



COUNTRYSIDE
stewardship

REPORT

FALL EDITION, 2017

BE A PART OF PROTECTING THE LAND YOU LOVE



Peter and Frances Chiddy

CVC recently celebrated three landowners making a difference. The “Friends of the Credit” Conservation Awards are given annually to individuals and groups who show environmental excellence or leadership in the watershed. Peter and Frances Chiddy, Barbara and Andrew Harrison, and Bernie and Joanneke Kottelenberg were recognized for their commitment to sustainable agriculture and protecting nature on their properties.

These stewards are champions in a changing climate. With more severe storms, rising temperatures and spread of invasive species, these landowners are taking actions to help reduce some big effects of climate change. We’re happy to share their stories with you.

The Harrisons and Chiddys planted more trees on their properties to grow larger forests with native trees and shrubs. Larger, more diverse forests will respond better to the dramatic disruptions of climate change. When trees

get damaged, native species are planted to replace what was lost and keep forests healthy. The plantings also shade streams, to keep the water cooler. Cold-water fish like brook trout can thrive because they depend on cold water to survive. These families are making their lands more resilient by removing invasive plants like buckthorn, honeysuckle and periwinkle. Removing damaging invasive plants means they won’t spread further.

The Chiddys and Kottelenbergs are using sustainable farming practices. They carefully manage manure by keeping livestock safely away from streambanks. This controls run-off and erosion in the streams, protecting water quality for safe drinking water on their farms and for other people downstream.

More intense rain storms are causing more erosion. The Kottelenbergs have a system to help prevent it. They’ve made the most extensive erosion control system in the watershed

by building a huge grassed waterway that controls gully erosion and protects both soil and water.

Our Conservation Award winners are truly champions in our watershed. They make nature strong and resilient in the face of climate change.

Do you know someone making an environmental difference in your community? You’ve got until November 27 to nominate your champion. No need to wait, though. Learn more at creditvalleyca.ca/conservationawards.





Nature's Show and Tell: **THE STORY OF SUCCESSION**

Change is all around us – in our lives and in nature. In fact, nature is at its best when it's changing, both gradually and from sudden events like storms or fires. Whether fast or slow, change is part of an important natural process called succession.

Ecological succession is the change in plant and animal communities over time. When you're attuned to succession, you can see it all around you. Ponds evolve into marshes and swamps. Shrubs and trees transform open areas into forests. Forest succession occurs over many decades, but you can also see changes happening right before your eyes. You just have to know what to look for to read nature's story.

Take a retired farm field for example. At first, grasses, flowers and shrubs move in as new tenants, along with sun-loving pioneer tree species. These early growers change the condition of the land and make way for other species that grow better in the shade and shelter of the pioneer trees.

Over time, the young forest develops into a mature forest with greater diversity and larger trees. Forest succession doesn't stop there. As a forest continues to age, some trees will die. When they fall, the forest canopy opens up and creates clearings where the sun peaks

through, giving a boost for younger trees to grow. This process occurs naturally with little human intervention. It's when forests experience bigger stresses like widespread disease, invasive species and impacts from climate change that landowners should give their forest a helping hand.

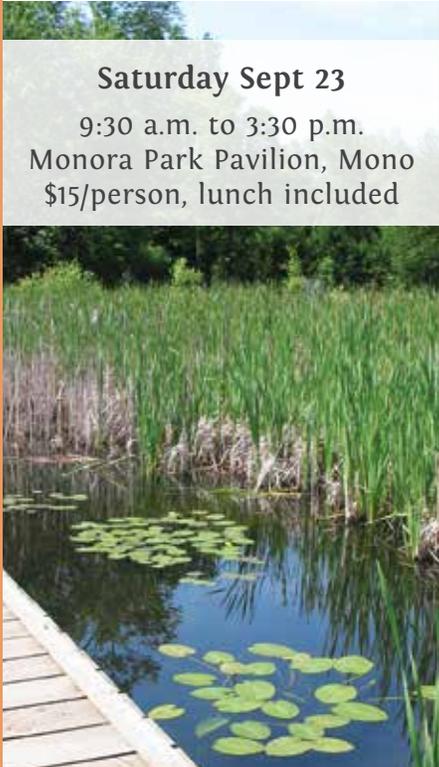
To restore lost forests, we can take a page from nature's playbook. Planting an old field with rows of coniferous seedlings such as white spruce and white pine creates a 'nursery' to kick start the process of forest succession. A plantation forest needs the right kind of tender loving care and good management practices to transition to a natural forest with lots of species of trees.

Natural spaces all around us are continually moving through succession. If allowed to unfold according to natural processes, nature knows exactly what to do. Learning how to recognize disturbances that threaten a forest's survival is important so steps can be taken to keep it healthy at each stage of succession.

Discover how to recognize the changes from succession in wetlands and forests on your property at CVC's *Nature at its Best* workshop September 23.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Nature at its Best: Forest and Wetland Health



Saturday Sept 23

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion, Mono
\$15/person, lunch included

SET YOUR PROPERTY UP FOR SUCCESS

Learn the signs of healthy forests and wetlands. Our experts will show you strategies from nature's playbook to keep nature at its best on your property.

*Attend all day or
a half-day session.*

Register at
creditvalleyca.ca/events



from the *Expert*

Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach on the importance of pasture management for healthy horses

A pasture is more than a place to keep your horse. Pastures are important semi-natural features on the landscape that provide many ecological benefits. A well-managed pasture

provides good, inexpensive nutrition for horses and protects the land from runoff and erosion. It also provides habitat for grassland birds and pollinators.

Help your pastures and your horses be their best by doing the following:

- Over-seed and fertilize pastures when vegetation looks sparse. This keeps grasses healthy and nutritious. Soil testing helps determine what type and how much fertilizer to use.
- Divide larger pastures into smaller ones and rotate horses through. This gives grasses time to regrow. Graze each pasture from 10 inches down to 4 inches before moving horses to the next pasture.
- Fence horses out of sensitive areas (wet or steeply sloped). This limits turf damage from hooves, and prevents manure and bacteria from entering the water table.

Learn more about pasture management at our *Caring for Your Horse and Farm* workshop on October 21.

DID YOU KNOW?

Grasslands are important habitats for pollinators and birds in the spring, summer and fall. The variety of wildflowers and grasses in grasslands provide bees, butterflies and birds with food to eat and places to find shelter as the seasons change. Aster and goldenrod provide vital sources of nectar and pollen in the fall. Tall grasses provide breeding areas for grassland birds like the eastern meadowlark and bobolink in the spring.



CARING FOR YOUR HORSE & FARM WORKSHOP

FREE

Saturday Oct. 21
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion, Mono

CREATE A PLAN FOR YOUR PROPERTY

GRANTS AVAILABLE

Make the most of your rural property. Learn how to care for nature and your horses with environmental improvements.

- Manage manure
- Improve pasture quality
- Protect water sources
- Enhance horse health

Register at creditvalleyca.ca/events

CVC'S SUBSIDIZED TREE SEEDLING PROGRAM



Plant a Forest for the Future

Let us do the work for you. Our experienced forestry staff can:

- Prepare a customized planting plan
- Deliver and machine plant bare root seedlings*
- Discuss opportunities to reduce your property taxes

Book a free site visit: 647-449-2743

creditvalleyca.ca/treeplanting

*minimum order and acres required

Only 20¢/seedling with subsidy from Forests Ontario



FARM GATE

PEEL RURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM: HELPING FARMERS HELP THE ENVIRONMENT



Farming is an important part of the rural community in the Credit River watershed. Farmers work hard to provide fresh food to the public. Agriculture is a necessity that can have environmental risks, depending on how it is practiced. In 2005, CVC and Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), with support from local municipalities and the agricultural community, developed a program called the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) to help farmers take on projects that protect the environment.

Over the years, the program has contributed \$720,000 in grants towards 154 projects valued at over \$4.4 million. Other funding programs and personal contributions of over \$3.1 million from farmers covered the remaining portion of the required funds. The program helps farmers:

- fence livestock out of rivers
- improve how manure is stored and fertilizers are applied
- plant trees and shrubs to improve wildlife habitat
- protect soil from wind and water erosion
- protect groundwater supplies from potential fuel storage leaks

“When farmers participate in the program we all benefit from improved water, air and soil quality,” said Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach at CVC. “Providing incentives helps farmers change their management practices for environmental good. It demonstrates that people support local sustainable farming and value the benefits it gives us.”

Farmers in Peel Region can be proud of the fact that their projects have:

- safely stored 43,000 dump trucks of manure
- protected 12 kilometres of rivers from cow, sheep and horse access
- planted 25,000 trees and shrubs to restored degraded lands
- protected a total of 109 hectares of natural woodlands, wetland and river banks

Don't just think of farmers as people who provide your next meal. They do much more. Their land helps maintain drinking water supplies, improves air quality and supports local wildlife. The next time you're talking to a farmer, thank them for caring for the land.

COMING EVENTS

Register at: creditvalleyca.ca/events

Events are free unless otherwise indicated

Peel Environmental Farm Tour

Wednesday Sept 13, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Meet at the Brampton Fairgrounds, Caledon

Nature at Its Best: Forest and Wetland Health - \$15

Saturday Sept 23, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion, Mono

Caring For Your Land & Water

Saturday Oct 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion, Mono

Caring For Your Horse & Farm

Saturday Oct 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion, Mono

Funding in support of Credit Valley Conservation programs, workshops and events is generously provided by our regional and municipal partners.

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.



Barnyard improvements can help you better manage manure on your farm.



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CVC was established in 1954 with a mandate to protect natural resources in the Credit River watershed. We have been working for more than 60 years with our partner municipalities and stakeholders to build a thriving environment that protects, connects and sustains us.

