



Medway Creek gets a helping hand!



The planting site along Medway Creek near the Village of Birr.

This fall has been a unique one, to say the least. Normally, UTRCA staff work with local schools on a variety of projects, such as tree planting, to improve the natural environment. However, due to COVID-19, this was not to be the case this fall. While schools were busy trying to figure out their new fall plans, UTRCA staff were doing the same.

We have been very fortunate to have funders, in this case ALUS and Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Program, who wanted to keep things moving forward despite the global pandemic. As a result, our plans to improve the water quality and forest cover in the Medway Creek watershed could continue.

With strict COVID-19 safety protocols in place, [15 UTRCA staff](#) along with members of the Friends of Medway Creek came together to ensure the environment didn't get sidelined during this pandemic. We planted nearly 700 native trees and shrubs along the banks of the Medway Creek. A big thank you to all the staff and Friends of Medway Creek who came out to lend a hand in these extraordinary circumstances, and help us keep working towards achieving our targets of improvements!



Members of the Friends of Medway Creek enjoyed a morning of socially-distanced tree planting.

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

Medway Creek & Cedar Creek get support from the Federal Government

The UTRCA is pleased to announce funding for the Medway and Cedar Creek Improvement Project through Environment and Climate Change Canada's EcoAction Community Program. The priorities of this program are to conserve, restore, and have a positive impact on the environment.



These in-stream rock structures will improve flows and water quality in Cedar Creek.

The EcoAction Program has awarded the project nearly \$100,000 over the next three years. The project will focus on reducing nutrients from entering the creeks through [tree planting along the banks](#), installing in-stream structures to improve stream flow, improving aquatic habitat, and restoring wetland and prairie habitats.



Members of the Oxford Trails Council recently joined UTRCA staff to plant 800 native trees and shrubs along Cedar Creek.

We will be collaborating with a variety of partners including the Cowan Foundation, Cedar Creek Collaborative, City of Woodstock, Oxford Trails Council, Ducks Unlimited Canada, local school boards, Friends of Medway Creek, NoKee Kwe, Thames River Anglers Association, and local landowners.

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

Fall Programs at Fanshawe Environmental Education Centre

Autumn is in full swing at Fanshawe Conservation Area: the Tamaracks are gloriously golden and beautiful northern finches, such as Common Redpolls, have moved south this year and can be spotted throughout the park. Fanshawe Environmental Education Centre's fall programs are also in full swing and Community Education staff have connected with homeschool groups and local clubs to lead many engaging fall community programs.



Members of the 5th London Guides had a beautiful fall day for their environmental education program.

Participants and staff alike have enjoyed the unseasonably warm weather while taking part in activities such as orienteering, playing environmental games, learning about Monarch migration by taking a "choose your own adventure" journey, and discovering adaptations that help local wildlife survive the winter.

The [UTRCA Fall Family Nature Series](#) had a successful run and was a wonderful opportunity for Community Education staff to deliver free environmental programs to families at local parks and Environmentally Significant Areas.



The “Wild Westminister Ponds Walk” took place at Westminister Ponds/Pond Mills ESA.

While offering this exciting fall programming, UTRCA staff have continued to prioritize the health and well-being of all participants, ensuring that our Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines are adhered to so that staff can bring safe and fun environmental education to the community during these unprecedented times.

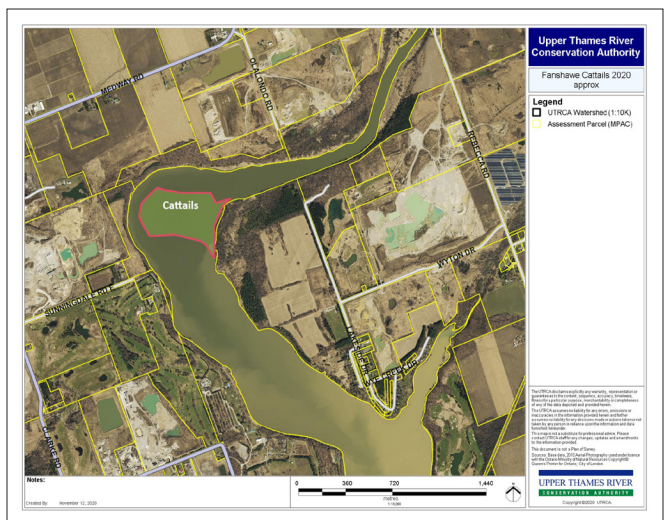
We look forward to continuing to offer fall and winter environmental education programs. We invite homeschool groups and local clubs to reach out if they interested in registering their group!
Contact: [Julie Read](#), Acting Community Education Supervisor

New Cattail Patch in Fanshawe Reservoir

A large patch of cattails has become established in an increasingly shallow area in the north (upstream) end of Fanshawe Reservoir. As the North Thames River flows into the reservoir, it slows down and sediment carried in the water settles to the bottom, gradually accumulating.

Over the last few years, the reservoir was kept at a lower level to allow repairs to the Fanshawe Dam. During this time, the shallow areas were likely exposed as mudflats, allowing Narrow-leaved Cattails (*Typha angustifolia*) to germinate

At right: The cattail patch viewed from a canoe (photo by K. Maaskant), from shore (photo by C. Quinlan), and from space (Google Earth), as well as a map indicating the patch's location at the north end of Fanshawe Reservoir.



and establish. This species of cattail tolerates fluctuating water levels and is common in reservoirs, including the upstream end of Pittock Reservoir, as well as in roadside ditches. On the plus side, the cattails are providing habitat for waterfowl and fish such as bass, and take up phosphorus and other nutrients.

We expect that the 2020 aerial photographs will show this new cattail marsh. The current Google Earth maps (see photo) show the large shallow zone, estimated at 8 hectares in size.

All reservoirs accumulate sediment over time, and this process has been occurring in the Fanshawe Reservoir since it was created in 1952. The sediment is mainly soil eroded from agricultural fields, urban construction lands, and streambanks, in the watershed upstream. [Programs are available through the UTRCA](#) for landowners interested in controlling soil erosion on their property.

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

On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be a virtual meeting on November 24, 2020.

- Finance & Audit Committee
- Fee Schedule
- 2021 UTRCA Draft Budget
- 2021 UTRCA Board Meeting Dates
- UTRCA Endorsement of *The Thames River (Deshkan Ziibi) Shared Waters Approach to Water Quality and Quantity*
- Section 28 Status Report
- Centreville Pond
- January 2021 Board Elections
- Rental House Rates
- Board of Directors Check-In Meetings

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