

Memorial Forest Dedication Services

St. Marys & Area Memorial Forest

On September 25th, Wildwood Conservation Area hosted the annual dedication service for the St. Marys & Area Memorial Forest. The forest is a lasting tribute to loved ones and helps to improve our environment.



Family members place mulch around the tree planted for the dedication service at Wildwood.

Memorial trees are planted each spring and a dedication service is held at Wildwood in September. Everyone who purchased trees that were planted the previous spring is invited to attend. This year, 11 families participated in the dedication service.

The St. Marys and Area Memorial Forest began in 2010 as a partnership between the UTRCA, St. Marys Ministerial Association and

local funeral homes. The forest is located on a 19 acre parcel of land near Wildwood CA, at the southeast corner of Line 16 and Line 9 in Perth Township.

Contact: Paul Switzer, Assistant Superintendent, Wildwood Conservation Area

City of Woodstock Memorial Forest

Close to 200 people attended the Woodstock Memorial Forest dedication service in Pittock Conservation Area on Sunday, October 2nd, despite the cool and rainy weather. Thanks go to Pittock staff for preparing the site, and to Woodstock Councillor Jim Northcott for representing the UTRCA.

To date, over 4200 trees have been planted through this program. The UTRCA is appreciative of the partnership between the City of Woodstock and Brock and Visser Funeral Home Burial and Cremation Services Ltd. (formerly known as R.D. Longworth Funeral Home). John Brock and Greg Visser officially changed the name after seven years of ownership of the funeral home, and both men and their families are very familiar with Pittock CA, being regular campers and living and working in Woodstock.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resource Specialist



Pittock's Jack MacMullin prepares the tree planted for the dedication service at Pittock.

Job Creation Partnership Program

The UTRCA has been fortunate to receive funding approval from Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) for the Ontario Job Creation Partnerships Program (JCP).

JCP is an employment program that provides work experience to unemployed people with projects that benefit the community or local economy. The UTRCA has participated in this program for several years, allowing many projects to be completed throughout the watershed that wouldn't have been possible without the valuable assistance of JCP employees.

Approval was received from MTCU for seven JCP positions for 2012. These positions start January 9th, 2012 and will last for 26 weeks.

The approved positions include: Trails and Forestry Assistant, Endangered Wildlife Technician, Conservation Trails Assistant, Maintenance Monitoring Technician, Forest Ecology Technician, Fleet and Facilities Inventory Management Technician and Environmental Planning Information Clerk.

Contact: Mary Sloan, Human Resources Assistant

Citibank Helps Beautify Boler

With a short reprieve in the rainy weather, 30 energetic Citibank employees and their families planted 100 white spruce trees on the new Boler Mountain Ski Hill on Saturday, October 22nd.



Citibank employees and their families planted 100 young spruce trees.

Citibank has participated in the last seven years in environmental projects as part of their global community day. While their numbers have been decreasing due to changes within the banking world, their impact has not lessened.

Staff at Boler Mountain asked the UTRCA for technical assistance in developing a long term tree planting plan on their new hill (10 years in the making), slated for a grand opening on December 31st. Citibank was looking to UTRCA for a meaningful environmental project. The three groups worked hard together, had a good time and Boler Mountain is now 100 trees greener. These trees will help to prevent soil erosion, provide wind protection and create habitat on the hill. This is one of the more challenging sites for the UTRCA's Communities for Nature program.

The UTRCA is also submitting a funding proposal to TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for assistance with future planting. The new hill is double the height of the existing ski hills, and will accommodate twice the number of participants.
Contact: Karen Pugh, Resource Specialist



Golder Associates employees and their families planted 105 native trees and shrubs.

Bringing Green to a Former Brownfield

Golder Associates and the UTRCA teamed up to plant 105 native trees and shrubs at London's newest soccer facility, the BMO Centre, on Saturday, October 29th. The engineering firm worked with the City of London to establish this top notch sports building on a former brownfield.

Fifty employees and their families planted on a berm that is being naturalized and will be a visual and sound barrier, as well as an attractive addition to the neighbourhood on Rectory Street. The next time you are on a Via Rail train, check it out as the berm is adjacent to the tracks.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resource Specialist

Fall Community Forestry

While September and October saw special interest groups planting potted trees, November is the time for the school group planting projects. This stock is bare root, coming from our wholesale nursery suppliers.

Planting started Tuesday, November 1st and is slated to finish November 10th. Projects are taking place in Ilderton, Beachville, St. Marys, London and in the Oxbow Creek and Stoney Creek watersheds.

Through this program, the UTRCA will connect with 1050 students and 400 community members. Thanks to funding from the RBC Bluewater Program, EcoAction, Clean Water Program, Golder Associates, Citibank and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, 3360 new native trees and shrubs are getting established this fall.

Contact: Karen Pugh, Resource Specialist



Students jostle for position at the start of the Lucas Secondary School cross country run.

It's Cross Country Season at Fanshawe

While the changing leaves draw many people out to Fanshawe Conservation Area for excellent fall colour viewing, this time of year also draws people out for another reason. Over the years, Fanshawe has become a popular location for hosting fall cross country races.

One of the largest races hosted at Fanshawe is the Thames Valley District School Board's finals in October. With the assistance of FCA staff, between 2000 and 2500 cars full of spectators are directed on and off the property.

Another popular October run is the annual Vulture Bait Run. Participants for this weekend race literally run among the fall colours as they compete in the 25 km and 50 km races that take them on one or two laps around the Fanshawe Lake Trail.

In September as the leaves are just starting to turn, Fanshawe College uses the conservation area for its annual invitational run, and has even hosted the Provincial College Finals on site. Also in September, Lucas Secondary School takes over the day use area for its annual invitational run, which continues to grow in popularity and numbers.

The park is also hosting a new run in late October. This event will see members of the London Legion Track and Field Club facilitate the MTA Cross Country Run.

The races usually begin and end in the day use area, making use of the various pavilions located there and the vast open green space to accommodate numbers. Routes vary according to the ages and abilities of the runners, with most routes winding through the various trails, plantations and meadows.

Contact: Damian Schofield, Assistant Superintendent, Fanshawe Conservation Area

SWMTalk

The UTRCA's Environmental Engineer, Imtiaz Shah, Ph.D., P.Eng., was invited to speak at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus on October 19th. Imtiaz delivered a lecture on stormwater management (SWM) issues including SWM best management practices and low impact development.

The presentation incorporated a variety of points, such as:

- The watershed and the importance of the watershed system
- The impacts of various land uses on the quantity and quality of storm runoff
- The dynamics of elements of the watershed such as wetlands, reservoirs and land cover

Imtiaz also discussed the UTRCA's role as a watershed-based resource management agency with a mandate that includes responsibilities in the land use planning and development process.

Contact: Imtiaz Shah, Environmental Engineer

Species of the Month: The Lowly Minnow

Minnows, or Family Cyprinidae, as they are known scientifically, are actually a very diverse and ecologically important group. Their numbers include shiner, chub and dace species, and even the introduced Common Carp and Goldfish are members of the minnow family.



From top to bottom: Silver Shiner, Northern Redbelly Dace, Bluntnose Minnow and Central Stoneroller are four of the 24 minnow species found in the Upper Thames River watershed.

Minnows have no spines in their fins (for the most part) and no teeth in their mouths, although they do have teeth in their throats. Most are relatively small. They are fairly abundant with at least a few species adapted to all of the aquatic habitats found in our area. As such they are an essential and important component of the food chain.

Sampling by UTRCA staff and others in the Upper Thames area has provided close to 12,000 occurrence records for the 75 fish species found here. Of those, over 5,000 are records for 24 species of minnows, which represents 60% of the minnow species found provincially. Species that are abundant and widely distributed include Blacknose Dace, Bluntnose Minnow, Central Stoneroller, Common and Striped Shiner and Creek Chub. Other species have more selective habitat requirements and only occur locally and in smaller numbers. These include Northern Redbelly and Pearl Dace, Brassy Minnow, and Blacknose, Golden, Redfin and Silver Shiners. Silver Shiner is designated a Species at Risk both federally (Threatened) and provincially (Special Concern).

As well as their ecological significance, minnows have some importance economically as a baitfish. Baitfish dealers from as far away as the Lake Simcoe area travel to the Thames to take advantage of the abundant minnow supply. If collected legally, many species also make attractive and interesting aquarium fish.

Contact: John Schwindt, Aquatic Biologist

You're Invited!

The Friends of Oxbow Creek and UTRCA are hosting an open house and community meeting for the Oxbow Watershed on Tuesday, November 22, at the Ilderton Community Centre.

Presentations and displays will include:

- The Friends of Oxbow Creek - Projects and Activities since 2003
- Health Check: The Oxbow Watershed's Streams & Forests
- A Local Perspective on Climate Change

Partners in the project include interested community members, the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, West Haven Golf and Country Club and the UTRCA.

Contact: Julie Welker, Community Partnership Specialist

On the Agenda

The following items will be presented at the UTRCA Board of Directors meeting on November 28th, 2011. Board meeting minutes are posted at www.thamesriver.on.ca; click on "Downloads."

- Administration and Enforcement - Section 28
- Pittock Area Lands Management Study - Surplus Land
- Conservation Area 2012 Admission Fee Schedule
- Watershed Conservation Centre Update
- EcoPark Fact Sheet

Contact: Susan Shivas, Executive Assistant