



BE A PART OF PROTECTING THE LAND YOU LOVE



Winter Survival

Helping our Feathered Friends

Photo copyright Chesapeake Bay Program, Northern cardinal male perched in tree during winter 02

There's something exciting about watching birds in winter – the bright colours of males against the white snow, the flurry of activity at bird feeders and the remarkable endurance of such small creatures in our cold Ontario weather.

Attracting birds and giving them some winter survival essentials can be easy and can add beauty to your landscape.

Native shrubs like meadowsweet and nannyberry keep their seeds and fruit throughout winter and are particularly nutritious for

birds. Cedar waxwings love the delicious red berries of winterberry. In fall consider leaving seed tops of flowers, like goldenrod, purple coneflower and asters for birds to feed on through the cold months. There is often a lot of insect activity in leaf litter so leaving fallen leaves on the ground before snow falls can help birds find food later. Birds aren't picky when it comes to insects – they'll eat any they can find.

A variety of heights and a mixture of coniferous and deciduous plants make for a more visually appealing garden. They also provide excellent shelter from wind and snow. Eastern white cedars and white spruce provide great shelter,

COMMON WINTER BIRD CHECKLIST

How many can you check off this season?

- Northern cardinal
- Black-capped chickadee
- White-breasted nuthatch
- Blue jay
- Cedar waxwing
- Downy woodpecker
- Hairy woodpecker
- Red-bellied woodpecker
- American tree sparrow
- Dark-eyed junco
- American goldfinch

Keep a special eye out for snowy owls. We have seen a significant increase in the number of these majestic birds for the second year in a row. If you're lucky enough to see one, be sure to snap a photo and post it on the Countryside Stewardship Connection at www.csconnection.ca.

especially if clustered together. Chickadees, finches and sparrows will eat their seeds.

As long as they don't pose a hazard to a person or property, dead trees provide food for woodpeckers and nuthatches. Holes in these trees provide cozy roosting spots. Dead trees might not be the most attractive thing in your yard but they are very beneficial.



Bird-Friendly CERTIFIED HAY

INFORMATION SESSION FOR FARMERS
AND RURAL LANDOWNERS

Learn about grassland birds and their habitat. Find out how to rent your land for hay production and offset your rural property taxes, expand your farm acreage and add value to your farm business.

March 2, Halton Hills or
March 5, Caledon

See *Coming Events* for more details.

For more information on the Bird Friendly Certified Hay program, visit: www.birdfriendlyhay.ca

INSIDE STORY:

CVC's **Landowner Action Fund** is helping you make the investment of a lifetime.

THE LANDOWNER ACTION FUND

HELPING LANDOWNERS MAKE ECOLOGICAL INVESTMENTS



What if you could invest in something knowing the return on investment is worth hundreds of millions of dollars to your community? Private landowners across Ontario are making these types of investments all the time - caring for the streams, fields and forests on their properties. Healthy ecosystems provide us with clean air, water, food, materials and a source of recreational, cultural and spiritual enjoyment. In the Credit River watershed alone, these ecological services are worth over \$370 million dollars per year.

The Landowner Action Fund is a new grant program offered by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) that supports the environmental stewardship efforts and ecological investments of rural landowners for the benefit of everyone. It reflects the changing landscape of the Credit River countryside and the need for new approaches to protect our environment.

In the past, farming and forestry played major roles in developing our local communities. There are many programs and resources that support environmental best management practices in these sectors, recognizing the importance of good environmental stewardship.

Today, the countryside is changing, with more equine farms, small-scale farms and

rural residences appearing on the landscape. Stressors such as climate change and urbanization are increasing pressure on already struggling ecosystems.

In response to these shifting land-use activities and environmental stressors, CVC continues to enhance its services offered to rural landowners. *Your Guide to Caring for the Credit* was introduced in 2007. This handbook for rural non-farm property owners is based on the model of the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) – a very successful program helping Ontario farmers adopt more environmentally sustainable practices. Through this workshop process, farmers use a handbook to identify their environmental strengths and areas of concern, and develop action plans to improve their practices.

Your Guide to Caring for the Credit provides an opportunity for rural non-farm landowners to engage in a similar process to create action plans for their properties. A *Horse Owner Stewardship Guide* for small equine operators is also available. To date, over 530 landowners in the

Credit River watershed have participated in a *Caring for Your Land & Water* or *Caring for Your Horse & Farm* workshop, associated with these workbooks.

The workshops and workbooks provide the information landowners need to improve environmental conditions on their properties. Taking action, however, can require more help. That's where the Landowner Action Fund comes in. Launched this past fall, the Landowner Action Fund provides financial and technical support to rural landowners who are not eligible for funding through existing farm-based stewardship programs.

The Landowner Action Fund has grants for well abandonment, stream restoration, tree planting, invasive plant control, native plant gardening and more. Project grants are available for between 50 and 100 per cent of eligible project costs up to a maximum grant amount. Grant rates are determined based on an evaluation of the project's environmental impact.

The fund is available to rural non-farm landowners, small-scale farmers and equine operators who attend a workshop and complete the action plan in the companion workbook. The next workshop is scheduled for **March 7 at 9:30 a.m.** at Erin Centre 2000.

To learn more about the Landowner Action Fund and to make the investment of a life time, visit www.creditvalleyca.ca/landowneractionfund.





from the *Experts*

CVC's Lorna Murison, Water Resources Technician and Amanjot Singh, Water Quality Engineer on why it's important to reduce our use of winter salt.

Using salt in the winter improves safety and can be necessary, but salt levels in our creeks and streams reach record levels every winter. This can have harmful impacts on water quality and fish habitat.

Salt lowers the freezing temperature of water. That's why it melts snow and ice. Unfortunately, as it dissolves into the melting snow, it finds its way into our storm drains, creeks, rivers, lakes and groundwater.

CVC has been measuring salt levels once a month in local watercourses since the 1970's. As the local population increased, so too did salt levels.

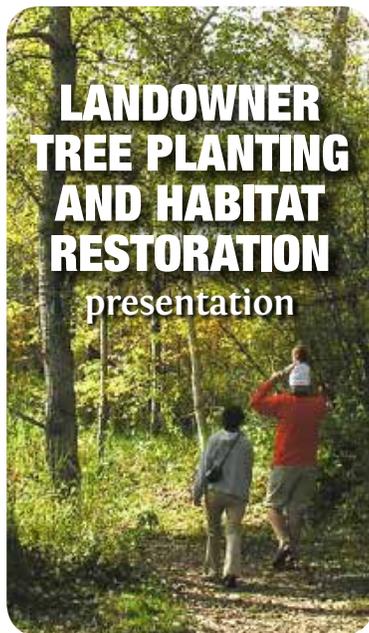
CVC recently installed state-of-the-art real-time water quality monitoring stations that measure salt levels continuously year-round. **The results are shocking. Levels have at times been as high as the ocean.** We need to be smarter about how we use salt in order to protect fish habitat and our drinking water sources.

You can reduce your personal winter salt use by shoveling more often and using salt alternatives such as kitty litter and sand. Even just being a little more thoughtful when spreading salt can go a long way.

Together, let's do our part to reduce salt concentrations in our waterways. Find out more at www.smartaboutsalt.com.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you have four hectares or more (almost 10 acres) of forest on your property you can reduce your taxes by entering the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP). Landowners can have a plan created to have their forests classified as "Managed Forest" and only pay 25 per cent of the municipal tax rate on that land. Eligible areas must meet certain criteria to enter the program which is administered through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Contact CVC at 905-838-1521 to have a MFTIP plan completed for your property.



LANDOWNER TREE PLANTING AND HABITAT RESTORATION presentation

Hear from the experts about:

CVC Restoration Services for Private Landowners

- Seedling Reforestation Planting Projects
- Potted Planting Projects
- Grassland and Prairie Habitat Restoration Services
- Invasive species management including managing Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
- Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP)
- CVC's NEW Landowner Action Fund grant program

Get the inside scoop on protecting your property, helping the environment and how CVC can help you do it.

March 28, 2015. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

CVC's Forestry Operations Centre
15526 Heart Lake Road, Caledon
Refreshments will be served.

Register by March 23. Space is limited.
Contact Andrea Morrone at 1-800-668-5557 Ext. 436
or visit creditvalleyca.ca/events



Caring for your LAND & WATER

free workshops for rural landowners



Sat. March 7, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Centre 2000, Erin
Register by February 27

Sat. April 25, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Terra Cotta Community Centre,
18 High Street, Terra Cotta
Register by April 17

CREATE A LANDOWNER ACTION PLAN AND QUALIFY FOR THE LANDOWNER ACTION FUND

Attend a workshop, assess your property and take action to protect your land and water

Get your projects done with grants and technical assistance*

Projects include well abandonment, stream restoration, tree planting, invasive plant control, native plant gardening and more

Register at creditvalleyca.ca/events

Landowners should own one acre or more of rural property in the Credit River watershed.

*Subject to available funding sources and eligibility requirements for grants.



FARM GATE

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE VALUE OF WIND BREAKS

Climatologists predict more frequent extreme weather events in the coming years. This will challenge agricultural businesses to continue producing abundant, high quality food through droughts, floods, high winds, freezing rain, hail and unpredictable air temperatures.

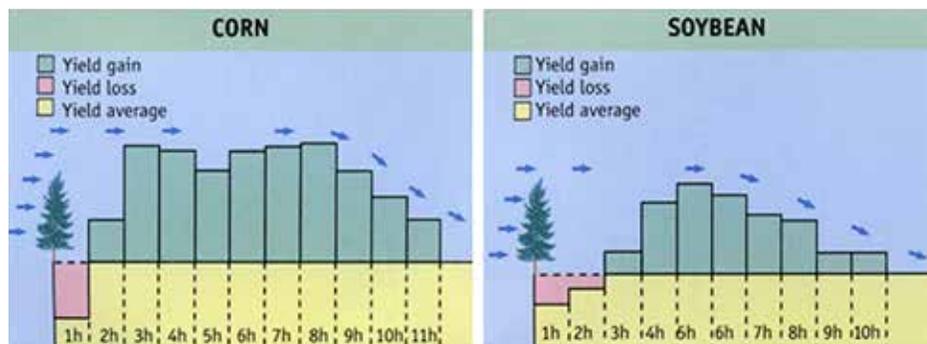
Consider incorporating windbreaks into your farm plan to make your farm more resilient to climate change. Windbreaks are purposely planted rows of trees and/or shrubs that protect your crops from blowing wind, sediment and hail by reducing wind speeds across fields. This also helps retain moisture in the soil during drought conditions.

Topsoil is your farm's most valuable asset and windbreaks keep it from blowing away. The University of Guelph has shown that corn and soybean yields improve when windbreaks are planted. The overall increase in yield more than makes up for the loss of arable land and slight losses in yield directly beside a

windbreak. Windbreaks effectively increase crop yields out to a distance of 12 times the height of the windbreak, so the orientation and spacing of windbreaks are important to consider when planning your project.

Windbreaks have off-the-farm benefits as well. White-out conditions on country roads often create hazardous situations for motorists. Windbreaks can control drifting snow, improving road safety and protecting drivers from accidents. Many areas such as Dufferin and Wellington Counties and the Region of Peel have living snow fence programs that provide trees and shrubs for windbreaks along roadways at no direct cost to the landowner.

Technical and financial assistance is available to help you plant a windbreak. For more details contact Mark Eastman, Program Coordinator, Agricultural Extension at 905-670-1615 ext. 430 or meastman@creditvalleyca.ca.



LEGEND h = tree height

Source: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, Agroforestry Series Volume 2, Establishing Tree Cover. 2008.

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.

COMING EVENTS

Register at: creditvalleyca.ca/events

Events are free unless otherwise indicated

Bird-Friendly Certified Hay Information Sessions for Rural Landowners and Farmers

Mon. Mar. 2, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Watershed Learning Centre,
Terra Cotta Conservation Area

Thurs. Mar. 5, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Caledon Village Place, Caledon Village

Caring for Your Land and Water Workshop

Sat. Mar. 7, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Centre 2000, Erin

Landowner Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Presentation

Sat. Mar. 28, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
CVC's Forestry Operations Centre, Caledon

Small-Scale Farming Workshop

Sat. Apr. 11, 2 p.m.
Whole Village
20725 Shaw's Creek Road, Caledon

Caring for Your Land and Water Workshop

Sat. Apr. 25, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Terra Cotta Community Centre,
18 High Street, Terra Cotta

Make Orangeville Shine and Earth Day Tree Planting

Sat. Apr. 25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Rotary Park, Orangeville

Natural Pond Management Workshop

Sat. May 9, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Watershed Learning Centre,
Terra Cotta Conservation Area

Funding in support of Credit Valley Conservation programs, workshops and events is generously 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.