

Conservation Update

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

October 2013

Community Helping to Make a Difference

The SCRCA and the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc hosted two events in October: a community planting day; and a planting day with nearly 120 elementary students from North Meadows Elementary School in Alexandra Park.

As part of the events, Conservation Authority staff demonstrated how sampling the fish, insects and other organisms in the stream can be a measure of the health of the watercourse. In this case, the organisms collected showed the water quality needs improvement pointing to the need to enhance the habitat surrounding the stream.



Between the two events, 350 native shrubs and 50 native trees were planted in the riparian zone of Stokman Drain and the Sydenham River. This project was undertaken to improve the riparian buffers along this urban waterway to support healthier water quality and aquatic habitat. By involving the community, we also hoped to raise awareness of how riparian buffers and wetlands influence stream water quality.

These events were supported by RBC Blue Water Project and Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Forest Sewage Lagoon Planting

Although we were originally rained out, we were able to reschedule this event on a fabulously sunny and warm fall day! 13 volunteers attended from CH2MHill (contractors managing the lagoon), the Municipality of Lambton Shores, and the Lambton Shores Trails Committee. We planted 90 shrubs and 300 shoreline plants in less than an hour and a half.

The two cells of the lagoon were retired many years ago and staff at CH2MHill wanted to see them naturalized to create better habitat for migrating waterfowl. After receiving advice from Ducks Unlimited and gaining approval from MOE, the water levels were lowered to make it more conducive for native shoreline plant growth. As these shoreline plants grow, they will provide additional shelter and food habitat for the migrating birds.

This event was supported by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.



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Green Parking Lots

At the administration office, the SCRCA is experimenting with green parking. "We created three green parking spots to evaluate how well they will work and hold up over the next year," Girish Sankar, Water Resources Engineer said.

Green parking lots allow for storm water to infiltrate into the soil rather than running off into storm sewers. "We are witnessing the impact of climate change locally with more severe summer rain storms," Sankar said. The high intensity rainfall is overwhelming the ability of urban storm drains to handle all of the water which is causing localized flooding.

The water infiltrating into the soil also helps to recharge our groundwater. "This is important because another aspect of climate change is more periods of drought. This is when we need the water stored under the ground," Sankar said.

"Green technologies such as these parking lots are just one way of adapting to the climate change that is upon us. We need to keep working to slow down the pace of climate change and develop new and innovative ways to adapt to our changing climate," Sankar said.



Once completed, you now have "drivable grass." The Authority will monitor the success of the green parking spaces before expanding this concept to the entire parking lot. The work was undertaken by Conservation Authority field staff. Thanks to Mike Tizzard and Don Skinner for coordinating the work.

New Website Launched

The SCRCA has revamped its website making it more user-friendly and to comply with the new Accessibility Act. The new site includes several features to allow for easy navigation while maintaining our wish to provide comprehensive information to our stakeholders and the public.



The green parking spaces were constructed by placing a base of coarse gravel followed by a layer of sand to allow for infiltration. A plastic panel is then installed and back filled with top soil that acts as an anchor for the grass that is planted on top.

Open House - Keith McLean Conservation Lands

About 60 people attended an Open House at the Keith McLean Conservation Lands on October 26. The majority of the people attending were neighbours or relatives of Mr. McLean. There was a strong sense of agreement with our plans for the property as a place for the public to explore and enjoy.

Union Gas Supports Conservation Education

A conservation and safety program that teaches elementary school students in the St. Clair Region to be more aware of the power of water – especially during the spring thaw – is getting some help from Union Gas.

The \$5,000 donation for the Spring Water Awareness Program will support Conservation Education staff visiting schools in Lambton and Kent counties to teach students from kindergarten to Grade 6 about the dangers of being close to the edge of swelling streams, creeks and rivers during the spring thaw. The program will also tie in to the provincial science curriculum for each grade level, teaching students about the rich aquatic life in local rivers and streams.

This is the third year Union Gas will be supporting Spring Water Awareness. Last year, 1,400 students participated in the program. "Based on the success of this project, Union Gas is pleased to continue its support of this valuable and potentially life-saving program," said Chris Young, Administration Manager for the Union Gas Dawn Facility.



A \$5,000 donation was made by Union Gas at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area for a program that will teach students about safety around watercourses during the winter and spring. From left to right: Chris Young Administration Manager, STO, Union Gas Limited; Kerian Moorey grade 3, High Park Public School, Sarnia; Steve Arnold, Chair, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority; Owen Evoy, grade 3, High Park Public School, Sarnia; Dave Lamoureux, Director of Storage and Transmission Operations, Union Gas. They all have their hands in ice water to get an idea of how cold and shocking it would be should you fall through the ice.

"We are very pleased with our partnership with Union Gas," Steve Arnold, Chair of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority said. "These funds will be a great help in advancing our efforts to teach school children in the region about the importance of being safe around watercourses, and of the importance for all of us to continue to strive for healthy watersheds."

Union Gas works in over 400 Ontario communities, including many in the St. Clair Region. The company is committed to contributing to the communities where its employees live and work by supporting direct and indirect employment, offering energy efficiency programs, and helping local organizations through sponsorships, charitable giving and hundreds of volunteer hours.



Next Conservation Authority Board Meeting
Thursday, November 14 10:00 a.m.

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