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(L to R) Mackenzie Chute, WCA Lake Patrol, with SPS Constable Aaron Mounfield and Constable Matt Peck in the WCA enforcement boat.

### Stratford Police Return to Wildwood CA to Assist with Reservoir Patrols

In November 2018, the jurisdiction of the Stratford Police Service (SPS) expanded to include the Township of Perth South, where the main day use area of [Wildwood Conservation Area](#) (WCA) is located. As part of the transition from OPP policing coverage, staff from SPS and WCA met during the following winter. A partnership was established to jointly offer proactive, safety-oriented patrols of Wildwood Reservoir. Two SPS officers accompanied Wildwood's seasonal Lake Patrol staff person, Mackenzie Chute, in the WCA enforcement boat on four weekends during the summer of

2019. They performed routine checks to ensure boats had all the required safety equipment on board and that no alcohol or drugs were being consumed, and monitored the lake for safe boating practices. Plans were underway for a similar arrangement in 2020, but they had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every summer, Wildwood Reservoir experiences substantial boat traffic, particularly on weekends. Visitors participate in a wide variety of activities on the water, including fishing, sailing, paddling, wakeboarding, tubing, and general pleasure boating. When the WCA boat launch and reservoir reopened on June 1, 2020, all of those activities resumed but in even greater numbers than in any recent summer. As such, we were very fortunate that the SPS eventually were able to assist again with reservoir patrols.

Officers spent substantial time on the WCA enforcement boat, as well as some time becoming more familiar with the rest of the park on the three weekends that concluded our busy summer season. They issued multiple alcohol-related charges as well as warnings for safety equipment, helping to make the lake safer and more enjoyable for all users.

Special thanks go to SPS Constable Aaron Mounfield for spearheading this program and working out all the additional details to make it happen this year in a condensed time frame. *Contact: Dave Griffin, Assistant Superintendent, WCA*

## Online Teaching

Imtiaz Shah, UTRCA Senior Environmental Engineer, was invited to present online to Chinese professionals on September 1 on

The poster is for an online forum titled "生态河湖云论坛" (Ecological River and Lake Forum). It features a logo at the top with a stylized river and lake. Below the logo, the text reads "立足河湖综合治理及相关领域技术和观点探讨" (Focusing on technical and opinion discussions in the field of comprehensive management of rivers and lakes and related areas). The main topic is "流域可持续发展的生态化路径" (Ecological Pathways for Sustainable Development of the Watershed). The forum is scheduled for "2020.09.01(周二) 19:30-21:00". The host is Imtiaz Shah, a Senior Environmental Engineer at UTRCA. Other speakers include Zhao Jinrong, Yao Jie, and Wu Yi. The poster also includes a QR code and contact information for Karen Pugh, Resources Specialist.

the topic of Sustainable Development Stormwater Management Techniques for Ecological Protection of Natural Features using a Water Balance Approach.

The online presentation was attended by hundreds of Chinese professionals. Dr. Shah highlighted the effects of

urbanization on natural heritage features and the importance of maintaining base flow using the water balance approach and SWM LIDs in the development process and improving quality of runoff.

Contact: Imtiaz Shah, Senior Environmental Engineer

## Furtney Memorial Forest Dedication Service Goes Virtual

The [Furtney Memorial Forest](#) dedication service usually draws approximately 200 visitors to Fanshawe CA on the last Sunday in September. The 2020 dedication service will obviously be different due to COVID-19 restrictions.

This year's 29<sup>th</sup> annual dedication service can be viewed on-line on the [Logan and Evans Funeral Homes website](#) on Sunday, September 27. Dave Pizzey, Owner and Funeral Director, the Reverend Brian McKay, and Karen Pugh from UTRCA conducted a memorial tree planting service on-site at Fanshawe. Families and friends who have had trees planted in memory of loved ones



through the Logan and Evans Funeral Homes in 2019-2020 will be able to attend the service virtually.

The meaningful video was created by Steve Sauder from the UTRCA. It is our hope that, even though people who are grieving a personal loss can't be on site for the service, they will find some comfort in watching the tree planting service on-line.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resources Specialist

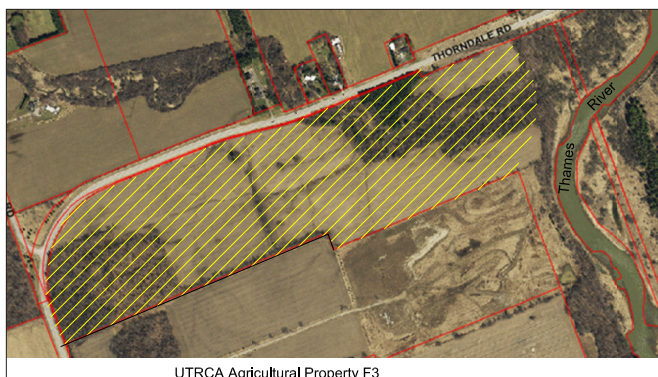
## Cover Crop & Demonstration Farm Projects - A New Initiative

Two new projects are underway through major funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada. The first project, delivered through the [Clean Water Program](#), is an opportunity for watershed landowners to receive funding to establish cover crops on their farms. Priority will be given to first-time adopters.

The second project is the creation of a Demonstration Farm focused around the use of controlled drainage installed on somewhat sloping land -- termed contour controlled drainage. This farm, with its gentle slopes, is quite representative of the farmland in the watershed. The site will provide an example to area farmers and the farm drainage industry.

Controlled drainage can hold water back in the drainage tile lines during much of the year, and then let the tiles drain freely during crop planting or harvesting periods. Ideally, the system will allow for optimal soil moisture growing conditions and the use of conservation tillage and cropping practices.





The farm is located on the Thorndale Road, just west of the Thames River.

It is anticipated that a number of other [agricultural best management practices \(BMPs\)](#) may also be showcased, including water and sediment control basins, cover crops, minimum and no-till planting, roadside and block tree planting, woody fence-row management, and woodlot management.

Although there has been considerable discussion about this project over the past few months, the planning is just getting underway. The partners who have shown interest in being involved to date include Bluewater Pipe, ADS/ Ideal Drainage, McCutcheon Farm Drainage, Land Improvement Contractors of Ontario, and the Middlesex Soil and Crop Improvement Association. More information to come!  
*Contact: Brad Glasman, Manager, Conservation Services*

### Stratford Library & UTRCA Partnership

For the second year, the Stratford Public Library and UTRCA Conservation Areas Unit have teamed up to give library patrons the opportunity to visit our parks. The UTRCA provided two 2020 Season Vehicle Passes to the library, as was done in 2019. The passes provide day use access to Wildwood, Fanshawe, and Pittock Conservation Areas, and can be signed out similar to a library book.

This year's partnership didn't start until July 14 due to COVID-19 but, once in circulation, the passes have been quite popular! Patrons have signed out the passes 11 times this summer and there are currently nine holds on them. Each pass can be signed out for two days.



In light of the pandemic, the library is offering curbside pick up and allowing the passes to be put on hold. Once returned, the passes are "quarantined" for a short period before being "checked in" and triggering the next hold.

This initiative began in 2019 with the St. Marys Public Library and has evolved from there.  
*Contact: Jennifer Howley, Manager, Conservation Areas*

### Why are the Leaves Falling Already?

This question was very common this summer, when it was common to see homeowners raking leaves in August or even back in July. On closer inspection, the trees being affected are non-native Norway Maples.

The fungal leaf diseases anthracnose and tar spot are the cause. Both diseases are often present in the watershed, but they are definitely more noticeable this year due to the leaves falling earlier than ever. Many Norway Maples had 50% leaf drop by the end of August.

These leaf diseases spread quickly under humid conditions, and this was one of the hottest and most humid summers in recent years. The other factor is the Norway Maple's extremely dense crown. With minimal air flow through the crown, the leaves remain damp, which is ideal for fungal leaf disease spread.

Anthracnose turns the margins of the leaves brown, while tar spot appears as irregular black spots approximately 1 cm in diameter. In a severe case, the leaves will dry up completely and drop off prematurely. Both leaf diseases are





"See through" Norway Maple infected by fungal leaf disease, August 2020.

considered cosmetic and do not affect the overall health of the trees, which will leaf out normally next year.

As far as control, there is not a lot that can be done. One recommendation is to rake up and destroy the leaves as the spores on these fallen leaves have the ability to reinfect next year. Another option is to have a certified arborist thin



Tar spot on Norway Maple leaf.

the crown on Norway Maples to permit better air flow. Most importantly, choose a native Sugar Maple when selecting a new maple tree to plant. Sugar Maples are not impacted by these fungal leaf diseases and will provide you with much nicer fall colour.

Contact: John Enright, Forester



### Endangered Wood Poppy focus of new study

For many years, it was thought that the only surviving Canadian populations of the endangered Wood Poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*) were located in the upper Thames River watershed. This beautiful spring wildflower is now the focus of a new partnership study headed by Jenn (McPhee) Dyson and Corey Burt of WSP (consulting ecologists), and Dr. Jenny McCune of the University of Lethbridge. Financial support is provided by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks 2020-2021 Species at Risk Stewardship Program and the partners. The UTRCA is providing some in-kind support as one of the species populations occurs within Fanshawe CA.

UTRCA staff have had a long involvement with this species. From 1992 to 2011, the late Dr. Jane Bowles worked with UTRCA staff and other volunteers on the Wood Poppy Committee. At that time, only two Ontario locations were known. Dr. Bowles took it upon herself to study the two small populations and later found a third. She planted their seeds at Western University's Agricultural Research Station to



study the plant's reproductive strategies and made some very interesting discoveries about the role of ants in seed dispersal. Jane wrote the Wood Poppy Recovery Strategy for Environment Canada in 2007 and the Recovery Strategy for Ontario in 2011 for the Ministry of Natural Resources. A fourth population was found in the region in 2010.

After Jane passed away in 2013, there was little work done on the species for a time. In the last few years, Dr. Jenny McCune initiated some research into the genetics of the small isolated Ontario populations and their habitat needs. She also found another population near Bayfield, bringing the total to five.



WSP researchers Jennifer McPhee and Corey Burt by Wood Poppies in Fanshawe CA.

The current research by WSP and Dr. McCune will document the number and vigour of each plant by site, examine the genetic differences between the Ontario and US populations, and investigate reasons for the Wood Poppy's rarity. WSP have visited all the known sites and tagged each plant so they can be tracked over time. We look forward to the results in 2022.



Numbered metal tags are staked next to each plant clump.

**A final note:** Cultivars of the Wood Poppy are sold at garden centres but there is a risk these plants may contaminate the native gene pool. Cultivated plants may establish more aggressively than native ones, so there is some risk if they get into the wild.

Contact: Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Biologist

### On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be a virtual meeting on September 29, 2020.

- 2021 Budget Concepts
- Safety Reviews - Fanshawe and Pittock Dams
- Hearing Procedure Updates
- Section 28 Status Report
- Blue Green Algae in Wildwood Reservoir
- West London Dyke Rehabilitation Phase 7
- Wildwood Dam Motor Control Cabinet

Draft agendas, audio recordings, and approved minutes are posted at [www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca) on the "Board Agendas & Minutes" page.

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