

fyi

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Hummingbird Clearwing Moth

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Children's Water Festivals Return!

After a three-year hiatus, UTRCA staff were excited to welcome back the in-person Children's Water Festivals, with not one but two events! As pandemic restrictions lifted in the spring, the Perth and Oxford Water Festival Organizing Committees both decided to hold an in-person community event to celebrate not only water in the community but also the opportunity to gather together again.

Perth's [community event on May 29](#) followed six months of virtual water related programming for schools. More than 500 people attended this first ever event at the Falstaff Centre in Stratford! The day was an opportunity to showcase the community's uses of and interactions with water, and to

expand the use of the virtual resources and activities for families as the school year came to a close. Families enjoyed Water Festival activities, Stream of Dreams activities, large trucks, and many other great stations hosted by our partners.



The Oxford Water Festival Organizing Committee organized three activities. They provided virtual resources for teachers to use and organized four live virtual sessions for students, including a dairy barn tour as well as presentations by Salthaven Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Centre and Sciensational Snakes. A mini water festival was held at Notre Dame Elementary School



for French first language students. The [in-person event, held on June 11](#) at Pittcock Conservation Area, was Oxford's 6th festival but only the second community event. More than 900 people turned out to enjoy canoeing, drumming, terrarium building, screen printing, seeing snakes up close, big trucks, traditional water festival stations, and much more!

All in all, we had wonderful participation from our partners, and everyone had a great day celebrating water together again!

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

FOSC 30th Anniversary Events

The Friends of Stoney Creek are celebrating their 30th anniversary by holding a series of events in 2022. The first event was a litter clean up in May that welcomed more than 30 people from the community. The second event was a pollinator garden planting where the Friends planted 1400 native wildflowers and grasses.



The Friends of Stoney Creek held a spring clean up (above), planted a pollinator garden (below), and hosted a birding hike (top right).



The final spring event was a beginner birding hike held on June 26 at the newly constructed barn swallow nesting structure.



Two new interpretive signs were installed by the UTRCA's Matt McCutcheon and Kevin Gouweloos, and 16 people enjoyed a morning of bird watching led by UTRCA's Kim Gilbert.



The Friends are delighted with the community's response and are looking forward to more events later this year!

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

Accessible Trail in Progress!

Two years ago, forward-thinking Wildwood Conservation Area (CA) staff proposed creating an accessible trail within the park. This idea is now becoming a reality, as the Green Trail is being overhauled with a surface that should allow barrier-free use.

The Green Trail is a 1.1 kilometre loop through the Dr. Murray Forest east of Campground B, with parking just north of the trail head. The trail's gentle slopes and serpentine shape remain, along with the views of nature. Visitors are asked to be patient as the trail surface will take some time to settle.



Resurfacing the Green Trail: before (top left), during (above), and after (left).

While staff were constructing the trail, a person with limited mobility who was visiting Wildwood CA stopped to talk with staff about barrier free trails, fishing platforms, and other amenities. They are quite excited by the work going on at Wildwood and similar efforts at our other conservation areas.

Contact: [Paul Switzer](#), Superintendent, Wildwood Conservation Area

Amazing Monarchs

Fanshawe Community Education staff were happy to deliver several monarch butterfly presentations to students at AJ Baker, Zorra

Highland Park, and Thamesford Public Schools in June. This initiative was the result of the participation by the Township of Zorra and Mayor Marcus Ryan in the [National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge](#).

Over the last 30 years, monarchs have experienced a 90% decline in eastern North America due to factors including pesticides, habitat loss, urban development, climate change, and invasive species. The Mayors' Monarch Pledge seeks to save this iconic species by encouraging cities, municipalities, and governments to commit to at least three actions from a list of 30 that focus on supporting monarch populations through education and habitat creation across North America.



In Zorra Township, students acted out the monarch life cycle, practiced migrating to Mexico from within their classroom, learned about threats to monarchs, and discussed ways to make a difference. Many schools were already well on their way to helping monarchs with pre-existing milkweed and native flowers in their schoolyard.

Thank you to Zorra Township for their willingness to support the amazing monarch and to the students and teachers for their great enthusiasm for protecting wildlife.

Contact: [Heather Hawkins Jensen](#), Community Education Technician

Thamesford Lions Pollinator Garden

Over the last year, the Thamesford Lions, Township of Zorra, and UTRCA have been planning a series of pollinator gardens in Thamesford. On May 25, a local Girl Guide group assisted with planting the first native pollinator garden at North Park. The Township of Zorra followed up by planting an additional garden at River Park. We're excited to continue this partnership to plant more pollinator gardens in Thamesford in the coming years.



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

Fanshawe Community Education Wrap Up

In June, Fanshawe Community Education staff welcomed school groups from the Thames Valley District School Board, London District Catholic School Board, and community school organizations, who hopped on school buses and headed to Fanshawe Conservation Area for an end-of-the-year school trip.

Over a two week period, approximately 375 students who participated in half day or full day environmental education programs. Students explored the pond, fields, and forests to identify and classify local aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. Other groups learned how to use a compass and map to find their way around the park's day use area, or played Survival!, where students used strategies and their wits to "survive" while playing a role of a herbivore, omnivore, or carnivore in an energy pyramid.

End-of-the-year field trips are valuable in many ways: to wrap up a curriculum unit (such as soil studies, plants, ecosystems, or biodiversity) in the outdoors with hands-on activities; to celebrate a year that has passed with their schoolmates; and to let off some steam and have fun after the months of hard work put into their studies.

Students that come to Fanshawe for an educational program gain an appreciation and awareness of the outdoors and nature, they get to know a local conservation area that they can bring their family and friends back to, and they have happy memories that will last a lifetime!

Contact: [Karlee Flear](#), Community Education Supervisor (Fanshawe)

On the Board Agenda

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held virtually on August 23, 2022. Please visit the "Board Agendas and Minutes" page at www.thamesriver.on.ca for agendas, reports, audio/video links and recordings, and approved minutes.

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