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October 2022

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Belted Kingfisher

New Shelter for Wildwood Nature School

"The Hollow" at Wildwood Nature School now features a wonderful new shelter constructed with building materials donated by the St. Marys Home Hardware Building Centre! Brad and Jenny Roth own the St. Marys Home Building Centre and Sam's Home Hardware in St. Marys. They and their staff have been strong supporters of the education programs at Wildwood Conservation Area for many years.

Wildwood Nature School gives children opportunities to build a relationship with the land through repeated visits in familiar natural places. The new shelter provides a space where participants can gather to share experiences, explore natural artifacts and resources, and find shelter as needed.

Thank you to Brad and Jenny for this very generous donation and for supporting the Wildwood education programs!

Contact: [Maranda MacKean](#), Community Education Specialist



Local business owner Jenny Roth and UTRCA's Vanni Azzano in the newly constructed shelter.

ESA Days Return

During London's Doors Open weekend, September 17-18, the UTRCA partnered with the City of London's Ecological Community Advisory Committee and local community groups to pilot events at three of the city's [Environmentally Significant Areas \(ESAs\)](#). The goal of ESA Days was to improve public awareness and appreciation of the ESAs, through education, hikes, and community involvement.

On Saturday, two ESAs were highlighted, Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills and Kilally Meadows. On Sunday, Medway Valley



UTRCA Aquatic Biologist Erin Carroll talked with visitors about stream health.

Heritage Forest ESA was featured, with support from the Friends of Medway Creek and the London Environmental Network.

Two access points were manned at each ESA, with UTRCA ESA and Community Education staff and/or community volunteers leading hikes and providing information to highlight the features of the ESAs.

Overall, the event was well attended and feedback was very positive. The organizing committee will be meeting to evaluate the events and plan for the future.

Contact: [Brandon Williamson](#), Land Management Coordinator

Friends of Medway Creek Community Day

The [Friends of Medway Creek](#) hosted a Community Day at Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA on September 18 during London's Doors Open weekend. The day educated visitors about the importance of water health in Medway Creek, promoted the work of the Friends group, and encouraged people to get involved in grassroots efforts to improve the local environment. The event also increased awareness of this natural area as one of the ESA Days sites.



Members of the Friends of Medway Creek were on hand to talk about the group's activities.

Most activities were located at the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate. A number of stations were set up including a welcome tent, activity centre with a recycle fishing game, a London Environmental Network booth, a tent highlighting the ESA, a benthic sampling activity, and electro-fishing demonstrations.

This event was funded through the London Environmental Network's [Environmental Action Incubator program](#).

Contact: [Jessica Penz](#), Water Resources Assistant/Community Partnership Specialist

Source Water Protection Series

The [Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Region's Drinking Water Source Protection Risk Management Office](#), which is hosted at the UTRCA, is launching a series of articles to share information and local stories. Topics include why protecting drinking water sources is important, what we are doing locally to protect the quality and quantity of municipal drinking water, and how your actions matter.

Walkerton tragedy triggered change

In May 2000, bacterial contamination of the municipal water in Walkerton, Ontario, resulted in the worst public health disaster involving municipal water in Canadian history. At least seven people died and 2,300 became ill.

The Ontario government launched a public inquiry into this tragic event. Conservation Ontario provided the Walkerton Inquiry with recommendations focused on improvements such as watershed management to protect drinking water supplies.

Following the Walkerton Inquiry, Justice O'Connor made 121 recommendations on a wide range of areas related to protecting drinking water. These recommendations are the building blocks of Ontario's drinking water protection framework.

Today, Ontario has a comprehensive safety net to protect drinking water from its source to your tap. The safety net includes:

- regular and reliable testing and public reporting, backed up by strong legislation and stringent standards,
- a comprehensive program to protect sources of drinking water,
- licensed drinking water systems operated by highly trained, certified staff,
- regular inspections of drinking water systems and testing labs.



Ontarians can be confident that they enjoy clean and safe municipal drinking water, and that the Province will continue to take action to safeguard our water.

Trust the Tap, and stay tuned for more!

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

STEP Water's Stormwater Management Pond Inspection and Maintenance Training

On September 27, the UTRCA and City of London partnered with STEP Water (Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program) to provide site and resource support for a Stormwater Management Pond Inspection and Maintenance Training Field Day in London.

STEP Water is a partnership between Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation, and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The training was provided at no cost to participants through funding from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and was geared toward local municipal and conservation authority (CA) staff.

The training was held at Summerside and Parker Ponds adjacent to Meadowgate Park. Participants rotated through six stations: inlets and outlets, embankments and surrounding area, forebays and aftbays, bathymetric surveys, sediment removal, and maintenance infrastructure and monitoring.

Each station had City of London or CA staff presenting. The UTRCA's Cole Volkaert and Richard Brewer spoke at the embankments and surrounding area station about "beaver baffle" flow devices our staff build and install in City of London stormwater management ponds and drains, invasive species and control methods, and issues such as garbage, erosion, and walkway damage. UTRCA Regulations Unit staff also participated in the training.



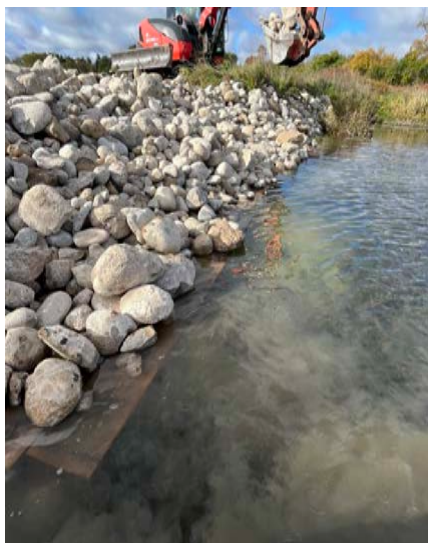
UTRCA staff discuss management activities they undertake at City stormwater ponds.

The field day received very positive reviews from the more than 70 municipal and CA staff who participated. It is anticipated that the London training will become an annual event. Contact: Vanni Azzano, Community Education Supervisor (Wildwood)

Installing LUNKERS for Fish Habitat on Medway Creek

Approximately 12 metres of wooden fish habitat structures has been installed along a bend on Medway Creek near Thirteen Mile Road, in Middlesex Centre. The wooden cover structures, also referred to as Little Underwater Neighbourhood Keepers Encompassing Rheotactic Salmonids (LUNKERS), are set just beneath the water's surface. They are constructed of oak hardwood which, so long as it stays wet, will last for many years.

The LUNKERS are located on the outside



River stone is piled on the LUNKERS to hold them down and protect the stream bank. Fish can hide in the cavity underneath the wooden structure.

of a bend where the natural water movement will scour the area clear of sediment, making it the perfect hiding spot for fish. Over time, the bank will become vegetated with grass and shrubs, which will shade the stream through this reach.

Funding for this work was

through Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program.

Contact: [Jessica Penz](#), Water Resources Assistant/Community Partnership Specialist

Let's talk soil health!

UTRCA stewardship staff recently met up with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Soil Team as well as local farmers, Jeremy O'Shea and Belinda Bowman, to discuss all things soil.

The morning began at one of the water sampling stations in the upper Medway Creek subwatershed. UTRCA staff discussed an initiative to improve soil health within the watershed by focusing on one specific agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP): cover crop trials.

Between fall 2018 and spring 2022, the UTRCA received funding for landowners in the upper Medway to take part in cover cropping trials which resulted in a surge in the adoption of this farming practice. These trials aimed for farm fields to have approximately 60% residue cover throughout the non-growing season, to reduce nutrient losses and soil erosion while promoting soil health and structure.

While staff are still analyzing the water quality data, we are optimistic about the beneficial potential of this BMP and are always appreciative of local landowners that are interested and willing to try new things.



The landowners talk with the OMAFRA Soil Team and UTRCA staff about their farming practices and goals.

Speaking of willingness to try new things, Jeremy and Belinda gave a quick tour of their farm and shared their agricultural goals. Their aim is to improve soil health by incorporating both cover cropping and rotational grazing into their farm operation. Rotational grazing has enabled them to cut

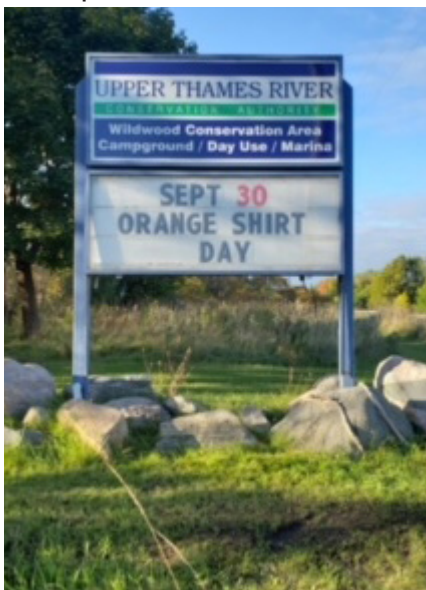
some farming costs while promoting soil fertility and forage production. Of course, the OMAFRA Soil Team could not resist grabbing a shovel and taking a look at their soil! Thank you to Jeremy and Belinda for being so welcoming and sharing your farming practices and goals with us.

All in all, it was a very interesting and informative morning to share ideas about soil health and the many ways it can be achieved. Contact: [Brynn Anderson](#), Stewardship Services Assistant

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honours the children who never returned home and the survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities.

The UTRCA Team for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) provided staff with the opportunity to become involved and show our understanding and solidarity, to bring a message of hope for the future. In advance of September 30, staff could order orange



t-shirts from Atlohsa Family Healing Services and were encouraged to wear orange on September 30. Wildwood Conservation Area used their entrance sign to acknowledge the day and its important message.

TIDE also provided other opportunities for staff to be involved and learn:

- Join a lunchtime walk inspired by the Walk for Wenjack to connect with nature,

- Watch the “Remembering the Children” ceremony on line from Ottawa,
- Tune in to A Day to Listen 2022: Message of Hope, which is broadcast through a partnership between the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund and more than 540 radio stations,
- Explore Internet resources including Celebrating Indigenous Peoples in Canada: A Learning and Activity Guide, and various websites.

Contact: [Tracey Haycock](#), TIDE Chair

Memorial Forest Dedication Services



Furtney Memorial Forest

The rain held off on Sunday, September 25, so that the 30th annual Furtney Memorial Forest dedication service could be held outdoors at Fanshawe Conservation Area. After two years of virtual dedication services, 200 people attended the event, which was hosted by [Logan and Evans Funeral Homes](#) and the UTRCA.

When George Furtney, the owner of Furtney Funeral Homes, passed away in the early 1990s, a program was set up to create a memorial forest in his memory. While the funeral homes have changed hands – and names - the program continues. Nearly 10,000 memorial forest trees have been planted throughout the City of London and on UTRCA property since.

Logan and Evans Funeral Homes plant a tree for each service they conduct. The memorial tree program is also available to anyone who wishes to have a tree planted in memory of a loved one.

Thank you to Fanshawe CA staff Alison Miller and Olivia Orsini for helping with this event.

Woodstock Memorial Forest

Sunday, October 2 was the annual Woodstock Memorial Tree Service at Pittock



CA. Pictured at this Brock and Visser Funeral Home event are (from left): UTRCA board member and Woodstock City Council member Mark Schadenberg, bagpiper Mike Pritchard, and Reverend

Gerard Hamoen of Westminster United Church in Thamesford.

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

Tree Power Programs wrap up

300 New Trees in Perth South

The second annual [Perth South Tree Power](#) program was a success, with 300 trees purchased online and picked up by their new owners on Saturday, October 1. Residents chose from red maple, autumn fantasy maple (a cross between red and silver maple), sugar maple, downy serviceberry, hackberry, black cherry, and red oak.



Ready to hand out trees to their new owners, from the left, are Perth South Councilor Sue Orr, UTRCA staff Emily Chandler, Karen Pugh, and Vanni Azzano, and Perth South Councilor Jaime Martin.

The program has been well received, with hopes for a third run next year. Thank you to the Municipality of Perth South and to the residents for helping to increase tree cover, create shade, provide wildlife habitat and food, and add species diversity.

1st St. Marys Tree Power!

The first ever St. Marys Tree Power program was a hit with residents! All 300 trees sold on-line before the pick up day on Saturday, October 15. Residents selected their trees from downy serviceberry, red maple, sugar maple, autumn blaze maple, red oak, hackberry, and white birch. Thank you to the Town of St. Marys for supporting this exciting new initiative.



Pictured amongst the trees on pick up day, from the left, are UTRCA staff Emily Chandler and Vanni Azzano and St. Marys staff Morgan Dykstra and Kenny.

Contact: [Emily Chandler](#), Communications and Marketing Specialist, or [Karen Pugh](#), Resource Specialist

Communities for Nature Events

After a long hiatus due to the pandemic, the UTRCA [Communities for Nature](#) projects are back and keeping staff busy this the fall! Here are some highlights of the activities.

New Pollinator Garden for West Nissouri Public School

Four kindergarten classes planted 100 new pollinator plants in front of their school on September 15. The young students learned



The kindergarten students learned how to plant the pollinators. about different types of pollinators and why they need flowers. As the children grow and adapt to their new school, so will the plants.

Funding was provided by the Thames Valley District School Board, and the plants were grown locally by Heeman's Nursery.

Home Hardware Celebrates 30 Years of Tree Planting

Fifty-seven students from London District Christian Secondary School partnered with Home Hardware, Tree Canada, and the UTRCA to plant 150 trees in London on September 23. The students and teachers were excited to be a part of this event held during the week of National Tree Day.



The students were happy to get out of the classroom to plant trees.

Happy Planet Group and TD Tree Days at Burgess Park

Thank you to the Happy Planet Group and [TD Tree Days](#) for partnering with us to get new trees in the ground at Woodstock's Burgess Park on October 2. A young, environmentally aware group planted 100 trees and then toured the park with UTRCA's Brad Hertner to learn about past projects.



Happy Planet Group members planted trees in Burgess Park.

Oneida Nation of the Thames and TD Tree Days

The UTRCA was pleased to work with Oneida Nation of the Thames and TD Tree Days on October 7. A total of 250 new trees were planted, including pear, apple, peach, white cedar, white spruce, white pine, hemlock, sugar maple, and red maple.



Community members and UTRCA staff planted 250 trees.

Fruit trees planted in previous years were reported to now be bearing fruit! Tree planting visits to the homes of many elders throughout the community also revealed excellent growth in previously planted trees. Thank you to TD Tree Days for this funding opportunity.

Beal at Boler and TD Tree Days

Thanks to the TD Tree Days program, Boler Mountain has 150 new trees planted by grade nine geography students from Beal Secondary School on on October 13. The white spruce, white cedar, sugar maples, and red maples will create a buffer at the bottom of Hill 55 and expand existing tree corridors.

Over the past decade, the UTRCA has worked with several groups at Boler to create shade, increase biodiversity and wildlife



Beale Secondary School students enjoyed the tree planting trip to Boler Mountain.

habitat, and help control erosion. Thank you to Marty Thody and Jessika Gunton at Boler Mountain for welcoming Beal SS and UTRCA in this tree planting initiative.

Metis Community Building Day

The Métis Nation of Ontario and Thames Bluewater Métis Council partnered with UTRCA on October 17 for a community building day. Forty people planted 110 trees in the Plover Mills corridor along the North



Participants enjoyed a beautiful fall day.

of Métis culture games and enjoyed a lunch catered by Oneida Nation of the Thames.

Thames River. The planting took place on UTRCA land, next to an area that students had planted in the early 1990s through the Community Forestry program.

Attendees took part in a variety



Wood chips were placed around all the newly planted trees.

It was an inspiring day of working together for our environment while learning about culture and heritage.

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

Upcoming Events

- Saturday, October 22: [Celebrating Natural Connections](#) at Lions Park, Mitchell
- Wednesday, October 26: [UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting](#) (virtual)
- Saturday, October 29: [Celebrating Natural Connections](#) at TJ Dolan Natural Area, Stratford
- Saturday, November 5: [Celebrating Natural Connections](#) at Fanshawe Conservation Area, London

On the Board Agenda

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held virtually on October 26, 2022. Please visit [Board Agendas and Minutes](#) for agendas, reports, audio/video links and recordings, and approved minutes.

- Fees Policy Update
- Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report
- 2023 Rental House Rates

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