

A HISTORY OF THE AYLMEER WILDLIFE AREA

1. Area expropriated approximately 515 acres of land in 1940.
2. Base called #14 Service Flying Training School R.C.A.F.
3. Site consisted of five double runways and 50 other buildings.
4. Site also consisted of 2 double runways 100' wide and 2700' long
5. Operated as an air force base until 1961.
6. Unclear when M.N.R. became involved but it would be about the same time.
7. 1962 News Headlines "Police College Coming to Aylmer".
8. The Police College takes in about 77 acres of which 40 acres are used for agriculture.
9. The Elgin Stewardship Council was formed and became involved in the management of the Aylmer Wildlife Area in 1997.
10. Description of the Area---At the Wildlife Area 171 acres is tendered for environmentally friendly farming, consisting of 6 plots. 100 acres was fenced as a sanctuary for birds and other wildlife. In this section we have a system of dykes and water control structures that have created a 25 acre pond. With the control structures a pond of about 50 acres was created at the back of the sanctuary. DUCKS UNLIMITED has planted a "Tall Grass Prairie" section of approximately 10 acres. On the dykes the surface area was improved to produce trails that will be accessible to the public under certain controlled situations. These trails are called "Tundra Swan Lane, Mallard Run Road and Great Blue Heron Court". Outside of the fenced area there is "Mockingbird Circle and Canada Goose Trail". Around the fenced area there are 4 viewing stands, 2 of which are open and 2 which are enclosed. (1 Wheelchair accessible) One of the stands overlooks the back pond in the enclosed area. This stand was constructed by the Stewardship Council and friends. The West Elgin Nature Club designed and assisted in building the stand. Plans for the future include a schedule for changing the level of the water in the ponds. The level of water in the ponds will kept high in the late summer and autumn to accommodate the ducks, geese, and herons. The water level in the late autumn will then be lowered to create an environment to attract shorebirds during their migration. The East Elgin Secondary School Environmental Leadership Program has spent time at the Wildlife Area painting, raking and trimming around various areas and conducted a 2 Day workshop and open house. During this program they escorted people through the sanctuary and explained the site and answered questions concerning the site. Stewardship Council members went along with the groups to act as back-up sources of information. One of the biggest programs the Council provides is the "Swan Viewing" in the early spring when the Swans are on their migration route between Chesapeake Bay and the Mackenzie Delta—a 6000 kilometer journey. A feeding program for the swans is held during the Swan Viewing weekend. There is a "Goose Pasture" which is maintained within the compound. Outside of the sanctuary there four hunting blinds for controlled hunting during the hunt season. These are located in a crop area.