

# Conservation Update

## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

October 2016

### Authority Receives Award

The Authority was proud to receive the Strathroy District Chamber of Commerce TD Bank Group Environmental Awareness Award. The Award was presented by Patty Hodgins, Branch Manager for the Strathroy Branch of TD Canada Trust at the Chamber's award night held on October 20.



*Brian McDougall, General Manager and Steve Arnold, Chair of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority were on hand to accept the Environmental Awareness Award from the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce.*

### 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 for 2017.

- \$7,000 for trails at Conservation Areas
- \$8,000 to finance a summer Conservation Intern position
- \$5,000 to support a 3D mapping project
- \$10,000 to support the Watershed Report Card
- \$50,000 to support Conservation Education



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### Fish Barrier Removed

The Conservation Authority removed a barrier on Bear Creek that was impeding the movement of fish upstream. The project, which was done with the cooperation of the landowner, became quite a challenge when rare mussels were discovered. After receiving a permit from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, over 300 mussels, including 69 of the rare maple leaf mussel, were found and relocated upstream to a suitable area.

Following the relocation, the barrier was removed and a riffle was constructed by placing rock across the river, creating improved invertebrate habitat and improved oxygen levels in the water downstream.

This project was funded by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program, Friends of the St. Clair River (using Ontario Trillium Foundation funds), Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), MNRF Youth Rangers, and the federal Habitat Stewardship Program.



*Following the removal of a barrier that was blocking fish movement, rocks were used to create a riffle that improves the habitat of the river.*



*"working together for a healthy environment"*

## Baby Softshells Released

About 80 eastern spiny softshell turtle hatchlings were released into the wild this summer. Biologists have noted an absence of young turtles in the Sydenham River as nests for this secretive species are often subject to predation by raccoons. It is hoped that efforts such as this will provide opportunities for this species to maintain its population while stewardship projects to enhance habitat are undertaken.



## Healthy Sydenham Headwaters

The SCRCA continues to encourage conservation and restoration efforts in the headwaters of the Sydenham River. Staff continue to meet with landowners seeking to implement stewardship projects such as this newly constructed wetland in Strathroy. The wetland will reduce overland flow and serve as a sink for nutrient runoff from nearby farm fields. Funding for this project came from Ducks Unlimited Canada; Middlesex Stewardship Council; Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (Aquatic Species at Risk); Wildlife Habitat Canada; and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Species at Risk Program.



## Aquatic Education Day in Port Lambton

One-Hundred and Sixty students ranging from kindergarten to grade 8 attended our River Day in the St. Clair River Area of Concern. The children had the opportunity to visit different stations where they learned about various topics relating to the water cycle, wetlands and the Great Lakes. Two members of the biology department demonstrated how they perform fish surveys and taught the children about the animals that live in our watercourses. The river day was held by the Conservation Authority with funds received from an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant secured through a partnership with the Friends of St. Clair River.



### Next Conservation Authority Board Meeting

Thursday, November 10, 10:00 a.m.

### St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

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