

Friends of Wetlands (FOWL) Meat Policy

Although it is unofficial until the board establishes a policy manual, the general sentiment is in favor and the notion has been included in the board minutes. Friends of wetlands will not provide meat at any function whether a board meeting, education or recreational event. Those who attend such events will be encouraged to also provide only non-meat refreshments.

Friends of Wetlands has had a public reputation as meat-lovers and a long history of pig roasts. We are aware that some members have distanced themselves as a result. If attendance is the measure by which we make policy decisions, it is also recognized that many members came to these events because of the opportunity to eat at such a carnivorous feast.

For a while we alternated between pig and non-pig picnics in an attempt to appeal to both sentiments. This was not enough to win back those who rejected the organization for its omnivorous tendencies. In general, the meat-lovers have been more vocal and active than the vegetarians. Those who objected to the roast simply withdrew.

Starting in 2010 FOWL has been reinventing itself. Deliberation on its focus, direction and demeanor has included all who care to participate. The food debate was raised once again. Although the primary activists are not practicing vegetarians, the consensus of the board is that our organization should be. All of our board meetings this year have included food without meat. Our Annual Meeting and Jamboree on June 19th will have only meatless food provided.

Since we expect pot-luck as standard fare, we have agreed not to censor any food that is contributed. Our hope is that, as time goes on, our membership contributions will tend towards the richness and variety of meatless dishes. The reasoning behind this policy will be obvious to some and elusive to others. As an environmental organization, we need to consider the impact on the environment of our organizational activities including eating.

Many of the things we already do are sensitive to low-impact. We hold our annual meeting on a farm that has conservation easements and historic structures. We invite non-motorized paddling of the beautiful Huron River. We provide nature walks to enrich our souls. We encourage camping rather than 'lodging' for those who want to stay late and enjoy the campfire. We encourage acoustic instruments for our musical edification. Whenever possible we encourage carpooling to events.

Friends of Wetlands will exercise every opportunity to minimize its carbon footprint, be gentle on the land and graze low on the food web. A meat-free diet is part of this strategy.