



2020 Annual Report

Photo: Michael Krahn

Chairperson's Message

It has been a tough year for the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) with COVID-19, as we lost most of our Maple Syrup festival and special events such as Vanfest, Paws-itively Elgin, and the Fred Eaglesmith Charity Music Festival. Even so, the Authority was able to quickly implement the provincial and health unit guidelines and open its seasonal campground only a few weeks late. It is my understanding from staff that we saw record numbers of both transient campers and day user visitors in 2020, which says to me that people love coming to Springwater more and more all the time.

Thanks to the generous donation from the Bushell Estate, the Authority is working with Steelway Building Systems and plans to build the Evans Sisters Green Stage that will be used for educational programs, weddings, and special events. A very successful fundraiser for the new Visitor Centre will allow a safer check in and out process from the Campground. These capital projects will assist with accommodating the increase in users to the Springwater Conservation Area.

We also lost our ability to host our annual MarshQuest environmental education event at the Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area. Fortunately, thanks to the talented staff and partners they were able to pull together a very successful virtual event that has over 500 views, meaning many people experienced MarshQuest in a safe manner.

We continued our tree planting, wetlands, and erosion control projects to work with landowners and partners to improve the Catfish Creek watershed and continue to work closely with the Township of Malahide to manage ice jams in Port Bruce.

Details of the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act in 2020 will be worked on in 2021 and we hope that our seventy years of collaborative work with the community is not compromised by the changes.

Hopefully next year is as promising, and the public will be able to further benefit from the community programs and services offered by the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority.

Rick Cerna, CCCA Chairperson



Corporate Services

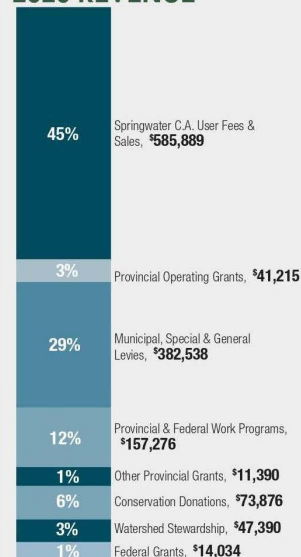
The activities of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of five (5) members appointed by the five (5) member municipalities of the Catfish Creek watershed.

Board Member	Municipality
Rick Cerna (Chairperson)	Township of Malahide
Mark Tinlin (Vice-Chairperson)	City of St. Thomas
Sally Martyn	Municipality of Central Elgin
Arthur Oslach	Town of Aylmer
Paul Buchner	Township of South-West Oxford

Staff Member	Position
Christopher Wilkinson	General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
Susan Simmons	Financial Services Coordinator
Dusty Underhill	Conservation Areas Supervisor
Tony Difazio	Resource Planning Coordinator
Peter Dragunas	Water Management Technician
Kelsey Oatman	Program Support Assistant
Emily Febrey	Community Outreach Technician
Gerrit Kremers	Field Technician
Austin Verbeek	Field Technician

2020 Financial Report

2020 REVENUE



2020 EXPENDITURES



Copies of the full 2020 Audited Financial Statements may be obtained by contacting the Authority Administration Centre.

Conservation Lands

In 2020, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) focused its Conservation Lands efforts on new initiatives, supporting the local constituents and increased users in a pandemic, while ensuring our lands are protected and enhanced. All thanks to the generous and financial support from different local, private, government agencies, and our many community partners, the following was undertaken in 2020.

- Began building the new Visitor Centre at the Springwater Conservation Area, thanks to a successful community fundraising campaign this project became a reality.
- Received a donation from the Donna Vera Evans Bushell Estate to create 'The Evans Sisters Stage', an environmentally friendly Green Roof Stage in the Springwater Day Use / Beach Area.
- Successfully opened the Springwater Conservation Area for the 2020 camping season with guidance from Southwestern Public Health Unit regarding COVID-19 protocols. A plan of action was made, and policies and protocols were developed that allowed seasonal and transient camping to occur with some limitations in services.
- Adjusted the Springwater Conservation Area group camping areas to add new individual sites to accommodate more transient campers.
- Received a second donation from the Donna Vera Evans Bushell Estate to be a part of the Art, Trees, and Trails initiative in collaboration with the Elevated Park, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority, and the St. Thomas-Elgin Art Centre. Local landmark paintings with local connections will be installed throughout Springwater Forest.
- Purchased 10 new picnic tables for the Springwater Conservation Area.
- Hosted various job placements through Fanshawe Employment Services, the March of Dimes, Green Jobs, and the Ontario Job Creation Partnership Program.
- Created an interactive website to highlight the stream rehabilitation work that needs to be done in the Archie Coulter Conservation Area, in conjunction with the Environmental Leadership (ELP) class from East Elgin Secondary School.
- Issued multiple research permits for work in our various Conservation Areas to organizations including The University of Guelph, Bird Canada, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- Completed an updated Springwater Master Plan that will create transparency, as well as guide development and sustainability in Springwater Conservation Area over the next few decades.
- Planted 2,200 American Chestnut Trees in the watershed in coordination with the ELP class, Ron Casier, and the Canadian Chestnut Council.





2021 Special Events Calendar



March 13 - 21	Maple Syrup Festival
	* two weekends & March Break
April 24	Opening Day of Trout Fishing
May 8	Tim Hortons Kids Trout Derby
June 11 - 13	Van Fest
July 10	Kid Cops & Canadian Tire Fishing Derby
July 24	Paws-Itively Elgin
August 20 - 22	Fred Eaglesmith Charity Music Festival
December 4	Christmas Spirit Walk

**These events are subject to Provincial Regulations, please check our website for the most up-to-date information*

For more information contact our office at 519-773-9037 or visit our website at www.catfishcreek.ca



Stewardship Services

Although Pandemic restrictions made planning and completing construction projects a challenge, demand remained high among watershed landowners wishing to restore natural habitats. Thanks to the commitment from long-term funding partners such as the Elgin Clean Water Program, the Elgin Stewardship Council, and Ducks Unlimited, the CCCA was able to help seven (7) landowners with stewardship initiatives in the watershed. With additional Federal Government funding assistance from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Authority was able to restore 350 metres of degraded stream banks, three (3) acres of wetlands, and six (6) acres of tall grass prairie with a focus on species at risk habitat within the Great Lakes Basin.

Environmental Planning

Historic high-water levels in the Great Lakes Basin have been the second largest battle that many shoreline residents have had to confront in 2020. Shoreline property owners are enduring successive years of unparalleled erosion rates resulting in the loss of land not seen before. Almost every shoreline resident has had to install new or repair existing shoreline protection measures in an attempt to protect dwellings and land. The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) has been working with landowners to facilitate Conservation Authority (CA) and Provincial approvals to expedite the timely construction of individual measures which may help protect communities along Lake Erie.

The CCCA has also worked with the County of Elgin on approvals to replace the main bridge crossing into Port Bruce and the Township of Malahide with important improvements to the harbour entrance at the confluence of Catfish Creek with Lake Erie.

Consistent with 2020 Legislative Mandates and Watershed Programs, the CCCA undertook the following:

- Issued 28 work permits or authorizations (0 major, 8 minor, and 20 routine) relative to the Conservation Authorities Act or the Drainage Act, each provided well under the proposed 42 calendar day turn around;
- Reviewed and commented on 111 Planning Act applications and Environmental Assessments (service timelines to be determined in 2021 following provincial review of the Planning Act);
- Provided responses to 44 property inquiries (legal, real estate, general information requests), each provided within the 7-day turnaround time required for pre-consultation.

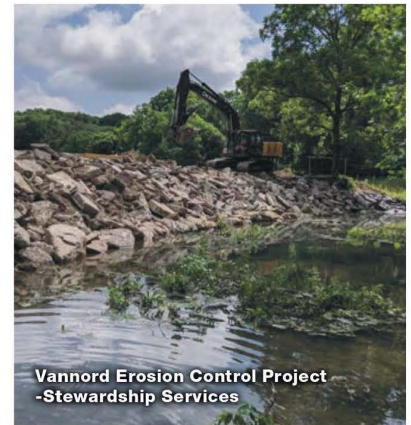
The Staff and Board Members of the CCCA have been working closely with Provincial Ministerial staff and local watershed member municipalities with revisions to the Conservation Authority Act and CA Programs which will be finalized and implemented in the 2022 fiscal year.



**Environmental Planning –
Port Bruce Bridge Construction**
Photo The Aylmer Express



**Environmental Planning –
Harbour Improvements**
Photo The Aylmer Express



**Vannord Erosion Control Project
-Stewardship Services**



**Wells Erosion Control Project
-Stewardship Services**



**Waneeta Beach Erosion –
Environmental Planning**

Water Management

The 2020 winter snowfall and temperatures were relatively moderate and in turn generated lower than average ice thickness throughout the Catfish Creek watershed. Two (2) Flood Watch, no Flood Warnings, three (3) Watershed Condition Statements and nine (9) Lake Erie Shoreline Condition Statements were issued during 2020. Recognizing the wide-ranging effectiveness of ice breaking/ice mitigation efforts and municipal emergency preparedness the relatively favourable weather conditions during the freshet runoff allowed for the ability of any creek ice to easily migrate out to Lake Erie which in turn reduced flooding in sensitive areas throughout the watershed.



**Water Management –
Ice and Flood Management**

It is worthy to note that as requirements for water increase in the Catfish Creek watershed through such variables as population migration, agricultural irrigation, and climate change, severe seasonal water level variability is increasingly widespread within the Catfish Creek and its tributaries. The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) staff work closely to monitor

water levels within the CCCA's administrative boundary to assist in making valued decisions on the appropriate conservation measures and actions for Irrigation Best Management Practices. This supports CCCA to achieve provincially outlined water conservation criteria. In the low water season of 2020 (spring to early fall), the Catfish Creek watershed received lower than average sustainable precipitation. The Catfish Creek and its tributaries were able to marginally maintain seasonal average flows.

Other Water Management activities in 2020 included:

- Continual monitoring of precipitation, streamflow, and watershed physiological conditions for flood forecasting and seasonal low water flows to assist CCCA staff with water management initiatives.
- Collection of surface water and groundwater information through the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.
- Provided technical assistance and support for CCCA water quality and quantity initiatives.
- Yearly review of the CCCA's Flood Warning, Flood Operations and Ice Management Plans, and Low Water Condition Strategies.



**Water Management –
Ice and Flood Management**

Environmental Education

This year due to COVID-19 the delivery of the Authority's Environmental Education Programs had to be shifted online. This created challenges, but also created content that can be utilized for years to come.

- Created eight (8) episodes of "Learn with Ranger Em" in a partnership with Rogers TV London and St. Thomas.
- Prior to the lockdown, hosted one (1) class for our mobile education program.
- With the help of the East Elgin Secondary School's Environmental Leadership Program (ELP) filmed an eleven (11) episode series for MarshQuest.
- In collaboration with Kettle Creek Conservation Authority and the ELP class, created an online experience for grade 7's for this year's Carolinian Forest Festival.
- Hosted the first W.I.L.D. Rangers Summer Camp for two weeks in September.
- Hosted the YWCA Newcomer Youth Club virtually to build birdhouses.
- Held a community-wide Art Contest in partnership with the Aylmer Fair that had over 30 participants.

Environmental Education –
Learn With Ranger Em Logo
(contributed by Paige Stirling)



Springwater Maple Syrup Program
Photo The Aylmer Express



Environmental Education – Learn With Ranger Em Filming
(contributed by Rogers TV)



Springwater Forest Enjoyment
Photo The Aylmer Express



Springwater Community Activity
Photo The Aylmer Express



Springwater Community Activity – Art Contest
with Aylmer Fair



Aylmer & Area Community Foundation
Cheque Presentation
Photo The Aylmer Express



Springwater Maple Syrup Program
Photo The Aylmer Express

Mission Statement

"To communicate and deliver resource management services and programs in order to achieve social and ecological harmony for the watershed"

The **CCCA** is a non-profit organization that needs your financial support and volunteerism to ensure locally driven environmental initiatives continue in the future. All donations are used for programs and projects within the Catfish Creek watershed.

YES, I would like to demonstrate my devotion and vision for a healthy environment by donating \$ _____ in support of the following initiative(s):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Protection & Preservation of Conservation Lands | ☐ Youth Environmental Education | ☐ Wildlife Habitat |
| ☐ Springwater Forest Preservation/Management | ☐ Commemorative Forest Program | ☐ Wetlands Restoration |

Official tax receipt will be issued for minimum donations of \$20.00. **Commemorative gifts and land donations graciously received.**

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

**Payment in Cash, Visa, Mastercard, or Debit will gladly be accepted at the CCCA Office or please mail a cheque to:
CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, 8079 Springwater Rd., R.R.#5, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R4**



2020 Partners/Donors/Volunteers



(please notify our office of any errors or omissions)

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Elgin Stewardship Council
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