

2017 Annual Report

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority

"for a balanced and healthy watershed"



Message from the Chair



Linda A. McKinlay
Linda McKinlay
Chair LTVCA

2017 was another remarkable year for the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA), bringing new challenges, successes and ongoing support from our community. The Board and staff continue in its goal to be one of the best Conservation Authorities in Ontario, working with our municipalities, residents and First Nations to provide a service based on Respect, Integrity, Commitment, Objectivity and Collaboration.

We look forward to working with our Municipalities to initiate implementation of Bill 139 which will enable us to better serve and protect our land and water through amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations. Our water management, land use planning and regulations programs continued to protect the lives and property of watershed residents

along with research to reduce and monitor phosphorus to improve soil health and water quality. Stewardship projects enhanced and restored the environment and a new program to protect aquatic species at risk was introduced. Conservation areas provided safe and healthy opportunities for the public to 'Step into Nature', while education and outreach programs introduced thousands of youth and adults to valuable conservation knowledge and practices. I would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to the multitude of partners and funders supporting programs with over \$2M and to the nearly 700 dedicated volunteers who made our activities possible.

The Conservation Authority would not have been able to accomplish these initiatives without the commitment of dedicated Board members and professional staff and I extend my appreciation to them for their support. I especially congratulate and thank our General Manager Don Pearson for his commitment to raising the bar and all his accomplishments over the past five years and wish him the best in his retirement. We welcome our new General Manager Mark Peacock and the Board offers our full support as we move forward into 2018. Proud of our accomplishments and in anticipation of the great work to achieve them, we will continue to grow together.

General Managers' Remarks



Don Pearson
General Manager
2013 - 2017

General Manager Don Pearson retired in December after an amazing five years leading the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA). We welcomed our new GM Mark Peacock mid-December and wish him all the best. This *GMs' Remarks* is a reflection of Don's last year, with a fresh look from Mark towards 2018.

The Vision of the LTVCA is mirrored throughout this annual report as we work toward 'balancing a healthy watershed with a healthy economy'. 'Leading by example in environmental protection in partnership with the community' is our Mission and our activities supported this goal. We acknowledge the financial support of our 10 member municipalities, our granting partners and dedicated volunteers. In addition to municipal support, community and government partnerships assisted programs with over \$2M.

All departments were very busy in

2017. Of special mention is the work encouraging the reduction of phosphorus flowing into the lower Thames River and western Lake Erie, an urgency supported by the multiple appearances of blue-green algae blooms on the Thames in Chatham this year. Our expansion of landowner stewardship programs and water monitoring, encourages reforestation and wetland creation, as well as education about Best Management Practices as solutions to this problem.

Two other members of staff retired in 2017. For over 40 years David Little managed the eastern district. Western district supervisor Russ Dysarz, also retired after 40 years. Their dedication to conservation area management and environmental stewardship is to be commended.

As the new General Manager, I come to this position supported by a committed board, a competent and dedicated staff and a progressive strategic plan. The Conservation Authority is moving into the third year of our Strategic Plan (5 year plan) implementation. This plan provides meaningful milestones for Lower Thames Conservation and I look forward to working with staff to accomplish all recommendations of this plan by 2020.

We look forward to 2018, filled with new challenges and rewards, as we all work together to improve our watershed for the benefit of our lower Thames community.



Mark Peacock
General Manager
December 2017

Our Vision ~ The LTVCA...for a balanced and healthy watershed



Our Mission

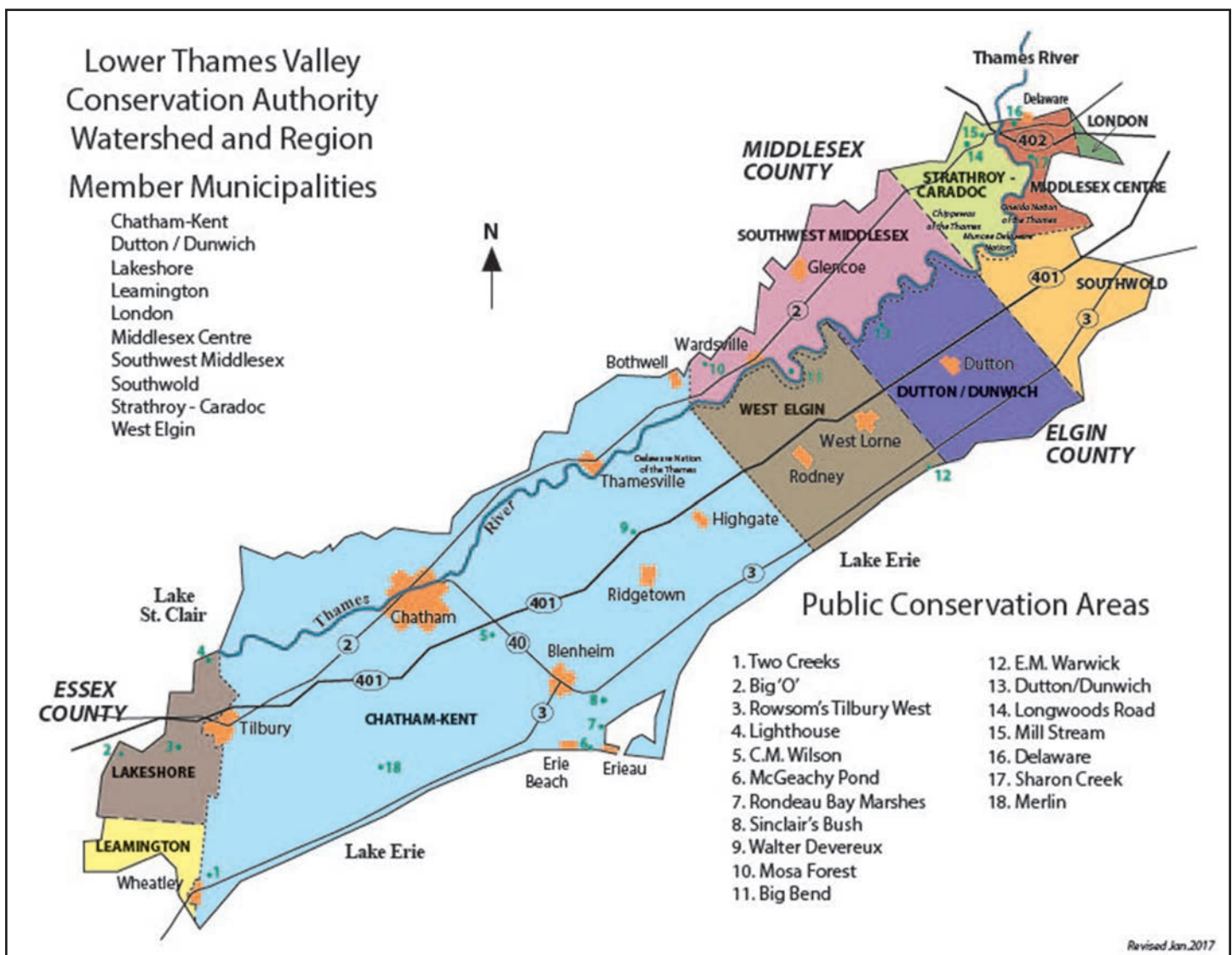
*Leading by example in environmental protection
in partnership with the community.*

Our Core Values

*Respect, integrity, commitment, objectivity,
and collaboration.*



*The LTVCA is one of 36
Conservation Authorities in the
Province of Ontario.
Member of
Conservation Ontario.*



Our area of jurisdiction lies over the watersheds of all streams, which drain into the Thames River from the Village of Delaware, to Lake St. Clair. The southern boundary has jurisdiction over the watersheds of all streams which drain into Lake Erie, from the Talbot Creek watershed in the east, to the Two Creeks watershed in the west. Total area covers over 3,275 square kilometres (1,264 square miles) in southwestern Ontario and is home to over 120,000 people.

Board & Staff Directory

Directors

Linda McKinlay (Chair) - Town of Lakeshore

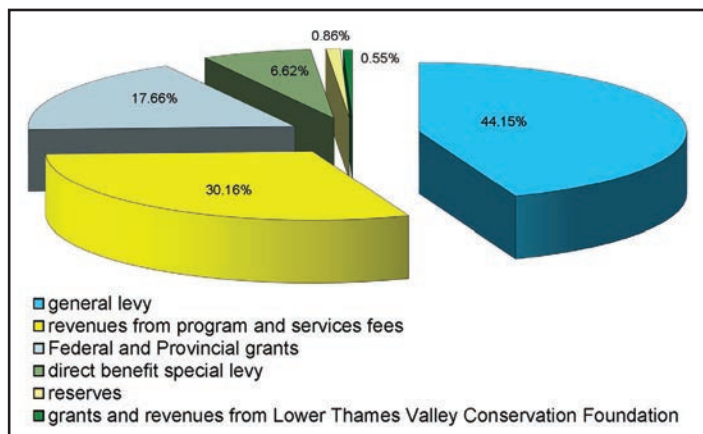
Hilda MacDonald (Vice-Chair) - Municipality of Leamington
Gayle Bogart – Township of Southwold
Stanley Caveney – City of London
Ron Doane – Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
John Kavelaars - Municipality of Southwest Middlesex
Leon Leclair – Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Dan McKillop – Municipality of Dutton Dunwich
Steve Pinsonneault – Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Michelle Smibert – Municipality of Middlesex Centre
Trevor Thompson – Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Jonathan Wolf – Municipality of West Elgin

Ska-Nah-Doht Village Advisory Committee

Don Fairbairn – Chair
Darcy Fallon – Vice-chair
Gayle Bogart, Dan McKillop, Stan Caveney, Elvira
Pupinski, Lynn Chelchowski, Bill Bruinink, Don Pearson

Budget

Don Pearson – General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer, directed the administration and financial aspects of the LTVCA, with support from Financial Services Supervisor – Todd Casier and Finance and Administrative Assistants – Kally Casier and Sandra Schnekenburger.



The LTVCA's budget of \$3,097,028 received approval in February.

Joint Health & Safety Committee

All conservation area properties were visited by the committee to ensure safe conditions not only for employees but the general public. The committee continued to develop task and operating procedures and stayed current with Ministry of Labour (MOL) updates as they affect the health and safety of all LTVCA employees. Five staff received their Working at Heights certification through the Public Services Health and Safety Association as per new MOL regulations.

Full-time Staff

Don Pearson - General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Mark Peacock - General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

Lindsay Bennett - Species At Risk Drainage Biologist
Dan Brinkman - Land Stewardship Technician / General Labourer
Kally Casier - Finance & Administration Assistant
Todd Casier - Financial Services Supervisor
Bonnie Carey - Community Relations Coordinator
Bruce Clark - Construction & Maintenance Technician
Jerry DeZwart - Conservation Education Technician
Russ Dysarz - Western District Supervisor / General Labourer
Jason Homewood - Water Resources & Regulations Technician
Paul Kominek - Western District Supervisor / General Labourer
Liam Laforest - Land Stewardship Technician
Colin Little - Agricultural Program Coordinator
David Little - Eastern District Supervisor (on leave)
Michael Latham - Eastern District Lead
Karen Mattila - Ska-Nah-Doht Village & Museum Curator
Vicki McKay - Aquatic Species At Risk Biologist
Rose Nicholas - Ska-Nah-Doht Village Education Technician
Austin Pratt - Water Quality Specialist
Sandra Schnekenburger - Finance & Administrative Assistant (interim)
Valerie Towsley - Resource Technician
Greg VanEvery - Environmental Project Coordinator
Randall VanWagner - Manager of Conservation Lands & Services
Agnes Vriends - Clerk / Secretary
Jason Wintermute - Water Management Supervisor

Seasonal / Part-time Staff

Robert Clark - Community Outreach Assistant
Brock Daugherty - Land Stewardship Assistant
Leeanne Duxtator - Community Outreach Coordinator
Katie Gillespie - Gatehouse / Tree Planter / Rondeau Bay Wetland Monitoring
Teresa (TJ) Little - Environmental Planning and Policy Assistant
Darren Jacobs - Water Resources Assistant / Rondeau Bay Wetland Monitoring / Aboriginal Species at Risk Fund
Nathan Joosse - GIS Technical Assistant
Buddy Morrison - General Labourer / Security
Kirsten Neuts - Gatehouse / Tree Planter
Rolland Pheasant - Heritage Build Labourer
Eric Rempel - GIS Technical Assistant
Christine Reynolds - Gatehouse
Vance Stark - Heritage Build Labourer
Blake Sykes - General Labourer / Security
Dean Telfer - Visitor Services
Kim Telfer - Visitor Services
Sherry Schofield - Conservation Education Assistant
Alex Tokarewicz - Water Resources Assistant
Nolan Vandenboorn - Security
Darcy Vander Pryt - GIS Technical Assistant
Alana Vandersluis - Water Resource Technician
Morgan Wardell - Water Resources Assistant
Shawn Wood - Security
Bill Menzie - Municipal Enforcement Unit

Protecting Life & Property

Water Management

The water management and technical services program provides science-based support for land and water resources management, including natural heritage programs, as well as technical expertise to forecast, control and monitor floods and erosion to protect life and property. Jason Wintermute is the Water Management Supervisor and the Water Quality Specialist is Austin Pratt. Additional support is provided by other Conservation Authority staff as needed.

Phosphorus Reduction Targets for Lake Erie and Thames River Algae Blooms

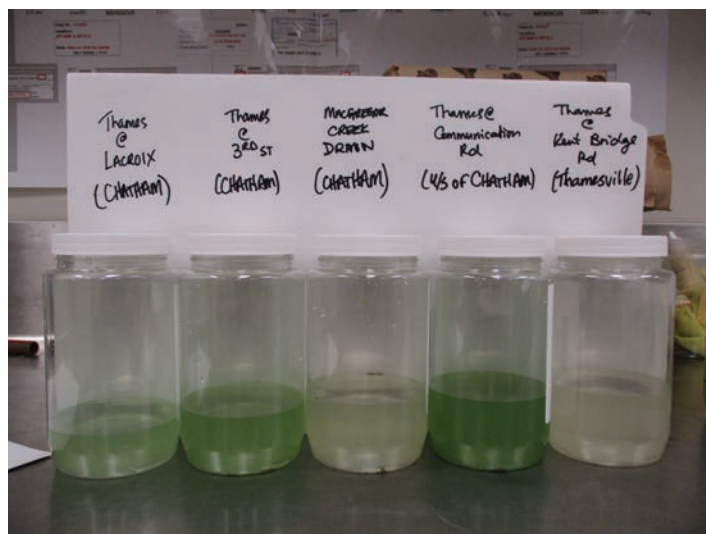
The 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement recognized the need to reduce phosphorous loadings to Lake Erie in order to reduce harmful algae blooms and hypoxic zones in the lake. In December of 2014, the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health was signed. In June 2015, Ontario signed the Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement. The consensus is that the annual total phosphorus loadings to the western and central basin of Lake Erie should be reduced by 40%. The Thames River has been identified as a priority watershed that also needs to see a 40% reduction in dissolved phosphorus and total spring loadings.

Throughout 2017, the LTVCA engaged in a variety of consultation and early actions to assist in developing the Draft Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan, collecting required research and implementing projects to reduce phosphorous loadings.

During the period from mid-August through October, the Thames River itself experienced three rather large blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) blooms. While the first bloom appeared visually to be the most severe, it seems to have been limited to the area around the City of Chatham and immediately upstream. The second bloom in late September appeared to be the largest and was visually observed as far upstream as Thames Road / Currie Road. A significant amount of sampling was conducted by the federal and provincial governments for this bloom. The third bloom was again limited to the area around the City of Chatham. LTVCA staff were involved in various aspects of bloom monitoring such as updating the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) on bloom locations, issuing media releases and answering questions from the public and the media.



Large blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) bloom event in the Thames River in September in Chatham.



Water samples taken from the Thames River on August 29th in Chatham.

Flood Control

The Lower Thames watershed had a mild start to 2017. The average temperature in January at Ridgeway was barely below freezing at -0.9 C and the rest of the winter saw monthly average temperatures above freezing. The Thames River never had a chance to accumulate any significant amount of ice cover. A peak flow of 470 m³/s was observed on January 15th during a winter melt event that lasted from January 10th to the 22nd.

Several heavy rainfall events during the year caused local watercourses to flood, triggering operation of the Indian-McGregor Creek Diversion Channel from March 30th to April 2nd, May 4th to the 11th and November 18th to the 20th. The 6th Street Dam in downtown Chatham did not need to be operated.

In total, 12 advisories were issued during the year for the Thames River and other watercourses: six Safety Bulletins, three Flood Outlooks and three Flood Watches.

Provincial Water Monitoring

The LTVCA partners with the MOECC on the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) and the Provincial (Stream) Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) programs. These programs assist in environmental reporting, decision-making and program implementation by the Conservation Authority, member municipalities and the province.

Groundwater monitoring is conducted at nine wells throughout the watershed with the use of water level loggers and supplemental rain and barometric pressure loggers at some locations. Seven of the wells were sampled in late fall for water quality. The LTVCA maintains the instrumentation, samples the wells and undertakes data corrections, while the MOECC provides equipment and lab analyses.



Staff take water samples at Indian Creek in Chatham, as well as using the YSI sonde to take in-field water quality readings such as pH, temperature, specific conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity.

Stream water quality sampling is conducted at 11 locations throughout the watershed. The Conservation Authority samples monthly in the spring, summer and fall for general water chemistry and the MOECC performs the lab analyses. Currently, the program is supplemented with pesticide monitoring at three sites. Since biological analyses are not part of the provincial program, the LTVCA tests for bacteria at the same sites.

The LTVCA also received a Canada-Ontario Agreement grant from the MOECC to expand the surface water sampling network with an additional 11 locations and winter sampling. This sampling will help with phosphorous reduction efforts as winter and spring months show the most nutrients and contaminants being transported to the Great Lakes.

Ontario Low Water Response Program

The LTVCA participates in a provincial program that monitors watershed conditions to determine if the area is in a low water (drought) situation. The Low Water Response Team is a group of local stakeholders who oversee local response. The year began under a Low Water Level One condition. The condition lasted through March when spring rains allowed the condition to be lifted. A Level One Condition was declared again for September and October due to a dry summer. A Level One Condition is triggered if there is between 60% and 80% of the long term average rainfall over the last 3 or 18 month period, or if river flows are between 50% and 70% of the lowest average summer month flow (100% to 70% in the spring).

Great Lakes Levels and Erie Shore Drive, Municipality of Chatham-Kent



Properties flooded as waves hit the breakwalls along Erie Shore Drive in Chatham-Kent on October 27.



Thames River Clearwater Revival

The Thames River Clear Water Revival (TRCWR) is a multi-agency partnership with the objective of improving the Thames River. Partners include Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), First Nations communities, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Upper Thames River and Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authorities and the City of London.

The primary activity for the TRCWR during the year was drafting recommendations and action items for improving water quantity and quality in the Thames River watershed. The TRCWR continues to be involved in other activities such as supporting the Antler River Guardians from the 4 Directions: First Nation Youth Stewardship Program.

Lake St. Clair water levels in January were around 35 cm above the long-term normal for that month. Water levels tracked 40 to 50 cm above average throughout the year, ending the year at about 45 cm above the long term normal.

Lake Erie water levels in January were 25 to 30 cm above the long-term normal for the month. Water levels tracked 40 to 50 cm above average throughout the year, ending the year at about 40 cm above the long term normal. During May, June and July, Lake Erie water levels were only around 20 cm below their all-time record high.

The high water levels on Lake Erie and strong seasonal winds from the south led to frequent flooding along Erie Shore Drive in Chatham-Kent this year. The area is well-known for flooding in the past, but hasn't seen such issues since the late 1990s. The thresholds for flooding seem to be significantly lower than in the past.

Twenty-nine advisories were issued for the Lake Erie shoreline and Erie Shore Drive. Flooding events have affected as many as 50 properties. There has also been shoreline erosion, breakwall failures, structural damages to homes and cottages and concerns around the road/dyke failing.

Benthic Monitoring

Sampling for benthic macroinvertebrates (insects, worms and crustaceans that live at the bottom of the stream) continued in partnership with the Biology Department at the University of Windsor. The research being conducted by Masters' candidate Alyssa Frazao under the supervision of Dr. Jan Ciborowski will assist the LTVCA in developing a monitoring program most suitable for the region's unique biogeophysical environment.



Benthic community composition is a well-known indicator used to measure stream health.

Land Use Planning & Regulations

Valerie Towsley, Jason Wintermute and Jason Homewood are the staff responsible for administering the land use planning and regulations program.

Municipal Plan Input & Review Under the Conservation Authorities Act

The land use planning and regulations program provides environmental planning expertise to guide municipal and other land-use planning decisions on a watershed basis, consistent with current applicable Federal and Provincial legislation and policies and Conservation Authority and municipal planning policy.

Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alteration to Shorelines & Water Courses ONTARIO REGULATION 152/06

Staff reviewed a total of 271 permit applications with respect to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 152/06. Only one application went to a hearing in front of the Executive Committee, where it was denied. Private property landowners submitted 154 permit applications for a wide range of projects, some of which included the construction of new homes in floodplains, additions to existing development in hazardous lands, altering shorelines and habitat/stewardship projects in regulated areas. Ninety-one permit applications were related to municipal drains and the Drainage Act, 15 applications were related to municipal/county infrastructure and 11 applications were related to utility companies (including gas, oil and electricity generation/transmission).



Staff conduct a site inspection on Erie Shore Drive in Chatham-Kent for a steel wall replacement.

Enforcement Issues

Staff continued to work towards the rehabilitation of the wetland involved in the 2016 court case, attending multiple meetings with the defendant's lawyer, agent and consultants. Thirty-one new complaints/tips were received. This resulted in 13 notices of violation being issued and multiple investigations with the goal to obtain compliance or future compliance. Staff also dealt with and monitored ongoing enforcement issues from 2016 and worked with other municipal, provincial and federal partners on joint investigations, where violations cover multiple laws or bylaws.



At right are the regulatory and municipal plan review summaries for the year. Plan input and review is one of the ways the Conservation Authority monitors development and achieves its objectives. The input the LTVCA has on new development near or in natural hazard areas like floodplains and steep slopes, ensures identification of potential hazards before complications arise.

Permits	Municipal Drain	57	4	7	6		3	5	3	2	4		91
	Private Property Owner	92	1	36			2			1	1		133
	Utility Company	6											6
	Municipal / County Infrastructure	12					2				1		15
	Habitat / Stewardship	7	3	2				1	2		6		21
	Wind Turbine	5											5
Plan Input and Review	Official Plans												0
	Official Plan Amendments	3					1						4
	Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws												0
	Zoning Bylaw Amendments	79	11	1	4	4	2	15	3	5	10		134
	Severances	54	8	1	4	1	1	5	10	3	11		98
	Minor Variances	40	2	1		1		4		7	7		62
	Plan of Subdivision	1						1		1	1		4
	Legal Inquiries	50	2	15	3			3	1		18		92
	General Property Inquiries	699	47	178	15	11	17	56	35	38	75	183	1354
TOTAL SERVICES PER MUNICIPALITY		1105	78	241	32	17	28	90	54	57	134	183	2019
SERVICES													
MUNICIPALITY		Chatham-Kent	Dutton/Dunwich	Lakeshore	Leamington	London	Middlesex Centre	Southwest Middlesex	Southwold	Strathroy-Caradoc	West Elgin	General Inquiries	TOTALS

LTVCA Planning & Regulations Policies

Over the past two years, staff have undertaken a comprehensive update of policies used for the review of municipal planning applications and private submissions for development within regulated areas under O. Reg. 152/06 of the Conservation Authorities Act. In addition to improved clarity, the draft Regulations and Planning Policy and Procedure Manual addresses frequent issues and items encountered in the administration of the regulations and provincial hazard policy under the Provincial Policy Statement. The document also incorporates LTVCA Board policy and decisions affecting existing buildings, buildings destroyed by fire, other hazards and infilling. As well as dealing with the unique geographical conditions

within the LTVCA, reference to neighbouring Conservation Authority policies was included to ensure consistency within individual municipal jurisdictions.

Currently, staff have circulated the policy for review and comment to key municipal staff of Building Departments, Planning Departments, Public Works and to neighbouring Conservation Authorities. Any concerns which can be addressed will be incorporated, with the revised document being circulated for broader public review in early 2018. This Manual deals with interpretation and application of O. Reg. 152/06. Revisions to the Conservation Authorities Act were undertaken through Bill 139 in 2017.



Enhancing Watershed Health

Tree Planting, Restoration, Stewardship

We would like to express gratitude to our 10 member municipalities who recognize the need for and contribute to the Land Stewardship Department and give us the opportunity to do the work we do. LTVCA also acknowledges the financial support of our many granting partners and dedicated volunteers. Above and beyond municipal funding, over \$1,300,000 was generated from various sources to assist private landowners and school programs.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Environmental Restoration 291 acres / 117 hectares:

Reforestation 217 acres / 87 hectares

Wetland 25 acres / 10 hectares

Prairie 49 acres / 20 hectares

- 3,200 large-stock trees planted across the watershed
- two bus tours highlighting stewardship efforts
- attended seven farm events for environmental education and stewardship promotion
- 10 wetland project sites had duck habitat boxes and cylinders installed for nesting and protection from predators
- a restoration contract was awarded to LTVCA by Ministry of Transportation for exit 90 at highway 40 & 401 interchange with seven locations within the clover leaf for native vegetation restoration
- six hundred 120cm - 150cm trees given out to Chatham-Kent citizens during our Free Tree Give Away event on Earth Day

PARTNERS

Aamjiwnaang First Nation	Ontario Power Generation
Oneida Nation of the Thames	Wildlife Habitat Canada
Chippewas of the Thames First Nation	Chatham Kent Public Health Unit
Eelūnaapéewi Lahnéewiit First Nation	Ontario Native Scape
Wildlife Preservation Canada	Forests Ontario
TD Canada Trust	Acer & the Riparian Rangers
Union Gas	Enbridge
Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association	Carolinian Canada Coalition
Forests Ontario	Scouts Canada & Riparian Rangers
OMNRF	Chatham-Kent Retention & Attraction
OMNRF Species At Risk Stewardship Fund	ALUS (Alternative Land Use Service)
OMAFRA	Elgin Stewardship Council
MOECC	Nature Conservancy Canada
MTO	CK Retention and Attraction
Environment Canada	Canadian Chestnut Council
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Neighbouring Conservation Authorities
Ducks Unlimited Canada	



HIGHLIGHTS

The Tomorrow's Greener Schools Today - This project is a schoolyard tree planting initiative. Since 2013, Chatham-Kent Public Health, in partnership with the LTVCA, have planted 400+ native trees at local schools. Goals are to provide shade, increase tree cover and educate youth. This is an excellent example of a project addressing health and the environment.

Scouts Canada & Riparian Rangers - Staff held an event at the Clear Creek Reforestation Project site on May 27. Eight hundred trees and 200 shrubs were planted by approximately 100 volunteers.

Nature Conservancy Canada, Parks Ontario, Enbridge, Larry Cornelius, Aamjiwnaang - The Antler River Guardians - This partnership involved the restoration of a Clear Creek quarry - a parcel of land north of the old growth Clear Creek forest. To reduce erosion and diversify the site, LTVCA created pools to slow runoff for a more dynamic habitat.

CK Retention and Attraction, CK Public Health - This partnership aims to keep or attract youth back to Chatham-Kent after post-secondary education. The CK Public Health also has an interest in skin cancer prevention through shading school yards and communities with trees. They sponsor "Your Roots Are Always in CK".

Oneida Nation of the Thames - Oneida hosted their first environmental summit 'Teyetisni nen Ukinulha - Caring for Our Mother' in November. LTVCA staff listened to presentations by Six Nations members, took part in the Water Ceremony and also presented 'Invasive Species in the Thames River Watershed'.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation - Stewardship staff helped them plant over 450 large stock trees as well as over 2,500 seedlings in the watershed.

AFSAR (Aboriginal Species at Risk) - LTVCA was the lead on an application with Delaware First Nation which was successful in obtaining \$50,000 for stewardship projects on First Nations land at Moraviantown.



Species at Risk (SAR) - Vicki McKay was hired in August as our Aquatic Species at Risk Biologist. She will develop an aquatic SAR program for the LTVCA and a SAR Section 11 agreement with Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

- Habitat Creation Program for SAR Reptiles in the Lower Thames Valley Watershed** - The provincial Species at Risk Stewardship Fund (SARSF) is providing \$65,000 per year for three years to improve habitat and conduct outreach and education for reptiles at risk in the LTVCA's watersheds. Eight landowners ordered snake hibernacula (overwintering sites) and materials for 10 snake nesting structures were delivered to six landowners. Social media posts, public presentations and newspaper coverage is increasing awareness of reptile SAR, why they are at risk and informing landowners of assistance to add habitat structures (including turtle nesting beaches) to their property. Species factsheets have been distributed to interested landowners. Thirty-four "Wildlife Crossing" and "Bake for Snake" signs will be placed in areas of high reptile mortality, with the first two erected at Longwoods Road Conservation Area.
- Aquatic Species at Risk (SAR) Recovery in the Lower Thames and Lake Erie Watersheds** - The LTVCA received \$50,000 from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to develop a Section 11 agreement. With this funding, the survival and recovery of aquatic SAR (fish and mussels) will be enhanced in the lower Thames watershed, Lake Erie drainages to the south and Lake St. Clair drainages to the north (LTVCA's jurisdiction) where there is a large diversity (26 species) of SAR. Funding is being sought from the provincial Species at Risk Stewardship Fund and federal Habitat Stewardship Program for the first three years of implementation which may include monitoring, education, recovery strategy/action plan/management plan development and implementation, habitat protection, research and/or other measures deemed beneficial for the species.



Wildlife crossing sign installed at Longwoods Road Conservation Area to encourage slower speeds for the protection of turtles and snakes crossing the road.



Mapleleaf, a mussel species at risk, found in the Thames River.

Discovery of an American Chestnut Tree – Staff discovered a mature, blight-free American chestnut on private property in the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc (one of only three reported in Middlesex County). The Canadian Chestnut Council visited the site to discuss their research efforts. We will work with landowners to promote 'gene conservation plantings' in their projects with the first site at Longwoods Road Conservation Area.



LTVCA staff Dan Brinkman stands beside an American Chestnut tree found in the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc. Photo - Andrew Lupton / CBC News.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (D.U.C.) - D.U.C. successfully secured more funds for wetland restoration. The program will now offer a 50% cost share for wetland excavations capped at \$10,000 per project. LTVCA received \$81,000 from D.U.C. Darrell Randell a long time D.U.C. partner has acquired an assistant for 2018 to help coordinate wetland restoration.

Elgin Clean Water Program (ECWP) - The ECWP is a cooperative program between Lower Thames Valley, Catfish Creek, Kettle Creek and the Long Point Region Conservation Authorities. It assists landowners with projects which improve and protect water quality in Elgin County. Fourteen projects were completed within the LTVCA watershed. This included the completion of one erosion control project, 10 wetland/riparian projects, one livestock management project, one tree planting project and one tall grass prairie project. In total, the ECWP contributed \$36,246 to landowners within the LTVCA watershed to implement these stewardship projects.

ALUS Middlesex - LTVCA has worked with Middlesex Federation of Agriculture and interested landowners to help get Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) started in Middlesex County. LTVCA looks forward to working with new partners to help promote agricultural and environmental stewardship. There has been some interest to establish ALUS in Chatham-Kent.

Stewardship Nights - Staff hosted two public stewardship nights in November, one in Chatham-Kent and the other in Dutton Dunwich. Landowners learned about funding opportunities for wetland, prairie, reforestation and reptile habitat projects.

Rondeau Bay Wetland Monitoring - Through a grant from OMAFRA, LTVCA contracted two staff to monitor nine wetlands within Rondeau Bay for nutrient capture and effectiveness in reducing nutrient loading in Lake Erie.

Database Trial - The new database system was a success. The database has streamlined our tree seedling inventory tracking, eased invoicing and cost share calculations for staff and improved report time. We are still fine tuning the system.

Elgin Stewardship Council - This organization provided \$29,435 to landowners within the LTVCA watershed to assist in offsetting the cost of environmental restoration projects in Elgin County. The funding contributed to the completion of seven wetland restoration projects and one erosion control project.



A two acre wetland restoration project in the Municipality of West Elgin.



Great Lakes Agricultural Stewardship Initiative (GLASI)

- Funding for GLASI is provided through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. GLASI is delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA). The key goals of the project are to improve soil health, water quality and pollinator health.

- **GLASI Jeannettes Creek Agricultural Phosphorus Reduction and Monitoring Program** - The purpose of the program is to implement and monitor the effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMPs) at reducing agriculturally sourced phosphorus loads within a 20km² subwatershed of Jeannettes Creek. Subwatershed producers received \$115,094 to assist with the implementation of 52 BMP projects within the Jeannettes Creek study area. The first phase of the project will conclude on March 31st of 2018.

Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative (TRPRC)

- The TRPRC launched during the summer and the collaborative steering committee includes: farm organizations, municipalities, ENGOS, the LTVCA, Chatham-Kent Drainage, various academics, and First Nations. The TRPRC strategy is aimed at raising awareness and providing extension services to reduce the surface and subsurface transportation of phosphorus off agricultural land, either directly into waterways or via municipal drainage systems. A small implementation team under the management of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture will carry out the strategy. The LTVCA is working with the TRPRC to provide expertise on BMP implementation, to support local outreach efforts and to assist with the monitoring and verification of new solutions on the landscape.

On June 27, staff organized and hosted the TRPRC Bus Tour. The tour involved stops at various restoration sites in the Rondeau Bay subwatershed to illustrate natural heritage solutions that can be implemented on farms to reduce agriculturally sourced phosphorus loads. Event attendees toured the GLASI Jeannette's Creek Priority Subwatershed Project (PSP) study area to see an example of how farmers and Conservation Authorities can work together to implement agricultural BMPs and perform research to verify their effectiveness.

- **Elgin County Watersheds Education & Outreach Program** - A partnership between Lower Thames Valley, Kettle Creek, Longpoint Region and Catfish Creek Conservation Authorities is undertaking outreach and education to engage local producers on soil health and water quality, encouraging action through on-the-ground projects. The peer-driven project will engage local champions to provide expertise and empower producers to learn more about and implement BMPs for soil health and water quality.

On July 6th, the LTVCA hosted the OSCIA Executive Outreach Tour in partnership with St. Clair Regional Crop Association. The tour provided attendees with the opportunity to see how GLASI funded projects are being implemented throughout Lower Thames Valley watershed.



Austin Pratt calibrates the water volume from ISCO autosampler at one of three pump stations being monitored for the GLASI Jeanette's Creek PSP to see the effectiveness of BMPs in regards to water quality.

Awards and Sponsorships

LTVCA Environmental Award Winners

- *Landowner Category*



Landowner recipients for 2016 projects are right to left: Dan and Chris Peltier, Jackie and Pete Cameron, (absent Sarah Judd). Greg VanEvery (left) presented the award at the LTVCA's Annual General Meeting in February.

- *Organizational Category*



Chippewas of the Thames First Nation was a big stewardship partner for the Conservation Authority. For their efforts, they were selected for the 'Stewardship Award' in 2017.

Graduation Award Sponsorship

A \$500 award was presented by LTVCA to a graduating student from the Academic Proficiency, Associates Diploma in Environmental Management Program at the University of Guelph - Ridgetown Campus.



Chelsea Garrett (Ridgetown College) received the award as presented by Todd Casier (LTVCA).



McGregor Naturopathic was also a proud recipient of the organizational "Stewardship Award" in 2017.

Thames - Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region

The purpose of the provincial Clean Water Act (CWA) (2006) is to protect existing and future sources of drinking water. Protecting water at the source - municipal wells and water intakes - is the first barrier in a multi-barrier approach to providing a safe, clean supply of water. The Act is part of the government's commitment to protecting and enhancing human health and the environment, while implementing the Walkerton Inquiry recommendations.

The Upper Thames River, Lower Thames Valley and St. Clair Region Conservation Authorities partnered together to form the Thames - Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region and worked with municipalities, stakeholders and the public to develop a Source Protection Plan to protect drinking water, while taking into account the needs of our communities. The Source Protection Committee is appointed under the Clean Water Act, 2006, representing municipal, business, general public and interest group sectors in the region. The Committee is responsible for guiding the development of the Source Protection Plan. Jenna Allain is the Source Protection Coordinator.

Highlights of the Year

- The Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan came into effect on December 31st, 2015, and implementation of the plan policies has now been underway for two years. In 2017, Conservation Authority staff from the Thames-Sydenham and Region were supporting implementation of the local source protection plan and monitored local implementation progress.
- On March 22nd, the Source Protection Programs Branch confirmed that Mr. Dean Edwardson had been appointed by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change as the new Chair of the Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Committee.
- With the appointment of the new Chair, the process to reduce the size of the Source Protection Committee (SPC) from 21 to 15 members was completed. The decision to reduce the committee membership was largely due to the decreasing role and responsibilities of the Committee moving forward.
- UTRCA has established a regional Risk Management Office on behalf of seven municipalities, including the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. The service agreement was for an initial period of three years which was renewed in 2017 to extend for an additional three years until December 2020.
- When the Source Protection Plan was approved, the Conservation Authorities were directed to prepare and submit a workplan containing detailed steps for the review of the source protection plan and submit it to the Ministry by November 30, 2018. The workplan must be developed in consultation with the Source Protection Committee, participating municipalities and the MOECC. Staff began preparation on the Section 36 workplan in 2017.



What are Hazardous Household Wastes?
Hazardous household wastes are any discarded, unused, or leftover portion of a household product containing toxic chemicals.

DO NOT put hazardous chemicals in your regular garbage, down a storm drain or onto the surface of the ground.

Any product that is labeled WARNING, CAUTION, POISONOUS, TOXIC, FLAMMABLE, CORROSIVE, REACTIVE or EXPLOSIVE should be considered hazardous.

How can we safely dispose of Hazardous Household Wastes?
Visit www.protectingourwater.ca and discover:

- Your nearest Hazardous Waste Depot location.
- Information about your community's sources of drinking water and what you can do to protect them.

Easy steps to protect your drinking water:

1. Use non-toxic cleaning products.
2. Store chemicals safely - ensure they are labeled, sealed tightly and off the ground away from drains, vents and sources of heat.
3. Dispose of hazardous household wastes properly. NEVER put hazardous chemicals in your regular garbage or down the drain.
4. Use less fertilizer on lawn and gardens.
5. Clean up pet waste.
6. Prevent pollutants from reaching the soil or entering storm drains.
7. Prevent spills when filling gas tanks or cans.
8. Take your car to commercial car washes.
9. If you have a septic system, keep it working properly - empty the tank and have it inspected regularly.
10. Protect and maintain any private wells and have unused wells properly decommissioned.

The Source Protection Plan contains an education and outreach policy specifying the use of an education program to target the handling and storage of hazardous chemicals in concentrations typical of household use. Source Protection staff prepared and delivered an educational campaign that fulfilled this policy requirement. Flyers were delivered door to door in each wellhead protection area, including areas in Ridgetown and Highgate within the Lower Thames watershed. A website and promotional video were also produced as part of the campaign and can be viewed at www.protectingourwater.ca.

Stepping Into Nature

Conservation Areas

The LTVCA has protected 640 hectares of environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, culturally unique features and significant biological, ecological and scenic qualities through its conservation areas program. Out of the 27 LTVCA owned lands, 463 hectares have been preserved at 18 conservation areas for public use in the watershed and region. The LTVCA promotes its objectives through recreational and educational opportunities in the Conservation Areas - places to actively experience the natural world and increase environmental awareness through interpretive signage and special events.

Russ Dysarz / Paul Kominek - Western District Supervisors, Michael Latham - Eastern District Lead, Bruce Clark - Construction and Maintenance Technician and Paul Kominek / Dan Brinkman - General Labourers, are responsible for the maintenance of these sites. The LTVCA's Staff Safety Committee tours the conservation properties regularly to assess their safety for public use. Additionally, it is the Conservation Authority's policy, to ensure conservation area facilities and programs are as accessible as possible for everyone's enjoyment. Conservation Area development and maintenance of facilities is enhanced by annual donations of money and volunteer time from local individuals, companies, conservation clubs and organizations.

E.M. Warwick Conservation Area



Many staff pitched in to tackle the removal of the long flight of stairs leading down to the beach. Access is still provided via a more gradual foot trail.

Courey Islands

Invasive species *Phragmites Australis* continues to be a problem in all low, wet areas. Staff worked with the contractor Dover-Agri. Services to burn and treat this tall reed grass, as a means to keep this Provincially Significant Wetland ecologically sound.

McGeachy Pond Conservation Area

Invasive species *Phragmites Australis* was treated with Glyphosate, rolled and burned. Two new animal proof garbage containers were installed, as well as new signage.

C.M. Wilson Conservation Area

There were many improvements at this high use facility including upgraded washrooms, hydro services and seasonal campsites, gate house renovations, new signage and removal of an old board walk with an earthen prairie walkway installation.



The Barn at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area was refreshed and is ready for wedding and special function rentals.

Walter Devereux Conservation Area



With grants from Union Gas and OMAFRA, staff designed an interpretive Farm Demo Trail for visitors to learn about various Best Management Practices to see how a farm can be both profitable and environmentally sound.

Big “O” Conservation Area

Thanks to a donation from Gosfield Energy, spring birders enjoyed a free guided hike through this birding hot spot. Naturalist Paul Pratt led a group of over 30 people, followed by a live bird demonstration at the Iron Kettle Bed and Breakfast.

Myslik Wildlife Preserve

This 100 acre/40 hectare donation of land is located northeast of Blenheim. The property comes with an annual \$5,000 payment to the LTVCA from the wind tower access road. Stewardship staff have planted over 20,000 trees along with the excavation of several wetlands. This land will be set aside as a Nature Preserve and not open to the public.

Rowsom Tilbury West Conservation Area

Staff removed and burned the old pavilion that was a haven for vandalism and deteriorated beyond repair.

Sharon Creek Conservation Area

A “Friends of Sharon Creek” meeting was organized in Delaware. The London Stand-Up Paddlers and Tall Grass Ontario representatives attended and together we are looking to improve enforcement, parking, washrooms and watercraft access to the reservoir.

Longwoods Road Conservation Area

Longwoods Road Conservation Area underwent a “Visioning Project”, to engage the public and LTVCA Directors and staff to dream and to have a vision of what the park could look like if resources were not an issue. The next stage after the visioning exercise will be to complete a feasibility study and develop a plan to move forward.



LTVCA Species at Risk Biologist monitored the replacement of a failed culvert on the main road at Longwoods Road Conservation Area. The new culvert will ease movement of aquatic, amphibian and reptile species including the Blanding’s Turtle, a species at risk, found here.

Conservation Education

Conservation Education programs provide field trip and in-class presentations to students and the community. Education staff enable and enhance the efforts of stewardship partners, service clubs, schools, volunteers and public to foster an understanding and appreciation of our renewable natural resources. Jerry DeZwart is the Conservation Education Technician. Bonnie Carey and Sherry Schofield assisted with school group programs.

School Programs

Conservation area **Field Trip Programs** reached 920 students and 178 adults at Longwoods Road (900) and C.M. Wilson (20) Conservation Areas. This equates to 53 classes. **In-classroom Programs** were delivered to 125 students and eight adult educators from six classes.

Supported by area service clubs, the LTVCA delivered the **River & Creek Safety Program** to 12 classes - 243 watershed grade two students and 18 educators. The Glencoe District Lions Club, Rodney Lions Club, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 251, Delaware Lioness and Optimist Club of West Lorne are greatly appreciated for funding this valuable safety program for over 15 years.



Students enjoy the Great Horned Owl Game and experience the challenges facing predators and prey.

Balance and Biodiversity - A new elementary school program combines the Heritage and Sciences curriculum strands. This two hour program is designed to outline Species At Risk and their current threats, emphasizing the importance of balancing the use of our natural resources with proper stewardship, as exemplified by the local Haudenosaunee people living here 1,200 years ago.

The beautiful trails at Longwoods Road Conservation Area with native and introduced species, combined with Ska-Nah-Doht Village, makes this site the perfect setting for the program. It has received very positive reviews from teachers.



Grade 2 students learn how to help themselves out of a bad situation. All part of the River and Creek Safety in-class program. Yes - the icy waters are that cold!



Community Education

Student Co-op Placements - The LTVCA Administration office and Longwoods Road Conservation Area provide both high school and college student placements.



Co-op students Morgan Squire (left) from Glencoe District High School and Amber Frak (right) from Fleming College assisted staff at Longwoods Road Conservation Area, with many environment-related duties and gained experience to help them in their future prospects.

Children's Water Festivals

- Education staff helped Kettle Creek and Upper Thames River Conservation Authorities deliver the St. Thomas-Elgin Children's Water Festival with 3,030 students enjoying this May event.
- The Chatham Kent & Lambton Children's Water Festival was held at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area. Hosted by the LTVCA in partnership with St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, an estimated 1,670 participants engaged in the 40+ activity centres in early October.



Thames Valley District School Board's STEAM Conference - Conservation Education and Ska-Nah-Doht staff provided a teacher workshop at the Thames Valley District School Board's STEAM Conference (Science and Technology, Environmental Education, Arts and Mathematics) to promote and share Longwoods and Ska-Nah-Doht education programs.

Thames Valley Science and Engineering Fair - LTVCA joined the Upper Thames River and Kettle Creek Conservation Authorities to judge and present the Conservation Award at the Thames Valley Science and Engineering Fair in April. Students receive this award for projects that best address the themes of natural resource stewardship and conservation.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation - Phragmites control efforts and successes at Longwoods Road Conservation Area were demonstrated to Chippewas of the Thames Lands & Environment staff.

Oneida Nation of the Thames - Questions regarding environmental education programming were addressed at the Oneida Environmental Summit in November. Contacts like these act to enhance relations and empower local group environmental endeavours.

Educational Events at Longwoods Road

- **Moonlight Winter Family Hike** - This Longwoods event provided a great winter evening of fun where 92 participants heard and viewed owls and walked the trails by moonlight.
- **Native Plants Workshop** - In April, 25 visitors discovered wildflowers and pollinators of our fields and forests during this Longwoods workshop.
- **March Break Hikes and Tours** - Staff provided hiking and learning opportunities for parents and their children along the Longwoods trails and Ska-Nah-Doht Village.
- **Twilight Tuesdays** - These summer evenings were very popular attracting 297 participants who enjoyed outdoor fun including owl calling, bug-hunting, music and Haudenosaunee living and legends from 1,200 years ago.

Ska-Nah-Doht Village & Museum



OUR MISSION

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum continues to be a community leader, to educate about the past, collect and preserve local history and faithfully interpret the Haudenosaunee - People of the Longhouse.

OUR VISION

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum is an interactive museum that engages the public in the preservation and presentation of the past through experiences on-site and in the community.

Village Curator - Karen Mattila managed the \$239,394 Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum budget. Rose Nicholas - Village Education Technician conducted programs, events and directed inventory for the Turtle Trail Gift Shop which had its best year with over \$14,000 in sales. We graciously acknowledge the \$22,992 in financial support from the Ministry of Culture through the Community Museum Operating Grant.

Heritage Build Project Completed

Two years of careful planning, plus the hard work of staff with two great build teams has brought Ska-Nah-Doht back to life! A new longhouse and palisade maze, all fully accessible, is an achievement worth celebrating. Thanks again to community partners GreenLane Community Fund, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation and Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program Intake Two for financial support of the Heritage Build Project.

Government officials, volunteers, friends and family gathered to party with food, music and dance at "Tastes of Fall / Canada 150" on October 1st, creating a community of over 400.



Left to right: Don Fairbairn - Chair of the Ska-Nah-Doht Village Committee, Ron Doane - LTVCA Director, Vance Blackmore - Mayor of Municipality of Southwest Middlesex, Peter Fragiskatos - MP London North Centre, John Fraser - for MPP Monte McNaughton Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Joanne Vanderheyden - Mayor of Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and Don Pearson - General Manager of the LTVCA.

Heritage Build Project



Two Heritage Build Labourers - Vance Stark and Rolland Pheasant assisted staff with preparing 34 central arches for the new longhouse.

Student Grants

A successful application to Canada Summer Jobs funded two students for community outreach and assistance with our Canada 150 Celebrations. Coordinator Leeanne Doxtator, scheduled community events and designed the poster and invitation for the Taste of Fall event. She and Assistant Rob Clark, travelled to watershed libraries to present "Sky Woman – a Creation Story". This play delivers a key LTVCA environmental message through Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge - storytelling.

Event Attendance Way Up!

Visitation at all Longwoods Road Conservation Area events increased. Summertime's "Twilight Tuesdays" more than doubled in attendance. "Artifact Day" was one of the busiest ever in its history. And "Tastes of Fall" was a huge success as we celebrated Canada 150 and the Heritage Build longhouse completion.

Professional Development

For a unique professional development opportunity, Karen Mattila and Rose Nicholas attended the Indigenous Collections Symposium on March 23-24 in Six Nations. Many contacts were made over the amazing two days. The facilities at the Polytechnic and Woodland Cultural Centre were excellent. Discussions focused on artifacts and the issue of repatriation, as well as Truth and Reconciliation.

New Ska-Nah-Doht Education Program

As part of its Mission to educate about the past, programs attracted 3,290 students and 738 adults, on-par with last year. Comparatively, public tours and workshops were up with 275 participants. A new program "**Balance & Biodiversity**" takes the First Nations' approach to living within the environment. It includes a village tour, trail walk to view invasive and at risk species as well as traditional medicines.



The area of the Heritage Log Cabins (Chippewa Cabin) became the home of the notorious Black Donnelly's (Lucan) as it was the set of a local film production.

Partnering with the Local Community

Community Relations - A Part of All Programs

Communication efforts enhance awareness and understanding of the goals and programs of the LTVCA for our target audiences, enabling them to support and enjoy our facilities and services. Through accurate, consistent and clear messaging, staff expand the range of the target audiences whenever possible. Bonnie Carey - Community Relations Coordinator is assisted by Agnes Vriends - Clerk - Secretary on communications projects.

Community Relations activities inform our primary audiences - LTVCA Board and Committee members, Councillors and staff from member municipalities, Government agencies and our own staff about Conservation Authority programs and services. Watershed residents, media, users of LTVCA facilities and services, partners including the LTVCA Foundation and potential partners, are additional vital audiences.

Through regular updates of social media and production of literature, our goals and objectives are broadcast across the watershed. Special events and tours are hosted across the watershed. Staff initiate and assist with local environmental projects such as children's festivals and design, arrange and create displays for fairs and conferences.

Fostering partnerships and collaboration with organizations, volunteers and other stakeholders are priority and help to further the conservation of our watershed resources. Meeting facilitation, fund-raising with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation, supervising employment programs and contributing on conservation committees and working groups, help the LTVCA meet its objectives.

Highlights of the Year

It was another busy and rewarding year beginning with the creation of the LTVCA's annual report and presentation to the Board at the Annual General Meeting. Daily updates to our website and Facebook pages were made, 39 media releases were issued, special conservation area events were planned, reports were prepared for our Board meetings, area farm show registrations were completed, publications were reviewed and produced including Species at Risk info graphics and conservation education programming at Longwoods Road Conservation Area was conducted.

In April, a big display at the "Go Wild Grow Wild" expo in London was well attended. Staff planned and helped with the St. Thomas-Elgin (May) and Chatham-Kent & Lambton (October) Children's Water Festivals. The new interpretive trail signs were installed at Longwoods Road in May with the volunteers from the Thames Valley Trail Association and in June, a Board and Partners bus tour was conducted in the western half of the watershed.

The "Canadian Coasters" celebrated in July at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area with their 150th Anniversary Tour car show in partnership with the Children's Safety Village. Four memorial forest dedication services were planned and held across the watershed in connection with the Conservation Foundation and local Funeral Homes, one in spring and three in the fall.

At year-end, new conservation area advertisements for county tourist organizations were designed and a funding application to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for the 2018 Lake Erie Student Conference was submitted.



The 27th annual Longwoods Heritage Weekend was held in early May, sponsored by the Upper Thames Military Re-enactment Society.



Longwoods Road Conservation Area's "Season's Greetings" event attracted over 300 visitors in late November!

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation

Highlights of the Year



The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation works in partnership with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, to raise funds towards the wise management of our renewable natural resources. Since 1995, the Foundation has raised over \$771,000 for natural and cultural heritage conservation. Thousands of dollars were raised throughout the year for conservation projects.

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation assists volunteer organizations with their fund raising efforts and manages the Sharon Creek Trust Fund, initiated by the Friends of Sharon Creek. The Foundation supports special projects and events like the annual Moonlight Winter Family Hike, the Carey Carolinian Arboretum and Trail and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation Bursary. Through the Foundation's Memorial Forest Program, the Conservation Authority has planted thousands of trees across the lower Thames region. The Foundation submits funding applications to corporations, government agencies,

service clubs and other philanthropic organizations to undertake projects and programs, which assist the LTVCA and watershed region.

The Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, federally registered charity, governed by a Board of Directors. Tax receipts are issued for all donations. The Executive - President Grant Jones, Vice-president Ken Brooks and Secretary-Treasurer Dan McKillop are recognized for their dedication and support in 2017.

The Foundation helped fund and support several Conservation Authority and watershed initiatives in 2017:

- ♦ 526 memorial trees \$7,535
- ♦ Longwoods Road Conservation Area Visioning Project \$10,000
- ♦ Ska-Nah-Doht Heritage Build Project \$10,000
- ♦ Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation Bursary \$500
- ♦ Volunteers for Moonlight Winter Family Hike event and 4 memorial forest dedication services



Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation presented a \$500 Bursary to Jillian Ball. Jillian is currently enrolled in the agricultural program at University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus.



At the Longwoods Road Conservation Area, the Conservation Foundation continued its support of the Ska-Nah-Doht Village 'Heritage Build Project' with a substantial donation of \$10,000.

Over 1,400 family and friends of loved ones attended four Memorial Forest Dedication Services held across the watershed. The Conservation Foundation recognizes the support of the McKinlay and Badder Funeral Homes, the Tilbury and District Horticultural Society and the LTVCA as partners in the reforestation program.





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The Thames River celebrated its 17th year as a Canadian Heritage River. Thousands of volunteers cleaned up hundreds of kilometres along the river during the 18th Annual Thames River Clean-up in April.