

UPPER THAMES RIVER

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

April 13, 2017

NOTICE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY, April 25, 2017

TIME: 9:30 A.M. – 11:15 A.M.

LOCATION: WATERSHED CONSERVATION CENTRE
BOARDROOM

AGENDA:


TIME
9:30am

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
3. Confirmation of Payment as Required Through Statutory Obligations
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:
Tuesday March 28, 2016
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Business for Approval
 - (a) Request for Capital 2017 – deferred from March (J.Howley)(Doc: CA # 3282)
(Report attached)(20 minutes)
 - (b) Request of Use of Capital Maintenance Reserve for Microscope (C.Harrington)(Doc: FIN# 638)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)
 - (c) Appointment of Brent Verscheure as Officer Pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act (T.Annett)(Doc: ENVP #4534)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)
7. Business for Information
 - (a) Administration and Enforcement - Section 28 (M.Snowsell/K.Winfield) (Doc: ENVP #4535)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)

9:35am

10:05am

8. Closed Session – In Camera 10:10am
(a) A property matter relating to Glengowan
(I.Wilcox)(Doc: #116995)
(Report attached)(60 minutes)
9. April FYI 11:10am
10. Other Business (Including Chair and General
Manager's Comments)
11. Adjournment 11:15am


Ian Wilcox, General Manager

c.c. Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

I.Wilcox	T.Hollingsworth	J.Howley	C.Ramsey	S. Musclow
C.Saracino	A.Shivas	C.Tasker	B.Mackie	P. Switzer
G.Inglis	B.Glasman	M.Snowsell	K.Winfield	B. Verscheure
T.Annett	M.Viglianti	C.Harrington	D.Charles	S. Dunlop

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017

Members Present:	M.Blackie M.Blosh R.Chowen T.Jackson S.Levin N.Manning	S.McCall-Hanlon A.Murray M.Ryan J.Salter G.Way B. Petrie
Regrets:	A.Hopkins T.Birch	H.McDermid
Solicitor:	G.Inglis	
Staff:	T.Annett C.Harrington J.Howley B.Mackie C.Saracino A.Shivas	M.Snowsall C.Tasker B.Verscheure M.Viglianti I.Wilcox K.Winfield

Regarding the recent passing of Board Member Anna Hopkins' husband, M.Viglianti informed the Board that a donation to the Brain Tumor Society of Canada was made in memory of Bill Hopkins, a condolence was left on the website, and a card will be circulated and sent to Anna.

1. Approval of Agenda

B.Petrie moved – G.Way seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors
approve the agenda as posted on the Members' web-site.”

CARRIED.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair inquired whether the members had any conflicts of interest to declare relating to the agenda. There were none.

3. Confirmation of Payment as Required Through Statutory Obligations

The Chair inquired whether the Authority has met its statutory obligations in the payment of the Accounts Payable. The members were advised the Authority has met its statutory obligations.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
March 28, 2017

S.McCall-Hanlon moved – S.Levin seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors’ minutes dated March 28, 2017 as posted on the Members’ web-site.”

CARRIED.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes
There was no business arising.

6. Business for Approval

(a) Request for Capital 2017 – deferred from March
(Report attached)

J.Howley contacted the EARTH Corporation as suggested at the March meeting. They recommended that project scoping and critical needs be identified before entering into any RFP process considering the potential size of this project.

S.Levin moved – B.Petrie seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the recommendation be amended to read ‘The Board of Directors approve the use of up to \$25,000 of the Capital Maintenance Reserve for the Campground Electrical Infrastructure Improvement project.’”

CARRIED.

S.Levin moved – A. Murray seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendations as amended.”

CARRIED.

(b) Request of Use of Capital Maintenance Reserve for Microscope
(Report attached)

The existing microscope will be kept as a spare. It was clarified that the Capital maintenance reserve was originally created for the upkeep and repairs to the old building, hence the name. It is now used as a general capital fund, but all requests must be brought to the Board for approval. This type of purchase is the intended use of this capital fund.

The cost of sending the benthic samples to an outside lab for analysis was discussed. There was a request for a tour of the Wet Lab when the Microscope arrives.

S.Levin moved – M.Ryan seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.”

CARRIED.

- (c) Appointment of Brent Verscheure as Officer Pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act
(Report attached)

T.Annett introduced Brent Verscheure to the Board. Brent will assume the role of Regulations Officer beginning May 10th.

M.Ryan moved – B.Petrie seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.”

CARRIED.

7. Business for Information

- (a) Administration and Enforcement – Section 28
(Report attached)

S.Levin moved – B.Petrie seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors accept the report as presented.”

CARRIED.

8. Closed Session – In Camera

There being a property matter to discuss,

T.Jackson moved – M.Ryan seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors adjourn to
Closed Session – In Camera.”

CARRIED.

Progress Reported

- (a) Property Matter Relating to Glengowan
(Report attached)

T.Jackson moved – S.Levin seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the
recomendations as presented in the Closed Session report.”

CARRIED.

S.Levin moved – B.Petrie seconded:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve
the Closed Session minutes dated March 28, 2017 as posted on
the Members’ web-site.”

CARRIED.

9. April FYI

The attached report was presented to the members for their information.

10. Other Business

The Members were given the opportunity to participate in a voluntary and confidential Diversity Survey sent by the City of London.

There was a discussion around water safety in light of the high water levels and fast flowing water in the River.

The Chair thanked the Board members who have attended various UTRCA functions on behalf of the Board in the last few weeks.

I.Wilcox and M.Blackie attended the Conservation Ontario AGM. There was no new information regarding the Gilmore case or the Conservation Authorities Act review.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:20am on a motion by B.Petrie.



Ian Wilcox
General Manager
Att.

M.Blackie, Authority Chair

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Jennifer Howley, Manager, Conservation Areas
Date: April 5, 2017 **Agenda #:** 6 (a)
Subject: Request for use of Capital Maintenance Reserve – deferred from March **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
RCA_PO.CAs:3282.1

Recommendation:

The Board of Directors approve the use of \$25,000 of the Capital Maintenance Reserve for the Campground Electrical Infrastructure Improvement Project.

Follow up from March 2017 Board of Directors Meeting

When staff presented this report in March, it was suggested that we should eliminate project scoping and move directly to the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage. With the deferral of the Board's decision, staff took the opportunity to review the project process and scale:

- Inventory the UTRCA's electrical infrastructure, including poles, overhead lines, transformers, meters, underground services, etc.
- Evaluate the current condition of each element of the electrical infrastructure and identify priorities for repair, upgrade or replacement.
- Recommend green infrastructure options.
- Develop suggestions for dealing with an Order from the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) to discontinue the use of electrical extension cord hook ups for seasonal trailers
- Develop itemized costing for all recommendations.
- Create an implementation plan.

It was suggested that staff contact EARTH Corporation to discuss the project, due to that company's RFP experience regarding electrical contracting. During that conversation, it was agreed that a project of this size requires a multi-step approach with clear priorities.

In order to clarify and set the priorities, staff need to fully understand the basics of our current electrical systems. We do not have that expertise in house, nor do we have proper documentation of the actual infrastructure, which is needed in order to identify priorities.

Scoping the project provides several benefits:

- Better understanding of the current infrastructure;
- Ability to determine if the study objectives are feasible from a budget perspective;
- Improved understanding of future costs associated with the study objectives; and
- Ability to create an RFP with relevant information, including budget constraints, that would bring focus to the project.

Writing an RFP without proper focus or an estimated budget will lead to proposals being submitted that are too broad and too expensive. For the RFP process to be effective, we need to give consultants clear direction on what the end product should look like.

The remainder of this report is as presented at the March meeting, including the recommendation that was put forward by staff.

Background:

At the August 2005 Board of Directors meeting, the following guidelines were approved regarding the use of the capital maintenance levy for Authority projects:

Capital Maintenance Levy Guidelines:

- The capital maintenance levy will be used for priority Authority capital projects as identified by the Infrastructure Management Plan (or existing capital list until plan completion),
- The Board of Directors will approve all capital projects as a component of the UTRCA Budget at a Board of Directors meeting,
- Projects that support the broader Authority mandated programs are eligible for capital maintenance levy,
- The capital maintenance levy may be used exclusively or in combination with other funding sources to meet project costs,
- Staff wages are an eligible expense (design, tendering, project management, labour, motor pool).

Staff is recommending the following projects to be funded through the capital maintenance levy in 2017. The current balance of the capital maintenance reserve is \$363,813.

Campground Hydro Improvement Project

The UTRCA is part of the Continuous Safety Services Program (CSSP) offered by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA). This program supports businesses in Ontario in complying with the requirements of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code. As a member of the CSSP, ESA inspections are completed bi-annually in all three Conservation Areas (CAs).

During an inspection in 2015, it was brought to the attention of CA staff that there was a change in the Ontario Electrical Safety Code regarding the use of electrical cords for the purpose of bringing hydro to seasonal campsites. The change limits the distance from the pedestal to the RV unit, eliminating the use of extension cords for seasonal campsites. It is felt that an extension cord on a seasonal site could be subjected to severe physical abuse or extended periods of wear due to the fact it is being exposed for long periods of time, versus a transient camper on an overnight campsite. This change in code is applicable only to new construction of campsites; however the use of an extension cord for a seasonal campsite is viewed by the ESA as “permanent wiring” which violates another existing section of the code.

This view of not permitting the use of an extension cord for the purpose of connecting a seasonal trailer to the electrical service pedestal has major implications for the seasonal camping hydro infrastructure layout in all three CAs. A visual inspection completed by CA staff last summer identified that approximately 40% of our seasonal campers require the use of an extension cord to reach the hydro supply. This number does not include cords that may be buried in the ground that we cannot see; therefore, we expect that the usage is much higher than what we visually noted.

Staff see this issue as an opportunity to complete a full study of the electrical services and options to determine how to resolve the problem as well as consider longer term investment opportunities into infrastructure. The study objectives would include:

- Assess the current infrastructure status,
- Provide options and costs to correct the extension cord issue to ensure compliance with ESA requirements,
- Identify cost to upgrade all services that are currently 15 or 30 amp to a minimum of 50 amp,
- Suggest metering solutions that would encourage users to conserve electricity,
- Suggest “green” alternatives, if feasible, to improve the current infrastructure.

It is estimated that such a study for all three CAs would cost \$25,000 to complete. The final product would be a report for each CA including the above mentioned objectives as well as cost estimates for project management and construction follow up. The information gathered could be used to implement an electrical improvement management plan which would be part of the UTRCA Infrastructure Management Plan.

Although completing this task is costly, it examines a broad range of aspects of the infrastructure beyond just solving the problem identified by the ESA. This is an opportunity to explore improvements to our outdated

electrical infrastructure and in the long run, could improve visitation to our conservation areas by offering newer amenities, as well as considering “green alternatives”. Such an opportunity supports the “Target” for the Conservation Areas.

The ESA recognizes the magnitude of the issue and supports the suggested process. They also recognize taking on such a large project is costly. In the event that the Board of Directors does not approve the use of Capital Maintenance Reserve for this purpose, the ESA will continue to work with staff to correct the problem. This will involve breaking down the magnitude of extension cord issue and addressing sections of each of the campgrounds over a longer period of time. From a dollar perspective this may appear more palatable in the short term but could prove to be more costly in the long run. Staff feel that the opportunity would be missed to look the system as a whole.

The electrical infrastructure within our CAs is ageing and requires our seasonal campers to use extension cords that were not intended for this extended use period. RVs are larger now and require more electricity to power all the amenities with which they are equipped. Staff believe that, while we need to address the extension cord issue, this is an opportunity to look at the big picture and improve the electrical infrastructure with future needs in mind, as well as look for green alternatives.

Recommended and prepared by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer Howley".

Jennifer Howley
Manager, Conservation Areas

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Chris Harrington – Manager Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring
Date: April 6, 2017 **Agenda #:** 6 (b)
Subject: Request of Use of Capital Maintenance Reserve for Microscope **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
RCA_PO.Finances:200.1

Recommendation:

The Board of Directors approves the expenditure of \$14,332.72 (plus applicable taxes) from the Capital Maintenance Reserve to purchase a new Microscope as part of the UTRCA's Benthic Invertebrate Biomonitoring Program.

Background:

At the August 2005 Board of Directors meeting, the following guidelines were approved regarding the use of the capital maintenance levy for Authority projects:

Capital Maintenance Levy Guidelines:

- The capital maintenance levy will be used for priority Authority capital projects as identified by the Infrastructure Management Plan (or existing capital list until plan completion),
- The Board of Directors will approve all capital projects as a component of the UTRCA Budget at a Board of Directors meeting,
- Projects that support the broader Authority mandated programs are eligible for capital maintenance levy,
- The capital maintenance levy may be used exclusively or in combination with other funding sources to meet project costs,
- Staff wages are an eligible expense (design, tendering, project management, labour, motor pool).

Staff is recommending the following equipment purchase be funded through the capital maintenance levy in 2017. The current balance of the capital maintenance reserve is \$363,813.

Replacement Microscope:

Benthic invertebrates are organisms that live in or on the bottom sediments of rivers, streams, and lakes. The benthic invertebrate community is strongly affected by its environment, including sediment composition and quality, water quality, and hydrological factors that influence the physical habitat. Different types of benthic invertebrates tolerate different stream conditions and levels of pollution. Because the benthic community is so dependent on its surroundings, it serves as

a biological indicator that reflects the overall condition of the aquatic environment. Depending on the types of invertebrates found in a stream, accurate predictions about water quality can be made.

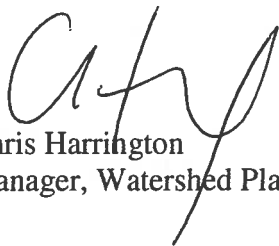
Benthic analysis has been a core component of the UTRCA water quality monitoring program since 1994. UTRCA staff collect samples from approximately 100 sites across the watershed annually. Sampling is conducted in the spring and fall with spring samples utilized for calculating Watershed Report Card scores. Moving forward benthic analysis will also be a core component of the monitoring plan for the water quality target within the UTRCA Environmental Targets Strategic Plan.

Since the UTRCA benthic program started the recommended provincial protocols for water quality assessment via benthic analysis have changed. Previously bug identification was only done to Order, which is a coarser level of identification. Current protocols require identification to a finer Family level. In some cases the ability to differentiate between two different Families of bugs within an Order relies on being able to see the differences between very small id features, such as mouthparts or antenna segments. This level of identification is not possible with our current microscope which has a magnification level of 40 times, the Provincial recommendation for this work is a minimum magnification level of 100 times.

In addition, the prolonged amount of time spent looking through a microscope to analyse samples, which will increase as the targets monitoring comes online, can result in musculo-skeletal injuries. The new microscope has an ergonomic head that will allow users to tilt the eyepieces of the microscope eliminating the need for the user to tilt their neck to look into the microscope. With proper use and maintenance it is anticipated that this microscope will have a working life of 20+ years. The microscope it will be replacing, from the same manufacturer, is 30+ years old and still functional.

The cost identified was determined in accordance with UTRCA Purchasing Policy with three written quotations obtained for the specified equipment and the lowest bid is identified here for this request.

Recommended by:



Chris Harrington
Manager, Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors

From: Tracy Annett, Manager
Environmental Planning & Regulations

Date: April 12, 2017 **Agenda #:** 6 (c)

Subject: Appointment of Brent Verscheure as Officer
Pursuant to Section 28 of the
Conservation Authorities Act **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
RCA_PO.ENVP:4534.1

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors designate Brent Verscheure as a Provincial Offences Act officer pursuant to Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* for the purpose of administering and enforcing the Ontario Regulation 157/06, Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation.

Background

With the approval of the 2017 UTRCA budget, funding was confirmed for the hiring of an additional Land Use Regulations Officer to assist with the administration and enforcement of Ontario Regulation 157/06. Brent Verscheure has been hired to fill the Land Use Regulations Officer position and will begin in this role on May 10th.

On September 2, 2009, the Board of Directors appointed Brent as a Provincial Offences Act Officer responsible for regulatory enforcement duties associated with Section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act (Trespass to Property Act)*. Prior to his previous appointment he had successfully completed the requirements to obtain his POA designation consistent with the *Protocol for Conservation Authority Designation of a Provincial Offences Officer* endorsed by Conservation Ontario, February 2010.

In Brent's new role, he will now be responsible to administer and enforce *Ontario Regulation 157/06, Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation* pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act. This designation will clarify that he is also able to administer Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act. Refer to the following excerpt from the Conservation Authorities Act:

Regulations by authority re area under its jurisdiction

28.(1) Subject to the approval of the Minister, an authority may make regulations applicable in the area under its jurisdiction,

(d) providing for the appointment of officers to enforce any regulation made under this section or section 29;

(e) providing for the appointment of persons to act as officers with all of the powers and duties of officers to enforce any regulation made under this section. 1998, c. 18, Sched. I, s. 12.

Prepared and Recommended by:



Tracy Annett, Manager
Environmental Planning & Regulations

To: Chair and Members of the UTRCA Board of Directors

From: Tracy Annett, Manager – Environmental Planning and Regulations

Date: April 12, 2017 **Agenda #:** 7 (a)

Subject: Administration and Enforcement – Sect. 28 Status Report – **Filename:** Document
Development, Interference of Wetlands and Alteration to ENVP 4535
Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation

This report is provided to the Board as a summary of staff activity related to the Conservation Authority's *Development, Interference of Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation* (Ont. Reg. 157/06 made pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act). The summary covers the period from March 16 to April 11, 2017.

Application #228/16

Thames Village Joint Venture Corp.

1691 Hamilton Road – City of London

- first phase of residential development by this applicant within Old Victoria Secondary Plan
- UTRCA required submission of satisfactory water balance and hydrogeology reports prior to permit issuance
- engineering drawings prepared by Eng Plus
- staff approved and permit issued March 27, 2017

Application #229/16 (AMENDMENT)

John Rose

35 St. George Street North – Town of St. Marys

- proposed amendment to previously approved new single family residence permit to accommodate removal of previously approved pool and south retaining walls and changes to the originally approved grading plans.
- plans prepared by MTE Consultants Inc, KS Consulting and Design and Witzel Dyce Engineering.
- staff approved and permit amendment issued April 4, 2017.

Application #15/17 (AMENDMENT)

Harry and Shelley DeGier c/o Cody DeGier

Part Lots 19 & 20, Concession 11 – Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

- proposed amendment to previously approved new dairy barn permit to include the relocation of a milk house, the removal of a second access driveway and extension of existing bunker silos.
- plans prepared by Stonecrest Engineering and landowner(s) in accordance with location and mitigation measures agreed to on site between landowner(s) and UTRCA staff.
- staff approved and permit amendment issued April 4, 2017.

Application #25/17

Distinctive Homes London Ltd.

222 Rathowen Street – City of London

- approval requested for construction of house addition in West London proposed Special Policy Area (SPA)
- engineering drawings prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued March 13, 2017

Application #26/17

City of London

Kiwanis Park – Trafalgar Street – City of London

- proposed expansion of City pathway system through Kiwanis Park, adjacent to Pottersburg Creek
- plans prepared following completion of municipal Class EA
- plans prepared by AECOM
- staff approved and permit issued March 27, 2017

Application #30/17

Ivy Homes Ltd.

102 Empress Avenue – City of London

- proposed construction of house addition within West London proposed SPA
- engineering drawings prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued March 13, 2017

Application #37/17

Distinctive Homes London Ltd.

184 Paul Street – City of London

- permit required for construction of house addition within West London proposed SPA
- engineering drawings prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued March 13, 2017

Application #38/17

Ivy Homes Ltd.

37 Empress Avenue – City of London

- proposed construction of house addition within West London proposed SPA
- engineering drawings prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued March 13, 2017

Application #39/17

Trevalli Homes Ltd.

Lot 2 (#263), Wedgewood Drive – City of Woodstock

- proposed single family residence and attached garage adjacent Sally Creek.
- site plans prepared by Van Harten Surveying Inc. in accordance with approved subdivision plan.
- staff approved and permit issued April 5, 2017.

Application #42/17

Scott Zehr

Part Lot 34, Concession 11 – Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

- proposed 4 acre wetland creation project (paired ponds and wetland/riparian buffer) adjacent the Thames River Improvement Drain.
- plans prepared by Ducks Unlimited Canada and are in accordance with design and details discussed on site between landowner and UTRCA (Conservation Services) staff.

-staff approved and permit issued March 30, 2017.

Application #46/17

Sam Karamoutzos

1747 Foxwood Avenue – City of London

- permit required for deck construction adjacent to Snake Creek/Heard Drain
- plans prepared by Marsh Katsios Architect
- staff approved and permit issued March 29, 2017

Application #47/17

MA Elite Properties Inc.

36 Blackfriars Street – City of London

- proposed house addition within West London proposed SPA
- plans prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued March 31, 2017

Application #48/17

Town of St. Marys

Emily Street, Glass Street – Town of St. Marys

- proposed reconstruction of approximately 1 km of Emily Street and a portion of Glass Street between Thamesview Crescent and the Grand Trunk Trail in the Town of St. Marys. Works will also involve replacement of watermain, sanitary sewer and sidewalks and introduction of storm sewers, curb and gutte.
- plans prepared by MTE Consultants Inc in accordance with Geotechnical Report prepared by exp Services Inc.
- staff approved and permit issued April 4, 2017.

Application #51/17

D'Wayne and Jillian Price

3592 Isaac Court – City of London

- proposed deck construction adjacent to Dingman Creek tributary
- located outside of flood and erosion hazards
- engineering drawings prepared by Santarelli Engineering Services
- staff approved and permit issued April 11, 2017

Application #52/17

CNC Homes Ltd.

145 Wilson Avenue – City of London

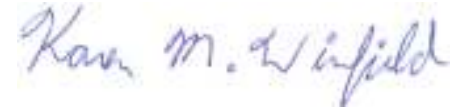
- approval requested for construction of house addition
- within West London proposed SPA
- engineering drawings prepared by D.C. Buck Engineering
- staff approved and permit issued April 11, 2017

Reviewed by:



Tracy Annett, MCIP, RPP, Manager
Environmental Planning and Regulations

Prepared by:



Karen Winfield
Land Use Regulations Officer



Mark Snowsell
Land Use Regulations Officer



Cari Ramsey
Env. Regulations Technician



The workshop is an excellent opportunity for landowners to talk with staff, look at displays and gather informational handouts.

St. Marys Rural Landowner Workshop

On March 21, the UTRCA hosted the annual Rural Landowner Workshop in St. Marys at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. This was the twentieth year that such a workshop has been held. These workshops started off as strictly tree planting workshops but, in recent years, the agenda has been diversified to appeal to a wider audience. Over the years, we have moved the workshop around the watershed to make it convenient for landowners. St. Marys has always attracted a very good crowd and this year was no exception, with over 100 landowners in attendance.

This year's audience was treated to five very informative presentations on the following topics:

- Characteristics of a Healthy Forest - UTRCA's Brenda Gallagher described the succession of a natural ecosystem and how a forest evolves over time.
- Sustainable Woodlot Management - UTRCA's Jay Ebel spoke on the importance of managing woodlots in a sustainable manner. Jay covered aspects such as County Woodlands Conservation By-laws, finding a logging contractor, logging methods and planning for your woodlot's future.
- Shifting our Focus to Soil Health - Tyler Vollmershausen farms with his father and grandfather near Innerkip. In 2016, Vollmershausen Farms was named the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association's "Soil Champion." Tyler spoke on how cover crops have improved their soil's health and productivity.

- Managing Runoff from Farm Buildings, Rooftops and Elevators - UTRCA's Alison Regehr spoke on how to manage rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces, through methods such as rainwater harvesting, enhanced swales, soakaway pits, infiltration trenches and rain gardens.
- Best Management Practices (BMP) Farm Video Series - UTRCA's John Enright introduced this topic. In 2016, the UTRCA worked with nine local farmers to create a series of short BMP videos. In these videos the farmers spoke about why they implemented their BMPs and their experiences in doing so. The BMPs include cover crops, windbreaks, buffer strips, fragile land retirement and erosion control structures. The videos are posted at <http://thamesriver.on.ca/landowner-grants-stewardship/farmland-bmps>

The evening workshop wrapped up around 9 pm with closing remarks and door prizes. Many in the audience stayed until almost 10 pm to discuss projects with the presenters. Stay tuned for next year's workshop, coming to a community near you!

Contact: John Enright, Forester

Let's Get Planting!

Spring is time for planting trees, and the UTRCA will plant more than 60,000 trees over the next few weeks. The conservation authority has planted an estimated 11 million trees over the past 70 years.

Contact: John Enright, Forester



The hand planting crew started at the beginning of April.



Paperwork time: new seasonal staff at the Fanshawe Conservation Area Orientation Day.

Opening Soon: A Conservation Area Near You!

Staff at Fanshawe, Pittock and Wildwood Conservation Areas (CAs) are taking advantage of the spring weather and getting ready for the parks to open for the season at 8 am on Friday, April 21. The past winter's lack of snow really helped staff get a head start on preparing for the camping and day use season. Preparations include hiring and training all the amazing seasonal staff who ensure we have a great season and our visitors enjoy themselves. The UTRCA employs more than 70 full time and seasonal staff in the three CAs.

As in the past, CA Unit staff organized an Orientation Day for each park, on April 7 (Fanshawe CA), April 13 (Wildwood CA) and April 24 (Pittock CA). The new Fanshawe CA seasonal staff enjoyed meeting their supervisors and coworkers, as well as learning about the park and the UTRCA. The day is also an opportunity to complete Human Resources paperwork, participate in the Health and Safety Orientation, meet the Workplace Health and Safety Committee representative, and begin job specific training.

UTRCA Directors are always welcome to attend the Orientation Days. Murray Blackie was in attendance at Fanshawe's and Nancy Manning and Marcus Ryan will be attending Wildwood's.

Contacts: Steven Musclow, Superintendent, Fanshawe CA;

Paul Switzer, Superintendent, Wildwood CA;

Brent Verscheure, Superintendent, Pittock CA

Grade 2 Students Learn about River Safety

Community Education staff were in schools across the watershed from late February to the end of March, delivering the River Safety program. This program is aimed at grade two students as research has shown they are at a vulnerable age for accidents near water. The program also ties in with the grade two science curriculum.

The program is timed to coincide with spring flooding and unpredictable river conditions. The students participate in four fun and interactive activities to build their understanding and



A student at Anne Hathaway School shows his classmates the watershed puzzlepiece he was given - a water mill - so they could figure out what it was and where it fit on the big puzzle to his left. (Photo credit: Galen Simmons, Stratford Beacon Herald)

knowledge of water safety. At the end of the program, they each receive a bookmark and an activity booklet as reminders on how to be safe near rivers, streams, and other bodies of water.

The many service and community groups throughout the watershed that sponsor the program enable us to deliver this in-class program free of charge. This year, staff visited nearly 100 classes, reaching more than 2000 students. Since the program began in 1998, more than 50,000 students have received the important river safety message. We wish to give a big thank you to all of the generous sponsors who continue to support the River Safety program, year after year.

Contact: Mia King, Community Education Technician



Aerial drone photo of the harvester removing every other tree within the windbreak.

Mature Windbreak Thinning Demonstration

Many windbreaks are approaching an age where thinning should be considered in order to maintain tree health and windbreak longevity. The UTRCA recently thinned two 30 year old, double row, Norway Spruce windbreaks at the Fraser Farm in Oxford County. Every other tree was removed from a single row within the windbreak, using a track harvester. This spacing was chosen to minimize stress on the remaining trees by avoiding potential wind damage or altering their environment too quickly. The

remaining trees will be monitored over the next few years to measure growth patterns and observe how the gaps (where trees were removed) fill in.

This thinning project was a first for the UTRCA and will serve as a pilot project to evaluate the logistics of thinning and financial options for landowners. Funding for this project was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs as part of the Canada-Ontario Agreement.

There are photos and a video of the project on the UTRCA's Flickr and YouTube channels.

Contact: Jay Ebel, Forestry Technician



Soil sampling equipment used in the Medway Creek Priority Subwatershed study.

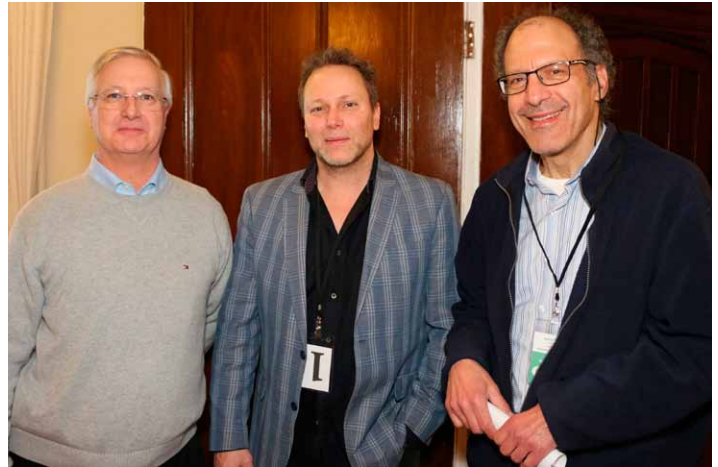
Soil Sampling at Medway Creek Farms

In fall 2016, soil samples were taken across farms in the Medway Creek Priority Subwatershed. Steve Redmond, Precision Ag Specialist with Hensall District Co-op, sampled approximately half of the fields in the study area.

The study aims to assess the impact of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) on phosphorus levels in the headwaters of Medway Creek. The soil sampling was undertaken to determine background phosphorus levels in the soils, which will help the UTRCA monitor future progress of BMPs in the watershed. This soil sampling will also help to identify target areas for reducing nutrient loads into the creek.

UTRCA staff and Steve Redmond conducted site visits with each landowner as a follow up to the fall sampling. These visits help build relationships, allow for data sharing and promote discussion on reducing nutrient losses from local farms.

Contact: Michael Funk, Agricultural Soil & Water Quality Technician



From the March 30 Urban League meeting about reducing Phosphorus in the Thames: Tom Copeland, Division Manager, Wastewater and Drainage Engineering, City of London; Wes Kinghorn, President, Urban League of London; Sandy Levin, Director, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (L to R).

Phosphorus Presentation

UTRCA Board Member Sandy Levin recently invited staff representatives to two Urban League of London meetings to discuss water quality in the Thames River and London's Pollution Prevention Control Plan. Mark Snowsell, UTRCA Land Use Regulations Officer, attended the first event, called "Pints & Politics," to talk about these topics with Urban League members in an informal setting.

The second event was the regular monthly meeting of the Urban League at Grosvenor Lodge. Steve Sauder, UTRCA Marketing Specialist, gave a presentation called "The Thames: Heritage River and Phosphorus Source," and Tom Copeland, City of London's Division Manager, Wastewater and Drainage Engineering, spoke about the City's Pollution Prevention Control Plan. The presentations were well received and members had many questions about the watershed from both rural and urban perspectives. Many thanks go to Sandy for organizing these sessions.

Contact: Steve Sauder, Marketing Specialist

Wildwood Outdoor School Expands for the 2016/17 School Year

Wildwood Outdoor School is in its second year, giving students the chance to experience and learn within the same natural setting multiple times throughout the school year.

UTRCA Community Education staff lead students on engaging and interactive hikes to various areas in Wildwood CA with curriculum-linked activities connected to the season, while using their "animal senses" to observe and explore their surroundings. The hikes encourage emergent and inquiry-based learning, such as students discovering animal tracks in the snow and using clues to determine what and why they were there. Students also make connections between nature and the classroom, such as when a Kindergarten class brought their recently acquired knowledge of patterns out into the "dark forest" (a spruce plantation) and created a pattern using spruce cones they had gathered.



Students getting up close and personal with Sycamore leaves.

This year, grade three students have been learning about differences over the season through observing a young tamarack tree. During a fall visit, the students learned to identify various trees. When the classes were brought to the yellow-needled tamarack, the students used their knowledge to determine if the tamarack was a coniferous or deciduous tree. When they visited the tamarack in the winter, the students noted that the needles had dropped, which is normal for a tamarack tree, but something unusual was also observed – some of the bark had been rubbed off. A quick investigation of the area found a clue: deer scat! This was an exciting example of a wildlife-plant interaction. During the spring visit, students will once again visit the tamarack to see how it has changed from the winter; hopefully, the tree has survived its injury!

In total, 22 classes are taking part in the Wildwood Outdoor School program, with more classes interested in participating for the 2017/18 school year. We hope that each visit holds surprise and wonder and also reminds students of earlier visits, awakening pleasant feelings and a curiosity for nature.

Contact: Mia King, Community Education Technician

Ontario Soil Network

On March 23-24, UTRCA staff participated in the Ontario Soil Network Leadership Course, which brought together farmers and extension staff from across southern Ontario. The goal was to increase leadership relating to soil health within the agricultural community. The two-day workshop was coordinated by the Rural Ontario Institute, with support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs,



Participants in the Ontario Soil Network Leadership Course.

The participants learned new leadership and communication skills from a variety of speakers, through group discussions, and from each other. Over the next 10 months, farmers and staff have been challenged to share their soil health stories by organizing and participating in different learning opportunities, such as farm tours and group meetings.

This network-based workshop helped build new partnership opportunities between farmers and extension staff to spread the message of soil health.

Contact: Tatianna Lozier, Agricultural Soil & Water Technician

On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be April 25, 2017. Agendas and approved board meeting minutes are posted at www.thamesriver.on.ca; click on "Publications."

- Request for Capital 2017 (Deferred from March 2017)
- Request of Use of Capital Maintenance Reserve for Microscope
- Appointment of Brent Verscheure as Officer Pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act
- Administration and Enforcement - Section 28
- Quarterly Financial Report

Contact: Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant



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