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UTRCA staff talk to Lucan-Biddulph Township Council members and local landowners about the Upper Medway Project.

New Balance London steps up to help Species at Risk!

We've partnered with New Balance in London! For the month of July, [New Balance London](#) will donate a percentage of sales to the UTRCA's [Species at Risk program](#). Visit them this month and help support our work to protect local Species at Risk!

Contact: Steve Sauder, Marketing Specialist

Field Tour Season is Underway

UTRCA Conservation Services staff hosted three tours in the [Upper Medway subwatershed](#) over the last month, showing many people the ongoing work there. The tours ranged in size and included participants with a broad range of interests.

Lucan-Biddulph Township Council and local landowners visited one of the monitoring stations to learn about the project's evolution over the last four years.

The Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative coordinated a tour of several projects that demonstrate innovative phosphorus removal technologies, including a project that is ready to start in the Upper Medway. Participants were given an overview

of the design and function of a changeable slag cartridge that removes phosphorus through chemical reaction (*see next story*).

The most recent "[tailgate meeting](#)" in the Upper Medway brought landowners out to hear Lawrence Levesque (Spear Seeds) discuss cover crop species selection, benefits, and seeding methods. The meeting host, Paul Hodgins (General Airspray Ltd.), spoke about aerial seeding options for cover crops, and gave a show and tell of the company's airplanes.



Paul Hodgins discusses aerial seeding options with Upper Medway landowners at a "tailgate meeting."

All three tours provided excellent opportunities for tour participants, local landowners, and UTRCA staff to share ideas and information about water quality and best management practices. Staff are now gearing up to cohost a tour with the University of Waterloo at the end of the summer, which will include a stop in the Upper Medway subwatershed.

Contact: *Tatianna Lozier, Agricultural Soil & Water Quality Technician*



UTRCA staff explain the slag filter cartridge demonstration project.

Slag Filter Cartridge Project

A new demonstration project was on display as part of a tour on June 27. The slag filter cartridge project is aimed at reducing soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP) in water from agricultural field tiles. The UTRCA's Mike Funk explained the "slag in a bag" project to a group of 50 people representing the agriculture industry, agencies, academia and conservation authorities.

Working with partners Bluewater Pipe and McCutcheon Farm Drainage, the UTRCA's Brad Glasman designed the system, which uses slag (a byproduct from the steel industry) to remove the SRP in tile water. The system was installed on a farm in the upper Medway watershed.

It is hoped the system will be another tool available for improving water quality in the Thames River watershed, Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie. The project is one of several projects funded by the Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative, of which the UTRCA is a partner.

Contact: *Craig Merkley, Conservation Services Specialist*

3rd Annual Glen Cairn In Bloom

The Glen Cairn Community Partners announced the winners of the [3rd Annual Glen Cairn In Bloom Competition](#) in July. This friendly competition between local businesses and organizations aims to beautify the southern section of London's Adelaide Street and surrounding area.

The goal of Glen Cairn in Bloom is to inspire the Glen Cairn community to make their neighbourhood and streetscape more visually appealing and environmentally friendly. This year we had a new organization join the competition that came up with a whimsical planter that related to their business, using a wheel chair as a planter.



The big winner this year was the Ukrainian Community Centre, which really stepped up its game from last year and saw their volunteers' hard work pay off. Second place went to Community Living London, and third place went to the Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre.

Contact: *Jessica Penz, Community Education Technician*

Jeanne Sauve School LID

The low impact development (LID) rain garden at Jeanne Sauve school in London underwent retrofit work earlier this spring to modify some design features. With the work completed, students planted perennials from Heeman's Greenhouses in the rain garden. The species planted will be drought tolerant once they are established. In class, the students have learned about stormwater management issues and how LID features improve water quality, reduce erosion, and decrease runoff volume.

Contact: *Karen Pugh, Resources Specialist*



Students plant the LID rain garden at Jeanne Sauve school.



Pittock South Shore Trail Work

The lake shore trail along the south side of [Pittock Lake](#) is a great place to take a walk, ride your bike, and enjoy nature in the City of Woodstock. The trail has been suffering from the impact of bank erosion in recent years and was in need of help.

Over the past few months, the eroded section was stabilized by regrading the slope (photo above) and placing 180 tonnes of stone along the toe (photo below). The work was finished in early June.

Contact: Craig Merkley, Conservation Services Specialist



New Lake Patrol Partnership with Stratford Police at Wildwood CA

The UTRCA is partnering with the Stratford Police for lake patrols on Wildwood Reservoir. The lake patrol helps to ensure a safe and relaxing outdoor experience for visitors to [Wildwood Conservation Area \(CA\)](#).

On average, 160 people drown in Ontario each year. With the expansion of the Stratford Police jurisdiction to include Wildwood CA, they are partnering with the UTRCA's Conservation Officers

to enhance safety on the water by increasing their visibility. The police service will focus on proactive, prevention-based lake patrols promoting safety.

Wildwood CA has seen visitor numbers rise in the past several years with camping and lake-based activities increasing in popularity. Staff welcome this opportunity increase safety measures by partnering with the Stratford Police for regular lake patrols.

Wildwood CA offers:

- 431 campsites
- Large lake for swimming, boating, sailing and fishing
- Modern washrooms and laundry facilities
- Canoe and kayak rentals
- Fat bike rentals
- 30 km of biking and hiking trails
- Summer recreation programs
- Peaceful day use area
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters TackleShare program – fishing gear for everyone!

Contact: Paul Switzer, Superintendent, Wildwood CA



UTRCA Community Education Supervisor Vanni Azzano explains the project to the students.

Bedford Public School Transforms Ball Diamond into Wildflower Garden

Stratford became Ontario's second Bee City in 2017. The designation means a greater commitment to protecting pollinators and starting a public dialogue about their importance. This project was initiated by Ethan Elliott, who was a grade 10 student at the time.

In June 2019, Bedford Public School students transplanted more than 300 native wildflowers into a former ball diamond. The site was tilled and prepared well in advance. Eventually the whole area will be filled, with plans underway to plant again in the fall. The school has also planted several native trees. Students and teachers are passionate about turning part of their large yard into a beautiful habitat that birds, butterflies, bees, and neighbours will all enjoy.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resources Specialist



Whirl Watershed Planting

Grade four students from Upper Thames Public School in Mitchell planted almost 1400 wildflowers in the Whirl Creek watershed on June 18. The planting site is next to the West Perth Demonstration Forest. The students had studied soils, plants and ecosystems and were able to observe the soil and plants up close, while getting their hands dirty.



Thank you to TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for funding the project. This support ensured proper site preparation, plants purchased from Verbinen's Nursery in Dundas, and education staff on site during the planting.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resources Specialist



Members of West Perth Forestry Committee: Jan Elligsen, and Steve and Don Giles.

Thames Watershed Turtles are Nesting

The 2019 turtle nesting season is well underway, after a long delay due to the cool, wet spring. Turtle nesting means you're more likely to encounter turtles along roads, in yards and along driveways. With populations of these reptiles declining across the province, all adult turtles are important to local populations. Some turtles in this region may be close to 100 years old, so you really are encountering a piece of history when you meet a turtle.

Seven of Ontario's eight turtle species are listed as at risk. Even our most common species, the Midland Painted Turtle, is experiencing declines in some areas. Here are a couple ways you can participate in turtle recovery.

Watch for turtles crossing the road and, when it's safe to do so, help them across the road. Place the turtle back in the nearest wetland area (regardless of the direction it was moving). Use care when you lift the animal, keep it low to the ground in case it falls, and keep your hands and arms behind the turtle and away from its head.

If you find a turtle nesting on your property, do not disturb her. Eggs may take 50 to 90 days to hatch and, in some species, hatchlings stay in the nest until the following spring. Avoid stepping or driving on the nest. Many nests are destroyed by predators, but those that survive contribute to increasing or maintaining turtle populations in this area.

We are always interested in sightings of the following species:

- **Spiny Softshell Turtle (Endangered)** - large turtle (females 35-46 cm, males 20-24 cm), green to brown flat, leathery shell, long neck, long snorkel-like snout
- **Spotted Turtle (Endangered)** - small turtle (10-12 cm), black shell with small yellow spots
- **Blanding's Turtle (Threatened)** - medium turtle (18-23 cm), high-domed black shell often flecked with yellow, bright yellow throat

If you see any of these Endangered and Threatened species, please contact **Scott Gillingwater, Species at Risk Biologist**.

The Thames watershed is one of the most diverse rivers in Canada and is home to a wide range of both abundant and endangered species. You can help **support turtle research** and other local environmental projects.



An adult Blanding's Turtle, with its distinctive domed shell and bright yellow throat.

Piloting New STEM Programs

This spring, the UTRCA's Community Education team piloted two new STEM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) at Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) schools. The programs are designed to engage students in learning about flooding - why it occurs, impacts, flood structures, and how natural areas and wetlands help stop it.



Students in the Grade 5 STEM program.

The new Grade 3 program, called Slow the Flow & Stop the Drop, is inspired by the Dr. Seuss children's book, *The Lorax*. The program links themes such as land use, water forces, structures, soil and plants. The students are teams of 'Landscape Engineers' who help the Lorax figure out why flooding and erosion are threatening his home. They work through hands-on engineering design steps to test materials and determine what works best to slow the flow of water and reduce erosion. At the end of the program, students apply what they learned to make landscaping suggestions for the Lorax.

The full day Grade 5 program is called Focus on Flooding. It links curriculum about natural disasters, structures and mechanisms, and forces. Students are hired as innovative 'Water Science and Engineering Teams' to help design flood structures along the



Some of the hands-on learning tools used in the programs were developed with funding from the federal National Disaster Mitigation Program, including the Stormwater Floodplain Simulator (above), the Tilted City Table, and supplies for the soil drainage test and mini model building.

Thames River to manage risks, and protect life and property. Teams use small-scale models to plan, test, and make improvements to demonstrate their understanding of floods. After a series of interactive lessons on watersheds, surfaces, flood management structures, and the topography of the Thames River, students build and test a mini model of a reservoir, dam, and river channel to see if they can manage floods.

Contact: Fiona Navickas,
Community Education
Specialist

TVDSB Newcomers Programs at Fanshawe CA

Community Education Staff are hosting approximately 250 newcomer students and adults for [Environmental Education programming](#) at Fanshawe Conservation Area this summer.



Families enrolled in the Newcomer Summer School Program at Eagle Heights Public School (PS), Louise Arbour French Immersion PS and White Oaks PS will be spending the full day at the park and participating in sensory nature hikes, and pond, field and forest explorations, as well as environmental games.

Contact: Karlee Flear, Community Education Supervisor

Summertime Parks Programs

This summer, Community Education staff are again offering [experiential educational programs](#) at Fanshawe, Pittock and Wildwood Conservation Areas. The programs are family-friendly and open to the public. Events such as Night Hikes, Learn to Canoe, and Guided Canoe Paddles have proven to be very popular and filled up weeks in advance! Offering these summer programs at the parks is an ongoing initiative as part of the UTRCA's goal to reach 1 million people each year with conservation messaging.

Contact: Karlee Flear, Community Education Supervisor



Participants in the Guided Canoe Paddle listen to instructions.

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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