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Medway Creek Kiosk

The Friends of Medway Creek have created a [kiosk sign](#) to educate the public on the natural heritage features and history of the [Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area \(ESA\)](#). The project was funded by the City of London, with design and installation contributions from the UTRCA.

Many hours went into developing this sign. Thanks go to the Friends of Medway Creek for

their dedication and efforts in helping to educate the community on the importance of this ESA.

Contact: [Julie Welker](#), Community Partnership Specialist



Sandy Levin, a member of the Friends of Medway Creek (right), joined UTRCA staff for the installation of the new kiosk.



The kiosk is located next to the paved pathway along the Medway, south of Sunningdale Road.

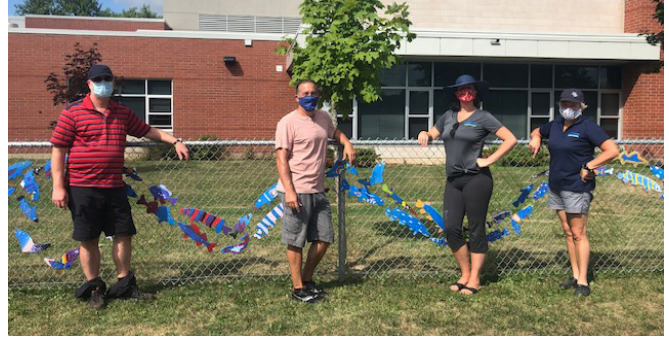




Stream of Dreams Murals

UTRCA staff installed "[Stream of Dreams](#)" fish at Byron Somerset Public School, Trafalgar PS, and Laurie Hawkins PS in July. Thanks to everyone who loaned a helping hand!

Contact: [Linda Smith](#), Community Partnership Specialist



New Residents Welcome!

The Friends of Stoney Creek secured funding for the construction of a Barn Swallow nesting structure in the Stoney Creek subwatershed, through the City of London's Neighbourhood Decision Making Program.



The nest cups on the underside of the structure.



Ready for occupancy - the finished Barn Swallow nesting structure.

Matt McCutcheon, UTRCA Carpenter, built and installed the structure next to the Stoney Creek near Stackhouse Avenue. We look forward to welcoming Barn Swallows, hopefully in the 2021 nesting season!

Contact: [Linda Smith](#), Community Partnership Specialist

Happy Fishing!

During the winter of 2015, the UTRCA's Conservation Services unit, with help from volunteers, installed a new platform on the north shore of Lake Victoria to strengthen the shoreline and enhance the existing live crib wall.

The platform was designed to create shelter for fish and other aquatic life, as well as to provide recreational fisheries opportunities for anglers. It has become a popular feature along the lake shore. Young anglers often use the platform, as pictured on the front cover of the July 28, 2020 *Stratford Beacon Herald*.



The project was funded in part by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program, with the Avon River Environmental Association and the City of Stratford.

Contact: [Craig Merkley](#), Conservation Services Specialist



The graceful, arching branches of a mature Black Walnut tree.

Black Walnut – A Wonder Tree

Love them or hate them, Black Walnuts (*Juglans nigra*) are an important tree in the Carolinian Life Zone of southwestern Ontario. Uncommon in the rest of Canada, the range of the Black Walnut extends south into the eastern US as far as Florida.

Walnuts grow naturally on well-drained, fertile lowlands near rivers and are intolerant of shade. They are a good early succession tree, growing quickly in sunny areas. The root system is deep and wide-spreading, usually with a taproot, so the tree is a great soil stabilizer. The UTRCA plants walnuts in floodplain restoration projects.

Black Walnuts are often planted for their fruit and wood, but they are also planted as an ornamental due their attractive tall, straight trunk and rounded, open crowns. The compound leaves have 14 to 22 leaflets, which gives the shade a dappled quality. The wood is highly valued as it is easily worked, has an attractive grain, and is a lovely dark brown colour with purple undertones.

The large green, globular or spherical fruits are 4-6 cm in diameter and grow in clusters of up to three nuts. The kernel inside has a strong flavour and contains several nutritional fatty acids.

Indigenous peoples knew the nutritional value of the nuts and nurtured walnut trees in groves.

Extracting the kernel from the fruit is difficult, requiring drilling and crushing, which may account for the wider popularity of the Persian and English walnut today. Squirrels are the main disperser of the seeds. Some buried nuts will be forgotten and germinate in the next year or two.

Why are these trees hated by some? A toxic substance called juglone is leached from the fallen leaves and exuded by the roots. This chemical inhibits the growth

of many broadleaf plants, which is not a desirable characteristic for gardeners. However, compounds in the leaves also keep insects at bay, so sit under a canopy of walnuts if you don't want to be bitten by mosquitoes!



The distinctive leaves and fruit of the Black Walnut.



Black Walnuts are a tasty treat but are very difficult to remove from their hard, protective shell.

The juglone and tannins in the fruit cause walnuts to stain cars and sidewalks and human skin when handled! The yellow-brown to brown-black dye was and is used for many purposes. The husk, leaves, and stems all have a characteristic pungent or spicy odour.

Black Walnut groves are considered a rare habitat type in southern Ontario. The Thames River floodplain in London is one of the few places where walnut groves are quite common.

The next time you see a Black Walnut tree, think of the amazing gifts it provides to the environment and to humans.

Contact: [Cathy Quinlan](#), Terrestrial Biologist

On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be a virtual meeting on August 25, 2020.

- Re-Appointment of Auditors
- 2021 Budget Concepts Memo
- Mid Year Financial Update & Revised 2020 Budget
- Section 28 Status Report
- Benefits Renewal
- Conservation Areas Update
- Watershed Planning, Research & Monitoring Unit Orientation Presentation

Draft agendas, audio recordings, and approved minutes are posted at www.thamesriver.on.ca on the "Board Agendas & Minutes" page.

Contact: [Michelle Viglianti](#), Administrative Assistant