

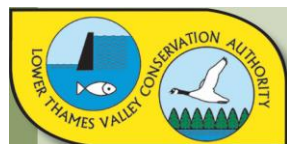
Media Release – For Immediate Release
February 2, 2021

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Celebrates 60 Years of Conservation!

Lower Thames Valley Watershed and Region – The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) recognizes its 60th year in conservation today! Mark Peacock – CAO and Secretary-Treasurer of the LTVCA states *"From generation to generation, the people of the Lower Thames watershed have come together to improve their communities. For 60 years, the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has been proud to be part of this work."* This milestone anniversary won't be celebrated in traditional fashion due to the COVID-19 pandemic however, we will definitely proclaim our 60th year in our programming and achievements in creative ways!



Founded on February 2, 1961, the LTVCA was established across the lower Thames River watershed to address its environmental issues. A mandate of watershed management included the control of flooding and erosion, as well as working with the farm community in tree planting efforts. The Thames River dike and erosion control works began during this first decade. Over 40 Directors represented the member municipalities of the LTVCA.



In the **70's**, conservation areas were developed with the help of student summer workers, our jurisdiction was expanded to the north shore of Lake Erie, and the Thames River dike was completed. A flood warning system was installed, and ice management took on a new emphasis. A new logo was revealed. Tree planting expanded. At the end of the decade, the

Administration Office location moved from 4th Street to its current location at 100 Thames Street in Chatham.

In the **1980's**, recreation and education programming took off. A watershed plan was developed, tug boats were used as icebreakers as major flooding was occurring along the river and the lakeshores. By the late 80's, a ground breaking ceremony took place for the Indian/McGregor Flood Control Project.

Partnership building and restructuring were necessary actions taken in the **90's** following provincial funding cuts and municipal amalgamations. The Board of Directors was reduced to 12 members. LTVCA's services expanded to include more tree planting and stewardship actions for combatting the ever increasing flooding and erosion in the watershed. Programs to protect species at risk were developed. Millions of visitors had visited our conservation areas and millions of trees had been planted.

With the arrival of the year **2000**, the Thames celebrated its designation as a Canadian Heritage River. A focus on protecting our sources of drinking water resulted from the Walkerton tragedy and we teamed up with our neighbouring conservation authorities (UTRCA and SCRCA) as the Thames, Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region. The Chatham-Kent Children's Safety Village was built at one of our conservation areas. LTVCA hosted our first Children's Water Festival. Forestry programs continued to expand in response to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.



With a fresh look and logo revealed in the last 10 years, the LTVCA has continued to serve its 10 member municipalities and watershed residents across a 3,275 square km (1,264 square miles) jurisdiction, with a population of over 100,000. The Conservation Authority has remained true to its mandate of protecting lives and property through its water management programs: flood monitoring and warning along the Thames and Lakes Erie and St. Clair shorelines; water quality monitoring of surface and ground water; administering land use planning and regulations; and municipal plan review. On the ground projects to enhance watershed health, including tree planting, restoring wetlands and prairie, protecting species at risk and efforts to reduce phosphorus from entering our waterways have soared, as we work with hundreds of community organizations, volunteers and government partners to improve the environment. 1,712 acres (693 hectares) are now protected in 31 properties the LTVCA manages, 18 of which are especially designed for the public to “step into nature” and enjoy day use and camping. School and public programming and events in these conservation areas reflect watershed initiatives to encourage wise management of our watershed’s natural resources. The vision of the LTVCA for a balanced and healthy watershed is ever present, through leading by example in environmental protection in partnership with the community.

This year, we will ensure that any plans to celebrate the LTVCA’s 60th Anniversary are in compliance with recommendations of local health units and the provincial and federal governments. Stay tuned to LTVCA Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social media platforms, along with the LTVCA’s website for information on how we will incorporate our 60th birthday celebrations into what we do across the watershed this year. *“At this anniversary, we look back with gratitude and we look forward with anticipation of great things to come.”* reflects Mark Peacock.

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For further information and comment please contact:

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