

Conservation Update

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

May 2014

Aamjiwnaang Earth Day Celebration

SCRCA staff participated in Aamjiwnaang's Community Earth Day celebrations. Staff provided community members with information about the unique and valuable wildlife found within our watershed, our programs to protect Species at Risk, critical habitat, and vulnerable ecosystems. SCRCA's mounted snapping turtle and eastern foxsnake were highlights for the visitors. Children were invited to play our 'Frog Song Game' in which they were challenged to match up some of our local frog species with their corresponding calls. Community members were also encouraged to forage through our benthic invertebrate sample to see what kind of life can be found in a healthy creek. A small crayfish was a highlight. Our staff were very pleased with the day, exchanging smiles, stories and perspectives with approximately 150 members of the Aamjiwnaang community.



Spring Tree Planting Underway

For Conservation Authorities, spring time means tree time. This year we received 84,000 trees the first week of May and work continues to get all of these into the ground. This is a near record for the number of trees planted in one year by the SCRCA. An additional tree machine planting crew was added to make three crews who are working to put in the lion's share of the trees. One crew is planting trees by hand in places where the tree planter cannot be used.

\$180,000 has been secured through 8 separate funding sources this year to offset planting costs for most landowners taking part in the program.

Campgrounds Water Soaked for the Long Weekend

A very wet start the week prior to the long weekend has forced the Authority to close transient campsites for the weekend. The wet ground conditions would make it impossible to park trailers and for campers to enjoy their campsite. We look forward, however, to a successful season once things dry out. Thanks to the assistance of our volunteer camper associations a number of events will be held at the campgrounds this summer including crafts and games for kids, adult bingo and hayrides.



Follow us on Facebook

Click on this symbol on our website at www.scrca.on.ca

"working together for a better environment"

Road Crews to Help in Snake Sightings

Spring is here, the temperatures are warming up, birds are returning and the flowers are blooming but that's not the only sign of spring. Reptiles are also on the move. To highlight the reptiles in the area, staff from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, with the help of Jenny Pearce of Scensational Sssnakes, presented an educational workshop at the Lambton County Road Crews Annual Spring Meeting. The purpose of the presentation was to educate road crews on how to identify native snake and turtle species and the important role reptiles play in the environment.

The presentation was conducted using live snakes and turtles. Some of the ambassador snakes included the eastern foxsnake, eastern hognose snake, milksnake, eastern gartersnake, and ribbon snake. "The presentation was a great success," says Kelli Smith, Biological Technician with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. "Having live snakes really helped to highlight the identifying features and allowed road crew staff to get an up close and personal experience with these amazing creatures," adds Smith. "The presentation was great and really made an impression on the staff," says Rob Steiginga Roads Operations Manager for Lambton County.

The Conservation Authority uses the information about species sightings, including road kills, to gain a better understanding of the population of reptiles, especially ones that are species at risk, and to contribute to recovery efforts for these interesting species.



David Cummings is seen with the endangered Eastern Foxsnake, one of Ontario's largest snakes and a globally rare species.

Job Creation Partnership

The Conservation Authority was successful in obtaining a Job Creation Partnership program through the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The program valued at \$136,000, will provide experience for seven people who are collecting or have recently collected Employment Insurance benefits for positions ranging from 26 - 42 weeks.

Sydenham River Canoe Race

Thirty-nine canoes and kayaks participated in the Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race on April 13. A late arrival of spring almost caused the race to be postponed but the weather cooperated and over \$1,600 was raised for Conservation Education. Alexander Wingrove and Janice Leboeuf were tied for the most money raised and the fastest time for the 17 km competitive race was won by Dean Brown and Ron Vincent at 1 hour 25 minutes and 2 seconds. Our sincere thanks to all who participated.



Paddle Day on May 24

Paddle Day is being held in partnership with local scouts on May 24 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Centennial Park in Strathroy (near the skateboard park). People may bring their own canoe or kayak but a number of canoes and life jackets will be available to use.

Denning Memorial Forest Dedication

The dedication of 120 trees for the Denning Bros. Memorial Forest Program will be held on Sunday, June 1 at 2:00 p.m. at Centennial Park, Strathroy.

Grants Support Conservation Work

The Conservation Authority continues to seek funding to help us undertake conservation projects that help create healthy and resilient watersheds. Work for this year is supported by the following grants:

- Environment Canada granted \$244,050 to implement best management projects through the Sydenham River Habitat Stewardship Program. This is the second year of a 3 year project.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation provided \$173,400 grant for landowner/community engagement, headwater wetland construction and other wildlife Best Management Practices in the Upper Sydenham Watershed. This is the final year of a 3 year project.
- Environment Canada's Great Lakes Sustainability Fund provided \$117,500 grant for wetlands creation and tree planting at Bowen's Creek Habitat Management Area. This is the final year of a 3 year project.
- Trees Ontario supports our tree planting program annually. In 2014 we received \$79,000 to subsidize tree planting.
- Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund for aquatic species at risk in the Sydenham watershed provided a \$54,000 in grant. This is the second year of a three year project.



New for 2014

- Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund provided a three year \$75,900 grant to continue to deliver the Reptiles-at-Risk Program. The grant will help pay for snake and turtle monitoring, and related outreach and education activities.
- Tree Canada provided \$49,000 to subsidize tree planting.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation provided \$58,000 over two years to conduct fish and mussel inventories in Lake Huron Tributaries with a complementary education and outreach program that builds on the program delivered at Kettle Stony Point First Nation.
- Wildlife Habitat Canada awarded \$22,000 for wetland and riparian buffer projects on McKeough Lands.
- OPG provided \$28,000 to subsidize tree planting in Chatham-Kent and Lambton County.
- Ministry of Natural Resources provided \$17,800 through the Canada-Ontario Agreement for Lambton Shores Coastal Wetland Restoration and riparian buffer restoration.
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance Program grant of \$10,000 supports restoration of Bowens Creek Habitat Management Area and \$2,000 to support erosion protection on McKeough Lands.
- Ministry of Natural Resources provided \$8,000 for Phragmites control at Stag Island.
- Friends of the St. Clair River awarded \$1,000 for Water Quality Monitoring in St. Clair River Tributaries.



Next Conservation Authority Board Meeting

Thursday, June 26, 1:00 p.m.

A.W. Campbell Conservation Area

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

205 Mill Pond Cr., Strathroy, ON, N7G 3P9

(519)245-3710, (519)245-3348 FAX

E-mail: stclair@scrca.on.ca

Website: www.scrca.on.ca

member of

