

# **Friends of Minesing Wetlands**

## **Strategic Plan 2016—2018**

*Promoting the natural values  
of the Minesing Wetlands*



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Photo: Canoeing in the Minesing Wetlands (Dave Featherstone)

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## The Importance of the Minesing Wetlands

The Minesing Wetlands, previously known as the Minesing Swamp, are a Ramsar-designated (internationally significant) wetland located in south-central Ontario. The Minesing Wetlands are one of the largest wetland complexes in southern Ontario and host the largest and best example of a string fen in this part of the province. The Minesing Wetlands have also been designated as a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) and a provincially significant Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

Approximately 3,900 ha of the 6,000 ha wetland is owned or managed by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA). The remainder is owned by the Province of Ontario, Simcoe County, local municipalities, other conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), and private landowners. It straddles the three townships of Clearview, Essa and Springwater. NCC plays an important role in property acquisition, stewardship, and management plan development and implementation.

The Minesing Wetlands consist of a mosaic of forested swamps, thicket swamps, marshes and fens. Lying in the heart of the Nottawasaga River watershed, the wetlands receive flows from a 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> drainage area. The Mad River and Willow Creek meet the Nottawasaga River in the core of the Minesing Wetlands. The Nottawasaga River then flows northward, entering Georgian Bay in the Town of Wasaga Beach. The wetlands act as a reservoir that absorbs floodwater during spring thaw and major storm events. This storage function moderates downstream flooding and provides significant warning for downstream flood damage centres such as floodplain areas in Wasaga Beach.

The rich floodplain wetlands associated with the Nottawasaga River, Mad River and Willow Creek support lush marsh, thicket swamp and deciduous swamp habitats. The forests on the dry river levees support Carolinian species that are typically found along the north shore of Lake Erie and the eastern United States. Conversely, the groundwater-dominated conifer forests and string fens extending outward from the base of the Algonquin bluffs in the southeastern portion of the Minesing Wetlands are more typical of boreal forests in northern Ontario.

These diverse habitats are home to over 400 plant species including several species at risk and provincially rare species. More than 220 bird species have been recorded and at least 135 are believed to nest in the Minesing Wetlands. Extensive spring flooding throughout the wetlands provides provincially significant stopover habitat for migrating waterfowl (e.g. Sandhill Crane) and shorebirds. The extensive forests in the Minesing Wetlands support a number of bird species that require deep, interior



forests for nesting. The vast marshes along Willow Creek and the Mad River support large numbers of breeding marsh birds.

The Minesing Wetlands also provide habitat for an impressive array of reptiles and amphibians. Turtle species are often observed basking on logs or nesting along trails and road shoulders. The wetland is home to 23 species of mammals and hosts a provincially significant White-tailed Deer yard during the winter months.

Thirty species of fish use the waterways of the Minesing Wetlands. The Nottawasaga River supports one of the last viable populations of Lake Sturgeon (Endangered) in the Lake Huron/Georgian Bay basin. The Minesing Wetlands are also one of only two known locations in North America where Walleye spawn on submerged vegetation.

The diverse wetland communities provide habitat for a rich variety of Odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) and butterflies. Monarchs (Special Concern) frequent the meadow marshes and fields. The Minesing Wetlands is home to the Hine's Emerald (Endangered) – the only known Canadian location for this globally endangered dragonfly.

Photo: Bird watching and insect catching in the Minesing Wetlands (Jolene Laverty).



## About the Friends of Minesing Wetlands

The Friends of Minesing Wetlands (FOMW, also referred to in this document as “the Friends”) were officially established in 1997. The FOMW consists of a committed Board of Directors, general membership and staff members of the NVCA.

The 2016 Board of Directors of FOMW includes:

- Naomi Saunders, Chair
- Sean Rootham, Co-Vice Chair
- Danny Mainville, Co-Vice Chair
- Byron Wesson, NVCA Liaison/Treasurer
- Kristyn Ferguson, Secretary
- David Featherstone, Director
- David Walsh, Director
- Richard Bowering, Director
- Brittany Hope, Director
- Laura Robson, Director
- Judy Watson, Director



Photos: Canoeing in the Minesing Wetlands;  
Waterfowl viewing platform; Friends of  
Minesing Wetlands snowshoe hike





## FOMW - Constitution and Bylaws

The FOMW have adopted a Constitution and Bylaws which outline their purpose and objectives, as follows:

1. To raise funds to supplement, complement and enhance the ecologically sound management of the Minesing Wetlands. To accept donations, bequests and other gifts.
2. To undertake specific projects and initiatives, or organize and promote special events compatible with Ramsar guidelines and the Minesing Wetlands Management Objectives, and as agreed to by the Friends of Minesing Wetlands.
3. To function in partnership with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority as a charitable non-profit corporation for the purpose of fundraising in accordance with Provincial and Federal Statutes on a continuing basis.
4. To develop programs which further the public's awareness, education, understanding and appreciation of the Minesing Wetlands' natural and human heritage resources.
5. To protect the ecological integrity of the Minesing Wetlands, and its supporting watershed.
6. To promote educational, recreational and eco-tourism opportunities compatible with the preservation of the Minesing Wetlands ecosystem.



*Photo: Aerial view of the Minesing Wetlands*

(Source: Joe Mabel [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)])

## FOMW - SWOT Assessment

The Friends developed the following table of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for the FOMW. During this development, the group recognized the importance of operating from its strengths and opportunities, and minimizing its weaknesses and threats.

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experienced committee members</li><li>• Committed committee members</li><li>• Passionate committee members</li><li>• Great local connections</li><li>• Good reputation in the community</li><li>• Thrifty</li><li>• International wetland as focus</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited budget</li><li>• Lack of communications support</li><li>• Lack of awareness of group, and Minesing Wetlands, in community</li><li>• Association with NVCA (can be a strength or weakness)</li><li>• Volunteer group with limited time</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ecotourism</li><li>• Raising awareness</li><li>• Raising funds</li><li>• Developing partnerships</li><li>• Attracting champions</li><li>• BioBlitz</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth pressures around wetland</li><li>• Discharges into wetland</li><li>• Invasive species</li><li>• Exposure to liability</li><li>• Stresses on habitat</li><li>• Climate change</li><li>• Deforestation</li><li>• Recreation pressures</li><li>• Community expectations of FOMW</li></ul>

# FOMW - Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles



## **Vision**

Inspiring Respect and Sustainability  
For a World Class Wetland  
For People  
Forever



## **Mission Statement**

To share our passion and inspire people to enjoy, conserve, restore and research the internationally significant Minesing Wetlands through innovative partnerships, communications, education and fundraising.



## **Guiding Principles**

To achieve the FOMW Vision and Mission, Guiding Principles were developed and approved. Guiding Principles are our core beliefs and values that govern the way the FOMW will work together and with their clients. They include operating with:

Integrity

Cohesiveness

Passion

Leadership

Inclusivity



## Guiding Principles

- Integrity** – We carry out the FOMW mission by adhering to ethical principles with the long term ecological integrity of the Minesing Wetlands foremost in mind.
- Cohesiveness** – We are a well-integrated team; our decisions are based on our mission and goals, and our actions are based on consensus.
- Passion** – We are genuinely enthusiastic about the internationally recognized values of the Minesing Wetlands, and are committed to inspiring that same passion in others.
- Leadership** – We engage the general public when facilitating guided nature excursions and events to educate and inspire, leading to sustainable use of the wetlands.
- Inclusivity** – We raise awareness and appreciation of the Minesing Wetlands through affordable, low impact nature tours and events available to the general public.

## FOMW - Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives: 2016-2018

Program: Education and Awareness			
<b>Goal #1:</b> to provide people with information on the importance of the Minesing Wetlands as an ecological feature and the need for protection.			
Objective	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Metric/Target
1. To develop a brochure	Lead – Laura Support – Naomi Approval - Directors	Dec. 2016	Completion and approval of the brochure
2. To develop an outreach program	Lead – Naomi Support – David W. Approval - Directors	Dec. 2016	Completion and approval of the outreach program
3. To develop a video showcasing the importance of the Minesing Wetlands	Lead – Sean Approval - Directors	Dec. 2017	Completion and launching of video
4. To produce the Minesing Reeds newsletter	Lead – Hellaina (or others) Approval - Directors	Annually: 2016 2017 2018	Produce at least one edition of Minesing Reeds per year

## Program: Supporting protection, restoration and research

**Goal #2:** to enhance protection of the Minesing Wetlands through encouraging proper and responsible use, partnering on restoration projects, advancing research and seeking grants for enhancement.

Objective	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Metric/Target
1. To define proper and responsible use of the Minesing Wetlands	Lead – Chair Approval - Directors	2016	Definitions and approval of proper and responsible use
2. To partner on grants	Lead – Brittany Support - Byron	As grants emerge	Funding required  Number of successful grants
3. To update the inventory of the wetlands	Lead – NVCA Co-Lead - NCC	TBD	Completion of an updated inventory (funding dependent; longer-term goal)



## Program: Developing Partnerships

**Goal#3:** to work with like-minded organizations to advance the mission and goals of the Friends of Minesing Wetlands.

Objective	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Metric/Target
1. To enhance existing relationships (NVCA, NCC, DUC, Brereton Field Naturalists, community, etc.)	Lead – Sean Support - Byron	Annually: 2016 2017 2018	Identify partnerships to be enhanced in 2016, 2017 and 2018  Develop an engagement schedule/strategy
2. To explore potential new partnerships with reputable, accredited organizations	Lead – Chair  Support – all Directors	Annually: 2016 2017 2018	Identify new partnerships annually  # of new partnerships engaged and approved

## Program: Community Engagement

**Goal #4:** to promote and provide outings and events which enhance understanding of and support for the Minesing Wetlands.

Objective	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Metric/Target
1. To continue outings in the Minesing Wetlands (canoeing, snowshoeing, skiing, etc.)	Lead – Dave F. Support - Kristyn/Naomi	Ongoing 2016 2017 2018	Two spring canoe trips Two snowshoe outings One ski trip One fall canoe trip One hiking trip
2. To attend events	Lead – Chair Support – Directors	Ongoing 2016 2017 2018	Attend 3 events per year (partner with NVCA where possible)
3. To provide community presentations	Lead – Dave F. Support - Naomi	Ongoing 2016 2017 2018	Make at least three presentations per year
3. To engage in discussion and planning of joint and additional events	Lead – Chair  Support – Directors	Ongoing 2016 2017 2018	# of joint events per year  # of additional events per year

## Program: Fundraising

**Goal #5:** to obtain funding to support awareness, restoration, and research for the Minesing Wetlands.

Objective	Responsibility	Timeline	Performance Metric/Target
1. To continue to fundraise at events such as annual curling bonspiel, and through memberships, and other donations and grants	Lead – Naomi Support - Danny	Ongoing 2016 2017 2018	\$3,500 annually <sup>1</sup>
2. To explore promotional material as a fundraising and awareness initiative	Lead – Naomi Support – Judy	Dec. 2017	Development of promotional material

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<sup>1</sup> Approximate annual organizational budget



## Conclusion

The Minesing Wetlands is one of southern Ontario's largest wetlands and is internationally recognized as a wetland of significance. Preserving, restoring and studying this unique landscape requires community engagement and partnerships.

The Friends of Minesing Wetlands are a dedicated volunteer group who are passionate in engaging the community and developing partnerships to ensure that this exceptional resource is preserved for future generations.

