

Explore Dufferin County's hidden gem ? Luther Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area

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Dufferin County residents and visitors looking to get out into nature might want to check out the Luther Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area this season.

Marie-Paule Godin, manager of provincial operations in Ontario for Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), spoke with the Free Press to share why the Luther Marsh is a must-see tourist spot.

‘The more the local communities go in and experience the wetlands the more they will form a kind of appreciation for it, and they will value them more,’ said Godin.

The Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 6,000-hectare marshland located at the headwaters of the Grand River watershed. Neighbouring the marsh is the Wylde Lake Bog, an extremely rare type of wetland habitat found in southern Ontario.

Visitors to the Luther Marsh can partake in a number of outdoor activities from hiking and paddling to bird watching and picnicking. The wildlife area is also accessible for sustainable hunting during the fall with permits.

In addition to being a local tourism spot to explore, the Luther Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area is also an important ecological part of Dufferin County.

The wetlands and tall grass prairies of the Luther Marsh serve as a habitat for a number of species found in Dufferin County, such as amphibians, reptiles, pollinators, salamanders, snakes, birds, and turtles; including the Blanding’s Turtle, which is on the threatened species list.

Godin said that they’ve even received reports of visitors spotting the Northern Flying Squirrel.

‘It’s not something that is seen very frequently, so that’s neat and different,’ she added. ‘It’s really a gem of a place for wildlife viewing.’

The wetlands are not just important for the species that call them home, but also for the residents of Dufferin County.

Godin explained that the wetlands act as a ‘sponge’ that can help prevent flooding in cases of intense precipitation and the retention of water during droughts.

Sharing the Luther Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area as a must-see destination is as much about tourism as it is about increasing conservation efforts, Godin noted.

‘The more we value our wetlands for being there for us to enjoy them and for the benefits of wildlife, the more conservation can happen,’ she said. ‘More people can raise awareness within our government about the importance of conservation, and more money can be raised for conservation actions.’

For those who visit the Luther Marsh and want to help further conservation efforts, Godin suggests downloading apps, such as iNaturalist, where they can log what kinds of species they see during their visit.

‘It’s really helpful because we can better understand the impact of where species are or where they may not be,’ concluded Godin.