

fyi

October 2019



Greater Yellowlegs

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enjoy the splendors of fall. Participants enjoyed wagon rides through the Conservation Area, self-guided hikes through the Dr. Murray Forest, and tours of Wildwood Dam.

Contact: [Vanni Azzano](#), Community Education Supervisor

National Tree Day

Home Hardware Building Centre London East store owner Dave Kirk received grant money through Tree Canada, and contacted the UTRCA to assist with a tree planting project. As a result, 100 new native trees were planted near Kilally Meadows Environmentally Significant Area through the UTRCA's Communities for Nature Program on National Tree Day, September 25.



Thanks go to the two enthusiastic grade 6 classes from Cedar Hollow Public School, the City of London's Parks Planning Department, and Home Hardware for helping improve our environment!

Contact:
[Karen Pugh](#),
Resources Specialist

Wildwood Open House

The weather was perfect on Sunday, September 29, for [Wildwood Conservation Area's annual Autumn Open House](#). More than 150 visitors took advantage of the free admission to



Finn (on the left) and Khallid dig in!
Photo: Andrew Graham, 980 CFPL.

Erosion & Sediment Control Tour

Proper erosion and sediment controls (ESC) are legally required in Ontario to protect the environment from pollution and soil loss associated with activities such as construction and development. Working in a regulatory environment, UTRCA staff frequently review and inspect ESC plans for a variety of construction projects including subdivisions, buildings, bridges/culverts, municipal road works and servicing, agricultural projects, and Drainage Act proposals.

In September, staff from UTRCA's Regulations and Water Management units participated in an ESC tour in Oxford County. The tour of construction sites gave our staff a better understanding of how ESC plans are implemented in the field, often at complex locations and under challenging circumstances. UTRCA staff were impressed at a Sun Canadian Pipeline (SCP) site where SCP staff and their consultants gave us a guided tour of their dewatering and site preparations in advance of pipeline repairs beneath a creek.



The Sun Canadian Pipeline site had temporary topsoil stockpiling under tarps, and construction matts to protect the farm field from heavy equipment.



A fish protection screen is visible upstream of a coffer dam, which is being used to temporarily dewater a short section of the creek, in anticipation of pipeline remediation.

The UTRCA will be hosting [Sediment and Erosion Control Inspector Certification training](#) in November. The one-and-a-half day training course covers background information, roles and responsibilities, best management practices, regulations, compliance, and how to conduct construction site inspections. Participants will take part in classroom exercises reviewing ESC plans and reports. Upon completion of the training course, participants have the option of writing a four hour certification exam.

Contact: [Imtiaz Shah](#), Environmental Engineer, and [Karen Winfield](#), Land Use Regulations Officer



Two of the thousands of Spiny Softshell Turtle hatchlings that were helped by the SAR Team this year.

Species at Risk Field Season Wraps Up

The Species at Risk (SAR) Team's extremely busy field season is wrapping up as their typical seven-days-a-week summer marathon finally ends, and the species they are studying move to overwintering sites.

With the help of many volunteers, the Team had one of their most successful seasons on record: the second best season ever for Spiny Softshell Turtle recovery efforts, the best season for Spotted Turtle surveys, and a great season for many of the other species they work with. With wonderful support from the media, they've been able to reach a large audience. They also hosted funders, scientists, and various staff from other organizations.

Thank you to the long-term SAR staff and volunteers for your hard work, energy, passion, knowledge, and camaraderie, and the many other volunteers who assisted throughout the year. Thanks, also, to UTRCA staff for their interest, support, and help in the Team's efforts, in the lab, with releases, and during other parts of the season.

Contact: [Scott Gillingwater](#), Species at Risk Biologist

Spiny Softshells being released - [photos](#) and [video](#)

[Eastern Hog-nosed snakelets hatching](#) and [being released](#)

Showcasing Drinking Water Source Protection at Doors Open St. Marys

On September 28, St. Marys residents and visitors had a unique opportunity during Doors Open to explore the town's many historic buildings. Some of these buildings are rarely open to the public, including the Waterworks Building, erected in 1899 next to Trout Creek.



The St. Marys Waterworks Building was built in 1899. The reservoir and booster station were added to the site in 2018 (below)



St. Marys is well known for its interesting limestone architecture, and the Waterworks Building is no exception. The Town has preserved much of the building's original interior features, including a stained glass window, wainscoting, wood plank ceiling, and lighting fixtures. In 2018, a new reservoir pumping station was added to the site, replicating the architecture of the original Waterworks Building and preserving the site's historic integrity.

During Doors Open, nearly 250 people toured the Waterworks Building to learn about the site's historic significance as well as the Town's efforts to provide clean, safe drinking water. The event was a great opportunity to showcase the multi-barrier approach to protecting the community's drinking water. It all starts with protecting water at its source. In this case, that means protecting the landscape that feeds the town's three groundwater wells, which are directly influenced by surface water due to the area's fractured bedrock. That's where the UTRCA comes in. The July 2000 Walkerton water crisis was the worst public health disaster involving municipal water in Canada, and led to the passing of the provincial Clean Water Act (CWA). In 2015, the Town of St. Marys delegated to the UTRCA the authority to provide drinking water risk management services on their behalf.

When a property is in an area where certain activities could affect municipal drinking water sources, UTRCA Risk Management Officials work with the landowners/ renters to ensure compliance with policies in the CWA. These policies may require the development of a legally binding risk management plan with measures to protect sources of drinking water, and/or the prohibition of certain activities. Risk Management Inspectors ensure ongoing compliance.

Events like Doors Open are a great opportunity to showcase local hidden treasures as well as discover more about programs and services that support a thriving community. We look forward to partnering with the Town of St. Marys in future events.

Contact: [Katie Ebel](#), Source Protection Policy & Risk Management Advisor



The UTRCA is pleased to partner with the Town of St. Marys and the Ontario Clean Water Agency to highlight work that keeps the community's drinking water safe.

On The Talking Circuit

Conservation Services staff are frequently asked to give presentations at local meetings and events hosted by our partners in the watershed. In September, Veldale Farms (Oxford County) hosted a night where families associated with the well-know farm operation were invited to an evening of socializing and learning. The UTRCA's Mike Funk and Brad Glasman have been working closely with Veldale to design several erosion control projects on their farm properties. They were asked to speak about the work they are doing there.

A different presentation was given at a recent ALUS Middlesex kick-off event. This time, Craig Merkley joined Mike to present the Conservation Services unit's work in the Medway Creek subwatershed. Their presentation outlined how staff are working closely with area farmers to demonstrate the multiple benefits of cover crops. As well, the audience learned how structural erosion control projects are designed and constructed. The presentation wrapped up with lessons learned from a unique 'in-stream' project near Birr, which generated lots of interest!

Contact: [Mike Funk](#), Agricultural Soil & Water Quality Technician



The GREEN and EcoSTEM programs begin with students gathering information about a local stream.

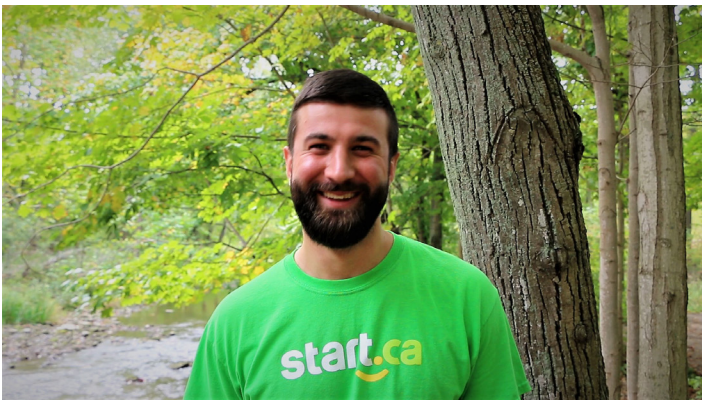
Kicking off GREEN and EcoSTEM

Fourteen grade 7/8 classes from across the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) have started their year long journey through the **GREEN** and EcoSTEM programs. GREEN and EcoSTEM are year-long environmental education and civic engagement programs centered around the award-winning “Community Action and Problem Solving Process.”

With the support of UTRCA Education and Partnerships staff, each class will work through this six-step process. Students will be guided through the steps, from identifying local environmental issues and engaging stakeholders, to designing and implementing sustainable solutions in their community. The programs culminate in a student-led action project, which they will share with other classes at a year-end Student Summit.

Funding for the GREEN program in the London area has been provided by Start.ca and the TVDSB. Funding for the EcoSTEM program in Oxford County has been provided by General Motors Canada.

Contact: [Karlee Flear](#), Community Education Supervisor, and [Brad Hertner](#), Community Partnerships Specialist



Start.ca and the TVDSA are providing funding for the London-area GREEN program.

Flood Education Activities

On September 26, Community Education staff brought engaging flood education tools to a Youth Water Summit hosted by the Thames Valley District School Board. More than 100 grade 9 students participated in the event, inspired by Greta Thunberg’s climate action, and a desire to learn more about the Thames River watershed. With the help of UTRCA staff, students took turns pouring water into the Stormwater Floodplain Simulator and discussed solutions for reducing floods in the future.



Community Education staff at the Youth Water Summit (above) and STEAM Night (below).



Community Education staff were also invited to provide an activity station at Westmount Public School’s STEAM Night (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math). Approximately 300 attendees took part in the family friendly evening, engaging with Flood Escape Room puzzles and demonstrations of the Stormwater Floodplain Simulator.

Contact: [Fiona Navickas](#), Community Education Specialist

Sifton through the Bog!

In September, the UTRCA Community Education team welcomed eight classes of grade 3-5 students to **Sifton Bog Environmentally Significant Area (ESA)**. This wetland is Canada’s most southerly bog and is home to many unusual species including Pitcher Plant, Sphagnum mosses, and Cotton Grass. The bog is one of London’s most treasured ESAs and a Provincially Significant Class 2 wetland.



Pitcher Plant and Sphagnum mosses are some of the unusual species that live in Sifton Bog.

The **Sifton Bog Wetland Education Program** introduces students to this unique local natural area, to learn about its creation, habitats, and distinctive species. The students observed and identified a dozen rare plant species from the bog boardwalk on a scavenger hunt. They also explored Redmond's Pond with dip nets to determine what types of aquatic invertebrates live in the water. An experiment illustrated how different surfaces can affect the quality, quantity, and movement of water.

The students left the bog understanding how wetlands reduce flooding and drought, improve water quality, and prevent erosion, as well as provide important habitat and beautiful scenery.

This year, the wetlands program was generously sponsored by the London Community Foundation's Heritage Grant and the Thames Valley District School Board.

Contact: [Kim Gilbert](#), Community Education Technician

Memorial Forest Dedication Services

The **UTRCA's Memorial Forest Programs** are open to anyone wishing to have a tree planted in living memory of a loved one.

St. Marys and Area Memorial Forest

Wildwood Conservation Area (CA) hosted 150 people at the annual St. Marys and Area Memorial Forest dedication service on Sunday, August 25. One ceremonial tree was planted at Wildwood after messages and a reading of the names. Tony Jackson represented the UTRCA Board of Directors.

The partnership between the St. Marys Ministerial Group, Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, and the UTRCA started in 2009. Each spring, memorial trees are planted on Line 13, south of County Road 9.

Furtney Memorial Forest

On Sunday, September 29, the 27th annual Furtney Memorial Forest dedication service was held at Fanshawe CA. A record large crowd of 400 people attended the event, which included the planting of a ceremonial tree. Speakers included Dave Pizzey, owner/manager of Logan and Evans Funeral Homes, and London City Councillor Anna Hopkins, who was also representing the UTRCA's Board of Directors.



The dedication service at Wildwood CA.

Thank you to our partner, Logan and Evans Funeral Homes, who have made it possible to plant nearly 8600 trees since 1992, as well as the staff at Fanshawe CA for the day's preparations and assistance.

Woodstock Memorial Forest

The 26th annual Woodstock Memorial Forest dedication service was held on Sunday, October 6 at Pittock CA, with more than 200 people in attendance. Speakers included City of Woodstock Mayor Trevor Birtch and Councillor Mark Schadenberg, who was also representing the UTRCA's Board of Directors, as well as John Brock from Brock and Visser Funeral Homes in Woodstock and Thamesford.

To date, more than 6000 trees have been planted through the program since 1994. Approximately 300 trees are planted every year. Thank you to Brock and Visser Funeral Homes for the continued partnership. The trees stand as a living testimony to the memory of loved ones. Thank you, also, to the staff at Pittock CA for hosting the event.

Contact: [Karen Pugh](#), Resources Specialist

TD Tree Days

The **UTRCA is proud to partner with TD Tree Days** during the months of September and October. This year, 2000 trees are being planted by 400 TD staff, family members and friends in St. Marys, Dorchester, Woodstock, London, and Oneida Nation of the Thames. Staff from these communities are integral to the success of the plantings. Thanks to all who participate!

Erin Dolmage, from the UTRCA's Community Education unit, was on hand at Sparling's Bush in St. Marys on September 14, as 37 TD Tree Day staff, families and friends planted 150 new



TD Tree Days in St. Marys.



TD Tree Days at Fanshawe CA.

native trees. Thanks to St. Marys town staff and to TD Tree Days for making the day possible. The trees were added to previous plantings at Sparlings Bush where new habitat is being created. They will help filter the air, provide shade, offer food for wildlife, create nesting opportunities for birds, and help prevent soil erosion.

Fanshawe CA is the recipient of 150 new trees and shrubs, thanks to TD Tree Days. On September 26, 30 TD Information Technology staff worked with the UTRCA to plant the trees along the roadway leading to the National Rowing Club. The trees will create a buffer between an overflow parking lot and the road, provide shade, aesthetic value, nesting habitat, and shelter from the wind, and contribute to action taken to combat climate change.

Contact: [Karen Pugh](#), Resources Specialist

Fridays for Future Climate Rally

The UTRCA had a display at the Fridays for Future climate rally held in Stratford on Friday, September 20. Inspired by the actions of Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg, the Fridays for Future movement saw climate rallies held in more than 5,000 communities in 150 countries, with participants requesting action on climate change.



Many other local businesses, environmental and activist groups, and non-profits participated in the Stratford rally, which had approximately 200 participants.

Contact: [Emily Chandler](#), Communications & Research Assistant

Communities for Nature

Local high school students worked hard planting trees on September 23, as part of the UTRCA's Communities for Nature program. The [EcoTeam at St André Bessette](#) Catholic Secondary School in London is actively working to reduce their carbon footprint. The EcoTeam reached out to many of the school's neighbours last spring, and they happily supported the students' desire to balance the urban sprawl happening around all of us. The neighbourhood around the school is growing quickly, and the EcoTeam feels it is very important to plant and nurture the gift of the natural environment.



The UTRCA was happy to help with the students' goals! Funding through the City of London's TreeMe grant is helping to establish 60 new white cedar trees and 15 large hardwoods. Thanks also to UTRCA's Jason Belfry, who operated the rented auger to dig holes. School yard soil is notorious for being compacted!

Contact: [Karen Pugh](#), Resources Specialist

Board of Directors - On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be on October 22, 2019, at the Watershed Conservation Centre, located in Fanshawe Conservation Area. Draft agendas, approved minutes, and audio recordings are posted on the "Board Agendas & Minutes" page at www.thamesriver.on.ca.

- Levy Work Sheet
- Rental House Rates
- Administration and Enforcement - Section 28
- Finance & Audit Committee Report
- Bill 108 Update

Please note: The meeting will be followed by "Remembering Kayla," a celebration of the life and work of Kayla Berger.

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