



COUNTRYSIDE
stewardship

REPORT

WINTER EDITION, 2014

BE A PART OF PROTECTING THE LAND YOU LOVE



Photo by Shaima Al-Khalili

Credit Valley Conservation Sixty Years of Community Conservation

On May 13, 1954, representatives from local municipalities met and approved the formation of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. The conservation authorities movement grew out of efforts from agricultural, naturalist and sportsmen's groups. They wanted to protect the land after decades of improper land, water and forestry practices that caused unprecedented flooding and erosion. It was a local movement. People felt connected to the land for their livelihoods and enjoyment, and worked hard for positive change. No one could have imagined the storm that came that fall – a storm that would underscore the importance of managing our natural resources.

October 15, 1954 is a date etched in many people's memories. Eighty-one people in Southern Ontario lost their lives that day due to flooding from Hurricane Hazel. The devastation in the hurricane's wake taught us the value of water management and flood forecasting to ensure public health and safety. Following Hazel, the Province amended the Conservation Authorities Act of 1946 to allow conservation authorities to regulate the land to safeguard life and property.

Hurricane Hazel was the biggest storm of the century. Two weeks of wet weather before the storm made flooding even worse. The ground simply could not absorb more water. Hazel brought record breaking rainfall. The water ran quickly across the surface directly into rivers and streams. This fact is important in helping us prepare for future storms.

Activities on the land that encourage absorption of rainwater can reduce the impact of storms and help protect water quality. Wetlands, forests and meadows on your property can naturally store and release water, limiting flooding and erosion. What we do on our land impacts everyone.

When we take care of the land it takes care of us, but we need to do it together. This belief is at the heart of what the community was trying to achieve 60 years ago. As we celebrate this anniversary year we invite you to join us at a workshop or event. Make a commitment to learn more about caring for your land and water as we work together for a healthier and safer countryside.



INSIDE STORY

AFTER THE ICE STORM

Digging ourselves out was a tough job. Find out what you can do with tree debris and how you can help your trees recover.

GRASSLANDS ON MY LANDS

a free workshop for landowners



Learn how to improve and create grasslands on your property and provide habitat for threatened grassland bird.

Learn about the new Bird-Friendly Certified Hay program that will encourage bird-friendly hay production and provide an online marketplace for hay growers and buyers.

Saturday, March 29, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Terra Cotta Watershed Learning Centre
Cost: Free

Register at: creditvalleyca.ca/events

AFTER THE ICE STORM



Terra Cotta main gate

The ice storm may be a distant memory now that the power has been restored, but for many, the clean-up continues. December's ice storm severely affected trees and woodlots across the Credit River watershed. Like many landowners, Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) experienced severe damage on its properties. Silver Creek, Limehouse and Terra Cotta Conservation Areas were hardest hit.

Getting things back to normal is a big task. CVC estimates its clean-up efforts will cost approximately \$480,000. CVC staff are clearing woody debris and removing broken branches and trees that present hazards around buildings and along trails. We are also monitoring for downed woody debris along



watercourses that may cause a jam and lead to flooding now and when snow thaws in spring. It's a big job and clean-up will continue into the summer.

Trees on private property are the responsibility of the landowner, but qualified forest professionals can lend a helping hand.

Safety First!

When heading out into your woodlot, be aware of broken branches wedged between trees. They can fall without warning. If a tree is a threat to buildings or power lines, consult a professional tree care company.

Caring For Your Woodlot

To an extent, disturbances like fire and storms are natural parts of how forest communities evolve. Think of your woodlot as an ecosystem. Woody debris and dead trees provide habitat for wildlife and support forest health. Sometimes disturbances can be more extensive and nature may require a helping hand. This is a good time to think about hiring a forest professional to help you assess your forest and damaged trees.

What to watch for:

- If a tree is bent less than 20 degrees it will straighten on its own. A bend greater than 60 degrees is unlikely to straighten.

- Large amounts of woody debris blocking dams or waterways can result in flooding if not addressed. If you notice this on your property, consult a forest professional.
- Damaged trees are more susceptible to disease and infestations. Watch for signs of stress including insect infestations, disease, excess gum or resin on bark and a change in size, colour and shape of leaves.

Suggestions for fallen trees and branches:

- Do not move or remove ash tree debris from the general location where it was found. It may contain emerald ash borer larvae. Moving ash tree debris may increase or intensify the spread of emerald ash borer. To learn more, visit www.inspection.gc.ca.
- Due to flood risks, do not put fallen trees or branches from your property into the stream or on the stream banks.
- Consider leaving fallen trees and branches throughout the forest to allow for decomposition and to return nutrients back to the soil. These trees contain the necessary ingredients to repair or rebuild our forest and wetlands. Fallen trees provide habitat for salamanders, invertebrates and small mammals, and function as nursery logs for new trees and plants.
- Create wildlife habitat with properly constructed brush piles. To control the risk of fire, keep brush piles 120 m away from structures and 30 m from roadways.

Ice storms will happen. A strong, healthy tree has a greater chance of withstanding a storm. Working with a certified forest professional who has the knowledge and training to effectively assess and manage forest health will go a long way to protect your trees or woodlot. Severe weather is occurring more frequently and being prepared is key to minimizing damage.

Consider replanting the trees you've lost. CVC has tree planting services for landowners. You can be a part of protecting the land you love.



from the *Expert*

CVC Regulations Officer, Ken Thajer, on the purpose of CVC regulations

Preparing a construction project on your property can be a large undertaking. When you're asked to see Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) for approval, it may seem even more daunting. Sometimes a permit is required from CVC for new development, such as building a home or shed, installing a culvert, adding fill or grading. CVC's permitting process makes sure the proposal doesn't negatively impact the natural environment. Permits make sure setbacks are maintained from erosion hazards like slopes and watercourses. They aim to limit the risk of future flood damage

or, if possible, keep development outside the floodplain.

CVC permits help limit the risks associated with development. Inappropriate development can lead to flooding, erosion, destruction of environmentally sensitive features and pollution on your property and neighbouring properties.

CVC Planning staff are available by phone, in person and by email between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday to answer questions about development on your property.

Call 905-670-1615

Visit our office at
1255 Old Derry Road, Mississauga

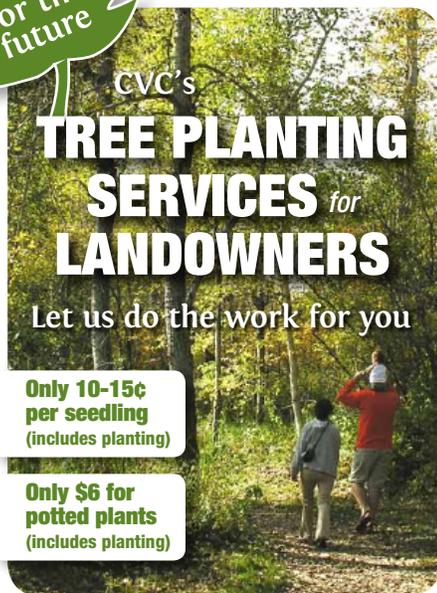
Email us at planning@creditvalleyca.ca

DID YOU KNOW?



Spring rain and melting snow can bring surface water contaminants into your well. That's why spring is the best time to tell if you have a problem with your drinking water quality. Contact your local health department to get your well water tested for bacteria, free of charge. Some municipalities also offer testing for nitrates. To test for other contaminants (e.g. pesticides and heavy metals) your Countryside Stewardship Coordinator can refer you to a list of fee-for-service labs within Ontario.

Plant now for the future



CVC's **TREE PLANTING SERVICES** for **LANDOWNERS**

Let us do the work for you

Only 10-15c per seedling
(includes planting)

Only \$6 for potted plants
(includes planting)

Imagine a beautiful mature forest on your land that you and your family will enjoy for years.

We make it easy. Our experienced Forestry staff will do the work *for you* from creating the planting plan and planting, to forest management.

Credit Valley Conservation offers:

- Free site visits and advice
- Woodlot/forest health inspections and assessments
- Preparation for Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and Forest Management Plans
- Invasive species control
- Marking prescriptions and tree marking services

For more info, call 905-838-1940.

PARTNERS, VOLUNTEERS & FRIENDS

CVC had another amazing year in 2013. We couldn't have done it without...



Volunteers, we thank you for your help & inspiration

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:



YOU WERE ONE OF 5,667 VOLUNTEERS



YOU HELPED US EDUCATE PEOPLE



YOU HELPED US LEAD VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS



YOU REPRESENTED CVC AT EVENTS



YOU PLANTED NATIVE PLANTS IN OUR PARKS



YOU HELPED CLEAN UP 10 KM OF SHORELINE AND REMOVE OVER 1300 KG OF GARBAGE



TOGETHER WE PLANTED 16,571 TREES & SHRUBS



TOGETHER WE PLANTED 6,690 WILDFLOWERS



TOGETHER WE REMOVED THOUSANDS OF INVASIVE PLANTS

BE A VOLUNTEER

VISIT CREDITVALLEYCA.CA/VOLUNTEER



FARM GATE

Introducing...

BIRD-FRIENDLY CERTIFIED HAY

Grassland birds like the eastern meadowlark and bobolink are declining in number and are now considered 'species at risk' by the Province of Ontario. This is largely due to habitat loss. Many grassland birds now nest in hay fields. Unfortunately, harvesting hay before the young have left the nest can kill them. **There is a solution.**

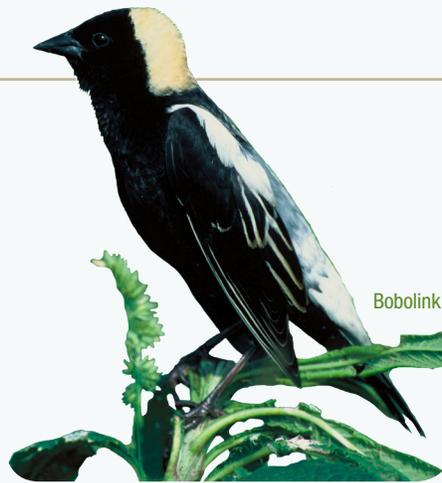
CVC has started a Grassland Bird Recovery Program with funding support from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. Central to the program is a way to certify and market bird-friendly hay.

The Bird-Friendly Certified Hay Program will connect hay growers with hay purchasers and rural landowners with land available to rent through an online marketplace. Certified hay is cut once the young eastern meadowlark and bobolink have left the nest, which occurs by July 15.

Benefits of Bird-Friendly Certified Hay:

- Hay growers can grow a new niche product and receive assistance marketing it through CVC's online marketplace and possibly gain access to newly rented farmland to grow their farm business.
- Hay purchasers have a tool to source hay and demonstrate environmentally responsible practices to customers.

CVC Countryside Stewardship programs are available to residents and landowners within the Credit River watershed. Our neighbouring conservation authorities offer similar programs. We would be pleased to direct those who live outside the Credit River watershed to the appropriate agency.



Bobolink

- Rural landowners with rented farmland can reduce their property taxes and may receive farmland rental income.

Not interested in growing hay on your old fields but still want to help grassland birds?

- Maintain open space and remove woody vegetation by mowing after young birds leave their nests in mid-July.
- CVC can help you restore your old field to a native meadow.

We can save our grassland birds.

Attend a free information session titled "Grasslands on My Lands". Learn about the Bird-Friendly Certified Hay Program and native meadow restoration options for your property. Join us March 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Terra Cotta Watershed Learning Centre.

For more information please contact CVC's Mark Eastman at 1-800-668-5557 x 430 or meastman@creditvalleyca.ca.

COMING EVENTS

Register at: creditvalleyca.ca/events

Events free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Trees Ontario Forest Management Workshop

Thur. March 13, 6:30 – 9 p.m.
CVC Forestry Operations Facility
15526 Heart Lake Road, Caledon
Register at www.treesontario.ca

Rural Landowner Services Social

Tues. March 18, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Belfountain Public School

Fast Forward Film Festival: Stand

Wed. March 19, 7 p.m., Erin Legion

Grasslands on My Lands

Sat. March 29, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Terra Cotta Watershed Learning Centre

Orangeville Lions Home and Garden Show

April 4-6, Orangeville Agricultural Building and Fairgrounds

Natural Pond Management

Sat. April 12, 9 a.m. to noon
Scott Mission Camp, Caledon, Cost: \$15

Orangeville Earth Day Tree Planting

Saturday, April 26, 9 a.m.

Halton Hills Earth Day and Sustainability Fair

Sat. April 26, 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Georgetown Marketplace

CVC Tree and Shrub Direct Sale Day

Pick up date: Sat. May 3, 8 a.m. to noon
15526 Heart Lake Road, Caledon
(CVC Forestry Operations Centre)
Pre-ordering is required. Call
905-838-1940 to place your order.

Funding in support of these workshops provided by our regional and municipal partners.



CVC was established in 1954 with a mandate to protect natural resources in the Credit River watershed. We have been working for 60 years with our partner municipalities and stakeholders to protect and enhance our land and water for present and future generations.