

# Conservation Update

## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

October 2014

### Authority Receives WECI Funding to Support Local Projects

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has provided \$524,000 to support a number of projects in the St. Clair region. The funds were provided to the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) program.

- \$300,000 for shore protection at the Lambton Area Water Supply System
- \$150,000 for Phase IV of the Cathcart Erosion Control Protection Project
- \$74,000 for dam and channel repairs at the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway



### Ontario Community Environment Fund Provides \$20,000 for Water Quality Monitoring

Sustained monitoring of benthic communities and surface water is important to assess long-term changes in water quality. A better understanding of aquatic resources will provide watershed residents, and the general public with the information needed to protect, restore and conserve these natural resources within our watersheds.

Benthic Sampling – funding will support collection, identification, data management, data entry, analysis and reporting of benthic organisms sampled from 12 stations throughout the Sydenham watershed from July 2014 to June 2015.

Surface Water Chemistry – funding will support collection of surface water quality samples at 6 stations.

Communications and Outreach – Data collected as part of the surface water quality monitoring program are used in a variety of communications material. Media releases, board reports, watershed report cards, newsletters, SCRCAs website, annual report and other communication materials will highlight water quality education and monitoring. 2013 report cards are posted on SCRCAs website. The next round of watershed report cards will be published in 2018.



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# Reaching Out Into the Community



**Perch Creek Reptile Species at Risk and Aquatic Indicators Program** - On October 7th, 2014 grade ten students enrolled in the Environmental Resource Management course at the St. Clair Secondary School in Sarnia, ON were introduced to reptile species at risk of Ontario and watershed management techniques at the Perch Creek Habitat Management Area. Staff from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority educated students on identification, biology, and the environmental significance of reptiles in Ontario, and how to determine the health of a watershed. Students were given a guided hike to Perch Creek where they collected aquatic bugs, assessed stream features, viewed fish captured from minnow traps, and obtained water quality data. Grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund have been a great assistance to making programs like these possible.

## **Lambton Shores Tree Planting Day**

The Forest Lagoons continued to be transformed with the planting of 40 trees on October 8. The Conservation Authority, CH2M Hill, Lambton Shores Communities in Bloom, Lambton Shores Nature Trails Committee and TD Friends of the Environment have partnered together to create better habitat at the lagoons for migrating birds and for wildlife using the area.



**Lambton County Heritage Forest - Reptile and Amphibian Survey** - With funding from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Species at Risk Stewardship Fund grant and the assistance of the MNR's Junior Rangers, staff from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority conducted a reptile and amphibian inventory in areas of the Lambton County Heritage Forest. Participants were eager to locate reptiles and amphibians, and learn about each species.



**Kettle and Stony Point Aquatic Sampling Demonstration** - Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, staff from the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority were able to demonstrate a fish survey and aquatic sampling to members of the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

## Foundation Supports Conservation Work

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation raises funds to support the work of the Conservation Authority. At a recent meeting, the Foundation approved support for a number of projects.

- \$10,000 for accessible picnic tables
- \$8,000 for support for land management staff
- \$7,500 to finance an intern position
- \$5,000 for trails at Conservation Areas
- \$5,000 to support the 3D mapping project
- \$5,000 to support water quality monitoring



*Accessible picnic table at the Strathroy Conservation Area donated by Bonduelle Foods, Strathroy*

We thank the Foundation for all its efforts to support conservation initiatives in our region. They have made our Conservation Areas better, helped to bring conservation education to thousands of students, improved the health of our watershed by supporting tree planting and species at risk research, provided thousands of dollars for conservation scholarships and helped improve our technical capabilities by supporting new mapping tools. The Foundation has had 16 property donations totalling 455 hectares - protecting these areas for future generations.

## Memorial Forest Dedications Held

Two memorial forest dedications were held in the month of September. The McKenzie and Blundy Memorial Forest Dedication was held on September 21 at the Wawanosh Wetlands Conservation Area and the Foundation's Memorial Forest Dedication was held on September 28 at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area. About 700 people attended.

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation launched the memorial forest program in 1987 with the purpose of raising funds to reforest lands within our region. To date, 13,405 trees have been dedicated at 45 sites throughout our region.

Through the program, the Foundation arranges for the dedication of trees which have been planted from donations received directly from members of the community. In addition to these trees, the Foundation receives donations from the McKenzie and Blundy Funeral Home, Sarnia; Eric F. Nicholls Funeral Home, Wallaceburg; and the Denning Brothers Funeral Home, Strathroy.



## Conservation Work on McKeough Upstream Lands

Work is continuing to enhance agricultural lands owned by the Conservation Authority upstream of the McKeough Floodway. Over the last two years 11 acres of buffers have been planted and 2 wetlands totalling 14 acres were created on marginal lands. Two erosion control projects were completed to reduce the amount of sediment entering the north branch of the Sydenham River.

### Next Conservation Authority Board Meeting

Thursday, November 13 10:00 a.m.

### 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](mailto:stclair@scrca.on.ca)

Website: [www.scrca.on.ca](http://www.scrca.on.ca)

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