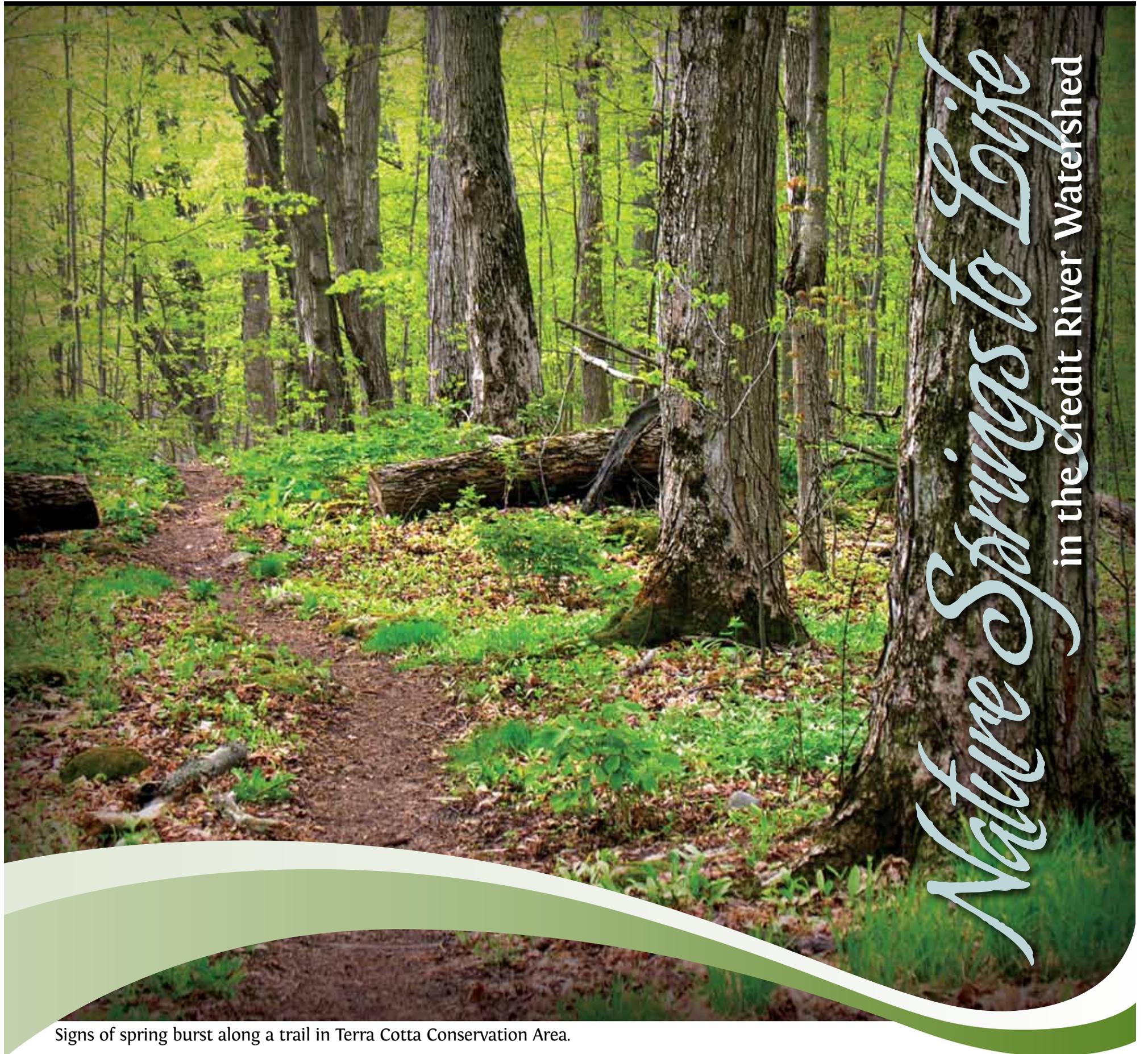


CREDIT VALLEY CONSERVATION

CURRENTS



YOUR CONNECTION TO THE CREDIT RIVER WATERSHED



Nature Springs to Life
in the Credit River Watershed

Signs of spring burst along a trail in Terra Cotta Conservation Area.

Nature Springs to Life in the Credit River Watershed



As the long and cold days of winter gradually fade away, spring brings new life to the Credit River Watershed.

More than 750,000 people live in this watershed, which is also home to hundreds of unique species of plants, trees, fish and wildlife. The Credit River is approximately 90 kilometres long and is world renowned for fishing, particularly in the fall when spawning salmon navigate the river.

Although the Credit River Watershed is an incredible place to visit all four seasons of the year, spring is a special time as nature comes to life and everything becomes new again. Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) operates 10 core conservation areas where visitors can enjoy abundant natural features and wildlife.

Mississauga's Rattray Marsh contains the last natural waterfront marsh in the Greater Toronto Area. The marsh is home to a variety of beautiful wildlife and plants and is a destination for avid bird watchers, photographers and nature lovers.

In the Town of Halton Hills, Limehouse Conservation Area features 190 acres of meadows, mature forests and historically-significant lime kilns that date back to the 1800s. The Elora Cataract Trailway, just west of Hillsburgh to the Village of Cataract, traces an early rail corridor (once the original Credit Valley Railway) now transformed into a 47 km hiking trail.

Ken Whillans Resource Management Area, located on Highway 10 just north of Brampton, offers a diverse range of recreational opportunities such as cycling, bird watching and fishing.

Silver Creek Conservation Area has both Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)

and is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), with nesting areas for many species of birds including turkey vultures, ruffed grouse and great-horned owls.

Terra Cotta Conservation Area is a trail lover's paradise with its rugged topography, numerous streams, lakes and ponds and breathtaking entrance to the Niagara Escarpment. Further north is Belfountain Conservation Area, which features a nature trail that spans the spectacular Credit River gorge. The scenic "Forks of the Credit" is only a short walk from Belfountain.

The Upper Credit Conservation Area consists of 400 acres of land including significant wetlands and several kilometres of the Credit River. This area provides an important green corridor that links the north and south sections of the Upper Credit River.

Picturesque Island Lake, in Orangeville, features osprey, great blue herons, mallards and many other bird species as well as painted turtles and leopard frogs. In spring and fall, migratory birds pause briefly at the lake. Visitors can enjoy a variety of recreational activities including fishing, windsurfing, hiking, boating and picnicking.

This spring, take some time and enjoy the natural beauty found in the Credit River Watershed by visiting one of the conservation areas operated by CVC. For more information, visit www.creditvalleyca.ca or call us at 905-670-1615 or toll free at 1-800-668-5557.



Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden

Did you know that your garden can help stop the decline of pollinators? Bees, flies, beetles, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds are all common pollinators in Ontario.

Habitat loss, pollution and disease are causing a decline in pollinator numbers. These important winged workers help 75 to 90 per cent of flowering plants reproduce, including fruits and vegetables in your garden. Providing food and areas in your yard for pollinators to nest and sleep during winter can help.

Different pollinators prefer different shapes, sizes, and colours of flowers. Native plants such as dogwood, swamp or common milkweed, Joe-Pye weed or black-eyed Susans attract four to eight times more pollinators than non-native plants. Pollinators also need food available as the seasons change. You can keep a continuous supply of food for them on your property by planting spring-blooming plants such as strawberries, cher-



ries and willows, and fall-bloomers such as asters and goldenrods.

Many butterflies and moths also require particular plants for their caterpillars to eat. The dependence of monarch butterflies on milkweed is a familiar example. Did you know that oaks, cherries, birches, and willows support more than 400 caterpillar species each?

Finally, keep in mind that pollinators need a place to lay their eggs and to sleep through winter. As temperatures drop, many bee species tunnel into bare or semi-bare patches of soil to make nests, while others nest in rotting wood or hollow twigs. To provide habitat for bees you can leave areas of your garden un-mulched, provide a "sand-box", or mimic twig nests. Make "bee condos" by drilling holes of varying widths 10 to 15 cm deep into preservative-free wood.

Visit www.pollinator.org, www.xerces.org or www.pollinationguelph.ca for more information.



Welcoming Back the Wildflowers

As winter fades behind us, snow and ice disappear. The spring wildflowers of hardwood forests are some of the first plants to wake up.

At this time trees have not developed their leaves and the forest floor receives a lot of sunlight. Wildflowers quickly take advantage and burst with exuberant growth. They are generally short-lived, and wither back once the tree canopy is filled.

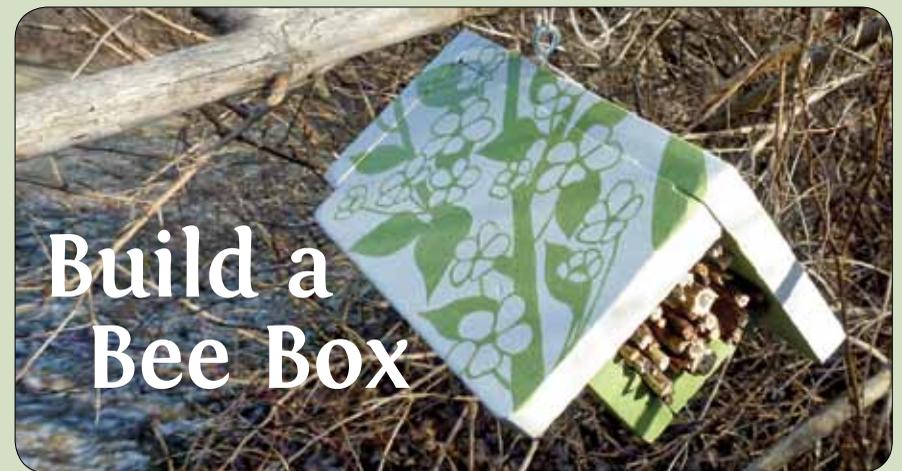


Bloodroot is one of these short-lived wildflowers. Within days of blooming the delicate white petals will fall off, leaving only a single round leaf behind. The name "bloodroot" comes from the reddish-orange juice that seeps from a broken stem. The Ponca tribe, a group of Native Americans, would use the juice as a love charm. The young men would smear their hand in the juice and hope the girl they wanted to marry would shake it. If she did, they would be married within five or six days.

Another spring wildflower to look for is the Jack-in-the-pulpit. This plant has the unique ability to change sex depending on how much food it has stored in its roots. When there is little food, the plant is a male. His only job is to produce male flowers and tiny pollen grains. Afterwards he can relax for the season and build up food reserves. When his food reserves are

larger he changes over to become female. Her work is much more laborious. She produces not only female flowers but also seeds surrounded by thick, juicy pulp. Next year, if she's too tired, she can just take a vacation and go back to being male.

If you are interested in learning more about spring wildflowers, come out to Limehouse Conservation Area on May 14 at 9:30 a.m. for a walk led by CVC Ecologist, Joe Pearson.



Close to a third of our native bees nest in wood, including hollow or pithy-stemmed plants. Small carpenter bees, leaf-cutter bees, masked bees and mason bees are all types of twig or stem-nesters. Make your own simple wooden bee nest to encourage these pollinators to make a home in your garden.

What you will need:

- Five pieces of wood, approximately one inch thick:
- left top: 6 x 8 in.
 - right top: 5 x 8 in.
 - left bottom: 4 x 7 in.
 - right bottom: 3 x 7 in.
 - back: 5 x 5 in.

Plus:

- 12 galvanized nails
- One or two medium screw eyes
- Hammer
- Sandpaper
- Hollow or pithy stems

Optional:

- Drill
- Non-toxic paints or stains
- String
- Post/Stake



Directions for the nesting tubes:

Any type of dead stems with a hollow or pithy stem can be used for nesting tubes. Examples include goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace, sumac, teasel, cattails/reeds, elderberry, parsnip, rose, or raspberry. Different sized twigs are recommended as different bees prefer stems of alternate diameters and lengths. One end of the twigs should be closed by a knot or stem node; the female bee will plug the front entrance with mud after she finishes nesting. Pack the tubes in tightly. Tubes should end just before the edge of the box overhang to protect the bees from the elements.

Directions for the box:

1. Nail left top piece onto top edge of right top piece using two nails.
2. Nail left bottom piece onto edge of left top piece using two nails.
3. Nail back piece onto top pieces using four nails. It can be nailed flush with the inside edges (as shown in the photo), or along the outside edges.
4. Nail the bottom pieces onto completed top using four nails, to form a square or diamond.
5. Use sandpaper to smooth rough edges.
6. Screw eye hook into top of the box, about one-third of the way from the back. A second hook can be used at the front to prevent the box from swinging in the wind. Pre-drill a hole if needed.
7. If desired, your bee box can be painted or stained in any design you choose.

Placement and Maintenance:

Place the completed nest on a building, post, or in a tree. Ensure it is level and stable. Actual placement height does not matter, although 2 to 6 ft. above ground level is good. It is best to put out nests in early spring, although it is never too late, as females of some species lay eggs throughout the year.



Value of the Credit River Fishery... an Angler's Perspective

By Mike Warrian

I became interested in fishing as a youngster while fishing for bass, walleye and panfish in the Kawartha Lakes at our family cottage. I began to read fishing magazines at an early age and "discovered" something called fly fishing and set out to learn how to do it.

Once I acquired the appropriate tackle and means to get around, I quickly learned that the Credit River was the best stream within relatively easy access of the west end of Toronto that offered fly fishing for wild trout.

Since that time, some 50 years or so ago, the Credit and West Credit Rivers have become my "home streams" where I learned most of what I know about fly fishing for trout. This pursuit has taken me through buying and devouring hundreds of books and countless magazines; purchasing many, many rods, reels, lines and other items of tackle; and learning how to tie flies of all kinds. All in all, it has become a complete and captivating hobby.

From the perspective of the angler, the Credit

River is unique in this greater Toronto/Southern Ontario area: it offers fishing for wild native brook trout in the most upper reaches, plus naturalized and self-sustaining brown trout in the areas below the Cataract and all the way downstream nearly to Georgetown. Access is open along long stretches of the river making it available to just about anyone who is looking for an



opportunity to fish in a beautiful, natural setting.

Further downstream, migratory rainbow trout, also called steelhead, are present in the spring, fall and into the winter months. Smallmouth



black bass are also found in the lower reaches of the river. Fortunately, Atlantic salmon are being reintroduced. The Atlantic salmon is a fish native to the Credit that became extinct in the 1800s due to the activities of European settlers, primarily the clearing of forest cover and building of dams which blocked spawning migration. Largemouth bass, northern pike and panfish are also available in Island Lake, making the Credit an amazingly diverse fishery overall.

As a fly fisher, it is the brook and brown trout

(and the aquatic and terrestrial insects they feed upon) that are the main quarry of interest. The opportunity to fish for them is extremely valuable. In many parts of the world, this kind of angling would be unavailable, or if available, would be expensive and beyond the means of many people.

From the perspective of the broader public, particularly those who value the natural environment, a healthy, productive cold water stream should support a vibrant, self-sustaining fishery. When this exists in or adjacent to a heavily populated urban environment

it only increases the value of the area, and it becomes all the more important to take the steps necessary to protect and sustain it.

Mike Warrian's passion for fishing and maintaining a healthy watershed has led to his involvement as a Board member for the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation, where he is involved in several fundraising initiatives which support conservation efforts carried out by CVC. Mike is also a member of Trout Unlimited Canada.

Spawning Salmon Navigate The Credit River

The Credit River south of Streetsville resembles Canada's west coast as Chinook salmon up to three feet long thrash and struggle up river from Lake Ontario to spawn.



Chinook salmon, along with coho salmon, were first successfully imported to Lake Ontario from the Pacific Ocean beginning in the late 1960s. Chinook and coho salmon will nest, spawn, and die before winter. Their offspring will hatch and swim downstream to Lake Ontario in spring, returning to the Credit River four years later as adults to continue the cycle.

While the hulking chinooks are definitely a fall spectacle, look closely amongst them and you will see members of another similar, almost

indistinguishable, species with a much longer history in the Credit River: the Atlantic salmon. Early settlers along the Credit River claimed that Atlantic salmon were once so plentiful that "two persons in a canoe with a spear and a torch will sometimes kill ... ten barrels (of 200 lbs. each) of salmon in one night." Other settlers reported streams with so many Atlantic salmon that people could cross from bank to bank by walking on their backs (reported near Georgetown, 1843). Farms were bought and houses built from the sale of salmon. The Village of Terra Cotta was

even once known as Salmonville.

By the end of the 1800s the Credit River's Atlantic salmon were gone. A combination of overfishing, damming, and water pollution caused the population to collapse across Lake Ontario. They didn't return for over 100 years. Today, along with the impressive spawning salmon, the Credit River is home to another 79 species of fish. It is a rare "cold water fishery" and one of the most popular in Ontario for fishing, generating millions for the local economy. Native Atlantic salmon are once again running



up the Credit River to spawn, alongside their imported west coast neighbours. Eggs from Credit River salmon are collected and raised in fish hatcheries for stocking in other rivers across all of Lake Ontario.

Did You Know?

The waters of the Credit River and the lands that surround it are home to more than 1,500 unique species of plants, trees, fish and wildlife - an incredible diversity of life. The continued protection of diversity of life in and around the Credit River is thanks to the ongoing efforts of many different organizations and volunteers. You can help too. For more information please visit: www.creditvalleyca.ca.

Quick Salmon Facts

- Brook trout, Atlantic salmon and lake trout are native to southern Ontario.
- Chinook salmon, coho salmon, pink salmon (together considered Pacific salmon) and rainbow trout have been introduced from the west coast of North America; brown trout are introduced from Europe.
- Brook trout, Atlantic salmon and lake trout are fall spawners and do not die

after spawning.

- Chinook salmon, coho salmon and pink salmon are fall spawners and all die after spawning.
- Chinook salmon regularly attain weights of 25 lbs and the largest one recorded in Lake Ontario weighed 46 lbs.
- Chinook salmon eggs hatch in the spring and the majority of fry enter Lake Ontario by May or June.

Our Valuable Wetlands

Wetlands are among the most important life sustaining natural systems in the world. They provide a variety of benefits to people including maintaining water quality, flood protection and erosion control as well as opportunities for recreational fishing and hunting, education, and research.

According to CVC's Natural Capital study, wetlands' ecological services (such as climate regulation and water supply) were found to be most valuable in the Credit River Watershed, providing annual benefits to watershed residents worth at least \$187 million per year.

Unfortunately, wetlands in the Credit River Watershed are at risk due to increasing pressures such as urban and commercial development and climate change. It is estimated that almost half the wetlands in the Credit River region have been lost since 1954, largely due to human activities such as expansion of urban areas, agriculture, and industrial developments. As wetlands decline in the watershed, so does the flow of benefits they provide to local residents, visitors and the broader community.

Local wetlands are critical to environmental, social and economic health of towns, communi-



ties and wild spaces in the Credit River region. It pays to protect our wetlands from threats like urban development, pollution and climate change. The good news is that people do value and want to protect them. A recent CVC Wetland Valuation study indicates residents in the Credit River region are willing to pay signifi-

cantly for wetland preservation and restoration programs (\$229 - \$259 annually per household). These willingness-to-pay estimates provide useful information to policy-makers. For example, they can be used in cost-benefit analyses to compare alternative wetland restoration programs in the region.

CVC will continue working together with its partners in an effort to ensure functions and values of wetlands in the Credit River region are conserved, restored and properly managed for present and future generations.



Celebrating Salmon and the Credit River in Mississauga



This year, CVC is working with the Culture Division and the Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM) in The Salmon Run Project: The Exhibition.

In January and February, AGM asked artists from Mississauga and surrounding areas to create a unique piece of art using a form of a salmon. Participating artists will transform these salmon forms in original ways.

When complete, the salmon creations will be exhibited at businesses along the Credit River in Port Credit and Streetsville from July to September. Look for more information about exhibitions and the Salmon Run Project in the coming months or visit www.artgalleryofmississauga.com.

Pesticide Ban

After Ontario's cosmetic pesticide ban was implemented on April 22, 2009, more than 250 pesticide products were removed from store shelves and 95 pesticide ingredients were banned for cosmetic use.

Significantly reduced pesticide application resulted in less exposure of chemicals to families and pets, while also reducing the amount of pes-

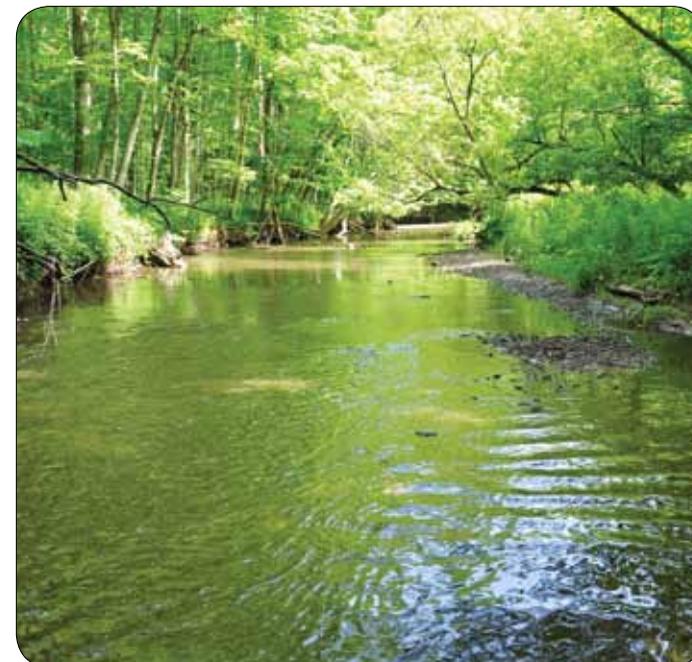


ticides that reached our local creeks and streams.

At the same time, this province-wide ban provided a unique opportunity to study pesticide concentrations before and after the pesticide ban was implemented.

Ten streams across southern Ontario were selected by the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to include in the pesticide study, two of which were Fletcher's Creek in Brampton and Sheridan Creek in southern Mississauga. Credit Valley Conservation assisted MOE with sampling during summer months of 2008 (before the ban) and summer months of 2009 (after the ban).

The purpose of the study was threefold: 1) to determine what pesticides were detectable at low limits; 2) to determine whether concentrations would change after the ban was implemented; and 3) to compare pesticide concentrations to standards deemed adequate for protecting aquatic life. All 2008 individual samples had combinations of at least two pesticides, which resulted in 33 total pesticides being identified at



low levels of laboratory detection. Of the most abundant pesticides detected (with exception of glyphosate), median concentrations were as much as 96 per cent lower in 2009, while the average of all streams yielded a difference of 65 per cent between the two years.

The knowledge gained in this study will assist CVC in developing water quality criteria to protect aquatic life.



Peregrine Falcons are Thriving in Mississauga

During the 1960s most birds of prey in North America were under threat of extinction for several reasons, but most infamously for pesticide poisoning. In the 1980s when the species faced near eradication, birds from elsewhere were reintroduced under a program spearheaded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Their descendants, two pairs of peregrine falcons, now live in Mississauga year-round.



Currently, these peregrine falcons nest on an office building adjacent to Square One and on the concrete silos near Lakeside Park off Lakeshore Road. Reintroduction has been so successful that their status "endangered" has improved to "threatened" under federal legislation.

This species, originally a cliff-nester of the Niagara Escarpment, is adapting well to city life and taking advantage of an abundance of urban prey. Peregrine falcons adapt to the environment by nesting on tall buildings where they are undisturbed by humans. Tall buildings also make excellent vantage points for spotting prey and help the perched birds quickly gain their attack speed of over 300km/hr, as they dive on unsuspecting prey. Formerly named duck hawk, the peregrine falcon hunts waterfowl along the waterfront, pigeons, songbirds and small park mammals.

The future of the cosmopolitan peregrine falcon seems bright. During the 1990s breeding pairs took up residence in Ottawa, London and Toronto. Today in the Greater Toronto Area there are over 16 successful nesting sites producing young.



step outside

& explore
CVC'S CONSERVATION AREAS



CONSERVATION AREAS:

Belfountain, Elora Cataract
Trailway, Island Lake, Ken Whillans,
Limehouse, Meadowvale, Rattray
Marsh, Silver Creek, Terra Cotta,
Upper Credit

Purchase an "Our Credit" membership and enjoy 10 of CVC's conservation areas for a full year. By becoming a member, you can explore 10 unique areas and enjoy family programs. You also receive a waterproof map and savings coupons, while your financial support will contribute to protecting these 10 significant areas.

www.ourcredit.ca

1-800-367-0890

O'Connor Park Turtle Rescue

In summer 2010, CVC staff assisted the City of Mississauga with a turtle rescue at an urban wetland site that was scheduled to be filled in.

The turtles involved were Midland painted turtles, aptly named because of the bright yellow and red markings that look like their shells have been painted. The Midland painted turtle is a small, freshwater species common in Ontario. While this colourful little turtle is not currently

at risk, all other native turtle species in Ontario are designated as Species at Risk.

The turtles were rescued from a pond slated to be drained and developed into a park. CVC wanted to make sure every last turtle was caught and moved before machinery began to work. Fortunately, staff were able to move the turtles to a pond in a natural section of the park. Under normal conditions catching or moving turtles is a prohibited activity. In this special circumstance CVC was saving the turtles and obtained a permit under Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Con-

servations Act.

The turtle rescue crew went out to the pond each day for a week before the water was drained and caught as many turtles and frogs as possible. After the water was drained they returned to the site to comb through the mud on their hands and knees looking for turtles.

Unfortunately turtles do not have the foresight to leave their home when it is being drained and will often burrow into mud hoping to wait out the disturbance. Knowing that they wouldn't survive by burrowing, CVC was there to dig them out and bring them to their new home. Many of the turtles were saved this way, including "Blinky", who was so completely covered in

mud that we only noticed him because he was blinking one eye.

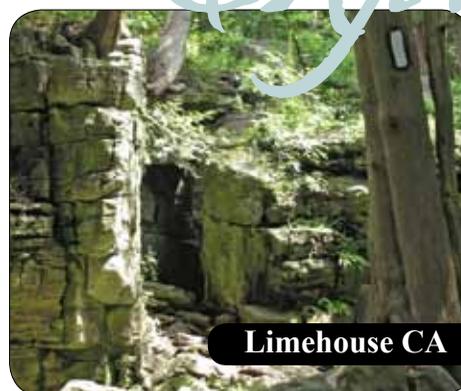
Over the next few years CVC will continue to monitor survival of the rescued turtles. These turtles will face many obstacles. Like other species of wildlife in urban areas, they have to adapt to the noise, pollution and disturbance. People must remember that we are not the only ones who enjoy natural areas, but are lucky to be able to share it with such wonderful animals. CVC is hopeful information gained from this project will help future decisions about locations for urban parks and wetlands.





Ratray Marsh CA

Exploring our trails



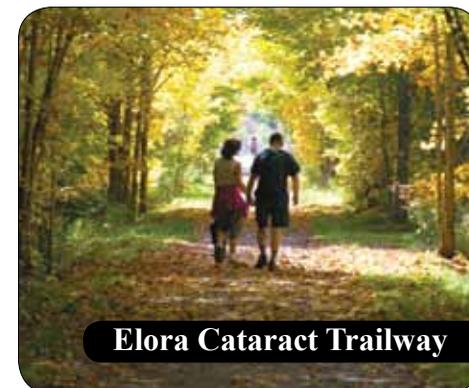
Limehouse CA



Silver Creek CA



Island Lake CA



Elora Cataract Trailway

The landscapes of the Credit River Watershed are as varied as the people who enjoy them. Offering diverse experiences, the hiking opportunities at CVC's conservation areas have something for everyone. Whether you are looking for a leisurely walk, a tranquil outing or an invigorating hike, CVC's conservation areas are close to home and have perfect trails.

Message from the Chair and CAO of CVC

As the days grow longer and the weather warms, we welcome the beginning of a new season.

Spring is a wonderful time of rebirth, renewal and regrowth, when nature sheds its winter blanket of ice and snow and comes alive with the birth of new trees, plants, birds and animals throughout the watershed.

At CVC, spring also marks a renewed commitment and enthusiasm to protect and manage the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed. This time of year sets in motion the busiest time for our many projects and programs. From water monitoring and species protection; to education programs and stewardship initiatives; to land securement and protection, our staff work tirelessly to ensure the natural environment continues to thrive.

Our work is essential to maintain the health



of the Credit River Watershed, but we also rely on strong support from the community, volunteers and our stakeholders. This support helps CVC better understand and meet the needs of our residents and partners in relation to resource management, restoration and protection.

Through *Currents*, we share some of our knowledge and energy for protecting, preserving and restoring the natural environment of our watershed. On behalf of CVC, we encourage you to join us – get involved, learn about our watershed and get outside to enjoy the new life that is blossoming all around.

Rae Horst, CAO of CVC
Pat Mullin, CVC Chair

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CURRENTS SPRING 2011

Currents is published by Credit Valley Conservation.

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FEEDBACK

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FOUNDATION

LANDSCAPES *for* LIFE

As a registered charity, the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation (CVCF) assists Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) with the daunting task of environmental protection by raising funds for conservation projects carried out by CVC. These valuable conservation projects protect the health and well-being of the flora and fauna, the watershed and its inhabitants for today and tomorrow.



Sixth Annual Conservation Gala

In partnership with Conservation Halton Foundation, proceeds will support the Conservation Youth Corps.

Date: Wednesday, May 11

Location: Rattlesnake Point Golf Club

Cost: Tickets are \$125/person or \$1,200/table of 10

Features: Cocktail reception, four-course dinner, silent and live auctions, and live jazz entertainment.

Fourth Annual Canoe the Credit

Hosted by the CVC Foundation Board of Directors and George Weston Ltd., proceeds will support the Conservation Youth Corps.

Date: Sunday, June 5

Location: Credit River at the Mississauga Canoe Club, Port Credit

Cost: Corporate team: \$1,000
Recreational team: \$500
Individuals: Free!

Features: A team challenge race in north canoes, family fun paddle, paddling demos and landing party.



Third Annual Island Lake Fishing Tournament

Hosted by the Friends of Island Lake, proceeds will support the Island Lake Community Trails Campaign.

Date: Saturday, July 9 – Sunday, July 10

Location: Island Lake Conservation Area

Cost: \$35 one day entry / \$60 two day entry

Features: \$4,500 in cash prizes, open to all persons aged 12 years and older, on-site camping available and children's trout pond.

Inaugural Landscapes for Life Charity Golf Tournament

Hosted by the CVC Foundation Board of Directors and Scotiabank, proceeds will support ongoing efforts to protect the Credit River Watershed.

Date: Monday, September 12

Venue: The Credit Valley Golf and Country Club, Mississauga

Cost: Foursomes: \$2,400 (includes lunch, dinner, prize packs, green fees, and cart)

Features: Prestigious, exclusive golf course and opportunities to win incredible prizes!



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CONTACT THE FOUNDATION

To make a donation or for more information about our events, please contact:

Sharlene Hardwar, Partnership Development Coordinator
905-670-1615 ext. 247 or shardwar@creditvalleyca.ca

Visit the CVCF at www.landscapesforlife.ca