

## Friends of Second Marsh to Launch *Love the Marsh! Campaign*

By: Helen Break, Board Member

Friends of Second Marsh (FSM), a Durham-based non-profit charitable organization, is on a fundraising mission to help protect and restore the integrity of Second Marsh and the adjacent McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve. The goal is to raise \$500,000 over the next five years. The *Love the Marsh!* Campaign, which will be comprised of five phases of \$100,000 each, will launch October 2nd.

The Marsh and the Reserve are provincially significant natural areas protected under the ownership of the City of Oshawa. They attract thousands of visitors each year, both residents and tourists alike, who walk the many nature trails, watch for migratory birds, soak in the sounds of nature, meditate in a peaceful place, help protect a sanctuary for rare, threatened, and endangered species, and learn about the natural world.

In cooperation with the City, it is proposed that the funds raised will be used to create an informative entrance, improve wildlife viewing platforms, boost community outreach and education programs, create a designated parking area, increase an indigenous presence, improve trails and signage, introduce benches, manage dominant introduced (invasive) species and start savings for a visitor centre with washrooms. The longer-term goal is a wetland education centre.

FSM (formerly the Second Marsh Defence Association) was instrumental in securing the future of the Marsh and has partnered with the City for the last 50+ years. FSM's mandate includes education, interpretation, and stewardship activities. FSM is currently funded by the City of Oshawa, project-specific provincial grants, membership fees and donations.

There are many reasons to donate. A recent 2022 U.S. State of the Birds Report studied long-term trends of bird populations and found widespread losses of birds in all habitats - forests, grasslands, deserts, and oceans - except for one – wetlands. Over the past 50 years, bird populations have increased overall in wetlands, where investments in wetland conservation have improved conditions for birds and people alike.

Second Marsh is such a wetland, and it is right in our own backyard. It is home to:

- 305 bird species with 92 breeding bird species
- 8 reptile and 10 amphibian species
- over 18 fish species
- 30 mammal species
- 588 plant species
- 8 provincially significant plant species
- 136 plant species regionally not present, rare and uncommon.

A one-time or monthly donation would be greatly appreciated. Group donations involving family members, friends, or members of a club or class are also welcome. A tax receipt will be issued.

A donation to the *Love the Marsh!* Campaign can be made online at [www.secondmarsh.ca](http://www.secondmarsh.ca), where membership information is also available. Call FSM at 905-723-5047 and leave a voicemail. You can also mail a cheque made out to Friends of Second Marsh to PO Box 31003 RPO Kingsway Village, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 8N9.

FSM will be providing more information via its website as the launch date approaches. Stay tuned!

***Second Marsh is one of the last, largest (137 ha) and most biodiverse coastal wetland on the north shore of Lake Ontario. Designated a Provincially Significant Wetland; Provincially Significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest; for its Cultural Heritage Value and Interest under the Ontario Heritage Act; and part of the Greenbelt.***