

2009 Annual Report
*Lower Thames Valley
Conservation Authority*

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



*Trillium erectum - Red or Purple Trillium also known as
Wakerobin, grows at E.M. Warwick Conservation Area.*

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Partners in Conservation

Our Member Municipalities of
Chatham-Kent, Leamington, Lakeshore,
Middlesex Centre, London, Southwold,
Strathroy-Caradoc, West Elgin, Dutton/Dunwich
and Southwest Middlesex

Local Conservation Authorities

Conservation Ontario

Province of Ontario and its Ministries, Stewardships

Federal Government, its Ministries and Departments

Arvin Meritor
Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation
Canadian Automobile Association
Canadian Museum Association
Carolinian Canada
Chandra Clark
Chatham Daily News
Chatham-Kent Brain Injury Association
Chatham-Kent Children's Safety Village
Chatham-Kent Communities in Bloom
Chatham-Kent Community Foundation
Chatham-Kent Community Living
Chatham-Kent Health Alliance
Chatham-Kent Secondary School
Chatham-Kent Soil and Crop Association
Comber Chamber of Commerce
C.M. Wilson Seasonal Campers
Delaware Lioness
Delaware Lions Club
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Ecole Secondaire de Paincourt
Evergreen Foundation (The)
Forest City Checkers
Friends of Sharon Creek
Friends of Tilbury Northside Park
George Wickham

Glencoe District Lions Club
Goodreau Excavating
Green Streets Canada
Guardians of Longwoods
Handy Brothers Heating and Cooling
Home Depot (The)
John McGregor Secondary School
Katimavik
Kent Christian Farmers Association
Longwood Kennels
Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation
National Trails Council
Ontario Archaeological Society, London Chapter
Ontario Forestry Association
Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Optimist Club of Mount Brydges
Optimist Club of West Lorne
Rodney Lions Club
Rona Cashway Chatham
Royal Canadian Astronomical Society
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 251
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 598
Scribendi Editing
Ska-Nah-Doht Advisory Committee
Southern First Nations Secretariat
TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation
Thames Canadian Heritage River Committee
Tilbury District High School – Environment Club
Tilbury and District Horticultural Society
Trees Canada
Trees Ontario Foundation
Union Gas
University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus
Upper Thames Military Re-enactment Society
Versacold Atlas
Wallaceburg Community Living
West Elgin Secondary School
Wheatley Two Creeks Association



Thank You!

And to all other individuals, corporations, foundations, government agencies, Scouts and Guides, youth groups, schools, businesses and service clubs, which have partnered with us in 2009 to help us achieve our goal to efficiently protect and enhance the environment for present and future generations.

Celebrating the "Guardians of Longwoods", staff hold an annual BBQ to thank its volunteers. Volunteers participate in every aspect of operations including maintenance, exhibits, events, photography, and many are Directors. We also publicly recognize our youth and adult volunteers through the annual Ontario Volunteer Services Awards program. Pictured left are volunteers gathered at Longwoods Road Conservation Area in July 2009, enjoying the barbecue and evening activities.

Chair's Remarks & Executive Summary

It is my pleasure as Chair, to bring greetings from the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA). Our vision is to **work with the local community** to protect and enhance the environment for present and future generations. We efficiently serve our member municipalities and residents of the lower Thames region, working hard to cultivate new and rewarding **partnerships** that help us manage watershed natural resources.

In 2009, the LTVCA **protected life and property** from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion by predicting flows and water levels, operating flood control structures and releasing flood warnings to municipalities and agencies. It was a challenging year which presented three significant runoffs requiring protection from the McGregor Creek Dam. Plan input and review identified potential threats by monitoring new development near or in natural hazard areas. Eighty-two applications were reviewed under the Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alteration to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation.

Habitat was protected and restored as we moved through our twelfth year of an agreement with the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In 2009, 191 applications for proposed works in watercourses and effects on fish habitat were reviewed. Great strides were made in reforestation, as staff engaged local schools, community groups and businesses in tree plantings made possible through the C-K Greening Strategy and funding provided through the Trees Ontario Foundation and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Response program. Additional donations were received from various charitable foundations including the T.D. Friends of the Environment Foundation, Evergreen Foundation, Trees Canada, Chatham-Kent Community Foundation, Union Gas and private individuals. In 2009, 76,133 trees were planted across the watershed and region.

The LTVCA continued its work in **research and monitoring** with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment in the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program, laying the groundwork for the development of watershed report cards for the lower Thames region. As well, awareness for Rondeau Bay's species at risk was building through information and education.

The **Drinking Water Source Protection Program** highlights of 2009 included work on the Assessment Report - a technical document that forms the basis of the source protection plans. Technical studies were completed to delineate and assess vulnerable areas, including intake protection zones and wellhead protection areas for the Lake Erie surface water intakes and the wellheads of the Ridgetown and Highgate well supply systems. Drinking water quality issues and threats were identified. The Tier One water budget was also completed. The draft proposed Assessment Report for the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area will be posted in early 2010 for comment. An increase in First Nation participation within the Region was evident as two First Nations seats on the Source Protection Committee were filled. Community outreach efforts were an important part of delivering the Source Protection Program with many public open houses held. Under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program, funding for various projects was provided to eligible landowners within a certain area of a municipal intake or wellhead.

Conservation lands allow the public to **enjoy, learn and respect the environment**, and provide important habitat for wildlife. In 2009, 5,246 students and chaperones took part in school programs while more than 27,500 visitors enjoyed events, camping and day use. We accessed nearly \$130,000 of funding to hire 14 workers, who assisted full time staff with conservation projects.

The **Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation** has raised over \$500,000 for conservation projects over the years, and I recognize the volunteer Directors for their ongoing support of the LTVCA.

In closing, I thank our Directors who represented their municipalities well over the past year, balancing watershed needs with needs of individual municipalities, and the staff team for their dedicated work and support.



Brian King - Chair Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority 2009.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Brian W. King". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brian King - Chair LTVCA

Board of Directors & Committees



Directors conduct their Annual General Meeting in Chatham-Kent at the Ridgeway Campus of the University of Guelph - in February, 2009.

Committees:

Personnel and Finance / Executive

Brian King, Stan Lidster, Ron Doane, Paddy Byrne, Bill Derbyshire

Ice Management

Brian King, Stan Lidster, Paddy Byrne, Art Stirling, Steve Pinsonneault

Ska-Nah-Doht

(Conservation Authority Representatives):

Brian King, Stan Lidster, Stanley Caveney, Conrad Wodrich, Ron Doane, Jerry Campbell

Chair: Brian King - Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Vice-chair: Stan Lidster - Township of Southwold

Steve Pinsonneault - Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Art Stirling - Municipality of Chatham-Kent

John Yokom - Municipality of Dutton / Dunwich

Paddy Byrne - Town of Lakeshore

Bill Derbyshire - Municipality of Leamington

Stanley Caveney - City of London

Conrad Wodrich - Municipality of Middlesex Centre

John Kavelaars - Municipality of Southwest Middlesex

Ron Doane - Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc

Mary Bodnar - Municipality of West Elgin



2009 Board of Directors

Front l-r: Paddy Byrne, Mary Bodnar, Bill Derbyshire, Brian King

Back l-r: Art Stirling, Steve Pinsonneault, Ron Doane, John Yokom, Conrad Wodrich, Stanley Caveney

Absent: Stan Lidster, John Kavelaars.

Budget

The LTVCA's 2009 budget of \$2,534,770 received approval in February. Jerry Campbell - General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer, directed the administration and financial aspects of the LTVCA, with support from the Accounting Clerks - Sharlet Piggott and Sandy Maynard.

Funding sources included:

31% in Federal and Provincial grants

19% in revenues from program and services fees

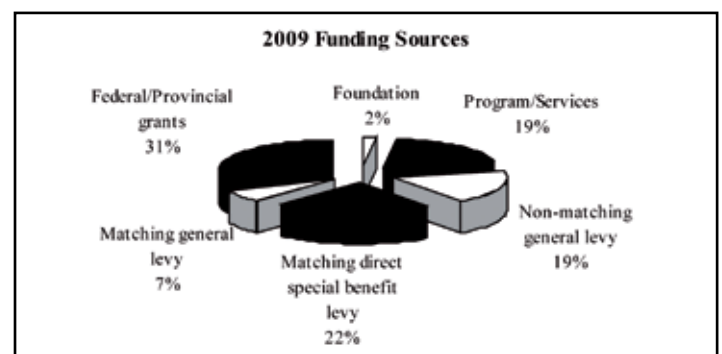
19% in non matching general levy

22% in matching direct special benefit levy

7% in matching general levy

2% in grants and revenues from the Lower Thames

Valley Conservation Foundation



Staff Directory 2009

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Administration Building

Jerry Campbell - General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

Jack Robertson - Water Management Supervisor

Valerie Towsley - Resource Technician

Sandy Maynard - Accounting Clerk

Sharlet Piggott - Accounting Clerk

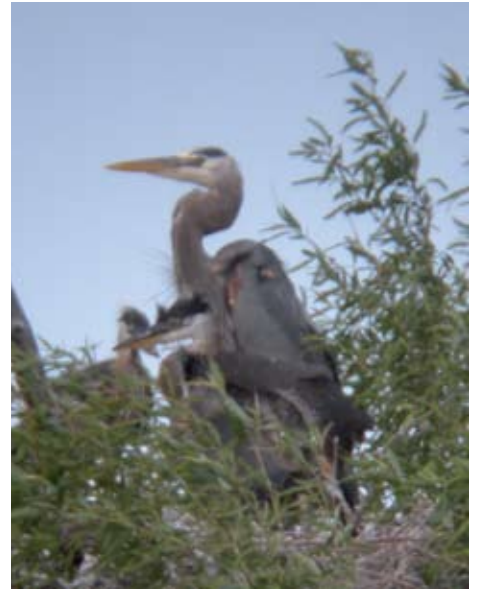
Jason Wintermute - GIS Specialist / Resource Technician

Chitra Gowda - Source Protection Technical Coordinator

Randall VanWagner - Environmental & Forestry Partnership Coordinator

Bob Pennington - Environmental Technical Assistant

**Chris Tasker - Source Protection Manager of the Thames-Sydenham
and Region Source Protection Region - (Lower Thames Valley,
St. Clair Region and Upper Thames River Conservation
Authorities)**



*Ardea herodias - Great Blue Herons
nesting in Rondeau Bay.*

Longwoods Road Conservation Area

Workshop

David Little - Eastern District Supervisor

Bruce Clark - Construction & Maintenance Technician

Resource Centre and Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum

Bonnie Carey - Community Relations Coordinator

Agnes Vriends - Clerk / Secretary

Karen Mattila - Village Curator

Rose Nicholas - Village Education Technician

Jerry DeZwart - Conservation Education Technician

**Derekica Snake - First Nations Liaison / Source Protection Technician of
the Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region**

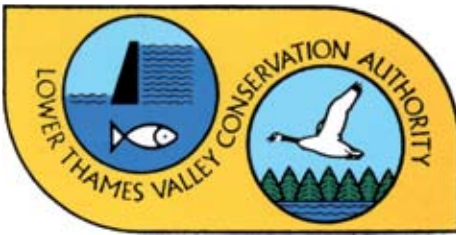
C.M. Wilson Conservation Area

Workshop

Russ Dysarz - Western District Supervisor



February Thames River flooding in Delaware.



Our Vision

“The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) is a watershed-based partner, working with the local community, providing services and information to efficiently protect and enhance the environment for present and future generations.”

Our Objectives

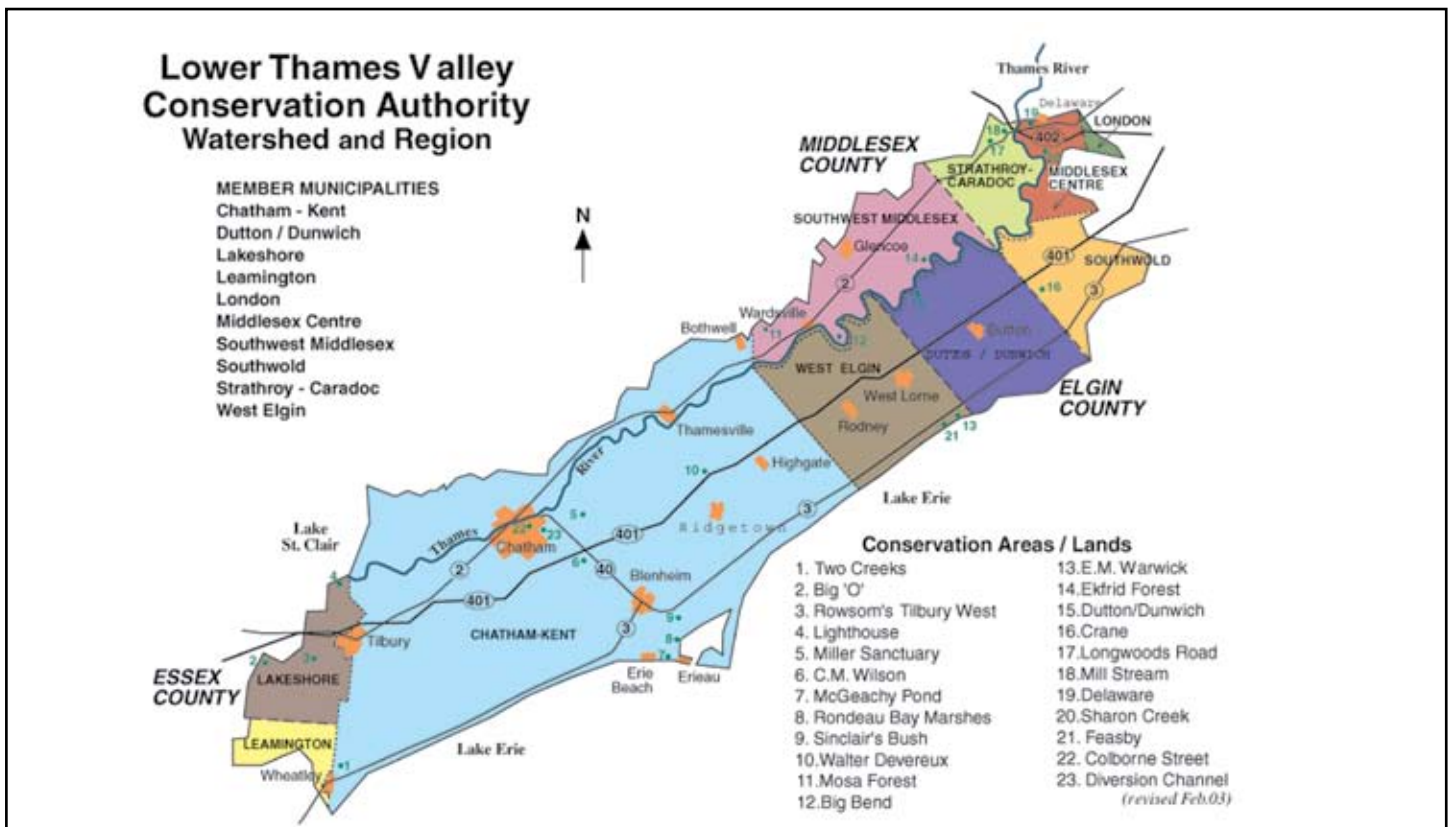
Protecting Life & Property

Protecting & Restoring Habitat

Research & Monitoring

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect

Partnering with the Local Community



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. 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 106,971 people.

Protecting Life & Property

Water Management Flood Control



The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) was subject to numerous flow events in 2009. Jack Robertson - Water Management Supervisor monitored conditions throughout the year.

A moderate climactic event in mid December 2008 left the Thames region in a saturated condition. The area was subject to heavy snowfalls and a snow/rain mix event on December 23 and 24 that provided 30 to 45 mm of precipitation. Temperatures reached a record 14 degrees Celsius on December 27 with an additional 5 to 10 mm of rainfall. This combination of climactic events produced a flow of 930 cubic metres per second (CMS) on the Thames River at the Byron gauge on December 29. The Thamesville gauge recorded a flow of 820 CMS on December 31 and Chatham recorded a water level of 179.5 m on January 1. The LTVCA closed the dam on McGregor Creek and initiated pumping operations between 1800 hrs on December 30 and 2300 hrs on January 2. This flow event flooded the river flats upstream of Chatham and caused flooding to many streets, parks and low lying areas adjacent to the river within the Chatham urban area. It also caused basement flooding for merchants along King Street.

Another significant event occurred in mid February. After a cold and snowy January, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority had approximately 59 mm of water equivalent in the snowpack and LTVCA had 20 to 25 cm of

ice on the Thames River from Chatham to the river mouth. Temperatures of 8 to 10 degrees Celsius were recorded on February 10 and 11. Rainfall affected most of the region on February 11 and early into the morning of February 12. Rain gauges within the LTVCA recorded levels of 38 mm at Dutton, 34 mm at Thamesville and 42 mm in Chatham. This event created significant runoff on the Indian and McGregor Creek watersheds with flows roughly equivalent to an event in February 1985 when the water level in the South Chatham area was about 30 cm above Rhodes Dam bypass or about 3 cm below the floor of the stores at the corner of Queen St. and Indian Creek Rd. In the 1985 event, approximately 400 South Chatham homes and businesses were either flooded or inaccessible due to flooding. The events of 1985 and February 2009 were equivalent to a one in 50 year event.

Flooding to the South Chatham area during the February 2009 event was averted due to the presence of the McGregor Creek diversion channel. On the Thames River at the Byron gauge, the flow reached 930 CMS at 0100 hours on February 13. The LTVCA closed the gates on the McGregor Creek Dam mid day February 13 and began pumping operations. This operation is undertaken if water levels in Chatham are expected to be over 3.7 m above normal to keep the Thames River waters from entering the South Chatham area. The Thames River peaked at the Dutton stream gauge at a flow of 800 CMS at 0700 hours on February 14. The Thames River then crested in the Thamesville area at a flow of 915 CMS at 1500 hrs on February 15. This level of flooding barely shows water on the street at the town centre. The Thames River peaked in Chatham at an elevation of 5 m above normal (179.9 m Canadian Geodetic Datum) at 0600 hours on Monday, February 16. This level of flooding affects Water St., Siskind Crt., Thames St., Pegley St., parking lots, parks and some basements on King St. adjacent to the river. It was the highest level reached in Chatham since the flood of 1985 when the river reached 5.5 m above normal. The gates on the McGregor Creek Dam were opened on Wednesday, February 18. The water levels recorded in Thamesville and Chatham during this event were 15 cm and 10 cm lower, respectively than the flood in 1977.

Protecting Life & Property

The third significant runoff event occurred in mid March. On Saturday, March 7 the area experienced a general rainfall ranging from 50 mm in Chatham to 45 mm in London. As a result, over the next two days the Thames River responded and recorded flows of 380 CMS at the Byron stream gauge and 410 CMS at the Thamesville gauge. This rainfall event was followed by another general rainfall event on Tuesday night March 10 ranging from 40 mm in Chatham to 30 mm in the London area. With the Thames River already swollen, these rains added to the existing flow. The river peaked on Thursday morning March 12 in Thamesville at a flow of 525 CMS and in Chatham that same day at a level of almost 3.7 m above normal. For comparison purposes, the level of the Thames River in Chatham during the mid February event reached 5 m above normal.

Date	Byron Flow (cms)	Thamesville Flow (cms)	Chatham Water Level (m.)
February 3 to 5, 1968	980	840*	180.3*
March 15 to 18, 1977	970	955	180.0
April 14 to 19, 1979	810	860	179.3
Feb 25 to 27, 1985	820	860*	180.4*
January 4 to 9, 1993	800	660	178.9
February 20 to 24, 1997	930	700	179.1
July 10 to 14, 2000	920	465	177.8
Dec 29-08 to Jan 1-09	925	820	179.5
Feb 12 to 16, 2009	930	915	179.9
Mar 9 to 12, 2009	380	525	178.6

*The three significant flow events of 2009 can be compared with other recent flood events by way of the above table.
Note - * affected by ice jamming.*

Great Lakes Levels

The Great Lakes generally tracked on their long term average levels during 2009. Both Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair spent the first half of the year approximately 10 to 15 cms above their long term average before trending down to their long term averages for the remainder of the year. With lake levels at this point and the lack of any significant wind generated storms, no flood events were recorded on the lakes in 2009.

Provincial Grant Funding for Capital Maintenance & Flood Forecasting

The Conservation Authority receives grant funding from the province each year for the operation, routine minor maintenance and preventative maintenance of flood and erosion control projects, flood forecasting and warning, chronic ice management, legal costs for ongoing joint Conservation Authority / Provincial capital projects, watershed management and related administration.

Category	2009	2008	2007
Flood Control Operations	120,603	120,603	120,603
Hazard Prev. / Watershed Mgmt.	37,006	37,006	37,006
Total	157,609	157,609	157,609

This table outlines the total approved funding in each category in 2009 as well as comparable numbers in 2008 and 2007. The costs outlined are the grants received. Eligible project costs would be twice the number shown.

Protecting Life & Property

Land Use Planning & Regulations

Municipal Plan Input & Review

Under the Conservation Authorities Act

Plan input and review is one of the ways the Conservation Authority monitors development and achieves its objectives. The input we have on new development near or in the natural hazards like flood plains and steep slopes, ensures identification of potential hazards before complications arise. This can be of great importance to municipalities, developers and private individuals who may not be aware of potential hazards.



In 2009, 1,142 plan reviews were completed for LTVCA municipalities.

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Official Plans (OP)	0	2	3	0	1	2
Official Plan Amendments (OPA)	7	8	11	7	3	8
Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws (ZB)	2	2	3	0	1	5
Zoning Bylaw Amendments (ZA)	110	135	102	109	107	137
Severances (SEV)	107	132	128	124	118	181
Minor Variances (MV)	42	39	46	49	50	59
Plans of Subdivision (SUB)	5	1	3	11	3	8
Drainage Reports & Maintenance. (DR)	46	54	49	49	96	75
Property Clearances (PC)	82	41	72	33	47	42
General Property Inquiries (GPI)	<u>735</u>	<u>694</u>	<u>731</u>	<u>452</u>	<u>317</u>	<u>374</u>
Total	1,142	1,108	1,148	834	743	891

Planning development issues reviewed in 2009.



Input LTVCA has on new development near or in natural hazards like steep slopes, ensures identification of potential hazards before complications arise.

	Chatham-Kent	Dutton/Dunwich	Lakeshore	Lincolnton	London	Middlesex Centre	Southwest Middlesex	Southwold	Strathroy-Caradoc	West Elgin
Official Plans										
Official Plan Amendments	3	1		1	2					
Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws	1		1							
Zoning Bylaw Amendments	83	8	1	1	4	5	1			7
Severances	61	13	12	4		5	4			8
Minor Variances	23		3	2	3	4			2	5
Plans of Subdivision	3									2
Property Clearances	31	1	2	1	3		2		3	3
Drainage Reports	58	5	2			3	1			8
General Property Inquiries	400	47	74	9	4	19	24	20	30	58
TOTAL SERVICES PER MUNICIPALITY	663	74	100	17	6	31	41	28	35	91
SERVICES										
MUNICIPALITY										

Plan input and review services by Municipality 2009.

Protecting Life & Property

Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses



The main objective of the Conservation Authority Regulation is to ensure public safety with regards to natural hazards through issuance of permits for works within or in proximity to lakes, rivers, streams or wetlands. This picture illustrates how close the flood waters from the Thames River came to a Delaware church in February, 2009.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Conservation Ontario developed Policy Guidelines for the “Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation” in 2009. The Guidelines provide a framework for the development of policy guidelines for individual Conservation Authorities. The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has had Operational Guidelines in place regarding the Regulation since 2006.

The Conservation Authority’s new Regulation was in effect for the third year in 2009. The regulation is known as the Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses. The new Regulation came into effect in May of 2006. More landowners are becoming aware of the Regulation and are concerned with how the regulation affects their property. The main objective of the Regulation is to ensure public safety with regards to natural hazards through issuance of permits for works within or in proximity to lakes, rivers, streams or wetlands. The LTVCA reviewed 82 applications under the Regulation in 2009. One application was denied. Two applications required a hearing in front of the Conservation Authority’s Executive Committee and were approved with conditions.



A landowner along Erie Shore Drive and Lake Erie proposes to replace the existing steel jetties which have fallen into disrepair from constant lakeshore processes of wave action, sand scour and ice movement. New structures are allowed so long as they are like for like, that is, no further out into the lake than what is existing.

Protecting Life & Property

Department of Fisheries & Oceans Drain Classification

It was the twelfth year of an agreement with the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for the review of proposed works in watercourses and their effect on fish habitat as it relates to the Federal Fisheries Act. The LTVCA entered a “Level Two” agreement with DFO in 2004. Level Two status means that the Conservation Authority conducts the initial assessment of the project to identify any impacts on fish habitat. If an impact is foreseen as a result of the proposal, the matter is then referred to DFO. With Level Two status the Conservation Authority can also determine how the proponent can mitigate any impacts. Staff attended several conferences and meetings to improve compliance with the Fisheries Act.

The LTVCA reviewed 191 applications under the DFO agreement in 2009. The applications primarily included maintenance and newly designed works under the Drainage Act. However there were some applications from private individuals involving shoreline works along the lakes and waterways within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Authority.

The Conservation Authority is also a longstanding associate member of the Chatham-Kent-Essex Chapter of the Drainage Superintendents Association of Ontario. This organization holds approximately four to six meetings per year.



Site inspections are undertaken on municipal concrete open footed road bridges that are in a deteriorated state. A new, larger structure is proposed to replace this existing bridge.



Valerie Towsley - LTVCA's Resource Technician does a site inspection after a municipality completes a drain cleanout.

Protecting Life & Property

Low Water Response



The Conservation Authority monitors watershed conditions to determine if the area is in a low water situation. Over many recent years, summer rainfalls have been low enough to create borderline situations of low water.

A Level One Low Water Condition is characterized by a combination of the three-month precipitation indicators being below 80 per cent of normal and low stream flows throughout the watershed. There were areas within the Conservation Authority that received less than normal precipitation during the summer of 2009 but none of the situations warranted entering a Level One Low Water Condition.

Wetlands such as marshes, swamps, fens and bogs are very important as they slowly release water during times of drought, "recharging areas" like giant sponges.

Other Water Related Initiatives

Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI)

The Province of Ontario has a program in place that provides 50% grants to undertake repairs to existing flood and erosion control projects of Conservation Authorities. It is known as the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI). The LTVCA applied and obtained funding in 2009 to undertake the repair of the scour erosion problem in the bottom of the McGregor Creek Diversion Channel. The preferred alternative to repair the problem was the construction of a 60 cm deep gabion stone lined channel in the middle of the diversion channel.

2010 Provincial Air Photo Initiative

The Province, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, is laying the groundwork for another air photo project in Southern Ontario in 2010. Jason Wintermute is the LTVCA's GIS Specialist / Resource Technician and attends meetings organized by the committee which is planning this initiative.



The repair of the scour erosion problem in the bottom of the McGregor Creek Diversion Channel was undertaken by Delway Construction of Chatham from the middle of August to the middle of October, at a cost of approximately \$610,000.

Protecting & Restoring Habitat

Reforestation

LTVCA Tree Planting Program

From 1988 to 2009, the LTVCA has planted approximately 2,011,933 trees within the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's watershed. In 2009, 76,133 trees were planted into windbreaks and woodlots on private lands, memorial forests and conservation area nurseries (2008 - 84,809 trees planted).

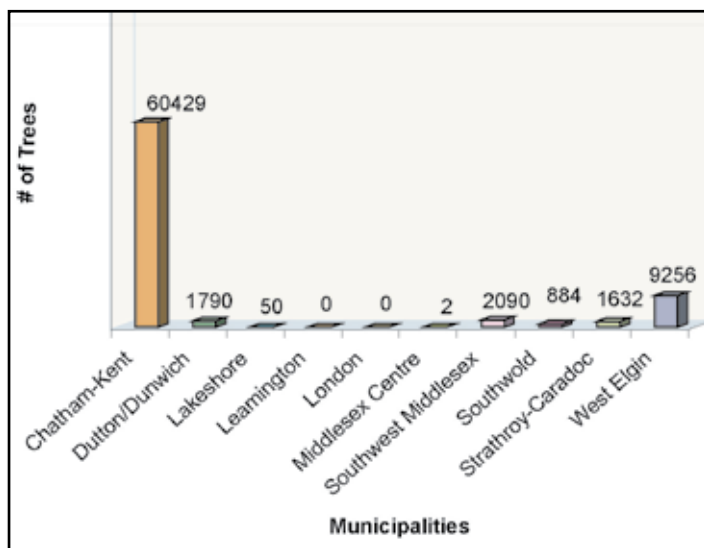
The cost to landowners for the Conservation Authority to supply trees varied in 2009 depending upon the species, ranging from \$0.65 to \$1.70 per tree for seedling stock. A minimum tree order of \$100 and 25 trees per species was required. Funding for eligible tree planting projects was provided through the Trees Ontario Foundation and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Response program. Additional donations were received from various charitable foundations including the T.D. Friends of the Environment Foundation, Evergreen Foundation, Trees Canada, Chatham-Kent Community Foundation, Union Gas and private individuals.

The Conservation Authority purchased tree seedlings in bulk from three main suppliers in 2009. The

primary source of trees was private nurseries including Baker's Nursery in Bayfield, Forest Care in St. Williams and Richardson's Pineneedle Farms in Pontypool. Versacold Atlas of Chatham, donated a cooler for the seedlings. Trees were sorted, packaged into individual orders and distributed to our customers. The whole process took three to four weeks.

Property owners rented the Conservation Authority's machine tree planters. In some cases trees were machine planted by the Conservation Authority's staff or hand planted by landowners, LTVCA staff and/or volunteers.

LTVCA staff made several presentations to local organizations including visits to the Blenheim Horticultural Society, an Environmental Workshop held in Chatham, and the Communities in Bloom judges. Staff also attended various workshops and forums related to tree planting and fund raising, including the Carolinian Canada forum at Point Pelee and the Species at Risk Stewardship funding workshop in Toronto.



Forestry program by Municipality 2009.

TREES SOLD TO INDIVIDUALS FOR PRIVATE PLANTING

Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc	1,632
Municipality of S.W. Middlesex	2,014
Municipality of West Elgin	9,256
Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich	1,790
Township of Southwold	884
Town of Lakeshore	50
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	60,114
	75,740

MEMORIAL FOREST PLANTINGS IN 2009

McKinlay Woodlands at C.M. Wilson C.A.	313
Tilbury Northside Park	2
Badder & Robinson at Mosa Forest	75
Sharon Creek	2
Big Bend	1

TOTAL TREES PLANTED 2009	<u>76,133</u>
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Protecting & Restoring Habitat

Chatham-Kent (C-K) Greening Strategy

Randall VanWagner - Environmental & Forestry Partnership Coordinator and Bob Pennington - Environmental Technical Assistant, worked diligently to achieve the strategy goals. Progress was made on all fronts. The challenge issued by the Mayor of Ottawa to all Ontario Municipalities was accepted by C-K Mayor - Randy Hope, and we have already exceeded our goal of 200,000 trees in four years. A Professional Registered Forester performed an audit of Municipality owned woodlots and submitted his report to Tom Beaton - Manager of Parks, Recreation, Horticulture and Cemeteries. As an update to the Greening Strategy program, a report to Council was made in December. Councillors were very supportive in their comments on the program and the report was passed unanimously. Over 350 large stock trees were planted in Kingston Park in Chatham and 3,000 tree seedlings were planted at the Tilbury Northside Park. In addition to the trees, we successfully applied for a grant to provide trails for this park. Together with other funding, over \$75,000 went to Tilbury Northside Park trails including the planting of 30 large stock trees.



On hand for the ribbon cutting of the Tilbury Northside Trail Project were l-r: Brian King (Chair of LTVCA), Dave Van Kestern (MP), John Fenton (Friends of Northside), Randy Hope (Mayor of Chatham-Kent), Brian Fluker (Ward #1 West Kent Councillor), Rob Veccia (Municipality of Chatham-Kent Parks).



The LTVCA received \$35,000 from the National Trails Council, \$35,000 from Chatham-Kent Trails Life Cycle Fund and approximately \$10,000 from other interest groups for a 1.5 km trail, along with signage for the Tilbury Northside Trail Project.



Large stock trees were planted beside the school in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent park by the John McGregor Secondary School students. Signage was also created by the students for each tree, highlighting the Latin and common names.

Protecting & Restoring Habitat

Forestry Grant Programs

Forestry staff applied for grants and donations from many organizations during 2009 and received in excess of \$203,000 from such organizations as the Evergreen Foundation (\$10,000), Trees Ontario Foundation (\$34,000), Government of Canada, EAB Response program (\$15,000), Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Job Creation Program funding (\$136,000) and many others. In addition, help was received from private volunteers. Jacob Trudel, a Chatham-Kent Secondary School co-op student, returned from last year and completed various projects during his term, including the design and construction of an osprey nesting platform. The platform was erected near the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area pond. Lumber and material for this project were supplied by Rona Cashway, in Chatham.



The ash trees at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area were devastated by the emerald ash borer. Due to the labour intensiveness of cutting the trees down with a chain saw one by one, a contractor was hired to push the trees down with a bulldozer.



Staff from T. D. Canada Trust and students from Chatham-Kent Secondary School's life skills class, planted large stock trees to replace ones killed by the emerald ash borer at the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area. T.D. Friends of the Environment Foundation provided the funding for this project.



Scott Heuvelman planted 3,800 trees on his orchard just north of Chatham. He installed black plastic mulch and an irrigation system for ongoing maintenance of the trees.



The Chatham-Kent Secondary School football team planted 4,000 tree seedlings on Wayne Jackson's farm east of Ridgetown.

Protecting & Restoring Habitat

Community Trees Initiative

For 2009, a project co-ordinator was brought aboard to handle the Trees for Tomorrow program. Greg Van Every was hired and worked out of the Stewardship Kent Ministry of Natural Resources offices in Chatham. Funding was arranged to cover Greg's term of office and he worked part time during the spring and summer months. This funding has since been extended. Greg visited all area schools and arranged demonstrations of the aspects of tree planting. He decided to change the program name from Trees for Tomorrow to Community Trees Initiative. He also set up a blog which is very informative with input from local students. Greg will be initiating some Tall Grass Prairie projects in 2010 and has managed to collect a sizeable amount of seed with the help of staff and volunteers. Most of the tree seed collected last fall was planted by students in our greenhouse under Greg's supervision and approximately 10,000 seedlings were successfully grown and either transplanted into nurseries or donated to community groups for use as give-aways at various functions.

Conservation Services

The Conservation Authority provided financial support to the Chatham-Kent Soil and Crop Association with their Conservation Farmer Award in 2009. Judging was conducted in December and the award was presented at the Chatham-Kent Soil and Crop Association Annual Meeting in mid January of 2010. The 2009 award went to Mike Buis and Van Mar Farms, Home of Buis Beef.



Attending the award program were l-r: Brian King (Chair of co-sponsor LTVCA), Ed VanDeWynckel (President of co-sponsor Kent County Soil and Crop Improvement Association) and Mike Buis (recipient of award).



l-r: LTVCA's Water Management Supervisor - Jack Robertson, presented the 2009 Proficiency in Farm Structures and the Environment Award to Brent Hartman.

The LTVCA has made a contribution to the Scholarships and Awards Committee of Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph for over 20 years. The award in 2009 was the sponsorship of "Proficiency in Farm Structures and the Environment Award". The \$200 was awarded to Brent Hartman of St. Paul's Station at convocation in May. The campus offers an excellent program and for years, has been a promoter of the conservation ethic in agriculture.

Research & Monitoring

Provincial Water Monitoring Program

The Conservation Authority continued to work with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) in the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program. The intent of the program is to have a provincial network for monitoring ambient ground water conditions. Such a network will assist in the monitoring of potential drought conditions and in the implementation of provincial and local action plans and environmental decision making by municipalities and the province.

In 2009, the Conservation Authority undertook water sampling at eight of the wells and sent the samples to a laboratory for analysis. We also continued working with the MOE with the sampling of in-stream waters at nine locations in the watershed region. In this program, water is collected on a monthly basis in the spring, summer and fall and then sent to the MOE laboratory in Toronto for testing. The results are then returned to the Conservation Authority. Both of these programs emphasize our role as the primary delivery agent for provincial programs related to the environment and natural resources.

This also marked the second year that the Conservation Authority undertook testing for e-coli at each of its stream sampling locations. The results from this testing, as well as the results obtained from the provincial lab, will be useful in the preparation of Watershed Report Cards for the Conservation Authority.

The LTVCA received funding from the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Job Creation Program to hire one water program related position for approximately seven months in 2009. The Conservation Authority also received funding from the Provincial Experience program and the Canada Summer Jobs Program for two positions. With this funding these staff undertook work related to the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program, Provincial Water Quality Program, the Provincial Dam Inventory Project and a Ground-Water-Fed Stream project.

Rondeau Bay & Species at Risk

A group consisting of staff members from the Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Fisheries & Oceans, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and the Conservation Authority, is concerned with aquatic weed removal in Rondeau Bay and the protection of the **Species at Risk** located here. The focus of the group is to work with the local community to promote awareness within Rondeau Bay.

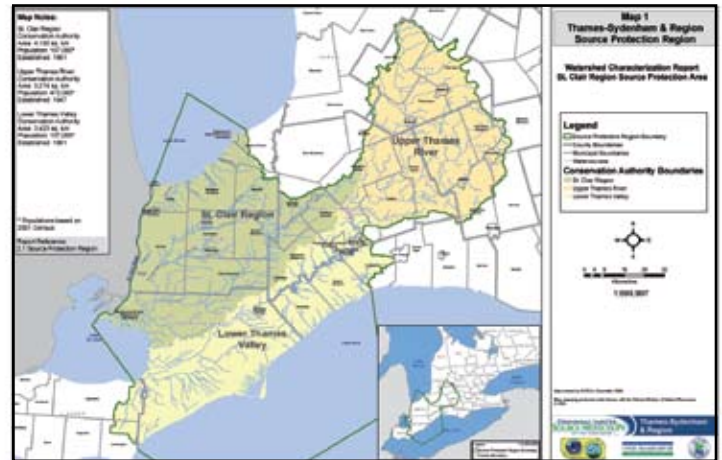
Species	COSEWIC Status	MNR Status
Reptiles and Amphibians:		
Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle	Threatened	Threatened
Blandings Turtle	Threatened	Threatened
Spotted Turtle	Special Concern	Special Concern
Five-lined Skink	Special Concern	Special Concern
Eastern Fox Snake	Threatened	Threatened
Eastern Hognose Snake	Threatened	Threatened
Fowler's Toad	Threatened	Threatened
Fish		
Spotted Gar	Threatened	Threatened
Lake Chubsucker	Threatened	Threatened
Warmouth	Special Concern	Special Concern

Information provided courtesy of the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC). The NHIC compiles, maintains and provides information on rare, threatened and endangered species and spaces in Ontario.

The table above (<http://www.rondeauwatershed.ca/speciesatrisk.htm>) provides names of aquatic species that are currently at risk in the Rondeau Bay watershed and their status as determined by Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR).

Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region

Water is critical to all aspects of our lives and it is important that we ensure there is a safe and reliable source of water for all our uses - now and in the future. Our municipal drinking water comes from lakes, rivers, streams or underground sources (aquifers) located across the province. Clean and plentiful water supplies are among the most important natural resources. In our region, most municipalities rely on piped water from the Great Lakes. This does not lessen the importance of protecting water source areas within our watersheds. We need to be proactive to protect our watersheds and, as a result, the Great Lakes upon which we depend.



The Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region.

The Upper Thames River, Lower Thames Valley and St. Clair Region Conservation Authorities have partnered together to coordinate the development of Source Protection Plans for our watersheds. Together the three form the Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region. We are committed to work with our municipalities, other stakeholders and the public to develop Source Protection Plans that serve to protect our drinking water while taking into account the other needs of our communities.



As laid out in the regulations, a third of the Committee is composed of municipal members, members representing the major sectors in the region make up another third, and environmental non-government organizations, recreation, academics, landowners and individuals make up the remaining third. The Minister of the Environment appointed Robert Bedggood as Chair; and in addition, there are three seats for First Nation's representation.

Source Protection Committee

The responsibility of the Source Protection Committee, appointed in November 2007, is to guide the development of local source protection plans. An important part of this process will be public and stakeholder involvement. Over the next five years, there will be a number of opportunities to become involved through open houses, forums and working groups. In addition, information will be provided through publications such as this one and through our website at www.sourcewaterprotection.on.ca. Information on committee meetings including notices, meeting minutes and reports can also be accessed through the website.

2009 Highlights

The **Assessment Report** is a technical document that forms the basis of the source protection plans. The report is a compilation of the findings of various technical studies.

In the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area, technical studies were completed to delineate and assess **vulnerable areas** as outlined in the legislation. These areas include intake protection zones (**IPZ**) and wellhead protection areas (**WHPA**) for the Lake Erie surface water intakes to the Chatham, South Chatham Kent, Wheatley and West Elgin water treatment plants, and the wellheads of the Ridgetown and Highgate well supply systems. **Highly vulnerable aquifers** and **significant groundwater recharge areas** are delineated and assessed as well.

Drinking water quality **issues** (in raw/untreated water) and drinking water **threats** within the IPZ and WHPA are identified. A preliminary investigation of conditions (threats due to past activities) was conducted. An enumeration of threats that 'are or would be' significant threats is completed.

The **Tier One Water Budget** was completed. The purpose of a water budget is to identify where drinking water sources may be stressed and determine those areas where water taking might have an impact on those sources. The Tier One Water Budget identifies those sub-watersheds where additional water budget work is required.

The draft proposed Assessment Report for the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area will be posted on the internet in January 2010, for a 35 day comment period, and made available at the LTVCA as well as the West Elgin municipal office in Rodney. Contact Chitra Gowda at the LTVCA for more information on the Lower Thames Valley Assessment Report.



During the bus tour in July, water plant tours provided opportunities for the Source Protection Committee members to ask questions about local conditions of municipal drinking water intakes and wells in Chatham-Kent.



Members of the Source Protection Committee, source protection staff and municipal planners engaged in a training workshop at Ridgetown Campus - University of Guelph in August. The purpose of the workshop was to learn about the processes involved in the development of Source Protection Plans.

An increase in **First Nation participation** within the Source Protection Region was evident in 2009. The year began with the production of a First Nations and Water calendar. This was followed by an effective proposal for an Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program grant enabling Derekica Snake - First Nations Liaison/Source Protection Technician to work with each of the eight First Nations to gather information on “Where Does Our Water Come From?”. Derekica was invited to various career and health fairs and was relied upon to organize a regional Source Protection display at the annual London District Chiefs Council Elders and Youth Gathering. Aboriginal Voices – Turtle Island – a play encompassing water attitudes and Aboriginal traditional knowledge was performed over 50 times to great feedback. Based on this higher profile of the LTVCA and Thames-Sydenham and Region in the First Nation communities, two representatives have been formally accepted to be members of the Source Protection Committee.



Funding from Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program enabled the gathering of information from First Nations communities on “Where Does Our Water Come From?” Display panels were created and taken to career/health fairs and meetings.

Community outreach efforts are an important part of delivering the Source Protection Program. In 2009, open houses and public consultations were held for the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program and the Assessment Report findings; a bus tour of the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area was well attended by Committee members and source protection staff in July; a Source Protection Planning workshop for the Committee and municipal planners was held in Ridgetown in August; regular updates were distributed to stakeholders; two Children’s Water Festivals were supported; and presentations were made to a number of organizations. Municipal staff also participated at the open houses and technical steering groups, providing support to the program. Bonnie Carey continues to organize Source Protection communications and consultations for the Lower Thames Valley Assessment Report.



Gus Tobias, Water Operator for Delaware First Nation, explains to the Source Committee members about the community’s drinking water system as part of a July bus tour of the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area.

Under the **Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program**, funding for various projects is provided to eligible landowners within a certain area of a municipal intake or wellhead. During the 2009 round of Stewardship funding, these areas were expanded a moderate amount by the Province provided that they were approved by way of municipal resolution. The projects that were funded included septic tank upgrade, decommissioning of abandoned wells and pollution prevention reviews. The 2009 funding allocation came to an end in September and a new round of funding was applied for in 2010. Contact Jack Robertson at the LTVCA for more information on the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect Conservation Lands & Employment Grants

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has protected environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, culturally unique features and significant biological, ecological, and scenic qualities through its conservation lands program. Over 675 hectares of conservation land have been preserved at 23 sites for public use in the LTVCA watershed and region. Russ Dysarz and David Little - Western and Eastern District Supervisors respectively, and Bruce Clark - Construction and Maintenance Technician, are responsible for the management of these sites.

In 2009, the LTVCA accessed \$129,583.22 of grant funding for 14 workers to assist with the completion of projects over and above those of full time staff in field services management, forestry, watershed planning, water

quality sampling, groundwater monitoring, community relations, visitor services, museum assistance and GIS. These people gained experience working with an environmental agency and the public. We were able to augment and improve our programs and services in various conservation areas through several Federal and Provincial employment program grants. In addition, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent provided two positions approved by council for a third term in 2009 to continue the Greening Partnership (LTVCA, C-K, and Stewardship Kent) with a mandate to 'green' Chatham-Kent, through tree planting, wetland, and tall grass prairie restorations.

	MTCU Job Creation Contribution	LTVCA In-kind Contribution and Other	Length of Program	Total Project Costs
Field Service Management Technicians - Western District 4 Positions Water Resource/GIS Mapping Technician 1 Position	\$68,526.00	\$235,661.85	7.5 months	\$304,187.85
Field Service Management Technicians - Eastern District 3 Positions Asset Management Technician 1 Position	\$32,571.00	\$144,321.31	6 months	\$176,892.31
	\$15,228.00	\$65,320.35	8 months	\$80,548.35
Total Job Creation Project Costs	\$116,325.00	\$445,303.51		\$561,628.51
	Prov. Summer Experience Program Contribution		Length of Program	
GIS Technician 1 Position	\$2,532.84		34 days	
Assistant Water Resources Technician 1 Position	\$2,532.84		34 days	
	Canada Summer Jobs Program Contribution		Length of Program	
Environmental Technician 1 Position	\$1,568.00		55 days	
Community Activities Coordinator 1 Position	\$3,703.00		50 days	
	Young Canada Works Contribution		Length of Program	
Museum/Design Assistant 1 Position	\$2,921.54		50 days	
Total Project Funding	\$129,583.22			



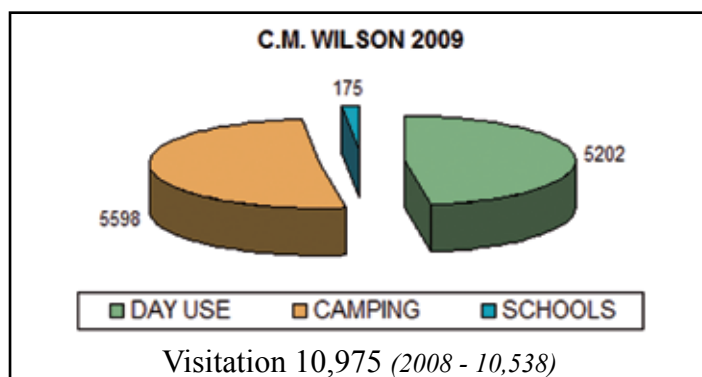
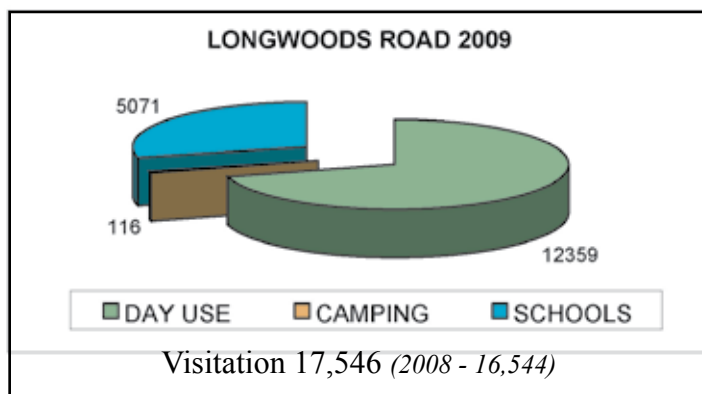
Through the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Job Creation Program (JCP), nine workers assisted the LTVCA with field services in our conservation areas, water resources/GIS, and asset management. Five summer student positions were funded through other Provincial and Federal grant programs. Above - JCP workers install 40 trail signs for the Carey Carolinian Arboretum and Trail project at Longwoods Road Conservation Area.

2009 Employment Programs and Grant Funding Accessed by LTVCA.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect

Recorded Visitation

Not all of our conservation areas have recorded attendance figures, however the following statistics are available for 2009: Big Bend - camping 1,037 (2008 - 1,169), E.M. Warwick - camping 3,211 (2008 - 2,411).



MUNICIPALITY	Chatham-Kent									Dutton/Dunwich	Lakeshore				Middlesex Centre		Southwest Middlesex			Southwold	Strathroy-Caradoc		West Elgin	
FACILITIES																								
Land Area (hectares)	35.21	2.22	30	1.62	20.64	14.97	33.55	39.83	48	93	78	25.68	4.37	46.37	3.06	36.42	40.47	121.2	3.19	9.22	59.68	7.88	14.16	
Day Use	■	■	5202	■	■	■	1000's	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	12359		■
Historic / Museum											■										■			
School Program			175																		5071			
ANSI / PSW Site				■	■	■															■			
Wetland/Rivers	■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	
Forest	■	■		■			■			■		■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Family Camping			5598													1037								
Group Camping			■				■					■		■		■					116		3211	
Memorial Forest			■				■					■		■		■		■			■			
Volunteer Groups			■				■														■			
Pavilion			■				■					■				■					■	■	■	
Trails / Boardwalks	■		■	■		■	■					■	■	■		■		■			■	■	■	
Fishing			■		■	■				■	■			■	■	■					■		■	
Boat Launch										■						■								
Unsupervised Beach			■			■								■									■	
Picnic Table			■			■	■				■					■					■		■	
CONSERVATION AREA LANDS	Walter Devereux	Miller Sanctuary	C.M. Wilson	Sinclair's Bush	Rondeau Bay Marshes	McGeachy Pond	Two Creeks	Diversion Channel	Colborne Street	Dutton/Dunwich	Lighthouse	Riverside Tributary West	Big O	Sharon Creek	Delaware	Big Bend	Ekfird Forest	Mosa Forest	Crane	Mill Stream/Janes Bush	Longwoods Road	Fasby	M. M. Warwick	

LTVCA Conservation Area Facilities, Services and Recorded Attendance 2009.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect Education Programs

	SKA-NAH-DOHT VILLAGE						CONSERVATION EDUCATION LONGWOODS ROAD C.A.						COMBINATION SKA-NAH-DOHT and CONSERVATION EDUCATION			
	# Adults free	# Adults paid	# classes half day	# Students Half Day	# Students Full Day	# classes full day	# Adults free	# Adults paid	# classes half day	# Students Half Day	# Students Full Day	# classes full day	# Adults free	# Adults paid	# classes full day	# Students Full Day
January	13		2	34	62	3	2		1	26			4		2	44
February	19	1			134	5	23	3	5	90						
March	20				160	7										
April	46	1	5	92	175	9										
May	97	12	8	154	341	17	18		7	143	92	4				
June	155	27	4	70	670	30	46	10	2	58	160	7	5		1	13
September	6		2	52			2				50	2	9		3	71
October	116	2	10	227	483	20	39	4	5	87	171	8				
November	127	12	8	166	576	22	42		5	123	282	13	3		2	38
December	33				227	10										
TOTALS	632	55	39	795	2828	123	172	17	25	527	755	34	21	0	8	166

	CONSERVATION EDUCATION C.M. WILSON C.A.						CONSERVATION EDUCATION OUTREACH					
	# Adults free	# Adults paid	# classes half day	# Students Half Day	# Students Full Day	# classes full day	# classes quarter day	# Students Quarter Day	# classes half day	# Students Half Day	# Students Full Day	# classes full day
January												
February												
March							11	219				
April												
May	10	3			35	2						
June	15		5	112								
September												
October									1	22		
November												
December												
TOTALS	25	3	5	112	35	2	11	219	1	22	0	0

Education program statistics 2009.

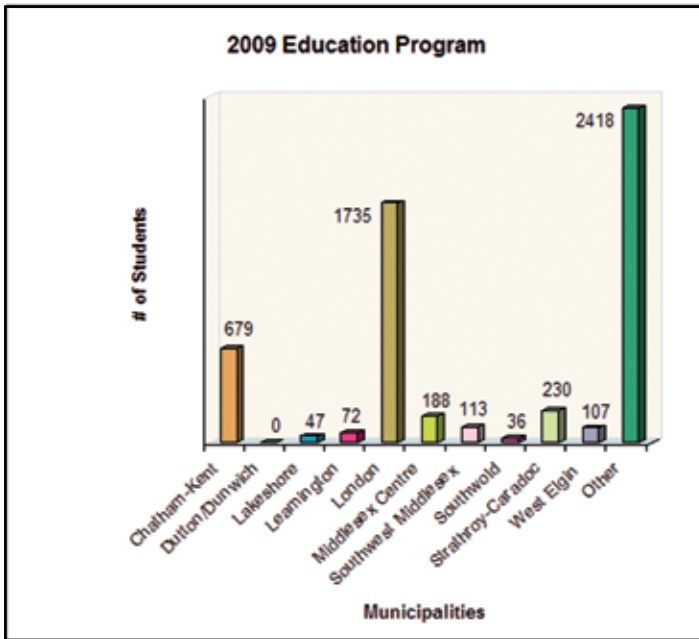


Ducks Unlimited continued sponsorship of "Project Webfoot", a wetland program at Longwoods Road.



The LTVCA operates two types of education programs out of Longwoods Road Conservation Area - Conservation Education and Native Studies at the Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect



Education programs by Municipality 2009.



Students are instructed on how to snowshoe, making winter an enjoyable experience at Longwoods Road!

Volunteering for Conservation



Conservation Education helps us understand the 'residents' of our natural areas. Above - *Canis latrans* - Coyote; below *Hyla versicolor* - Grey Treefrog.



Longwoods Road Conservation Area received extra help from three new volunteers in 2009. Jennifer Bruggeman and Jaqueline Gauthier helped with the Bluebird nesting box construction and trail and Phragmites control in the wetland. Ashley McFadden, a co-op student from West Elgin Secondary School, helped every morning for one semester with the education programs. The assistance that these volunteers provided the staff was greatly appreciated. In return, the volunteers received training and experience in the field of conservation.



The third annual Chatham-Kent Children's Water Festival was held October 6-8, at the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area. 1,050 students attended the festival along with an additional 210 teachers and parent volunteers.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect Education Programs



Advisory Committee

Don Fairbairn - Chair Ron Watts - Vice-chair
Brian King, Stan Lidster, Ron Doane, Conrad Wodrich, Stan Caveney, Andy Chisholm,
Glenn Stott, Warren Huff, Jerry Campbell

The Budget

Village Curator - Karen Mattila, worked within the \$202,814 Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum budget for 2009. Rose Nicholas - Village Education Technician assisted with programs, events and the gift shop. Financial support is acknowledged from the Ministry of Culture through the Community Museum Operating Grant of \$22,992.

Education Programs

A total of 3,789 students (2008 - 4,484) and 708 supervisors and parents (2008 - 819) enjoyed the Village programs this year. These numbers represented 170 half and full day class visits (2008 - 192). In addition, there were 899 public tour / workshop participants (2008 - 874). In 2009, the price of Half Day programs was raised from \$5.50 to \$6. Full Day programs remained at \$11. The prices had not changed since 2004.

Federal Summer Grants

We received a Young Canada Works in Heritage grant through the Canadian Museum Association and re-hired Design student, Ian Bullock. We also received a Canada Summer Jobs grant for one student, Erin Mosley. Ian and Erin worked together creating a travelling display to take into the community. They set up at London's Farmers Market, Parks Blueberries (Bothwell) and Lakeview Gardens (Eagle). A new venue for us was London's most popular event, Sunfest in July. This four day event has the highest attendance of all the summer events held in Victoria Park. Staff spoke with people from Strathroy to Chatham, from South Africa to Australia. We even saw new friends from the London English as a Second Language program who had come on tours this past year. We were pleased with the exposure at Sunfest, so look for us in 2010!

Annual Events

The Village hosted Archaeology Day in July, Nightwalk with the Spirits in August and Tastes of Fall in October. All events took place with great weather and were well attended. Special thanks goes to our volunteers for their help with these events. The number of volunteers is steadily growing and their ages range from 8 to 60 years young! Many are local students who are getting their community service hours for high school. The museum received two generous donations this year. At Archaeology Day, Bob and Jean Hardy (Dutton) donated their artifact collection. In September, Donald Grinage (Chatham) gave us a pair of lacrosse sticks. Both donations are now part of our education collection.



Erin with display at Lakeview Gardens in Eagle.



Above - the Nightwalk cast of volunteers from 2009.



A portion of the Hardy collection at Archaeology Day.

Providing Opportunities to Enjoy, Learn & Respect

Education Programs Conservation

Field Trips

During the 2009 season, 1,595 elementary and secondary students (2008 - 1,424) accompanied by 238 adult supervisors (2008 - 281), participated in field trips to Longwoods Road Conservation Area (Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc) and C.M. Wilson Conservation Area (Municipality of Chatham-Kent). These numbers represented 74 half and full day class visits (2008 - 70). Pre-school through Secondary school groups participated in various curriculum related programs such as Aquatic Ecology, Habitats and Communities, Acid Rain, Soil Ecology, Wetlands, Predator-Prey, and Incredible Insects. Outdoor hands-on experiences greatly enhanced student ability to grasp scientific, geographic, mathematic and environmental concepts.

Classroom Programs

The River and Creek Safety Program (RCSP) was jointly presented by LTVCA staff (presenting to schools East of Chatham-Kent) and the Chatham-Kent Safety Village (presenting the program to schools within the Municipality of Chatham-Kent). This outreach program for schools in the municipalities of West-Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southwest Middlesex, Middlesex Centre, Strathroy-Caradoc and Southwold performed by LTVCA staff was delivered to 219 students - 11 classes (2008 - 280 - 13 classes) during the month of March. The RCSP targets students at grade two level, teaching them waterway safety for all seasons, but with special emphasis on the Winter (ice safety) and Spring (melting) seasons when danger is greatest. A special thanks goes to these service clubs - Royal Canadian Legion Branch 598, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 251, Glencoe District Lions Club, Rodney Lions Club, Delaware Lions Club, Optimist Club of West Lorne for their ongoing support of this important safety program. Also, staff taught one classroom conservation program to 22 students.

Students are supervised at a pond in C.M. Wilson Conservation Area. It serves as an outdoor classroom for wetland studies.



Conservation Workshops

Eighty-one Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Brownies, Beavers, Sparks, and Venturers (2008 - 65) participated in a variety of workshops at Longwoods Road Conservation Area and LTVCA outreach locations. Youth groups obtained different badges for various outdoor activities including Owl Hikes, Snowshoeing, Naturalist Hiking, World Conservation, Soil and Water Management and Forestry.



Jerry DeZwart - Conservation Education Technician, delivers the LTVCA's conservation education programs in classrooms, as well as in our conservation areas.

Partnering with the Local Community

Community Relations - A Part of All Programs

Community Relations activities inform Directors, member municipalities and residents, media and politicians about all LTVCA's programs and services. Staff participate in special events and tours, initiate and assist with local environmental projects, produce literature on conservation programs, design and create displays for fairs and conferences and write articles for local newspapers and newsletters. We partner with organizations, volunteers and other stakeholders, including our Foundation, to help with the conservation of our watershed resources. The communication of information and education about the LTVCA encourages the wise management of our natural environment in the lower Thames River watershed and region. This report highlights Community Relations activities in 2009. Bonnie Carey - Community Relations Coordinator is assisted by Agnes Vriends - Clerk - Secretary in many communications projects.

Communications Products & Services

writing, editing, designing, presenting

- annual reports
- presentations for member municipalities and stakeholder groups
- conservation area brochures and publications
- displays and exhibits
- advertising, marketing, public relations
- website updates
- media releases and public service announcements
- communications plans for special projects
- "Lower Thames Beacon" newsletter

organizing

- meeting facilitation
- public events / public consultations

fund raising

- employment programs
- conservation projects and services

representation on watershed committees and working groups



Staff provided communication services for the Drinking Water Source Protection Program of the Thames-Sydenham and Region. This included organizing and supporting many public forums and open house consultations as per the Clean Water Act and hosting educational workshops and bus tours for the Source Protection Committee across the Lower Thames watershed, as pictured above at the Wheatley Water Treatment Plant.



Open houses were held in late 2009 for review of the early stages of the Lower Thames Valley Source Protection Area Assessment Report. One of the open houses was held in Merlin and interested property owners were able to ask questions and learn about the vulnerable areas around local municipal drinking water systems.

Partnering with the Local Community

Year-round Special Events

Exploring the natural environment is made fun at the special events organized in our many conservation areas. Whether learning about endangered species or habitat restoration, enjoying an activity like hiking, canoeing or bird watching, reliving local history or listening to an outdoor concert, the LTVCA joins with great partners, provides ideal locations and has the expertise to offer year-round activities for everyone! Effort is made to host or help partners organize events in as many of our conservation areas as possible. Highlights of some 2009 events have been included in this report.

Moonlight Winter Family Hike

A beautiful winter's evening was enjoyed by 115 participants (2008 - 103) who searched for Eastern Screech Owls at Longwoods Road Conservation Area. There were hotdogs beside the bonfire and homemade chili and hot drinks in the Resource Centre. George Wickham was present to reveal his award winning bird carvings while Lynn Eves from the Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation, allowed her audience to view a long-eared and a screech owl. Owl crafts were made downstairs and owl pellets were investigated by children to determine what owls eat. Thanks to our remarkable volunteers: Dawn and Peter Snow, Rick Gray, Sandy and Bev Wilson, Deb De Zwart, Sandy and Bob Morrison, Cleve Lowthian, Glenn Stott, Karen Mattila and nine volunteers from Katimavik who all helped make this event a great success.



The Moonlight Winter Family Hike (owl hike) in February was enjoyed by over 115 people and 20 volunteers.

Spring Woodland Discovery

A celebration of Spring was experienced on April 26, at Longwoods. A discussion of Field Guides and their use was followed by a hike to view flowers, trees, shrubs, birds and animal signs. Many interesting birds, plants and wildlife signs were encountered on this journey, and a wonderful time was had by all!

Star Party

The evening of June 13 began with a presentation by Dave McCarter and the Royal Canadian Astronomical Society (RCAS) based in London. Forty people learned about stars, constellations, globular star clusters, planets and methods used to view them. Later, the crowd enjoyed using RCAS telescopes to view the night sky.



In May, the Upper Thames Military Re-enactment Society hosted the Annual Longwoods Heritage Weekend.

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation



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 \$500,000 for natural and cultural heritage conservation. Thousands of dollars were raised in 2009 for conservation projects.

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation assists volunteer organizations with their fund raising efforts like the “Friends of Sharon Creek” volunteers, and the Sharon Creek Trust Fund. The Foundation supports special projects and events like the Annual Moonlight Winter Family Hike, Interpretive Trail Sponsorship Program and the William Erickson Bursary. The Foundation submits funding applications to corporations, government agencies, service clubs and other philanthropic organizations to undertake projects and programs which assist the LTVCA.

2009 Highlights

Through the Foundation’s **Memorial Forest Program**, the Conservation Authority planted over 500 trees in the lower Thames region.

The **William Erickson Bursary** was awarded to Lauren McConnell of Tilbury.

Continuing its contributions to the **“Save the Cabins”** project, the Foundation provided the finances for the construction of a second wheelchair ramp and stairwell roof at the Longwoods log cabins. Construction will begin in 2010.

Gonrah Desgohwah “White Pine Dancers” are a First Nations dance group performing at the Taste of Fall event at **Ska-Nah-Doht Village**. They were sponsored by the Foundation. Partial funding was also provided for Longwoods’ summer staff at Ska-Nah-Doht.

Funding was also provided by the Foundation for the production of the **Thames River - A Canadian Heritage River** bridge signage in the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority watershed.



Every fall, memorial forest dedication services are held across the LTVCA watershed at McKinlay Woodlands in C.M. Wilson Conservation Area in Chatham-Kent, Badder and Robinson Memorial Forest in Mosa Forest near Bothwell and Tilbury Northside Park.

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Carey Carolinian Arboretum & Trail

Facilitated through the Foundation, a \$26,000 gift in 2008 from a private donor - Dr. Lewis Carey, was used by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority for an educational “Carey Carolinian Arboretum and Trail” project at Longwoods Road Conservation Area in 2009. Dr. Carey passed away in November of 2009.

The purchase and planting of Carolinian tree species, signage and design of an interpretive brochure were completed for the arboretum and trail in 2009. An official opening and recognition ceremony will be held in 2010. Both the Conservation Foundation and Conservation Authority realize the importance of creating a Carolinian arboretum and trail system as an educational tool for this unique habitat. Dr. Carey’s wish for messaging to reflect the connection between First Nations peoples and the natural surroundings of a Carolinian forest came to fruition, as Longwoods highlights both native and natural history. The final phase of this project will be the construction of an Carolinian information kiosk.



May - six large stock Carolinian trees planted.



May - Katimavik volunteers planted 450 Carolinian tree seedlings.



By year-end, tree and trail header signs for the Carey Carolinian Arboretum and Trail were in the ground.



Summer - brochure designed and printed.



December - the JCP crew, Mark and Earl Livermore and staff installed 40 arboretum signs along the trail.



The Thames,
A Canadian Heritage River

*In 2009, the Thames River celebrated its ninth year as a Canadian Heritage River.
The tenth Annual Thames River Clean-up was held in April with thousands of volunteers
cleaning up hundreds of kms along the river.*

*Lower Thames Valley
Conservation Authority*

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