for Lake Erie.

The protection of America's public lands is a charge not just for government, but also for its citizens to whom the benefit of these public resources accrue. Your work to support the Ottawa Refuge is as important as ever. As Ohio's only national refuge, this special place beckons more and more visitors each year to enjoy its beautiful wetlands, marshes, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and abundant wildlife.

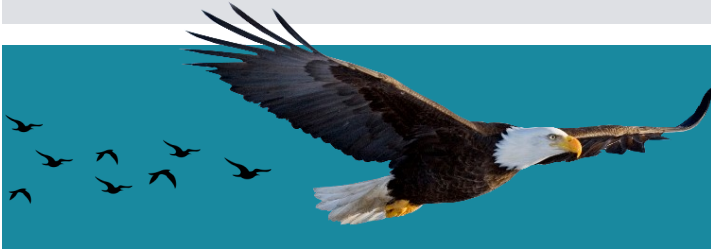
On behalf of ONWR's many visitors, her resident and travelling wildlife benefactors, and the citizens of our region, thank you for your strong voice for conservation, natural and historic preservation, and public enjoyment and education. Onward to a bright future for our Refuge and the Friends who bequeath her to future generations!

Sincerely,

MARCY KAPTUR
U.S. Representative



Your National Wildlife Refuge



TO EDUCATE &
CONSERVE

The Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Complex consists of three National Wildlife Refuges:

Ottawa NWR:

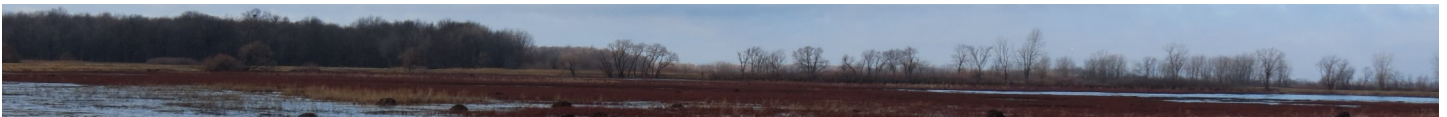
Located between Toledo and Port Clinton, this 6,858 acre refuge is managed for waterfowl, shorebirds, neo-tropical migrant songbirds, and a variety of plant and animal species. The three story Visitor Center and hiking trails are located here.

Cedar Point NWR:

Cedar Point NWR's 2,450 acres comprise the largest contiguous marsh on Lake Erie. Aside from a designated fishing area, access is by guided tour or permit only.

West Sister Island NWR:

This 80 acre island is situated in Lake Erie, about 9 miles from shore. It is the largest Great Blue Heron and Great Egret rookery in the U.S. Great Lakes. Access is by permit only.



Part of a Larger System



Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge is part of a much larger National Wildlife Refuge System. Known as one of America's greatest conservation success stories, the system has protected and restored habitats for hundreds of species including fish, plants, animals, and migratory birds.

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge is part of Region 3 of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Also known as the Midwest Region, Region 3 encompasses eight states and four out of five U.S. Great Lakes.

For more information about the National Wildlife Refuge System, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and conservation priorities, visit www.fws.gov.

Conservation Initiatives



The new **Boss Unit** nesting box produced **five chicks** in June 2017. These little raptors were banded before leaving the nest. In July, volunteers Mike & Dawn Zook realized that a second nest attempt was made! Three eggs were laid, but did not hatch. They are now on display in the Visitor Center.

A second nest box will be added to Ottawa NWR at **Grimm Prairie** in 2018. Will it be active, too?

American Kestrel



This year, volunteers tagged and released 51 butterflies as part of the Monarch Watch program. In this picture, Jane Ruvolo (Congressional Assistant to Rep. Marcy Kaptur) releases a monarch butterfly with a visitor at ONWR. This butterfly will face storms, pesticides, and predators on its journey to wintering habitat in Mexico. Stay tuned to hear if any of our tags are found!

Monarch Butterfly



These raptors are making a come back in NW Ohio. Ottawa NWR has three osprey platforms: two had activity in 2017, and one had a successful brood! In July, local partners came together to band **two female osprey chicks** at the **Blausey Unit**. Thanks to *Lake Erie Tree Service* for donating their time and bucket truck to access the platform. We hope to install a fourth platform in 2018.

Osprey



Ottawa NWR increased the number of gourds from 47 in 2016, to 84 in 2017 with the help of Joey Jenkins' Eagle Scout Project and a grant written by our Friend, Darlene Sillick. With the combined effort for more rigs, colony landlords Mike & Dawn Zook saw a nice increase of fledglings, from 138 in 2016, to **331 fledglings in 2017**.

Purple Martins



West Sister Island National Wildlife Refuge is a designated wilderness area and wading bird rookery located 9 miles off shore of Ottawa NWR. In 2017, here are the birds that refuge biologists saw on the island:

Great Blue Heron: 84 nests; 552 birds

Great Egret: 147 nests; 965 birds

Black-Crowned Night Heron: 70 nests; 460 birds

Double-Crested Cormorant: 410 nests; 2692 birds

Wading Birds

2017 Facts and Figures



\$13,350
spent to provide **7**
intern stipends

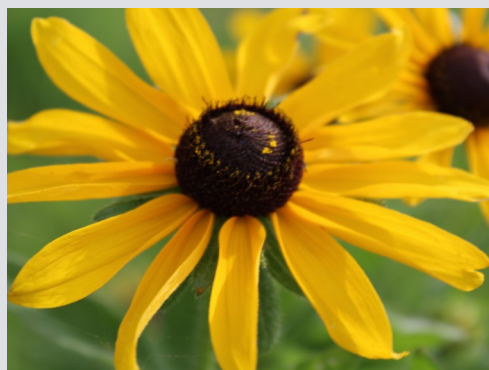


221,184
visitors

7,551
volunteer hours



20 special events with
10,618
participants



Restoration Initiatives

 **9,403**
total acres of habitat

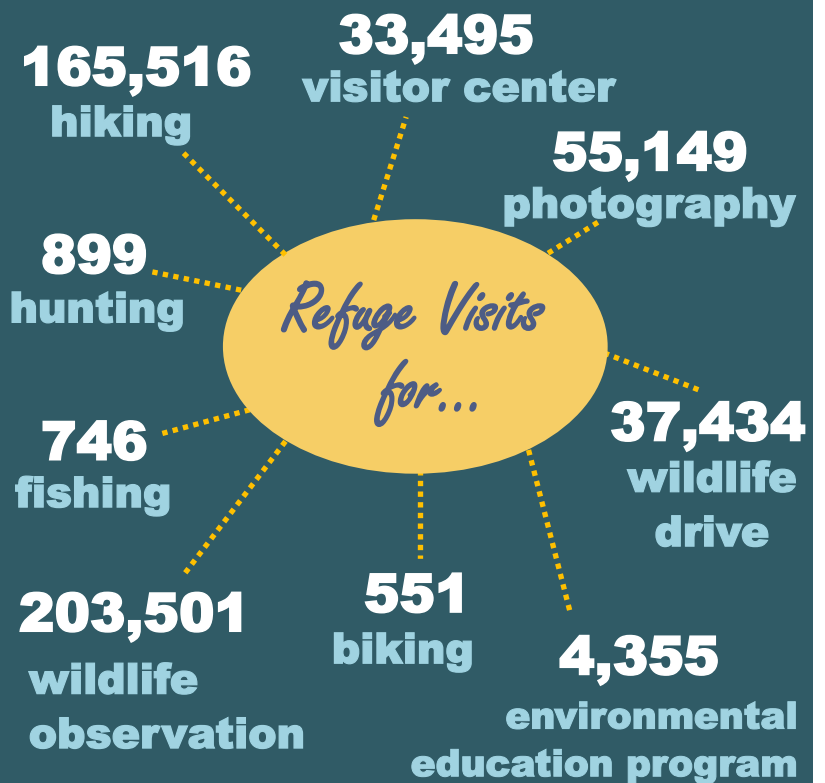
7,780
wetland acres 

 **275**
acres treated for
invasive plants

55
acres enhanced
for pollinators 

 **36**
research studies

What do you do at Ottawa NWR?



Volunteering: It's good for the entire family!



MEET THE SCHORLING'S

JUDITH (MOM)

"As a kid, our family used to come out to Crane Creek State Park, now it's Magee Marsh. I always loved coming out to the area and even as an adult when I wanted to "get away from it all" I would drive out to Magee and Ottawa NWR to enjoy wildlife and the fresh air. So, when I saw the opportunity to volunteer at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, I was excited! What greater way to learn more about ONWR and my sons could volunteer too!

I wanted my boys to learn about volunteering because I want them to grow up to be compassionate men and passionate about helping to save the wildlife, fish, and birds in our area. We are a family that loves the great outdoors and if we can help with things related to it, that's great! We also get a chance to meet people from all over the world who are just as passionate about ONWR as we are.

Volunteering is still one way to make a difference. I have the time and I recognize that time is something I can give, if not the money."

"I volunteer at ONWR because I love animals and this is a way for me to help them so that they're around for a long time. Too many animals are becoming extinct. I get a chance to learn about ONWR and help others learn about it also. I want to help make a difference, and this is one way that I can do it. When I volunteered during Birding Week, I met people from places like Germany and Canada. I love the fact that they also have recycling bins there. Recycling is very important. **I volunteer because it feels good to help."**



GARRETT (AGE 11)

DRAKE (AGE 13)

"I volunteer because it continuously teaches me something new about wildlife. I don't like talking much, but I get to be behind the scenes helping to set up for events and things. And being behind the scenes, I learn so much more than just visiting. Our family loves being outdoors, and my mom brings us out to ONWR a lot, so this is a perfect learning experience for me. The bottom line is I volunteer because I can.

If you could do something to help the world around you, why wouldn't you?"

Twenty Years of Friendship



1996 Initial meeting at the refuge headquarters. Thirty-five people attended this meeting, most from the immediate area. Support was strong. A board of directors was elected, and the name Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Association was chosen.

1997 Received \$5000 capacity building and project grant from the *National Wildlife Refuge Association* to produce a logo, create banners, purchase a computer system, and put a ramp in at the trail head parking lot. Then refuge manager, Larry Martin even drove his car over it to pack it down after it was built!



1998 Membership numbers grew to over 100.

1999 Started to sell a small inventory of bookstore items. Annual sales were roughly \$2,000 and profits were set aside for refuge projects and organizational needs. Began to advocate for a Visitor Center.



2001 Purchased golf cart shuttle to increase access to the hiking trails for disabled and elderly individuals who needed assistance to get out and explore.

2002 On March 14, a centennial ceremony was held to honor the 100th year of the National Wildlife Refuge System. A groundbreaking ceremony for the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center was held, and a time capsule was sealed. Later that year, the Association built the observation deck at Stange Prairie.

2003 Check received for \$1.35 million from First Energy to restore Farm Unit 2 and to include accessible boardwalk and outdoor restrooms near the Visitor Center.



2006 Received grant for "Reading with Puddles" program and purchased 250+ kids books and refuge mascot costume.

2007 Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center opens on May 11, 2007, International Migratory Bird Day. Center included a nice space for a store. West Sister Island featured on *Dirty Jobs*. First *Cars for Critters* benefit car show held.

2012 Boss Unit Shorebird Deck built.



2013 Received an Ohio Environmental Education Foundation grant (\$48,460) to equip the Refuge Ranger Station with educational materials and provide staffing to update curriculum on wetlands, native species and migratory birds. With funds from another grant, we also hired consultant Cathy Allen to help the board with strategic planning and budgeting.

2014 Purchased automatic gates for the Ottawa Wildlife Drive to increase and enhance access to wildlife viewing opportunities at ONWR. Created a policy manual and 10 year strategic plan.

2015 Hired first salaried staff member who worked towards our strategic goals.



2016 Re-branded as Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Constructed Wildlife Window. Enhanced Biggest Week activities with arts and crafts vendors. Started a petition to create an Ottawa NWR license plate.

2017 Raised \$100,000 in gross Nature Store sales, and had nearly 800 members.

"For a brief moment in time, I was fortunate enough to be associated with some of the most amazing naturalists, hikers, hunters, and outdoors folks NW Ohio has to offer. All the refuge staff, especially Rebecca, Mike and Chris Crofts, Bill and Sharon Dailey, Bob Morrison, Sharon Cummings, Tom Bartlett, Jackie Breno, Nicole (Breno) Crofts, Jack and Janet Volker, Al and Betty Schlecht, so many more... we are all just people who wanted to help. At the end of the day, I can look back knowing that we never doubted that "a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.""

—John Hinkle, Board President (2002-2007)

Giving to Carry on a Legacy.



See the wooden canoe (third one from left)? That's the canoe that Harvey built. Daniel and Ruth Ann are pictured here during the Members Only Paddle on Crane Creek.

The Turtle Creek Kayak Launch

"We first learned about ONWR when we heard there was a wildlife drive near Lake Erie where you could watch bald eagles. In 2016, we joined the Friends so we could take part in the first ever canoe and kayak event at the refuge, led by ranger Justin Woldt. Paddling along Crane Creek in the cedar strip canoe was such a great experience, allowing us to see parts of the reserve that are normally hidden away. That canoe is what led us to make our [Giving Tuesday](#) donation in memory of Harvey Fraser, Daniel's dad and the canoe's builder. Harvey never visited ONWR, but since there's water and open sky, he would have loved it! Harvey competed in marathon canoe races well into his 70s, and in his younger days was a member of the BC team that raced voyageur canoes across Canada in 1967 for the centennial of confederation. In 2013, we drove to Kamloops where Harvey was in hospice care at the end of a long battle with cancer. At his request, we brought home to Michigan the cedar strip canoe that he had built in 2002. With it came many memories of past paddles, from Daniel's high

school graduation trip with his dad to the wild rivers of the Northwest Territories, to a day trip here on the River Raisin in our backyard just a few years before. When the estate was finally settled this fall, we wanted to make sure that some small piece of Harvey's paddling legacy would be remembered. **So when we saw the ONWR was looking for funds to build a canoe access, we knew we had found the right place.** Harvey enjoyed sharing his love of paddling with everyone he met, and we are happy to pass that opportunity along to others by making the new canoe and kayak launch on Turtle Creek a reality."

—Daniel and Ruth Ann Fraser



The Wildlife Window

"During their 55 years of marriage, Joan & Richard Kimple's favorite pastime was walking through parks and forests. They took long hikes in the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge - though there were few visitor facilities at the time. Before the boardwalk was built, they searched Magee Marsh for additions to their life lists. They sat in the cold along Lucas-Ottawa County Road trying to spot kettles of hawks during the fall migration. My parents traveled to many top birding spots, but loved seeing birds at their backyard feeders and in the nearby marshes, fields and forests. Their enthusiasm for birding was contagious. They organized a bird study group, planned Earth Day celebrations and shared their library. Their two granddaughters joined the excursions at early ages, delighting in the birds, snakes and shells they encountered.

When Joan died in 2015, Richard wanted to create a living tribute to her. He wanted to help provide an opportunity for people, especially children, to observe and enjoy the outdoors. Working with the Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and the refuge staff, particularly Justin Woldt, the idea of a Wildlife Window was conceived. The building opened in May of 2017. This spring, cameras are being added to enrich the viewing experience. Our family is happy to partner with the Friends of ONWR on this project - and we are certain Mom would approve!"

—Jennifer Shriver



Above: The Wildlife Window at ONWR.

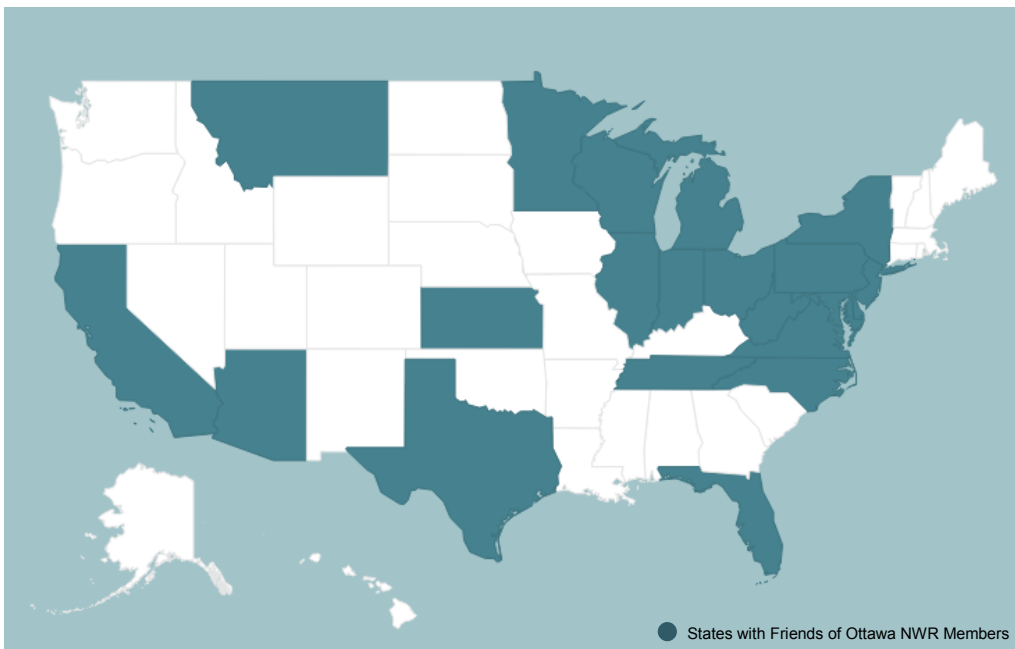
Below: Joan, birding with granddaughter Allison.



Building a National Movement



FRIENDS OF OTTAWA MEMBERSHIP MAP



2017 top supporters

Did you know that Friends of Ottawa NWR has supporters across the country? This map shows where our members live, from Ohio to California.

At the end of 2017, Friends of Ottawa NWR had members in 21 states and even one Canadian province!

We are so grateful that both locals and out-of-state visitors recognize the importance of our critical wetland habitats along the shore of Lake Erie.

Making a difference at YOUR national wildlife refuge.

790 MEMBERS

9 student
senior..... 487
85 ... individual
family..... 152
48 ... best friend
trumpeter..... 4
1 snowy owl
eagle..... 1
3 osprey

Ending 2017 with 790 members is a big deal to us. Friends of Ottawa NWR relies on your help to protect and conserve Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. The generosity of members and donors like you allows Friends of Ottawa NWR to provide transportation grants that allow kids to explore the great outdoors, fund maintenance and restoration initiatives, and arrange stipends for refuge interns to help with all of these meaningful projects. It is because of you that we are able to fund \$20,000+ in projects and refuge support annually.

Not a member yet? **Do your part for conservation and education in this critical stopover habitat and become a Friends of Ottawa NWR member.** In return, you will receive discounts in The Rookery Nature Store, quarterly e-newsletters and biweekly updates, access to Members Only presentations and tours, discounts from a wide variety of businesses in the Oak Harbor area, and the reward of knowing that you're supporting Ohio's only National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Being a member with Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge means that you are making a difference in the world of wildlife and habitat conservation. Join or renew your membership today.



www.friendsofottawawr.org/membership



@FriendsofOttawaNWR

What's Next, Friends?



Dear Friends,

This year, we celebrated our 20th year supporting conservation efforts in the Lake Erie marshes. Looking back over the last 20 years of our existence, I realized that there have been so many people from all walks of life who have made the decision to protect Ottawa NWR, from 1997 when a group of concerned citizens formed a friends group, to today with nearly 800 annual members. Together, we have a voice for wildlife and habitat conservation.

In 2017, we saw our lake make national headlines for the enormous algae bloom, covering most of the shallow Western Basin in a green slime the same texture as latex paint. Lake Erie looked like some kind of science experiment gone wrong for months. Threats of E. coli bacteria and microcystin slammed the tourist industry. Beaches remained closed under a public health advisory, and people were warned to stay out of Lake Erie until the bloom retreated.



September 2017: Microcystin covers the beach near Metzger Marsh.

It's unsettling to think that 11 million people rely on Lake Erie as their source of drinking water— water that is transformed into toxic gunk each summer. There has recently been a lot of discussion about what can be done to resolve this issue. One of the most effective ways has been right under our noses for years.

I'm talking about wetlands. Look at the marsh plants at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge for example. These plants are designed to absorb excess nutrients and filter the water. I've viewed the marshes from the hiking trails on a calm day, and literally watched this process happen. **Water entering the marsh is soiled and discolored. Water that has been filtered by the marsh plants comes out the other side clear. The difference is astounding.**

Friends of Ottawa NWR hosts a special day each October for kids of all ages to have a safe, family friendly trick-or-treat experience at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. We call the event Howl-o-ween, and it draws in families from Toledo to Cleveland. This year, I decided to make a statement with my costume. I dressed up as an algae bloom, because it was the scariest thing that I could think of.



The bloom is an indicator. Now is the time to act.

One of the things we will be working on in 2018 and over the next few years is to build a \$500,000 land acquisition and restoration fund, so that we can purchase new lands to be conserved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and restore areas already managed by Ottawa NWR. Creating and restoring wetlands will be key to the health of our lake. If you'd like to help with this project and influence your quality of water, you may donate online at www.friendsofottawanwr.org. Every little bit counts.

So Friends, I implore you... Stop algae blooms. Create wetlands!

Aimee Arent
Executive Director
Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge



NATIONAL Wildlife Refuge ASSOCIATION

NWRA's leadership has resulted in increased funding for the Refuge System:

- **25% increase in Refuge System funding**, from 2008 - 2010 - over \$105 million.
- **\$290 million for the USFWS** in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- **\$257 million in emergency funding** for the Refuge System due to natural disasters since 2005.
- **\$4 million for the Invasives and Volunteers Program**, now institutionalized nationwide.

www.refugeassociation.org



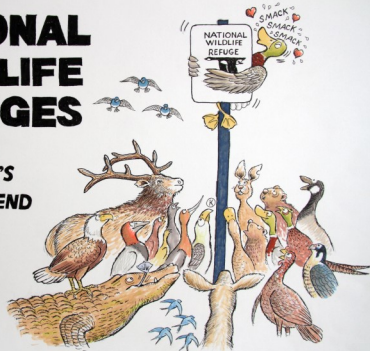
Special thanks to all of the Friends, legislators, volunteers, board members, and visitors who continue to make Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge what it is today.

"In every outthrust headland, in every curving beach, in every grain of sand there is the story of the earth." —Rachel Carson

Thank you for being part of our story.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

...WILDLIFE'S
BEST FRIEND



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