

# Conservation Update

October 2019

## Autumn Tree Seed Collection

It's been another great year of tree seed collection in the St. Clair Region! Each year, our Conservation Services staff collect seeds from native trees throughout the watershed. The seeds are planted to grow trees for future afforestation projects in our region and ensure the trees produced are genetically adapted to our local growing conditions.

The 2019 program saw the collection of over 2,700 litres of seed from 8 different native tree species in the watershed!



There are numerous methods of seed collection utilized which are dependent on tree species. Pictured left – a method of seed collection where the tree is shaken and seeds captured using a mesh tarp. Pictured right – a Black Maple key.



Erosion along the reservoir at Warwick Conservation Area

## Warwick Reservoir Shoreline Naturalization

Two hundred metres of shoreline will be naturalized at Warwick Conservation Area thanks to funding provided by Lambton Wildlife Inc. Native vegetation will be planted along the reservoir shoreline to reduce erosion and improve wildlife habitat. In addition, a new pollinator garden will be established to attract and support local pollinator species such as bees and butterflies.



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## Wetland Project Gets Boost from Local Insurance Company

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) wishes to thank Trillium Mutual Insurance who have donated \$3,800 towards the Bridgeview Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project. This donation will support the creation of wetland at Bridgeview Conservation Area in Petrolia along with the removal of hazard trees and the planting of a pollinator garden.

The project is also being funded by the Town of Petrolia and through grants administered by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Habitat Stewardship Program), Environment and Climate Change Canada (Canada Nature Fund) and Wildlife Habitat Canada.



Christine Fizell of Trillium Mutual Insurance presents Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas at the SCRCA with a \$3,800 cheque towards the Bridgeview Conservation Area project.



## Wildlife Habitat Canada Supports Wetland Projects

In addition to contributing to the Bridgeview Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project in Petrolia, Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) funding is slated to support wetland projects on four properties in the St. Clair Region. In total, 4.8 hectares (11.8 acres) of active or marginal farmland is being retired to improve wetland coverage in our watershed. If you are interested in wetland enhancement or creation, please contact Jessica Van Zwol, SCRCA Healthy Watersheds Specialist at [jvanzwol@scrca.on.ca](mailto:jvanzwol@scrca.on.ca) or 519-245-3710 (Ext. 241) for project assistance including information on available grants.

In addition to improving local water quality, wetlands also provide shelter, resting, and feeding habitat for migrating waterfowl and other wildlife.

Wildlife Habitat Canada is a non-profit, conservation organization that protects habitat, primarily by investing funds from the sale of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp and Print program, contributed by waterfowl hunters. Since 1985, WHC has provided over \$50 million in grants to more than 1,500 habitat conservation projects across Canada, which have helped safeguard important ecosystems and countless wild species. To learn more please visit [www.whc.org](http://www.whc.org).



## Enbridge Supports Safety Upgrades at Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area



Enbridge has generously donated \$5,000 towards safety upgrades at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area that will benefit conservation education students, campers and day-use visitors. The donation supported the construction of a pond-edge boardwalk (pictured below), a dedicated roadside walkway and a trail stabilizing retaining wall.

"We are very grateful to Enbridge and their continued support of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority," said Joe Faas, chair of the SCRCA. "These improvements will not only benefit the safety of our students and visitors, but also the educational and camping experiences they are coming here to enjoy."



The Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area is located west of Petrolia. It is home to the SCRCA Education Centre which welcomes over 10,000 students a year. The adjacent campground consists of over 150 sites that can accommodate both seasonal and overnight camping.

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## 2019-2020 Conservation Education Programs

Calling all teachers! Our conservation education programs are back for the 2019-2020 school year! The SCRCA offers over 25 hands-on, curriculum based programs for both elementary and secondary school students. Of particular interest for 2019-2020 is the revival of the popular "Oh Christmas Tree" program and the new "Healing Hikes" program for elementary school-aged children. New for secondary schools this year is the "Sector Specific Sustainability Practices for Agriculture" Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) certification and the new "Phosphorus 101" program. Both indoor and outdoor programs are available.

For more information on conservation education programs and how to book, visit [www.scrca.on.ca/conservation-education](http://www.scrca.on.ca/conservation-education) or contact Sharon Nethercott ([snethercott@scrca.on.ca](mailto:snethercott@scrca.on.ca)) or Melissa Levi ([mlevi@scrca.on.ca](mailto:mlevi@scrca.on.ca)) at (519) 882-2399.



A number of programs are offered free-of-charge thanks to generous donations from businesses and organizations. More information regarding these programs is available online.

## Memorial Forest Dedications

### Denning's Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest Dedication

The 3rd annual Denning's Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest dedication was held on Sunday, September 15th at the Keith McLean Conservation Lands. Tree planting and conservation education are supported through donations made to the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation in recognition of families served by the Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Denning Funeral Home branches.

Approximately 95 people attended the service. Duncan Skinner brought remarks on behalf of the Foundation. A red oak tree was planted as a symbol of the trees that will be planted through the Authority's forestry programs and all the children that will take part in conservation education programs.



### Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication was held on Sunday, September 22nd at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area in Petrolia, Ontario. Duncan Skinner and Joe Faas provided remarks on behalf of the Foundation and Authority, respectively. Seventy people attended the dedication where a ceremonial tulip tree was planted as a symbol of all the trees that will be planted through the Foundation. From September 2018 to August 2019, 47 trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program. To date, a total of 2,142 trees have been dedicated through the Foundation's Memorial Forest Program.



Duncan Skinner, Foundation President, provides remarks at the Denning's Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest Dedication at the Keith McLean Conservation Lands.

## Phragmites Removal at Peers Wetland

The Sydenham Field Naturalists community group teamed up with SCRCA staff to remove Phragmites from Peers Wetland.

Phragmites is an invasive grass considered one of the most aggressive invasive species impacting wetland ecosystems in North America. Growing as tall as 5 metres in height, the grass forms large, dense stands that impact biodiversity, reduce recreational opportunities and alter local drainage. Over the years, a significant stand of Phragmites has established at Peers Wetland located in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

On Saturday, September 7, 2019, over 15 volunteers from the Sydenham Field Naturalists spent an entire day cutting Phragmites from a large section of the wetland. Plants were drowned by cutting the shoots below the water level. Seed heads were collected and bagged for incineration. The SCRCA hopes to maintain this partnership with the Sydenham Field Naturalists and continue the fight against the encroachment of this invasive species into our natural spaces.



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## Mark Your Calendars!

Stay tuned for two events the SCRCA will host in the coming months:

**November 2019** – Wetland Workshop, Alvinston, Ontario

**February 2020** – Soil Health Conference, Chatham, Ontario

More details regarding dates and times will be available shortly.

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PC - Sharon Nethercott

### Next Conservation Authority Board Meeting

Thursday, November 14, 2019 10:00 am

### St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

205 Mill Pond Crescent Strathroy, ON N7G 3P9

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