

*Working in partnership toward the greening of Chatham-Kent*



# SPRING EDITION

*The Greening Partnership is an agreement between The Municipality of Chatham-Kent, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) and St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRC), to green our municipality through tree plantings, tallgrass prairie, and wetland restoration.*

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## NATURAL HERITAGE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (NHIS)

*The purpose of this Implementation Strategy is to identify how the Municipality of Chatham-Kent will work with all sectors of the community to maintain and enhance the natural heritage system within the municipality and manage collectively, the greater ecological goods and services that are a benefit to all members of society.*

The Natural Heritage Implementation Strategy (NHIS) identifies 29 recommendations for conservation improvements throughout Chatham-Kent. One recommendation is the creation of a Natural Heritage Sustainability Committee. Jeff Bray, Manager of Parks, Horticulture and Cemeteries has assembled the Natural Heritage Sustainability Committee (which is different from the Sustainability Review Team identified in the Official Plan).

The Committee includes individuals from: Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA), St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRC), Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC), Great Lakes Community Eco Initiative, Kent Federation of Agriculture (KFA), Regenerative Agricultural Land Use Management (REALM), Sydenham Field Naturalists and the National Farmers Union.

The Committee will oversee the Greening Partnership staff, provide direction by identifying annual priorities, collect data and share the results with Chatham-Kent Council. By monitoring the tree loss and the rate of tree removal, they will be able to report to Council and determine whether additional measures need to be recommended for consideration. The Committee will also have the role of providing input to the Sustainability Review Team. This will keep them aware of changes on the landscape so they are able to make appropriate and educated decisions related to policy and municipal advancement.

The first meeting is set for the end of June. We are looking forward to having a focused group that will provide more direction and a stronger presence within Council.

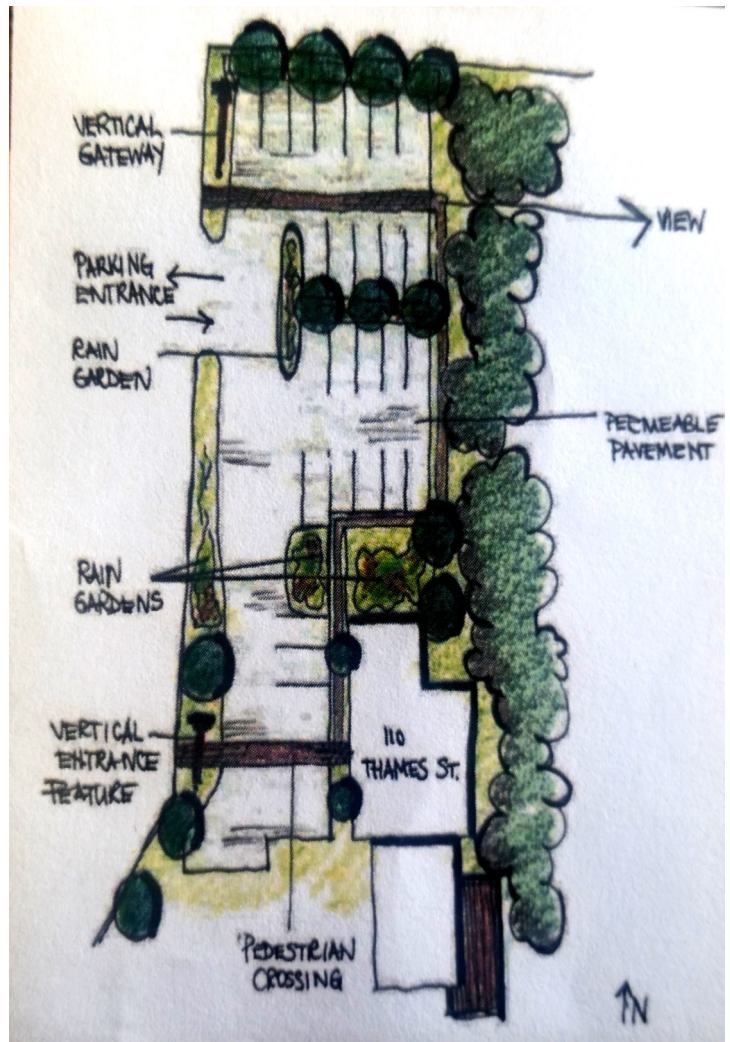
GRANTS

*Return on Investment: The Greening Partnership has a proven track record of providing roughly 3 dollars into restoration for every dollar invested by Chatham-Kent.*

Greening Partnership staff have recently received status updates from various grant applications. Many were approved for funding. The **RBC Blue Water Program** grant will provide \$75,000 for Low Impact Development (LID) on the brownfield lot adjacent to the LTVCA's Chatham office. The site will be converted into a permeable parking lot and demonstration rain garden.



Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup>, the big cheque was presented to Don Pearson, General Manager of LTVCA by the regional Vice President of RBC and the Chatham branch managers.



Conceptual Design of the Low Impact Development parking lot designed by Dillon Consulting.

The **National Wetland Conservation Fund** was approved to restore drained or lost wetlands and enhance the infrastructure and/or functionality of degraded wetlands. We have received \$84,500 and eight wetlands have been completed to date.



**Species at Risk (SAR) Fund** for the CK Municipal Drain Improvement Project – is providing \$41,000 for a one-year position to work alongside the Drainage Department. Drainage Superintendents will develop and implement projects on priority municipal drain systems. Focus will continue on establishing wetland and riparian vegetation to improve water quality and habitat for a variety of aquatic and terrestrial SAR in the area. This project will reduce pollution and siltation of important downstream areas such as the Thames River, Sydenham River and Rondeau Bay.



## IN THE COMMUNITY

*The Greening Partnership must be active in engaging the community in order for the NHIS to succeed.*



Thursday May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Amanda Paulin (seasonal Greening Partnership staff) with the new Merlin Conservation Area sign.

**CONSERVATION AREAS** – LTVCA will be updating the signage for conservation areas across the watershed! Staff put up the new Conservation Area sign at Merlin Conservation Area on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

**CHATHAM-KENT NONPROFIT NETWORK (CKNN) ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK** – We provided 200 seedlings, which were given to each attendee of the Rock Around the Clock event to take home and plant in their own yard.

**SCOUTS** – Scouts were active and planted 5000 trees on two properties on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. We applaud them for their hard work and dedication!



Scouts planting at Koopman property.

### CHATHAM- KENT GRAD TREES -

From Tuesday May 26<sup>th</sup> to Friday June 5<sup>th</sup>, a total of 12 trees were planted on campus or Municipal parks to commemorate Chatham-Kent's 2015 secondary and post-secondary graduating classes. Representatives from the Municipality's Community Development, the Public Health Unit, council and LTVCA were present. They met with staff and students, encouraging the graduates to remain connected to Chatham-Kent as they embark on the next phase in their lives. This project was funded through TD Canada Friends of the Environment.



**UNION GAS HELPING HANDS** – On Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, the volunteers of the Helping Hands Event at Thames Grove planted 1000 prairie plugs.



Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, Union Gas Helping Hands Volunteers.

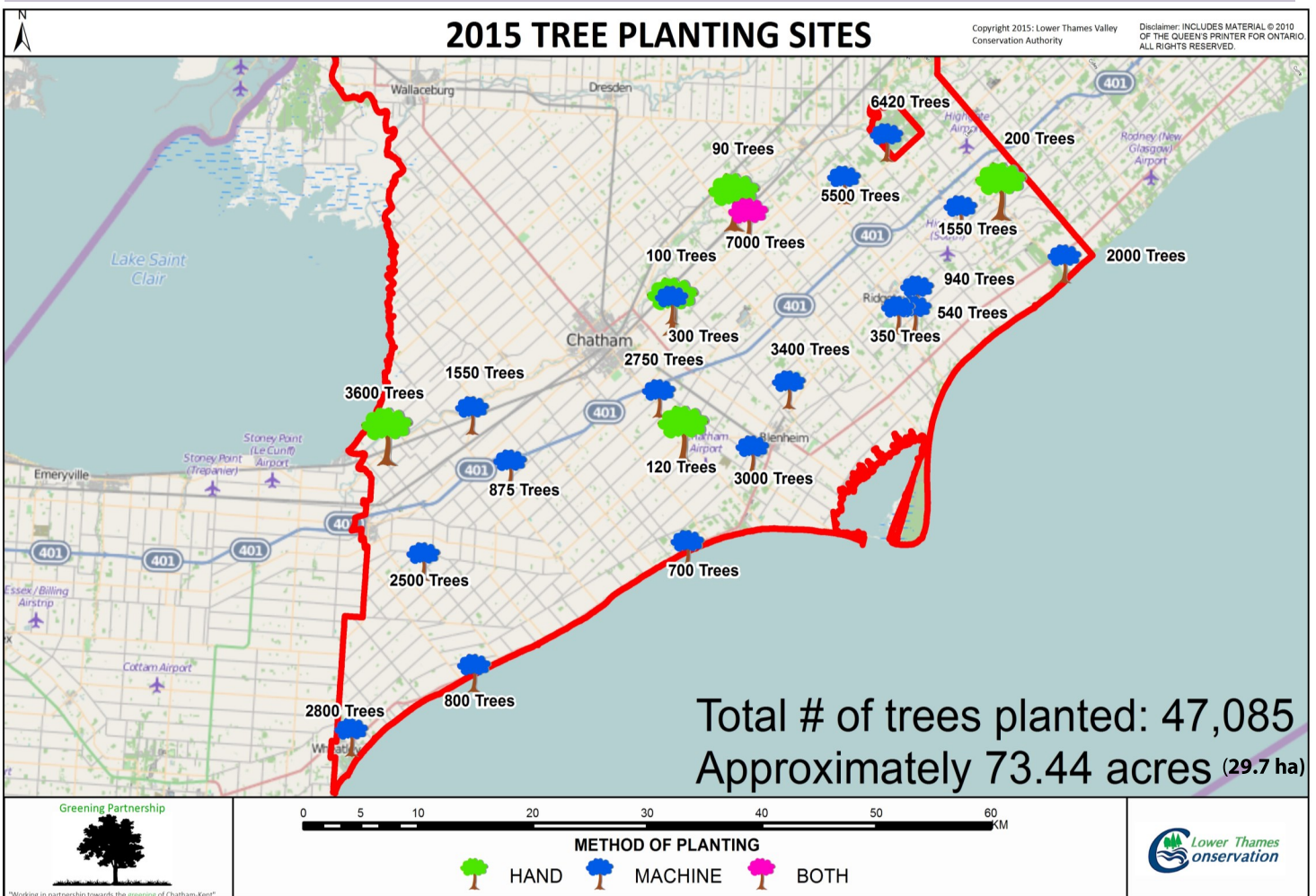


**UNION GAS EARTH DAY** – April 22<sup>nd</sup> Chatham Kent Secondary School’s Earth Club and Ursuline College Collegiate (UCC) along with Marcelo Villanueva from Union Gas helped plant trees and prairie plugs at the Grand Ave. Water Treatment Plant. Despite the cold weather, students worked hard to get the job done!



Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Earth Day Union Gas event: Marcelo Villanueva (left) and three UCC students (right) with the prairie plugs they were about to plant.

**PLANTING SITES**



In May, through rain and shine, the Greening Partnership Team were hard at work machine and hand planting roughly 47,000 of the 80,000 seedlings sold in Chatham-Kent. The planting season was a success, with the help of two seasonal staff, Paul Kominek and Amanda Paulin. We’re already counting down the days till next year’s planting season! If you are interested in a site visit or ordering trees for 2016 please contact us!



## KEY PARTNERS

*The Greening Partnership connects with partners for financial and technical support.*



**WETLAND PROJECT** – Wetlands represent one of the most important life support systems in the natural environment. They have beneficial systems that create a crucial habitat to promote biodiversity, act as a natural shoreline protection, provide areas that source water recharge and work as a reservoirs to control and reduce flooding. Eight additional wetland projects will be restored later in 2015. Partners of these projects include Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), Ducks Unlimited, National Wetland Conservation Fund (NWCF) and Great Lakes Guardian Fund. At Skakel Wetland, we planted 5500 trees thanks to Forests Ontario, Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Power Generation and Canada Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

**401 PLANTING** - This spring we contracted out the 401 planting job. A total of 10,000 seedlings were planted across five different priority sites. These species of seedlings include: Austrian Pine, Colorado Blue Spruce and Norway Spruce. They were selected as they are salt tolerant, work well for windbreaks and are fast growing. These trees also tolerate adverse soil conditions and air pollution.



John Skakel and his wetland. Trees and prairie were planted this spring.

**PRAIRIE** – Over 40 acres (16.2 ha) of tallgrass prairie restorations are complete. A subcontractor assisted the Land Stewardship Technician with the drill seeding of the sites. This funding was provided by CFIA. Tallgrass prairies and savannas have a diverse amount of grasses and wildflowers making them an excellent habitat for wildlife. Tallgrass prairies also attract pollinators, are low maintenance and can be planted on degraded fields to build up soil quality and improve water infiltration.



Ray Gill proud of the seedling he planted. The Gill property will also be restoring a wetland by the end of the year.



Prairie seeding on White's Farm. The future use of this field is for tallgrass prairie pasture.

# ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (OMAFRA)

*The Greening Partnership received funding from OMAFRA to hire an Agricultural Specialist, who will be focused on stewardship and education with the agricultural community.*

**NEW AGRICULTURAL SPECIALIST** - At the beginning of May, Colin Little joined the LTVCA as the new Agricultural Specialist. Colin graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies in Environment and Business. He grew up in Ridgetown and has experience working within the local agricultural sector on farms and at the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus performing renewable energy research. As an Agricultural Specialist he will be working throughout the watershed to implement stewardship projects and raise awareness on the environmental challenges farmers are facing and the solutions which are available to mitigate these issues in a cost-effective manner. Furthermore, he will be managing and promoting the Agricultural Improvement Fund (AIF), a program designed to provide cost-sharing options to farmers throughout the Lower Thames watershed who wish to implement agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their land.



Colin Little, Agricultural Specialist in front of LTVCA building.

For more information about the program contact **Colin Little** at **519-354-7310 Ext. 231** or **Colin.Little@ltvca.ca**

**OMAFRA RESEARCH PROJECTS** - Earlier this spring, Richard Brunke (OMAFRA), Stephen Clarke (SCRCA), and Colin Little (LTVCA) installed a Meteorological Station at the McLean Conservation Lands by Rondeau Bay. This station will monitor soil moisture/temperature, wind speed, solar radiation, precipitation levels and air temperature at the property. The data collected will be used in support of the OMAFRA research project that is monitoring the level of nutrient loading occurring in the Rondeau Bay sub-watershed basin from agricultural practices.



Richard Brunke (OMAFRA) setting up the meteorological station at the McLean Conservation Lands.

The erosion GIS modeling in the Rondeau Bay watershed is progressing. Later this spring LTVCA staff will be going in the field to examine the computer results and compare them against actual infield erosion. Variables such as weather data, elevation, soil type and slope are incorporated.



## GREENING PARTNERSHIP



*Greening Partnership Team*  
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Greg Van Every- Environmental Technical Assistant ext. 229

Lindsay Bennett- Land Stewardship Technician ext. 233

Stephanie Allison- GIS/Communications Technician ext. 234



## LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER 2015

1. Working with CK Horticultural Society on "Tree of the Year" which will provide large stock trees to residents
2. Sign Installations at McGeachy Pond Conservation Area
3. Updating the Greening Partnership tab on the new LTVCA website
4. Eight wetlands to be excavated
5. Species at Risk Biologist to be hired

## FUNDERS

Blenheim News Tribune  
 Chatham Daily News  
 Chatham Kent Community Foundation  
 Chatham This Week  
 Ducks Unlimited Canada  
 Enbridge  
 Environment Canada  
 Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario  
 GDF Suez  
 Great Lakes Guardian Fund  
 Kent Federation of Agriculture  
 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
 Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
 Municipality of Chatham-Kent  
 National Wetland Conservation Fund  
 Ontario Power Generation  
 Rotary Club of Chatham  
 Scribendi Editing  
 Sun Media News  
 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation  
 The Ridgeway Independent  
 Trees Ontario  
 Union Gas, a Spectra Energy Company  
 Wheatley Two Creeks Association

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