

# ANNUAL REPORT

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## 2017



Thames Talbot   
Land Trust

[ttlt.ca](http://ttlt.ca)



## Our mission:

Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) is dedicated to protecting environmentally significant lands through acquisition, conservation easements, landscape restoration and education.



## Our goals:

**Protect** Lands and Natural Heritage  
- primary intent is to hold and manage land in perpetuity for the benefit of future generations.

**Restore** Ecosystems - restoration activities like planting native species, removing garbage and controlling invasive species to help restore damaged ecosystems.

**Nurture** Environmental Stewardship  
- engagement, mentorship, volunteer opportunities, skill building and professional development workshops.

## Our focus area:

Natural, recreational, scenic, historical and agricultural lands throughout Middlesex, Elgin, Perth and Oxford Counties.



"2017 was an exciting time for the Thames Talbot Land Trust because we were basking in the glow of having completed the largest campaign ever undertaken namely Hawk Cliff and Beyond. Our campaign goal of \$1.6 million had closed at the end of 2016 but we continued to receive the final commitments in 2017. The Board and Staff felt a wonderful sense of accomplishments.

We closed the Beryl Ivey Woods property acquisition and fund raising campaign in 2017 and had a glorious celebration of the property in the fall. This property marked the 14th parcel in our roster of land ownership and represents a gem in our portfolio. We were particularly pleased to recognize Beryl Ivey a key person along with her husband Richard M. Ivey in their support for the Land Trust.

Over the course of the year, we were very engaged in the initiation of the Westminster Ponds Centre. This project is still under development and represents a possible partnership with ReForest London to create a unique environment and sustainability centre on the Western Counties Health and Occupational lands behind Parkwood Hospital. We are hoping to finalize this project in 2018.

We were also delighted to receive the 2017 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in the Preservation of Hawk Cliff Woods. We were nominated by the Municipality of Central Elgin. This was a banner year for the Trust and we look forward to more milestones for the coming years.

On behalf of our Staff, thanks everyone for your continued support of our Mission and Vision."



Suzanne McDonald Aziz, Executive Director

"In October of 2017, we gathered in Skunk's Misery to celebrate the protection of Beryl Ivey Woods, a 50-acre parcel of rich Carolinian forest, in the Skunk's Misery Natural Area. While we celebrated this, the 14th property to come under direct ownership of Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT), we were also in the final stages of receiving a donation of land from George Gillies. Thus, by the end of December 2017, TTLT had reached a new milestone 15 properties, totalling 1329 acres! In addition, TTLT holds one conservation easement in Perth

County, making for a total of 1429 acres of protected land.

Preparations continue for acquisition of additional conservation lands through purchase or donation. Members and friends of TTLT will see some exciting new projects in the weeks and months ahead.

Acquiring the land is but one part of the story. From the earliest days of the land trust, we have made a commitment to look after the land we own. Among stewardship activities in 2017, we continued to address invasive species on our properties. We were successful in obtaining funding that enabled reconstruction of the boardwalk at Joany's Woods. Volunteers contributed hours of time and talent towards the boardwalk project, and other stewardship activities on TTLT properties.

Outreach activities including the annual speaker, the Winter Walk, the EcoFolk concert, the Native Plant Sale, helped to introduce more people to the work of the land trust. The use of social media also assists in spreading the word.

Throughout 2017, TTLT worked towards development of a partnership with ReForest London (RFL) at Westminster Ponds. TTLT and RFL have been sharing office space in the Bruce Pavilion at Westminster Ponds for several years. London Health Sciences Centre has determined that the Western Counties buildings and the associated 14 acres of land are surplus to their needs. If negotiations are successful, RFL and TTLT would take ownership of the land and buildings. The goal is to develop an Environment and Sustainability Centre that would benefit the community of London and be a potential source of revenue for both organizations. Partnership discussions are ongoing.

The work of the Thames Talbot Land Trust would not be possible without the superb efforts of our loyal and dedicated staff. Staff are key to our success in so many ways. Thanks to each and every one.

Thanks also to our members, donors, supporters, and volunteers, including those who serve on the board and committees. Many individuals and organizations assisted us in helpful and creative ways in 2017, and I assure you that your efforts are greatly appreciated."

David Wake, President (2016-2017)



# CONSERVING WILD SPACES



Almost 90% of the land protected by TTLT is located within the Carolinian Zone - Canada's most biodiverse region. Biodiversity in this region includes over 70 species of trees, 2200 species of herbaceous plants, 400 species of birds. One-third of Canada's species-at-risk are found in the region. The Carolinian Zone covers less than 1% of Canada's land mass yet contains 25% of the country's population. That's impressive! The pressure of increasing population in the Carolinian Zone

motivates us to continue working to sustain our region's biodiversity. Our land securement strategies focus on protecting rare plant, animal and vegetation communities while our educational events help raise public awareness. In 2017, TTLT worked to protect, restore and nurture quality habitat for 30 species-at-risk that call our conservation properties home.



11 birds



9 plants



4 reptiles



2 mammals



2 fish



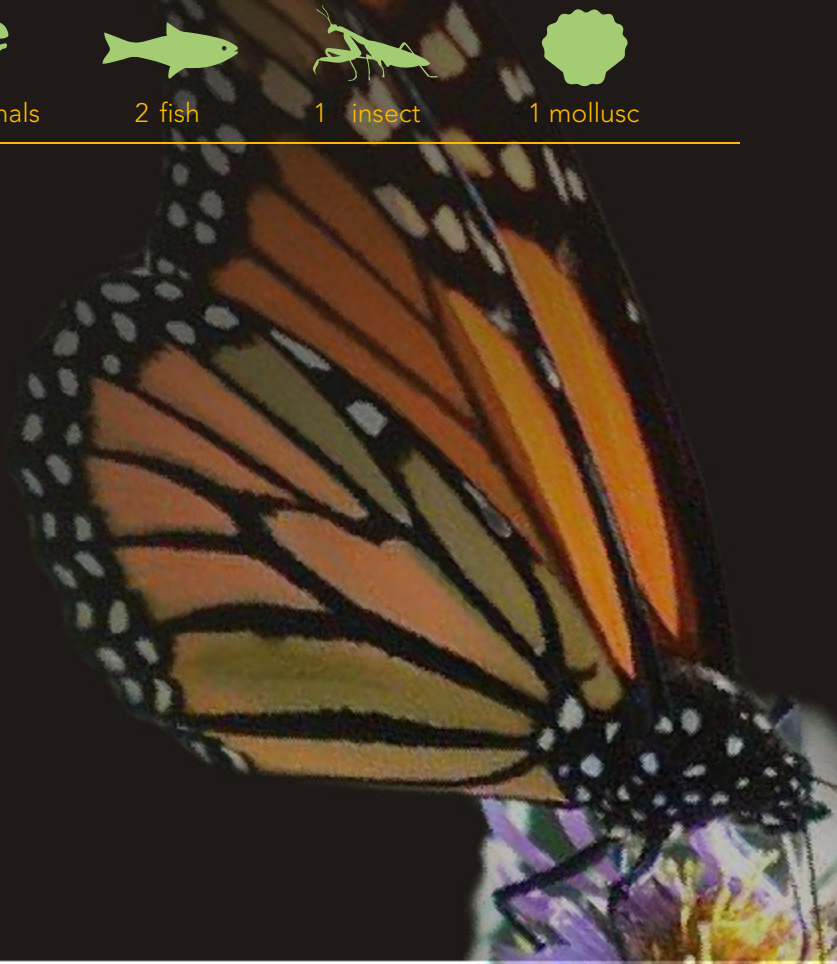
1 insect



1 mollusc

Each year we engage communities through nature walks, guest speakers and other educational events to inspire new audiences about conservation stewardship. In 2017, we introduced new programs, cultivated new partnerships, enhanced accessibility to our properties, created new public spaces and hosted more than **14** public events, **23** community work days and **12** outreach events. Here are just a few that took place in 2017:

- "Invasion of the Habitat Snatchers", presented as part of the Nature in the City Series
- Conserving Canada's Birds, presented by Jody Allair at the 11th Annual Speaker Event
- EcoFolk 2017 benefit concert to raise conservation and species-at-risk awareness
- Toast for Turtles a partnership with Anderson's Craft Ale to celebrate World Turtle Day
- Hawk Cliff Weekends brings birders, banders and the public together





*"A land trust is really a promise made to future generations."* Quote: Mary E. Kerr, a founding TTLT Director

## Protecting Lands, Habitats & Natural Heritage

Securing ecologically significant lands to protect species and habitats is a tall order. As always we are thankful for the excellent work and commitment of TTLT's volunteer Land Securement Committee (LSC), who worked together with staff to make 2017 another very successful year.

## 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

### Using science to identify and prioritize key habitats

- With funding from Ontario Land Trust Alliance, developed a new Land Securement Strategy for the entire TTLT focus area. GIS analysis identified 33 priority areas.
- Completed an update of the Skunk's Misery Natural Area Conservation Action Plan. The updated plan will assist TTLT in securing funding for future land acquisition in this area.
- Presented "Securement Challenges and Successes in Southern Ontario" at the Latonnell Conservation Symposium in Alliston.

## Acquisitions

### Gillies Nature Tract

With a generous gift from George Gillies in 2017, TTLT acquired our 15th property – Gillies Nature Tract, bringing the total area of land protected by TTLT to 1427 acres. The land securement team worked closely with the land owner to complete the EcoGift donation of this lovely wetland/woodland property in Bobcat Swamp (Middlesex County). Gillies Nature Tract is a 34.2 hectare (84.5 acre) parcel situated within a high priority location containing 23 hectares (56 acres) of contiguous interior forest and is a mixture of upland forest (85%) and Provincially Significant Wetland (15%). Biological inventories on the property are underway.

## Beryl Ivey Woods

Although Beryl Ivey Woods (Skunk's Misery) officially came under the TTLT conservation lands umbrella within the year prior, the fundraising campaign for the purchase and stewardship of the property came to a successful close in 2017. A celebration was held at the property in October 14. The stewardship management plan for the property is now complete.

In 2017, TTLT also considered several properties for future acquisition.

## Recognition

- Beryl Ivey Woods, Hawk Cliff Woods and Bebensee Tract were included in the Canada 150 Land Conservation Recognition Program by the Government of Canada.
- TTLT was recognized with the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in the Preservation of Hawk Cliff Wood.

## Looking towards 2018

We are gearing up for another busy year. Currently in development:

- Cross border conservation with American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts.
- Our biggest land securement campaign yet – 6 new conservation properties totaling 470 acres, increasing our current land base by 33%.

## Protected Properties by year and number protected







For each property that TTLT acquires, we develop a property management plan (PMP) that outlines the natural and anthropogenic features of the land, the biodiversity targets we want to protect and any problems that need to be addressed. Our stewardship work is guided by these property

management plans. TTLT has updated the PMP format based on best practices developed by Ontario Land Trust Alliance and Nature Conservancy of Canada. In 2017 we completed four new or updated Property Management Plans for five properties.

## Protected Habitat Types



Forest



Swamp



Meadow



Marsh



Farmland

## Restore Ecosystems

Stewarding ecosystems on our properties is a serious commitment. Each year we dedicate a large portion of our time to monitoring populations, enhancing and creating habitat, maintaining trails and connecting people with nature. In 2017 we dedicated **3845** staff and summer student hours to stewardship activities. More than **1200** additional hours were generously donated by volunteers.

## Invasive Species Management

Invasive species are an environmental and economic threat throughout southern Ontario. Once established, the ecological effects of invasive species pose a serious threat to biodiversity and are often irreversible because invasive species are incredibly difficult and costly to control and eradicate. In 2017 we tackled **7** invasive species at **8** properties. Invasive species management takes an army so we are always looking for new ways to educate and inspire with a call to action. This year we continued to grow the Adopt-a-Patch program to **45** community members/garlic mustard warriors.



## Monitoring Populations & Ecosystems

Protecting and stewarding our lands includes monitoring the species that call our properties home. TTLT performs focused monitoring of specific target species and restoration projects and some of our properties are included in citizen science programs that collect data about local wildlife populations. In 2017 we engaged in several large monitoring projects.

We have done a lot of restoration and monitoring work at Hawk Cliff Woods in the last few years. In 2017 we launched several monitoring programs to assess the restoration process and monitor wildlife populations. We have installed 5 point-count stations for bird monitoring, 3 transects for butterfly monitoring and 14 permanent quadrats for vegetation monitoring. Our first year of data demonstrates the wide diversity of bird and butterfly species living at Hawk Cliff Woods. Our vegetation monitoring shows that invasive species are still present in our restored fields and will need some ongoing management. Long term monitoring data will help us make good decisions about stewardship projects and the health of ecosystems and populations.

Below are a few of the projects we were part of in 2017:

- Bird inventories at Bebensee Tract and Beryl Ivey Woods
- Mist netting of bats with Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA)
- Worked with Canadian Chestnut Council on endangered American Chestnut recovery initiatives at Hawk Cliff Woods
- Monitoring of Eastern Flowering Dogwood populations on two properties
- Monarch Watch: tagging migrating Monarch butterflies at Hawk Cliff Woods
- Christmas Bird Count: counting local bird populations in Skunk's Misery
- Annual Butterfly Count: counting butterfly populations in Skunk's Misery and at Hawk Cliff Woods.

We are very grateful to our volunteers and donors for their help in conserving wild spaces.







## Nurture Environmental Stewardship

Through outreach, stewardship and volunteer events we provide the opportunity and environment to foster positive, lifelong relationships with nature. In 2017 TTLT hosted 26 outreach and public events, engaging more than 1200 individuals of all ages.

### Eat Your Enemy

In May of 2017 TTLT hosted the very first Eat Your Enemy Workshop with Growing Chefs!, a London-based charity focused on food education. Funded by TD Friends of the Environment, Eat Your Enemy is an innovative edible plant workshop series, educating participants on how to forage for edible invasive plants and use them in a number of recipes. The 2017 workshop involved the use of Garlic Mustard, typically found invading understories, threatening trilliums and other spring wildflowers. Foraging Garlic Mustard aids in controlling its invasive spread, while also providing the main ingredient for a delicious pesto.

### Mood Walks – Nature for Nurture

Together with the Canadian Mental Health Association – Middlesex, TTLT launched Nature for Nurture in 2017. The program offers Mood Walks (guided hikes promoting the benefits of taking a break in nature) in city parks as well as outings to TTLT's nature reserves where participants take part in stewardship activities, like seed collecting, invasive species removal, and planting native wildflowers. Nature for Nurture kicked off in the fall with an 11-week long series including 7 city walks and 4 outings. Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant, the second series started back up in the spring of 2018.

### Schools Programs

2017 marked the 10th anniversary of the partnership with Catholic Central High School's (CCH) Environmental Leadership Program. Each year approximately 20 CCH students and 80 elementary school students take part in field trips to Meadowlily Nature Preserve. The high school students

spend time learning about forest and meadow ecology and plant identification. They then host the elementary students where together they participate in butterfly surveying and planting native plants. Since the start of the partnership in 2007, over 1000 students have participated. Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, the program will be expanded to 12 new schools over the next three years.

- 250+ high school, university and college students participated in stewardship and outreach activities in 2017

*"My favourite part was when we planted flowers because planting new plants helps the environment. So thank you again."* – Abigale, Grade 3/4, Holy Cross Elementary School

*"It was a lot of fun. I'm going to remember [Meadowlily] and show my parents. I loved the trip. I hope I can go to that place again soon. Thank you for inviting us on the trip."* – Taylor, Grade 3/4, Holy Cross Elementary School



# SPROUTING INNOVATION



## Taking Root

In 2013, twenty-five groups gathered together to discuss the needs that an environmental network might address in the London area. Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) and ReForest London collaborated on a grant to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and were fortunate to receive funding to operate the network for three years. The London Environmental Network (LEN) was officially launched to the public on March 27, 2015.

LEN exists to help member organizations deliver on their missions. These organizations help to protect our environment and build a sustainable community for London. LEN was able to succeed through the generous support and coaching from Thames Talbot Land Trust and ReForest London.

In 2018, LEN will officially become incorporated as an independent non-profit organization. We thank TTLT's staff and Board for their ongoing support of our mission and their active participation in London's environmental sector.

## It's a Matter of Trust

"I am honoured to take on the role of President of the Thames Talbot Land Trust for the next two years. I hope to contribute in every way I can to our mission of acquiring land, returning it to its native state if possible, and keeping it in a good state of health. We have done that well for 18 years. The challenge ahead is to adapt to the increasing complexity of our operations. My goal is to see us, together, build on the best that we have, in a fiscally responsible manner, and in a context of effective communication between staff, directors, members, stewards, volunteers, donors, and the public."

A handwritten signature in gold ink, reading 'André'.

André Lachance, President (2018-2020)

# 2017 FINANCIAL STATEMENT



**Solid Investments:** - Long term investments increased from \$616,561 to \$772,381. We have transitioned from holding additional cash in operating bank accounts to investments in short term holdings that allow full flexibility with the benefit of interest income.

Our investment with the London Community Foundation distributed 4.5% to our operations and earned 11.9%. We continue to feel this is a good partnership for the Land Trust. In the past ten years, our average return on investment has been 7%.

**Fundraising initiatives:** - TTLT received \$123,362 of cash donations and land valued at \$145,000 during 2017. Notable fundraising events included the Winter Walk for Wildlife, EcoFolk, Native Plant Sale and the Taste for Nature dinner presented in partnership with Plant Matter Kitchen. TTLT had an excellent year and we hope to expand on our fundraising efforts in 2018.

**Financial health:** - the TTLT further strengthened their overall financial position during the year increasing net assets from \$4,851,116 to \$5,158,517. However, our operating fund continues to pose a challenge for the Trust. During 2018 we hope to implement a new plan to ensure that we can continue to support the critical day to day operations of the organizations. Our many supporters can help us in this regard by making donations to our general operations, rather than a specific funds, whenever possible.

## Statement of Financial Position As at December 31, 2017

ASSETS	Total 2017	Total 2016
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash and short term investments	1,085,677	1,150,723
Accounts receivable	9,105	106,169
Due from Opportunities Fund	---	100,000
Prepaid expenses	---	707
	<u>\$ 1,094,782</u>	<u>\$ 1,357,599</u>
<b>CAPITAL ASSETS</b>	5,569	7,955
LAND	3,486,811	3,341,811
<b>LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS</b>	<u>772,381</u>	<u>616,561</u>
	<u>\$ 5,359,543</u>	<u>\$ 5,323,926</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable	18,643	77,420
Due to Stewardship Fund	---	100,000
Deferred contributions	<u>182,383</u>	<u>295,390</u>
	<u>201,026</u>	<u>472,810</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>5,158,517</u>	<u>4,851,116</u>
	<u>\$5,359,543</u>	<u>\$5,323,926</u>

## Statement of Operations As at December 31, 2017

REVENUE	Total 2017	Total 2016
Grants	333,519	621,424
Donated land	145,000	---
Donations	123,362	560,733
Fundraising	47,523	17,034
Agricultural rental	<u>9,795</u>	<u>6,956</u>
	<u>\$ 760,730</u>	<u>\$ 1,272,531</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salary and wages	276,442	272,193
Property stewardship	44,405	56,986
Administrative and office	46,881	40,384
Professional fees	51,420	51,928
Property acquisition	10,579	20,939
Marketing and promotion	14,020	14,426
Automotive	<u>9,582</u>	<u>8,973</u>
	<u>\$ 453,329</u>	<u>\$ 465,829</u>
Excess (deficiency) of		
Revenues Over Expenditures	<u>\$ 307,401</u>	<u>\$ 806,702</u>



# SUPPORTING CONSERVATION



The Aeolian Hall | Allegra Marketing Print Mail | Anderson Craft Ales | Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority  
Bird Studies Canada | Breck Campbell Design | Brent Jones - Musician | Broomsticks & Hammers  
Catfish Creek Conservation Authority | Canadian Land Trust Alliance (CLTA) | Cargill | Catholic Central High School  
Canadian Mental Health Association-Middlesex | Central Elgin Collegiate Institute | Christine Newland - Musician  
CI Investments | City of London | County of Middlesex | Covent Garden Market | Dynamic Funds | ECHO Foundation  
Elgin St. Thomas Community Foundation | Fanshawe College | Fanshawe Yacht Club | Fidelity Investments  
Franklin, Templeton Investments | Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex | Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program  
Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs | Government of Canada - Ecological Gifts Program | Glassroots Restaurant  
Growing Chefs! | Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders | Huron Tractor | Ingersoll District Nature Club | Ingersoll Foot and Ankle Clinic  
Invesco Trimark | Kettle Creek Conservation Authority | Kettle Creek Marina | Kiwanis Club of Forest City | Lee Valley Tools  
London Community Foundation | London Public Library | Long Point Region Conservation Authority  
Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority | Mackenzie Investments | The Marrieds | The McLean Foundation  
Moore Water Gardens | Moss Leadership Consulting | Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) | Municipality of Central Elgin  
Museum London | Nature Conservancy of Canada | Nature London | Norfolk Field Naturalists | O'Neil Funeral Home  
Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) | Ontario Trillium Foundation | Pat Denomme and the Cosmic Cowboys  
Pillar Non-profit Network | Plant Matter Kitchen | Royal Bank of Canada | Saunders Secondary School | Scotiabank  
Siskinds Law Firm | Sisters of Saint Joseph | Sonometrics Corporation | St. Joseph's Catholic High School  
St. Joseph's Heath Centre | St. Thomas Field Naturalists (STFNC) | Stacey Zegers - Musician | Steel Grill Catering Ltd.  
Strathroy District Collegiate Institute | Sydenham Field Naturalists | Takla Foundation | TD Bank  
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation | To Wheels | Trojan Technologies | Western University  
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority | Urban League of London | Village Square Coffeehouse  
Walter J. Blackburn Foundation | West Elgin Nature Trust | West Lorne Men's Breakfast Club | Westminster Park  
Wilsie Equipment Sales | Woodstock Field Naturalists | ...and all the individuals who support our mission.

**TTLT would like to thank the following for the wonderful photos they provided for our 2017 annual report**

page 1 & 12 - Brenda Gallagher, page 3 - Mark Cunningham, page 4 - Terry Whittam, page 5 - Cathy Quinlan, page 6 - Cathy Sumac,  
Left-to-right Dave Wake, Cathy Quinlan, John St. Pierre, Cathy Sumac, Unknown supporter, page 7 - Left-to-right John St. Pierre, Lucas  
Foerster, John St. Pierre, Stan Caveney, Scott Gillingwater, page 8 - Jane Bowles, page 9 - Jane Bowles

## Board of Directors 2017/2018

### Officers:

**President,** David Wake  
**Vice-President,** André Lachance  
**Secretary,** Kim McCabe

**Past President,** Linda McDougall  
**Treasurer,** Jack Smit (Apr-Sep), Adrienne James (Sep-Jun)

### Board Members:

Greg Clark  
Adrienne James  
Linda McDougall  
David Wake

Al Driedger  
André Lachance  
Jack Smit

Carol Dyck  
Chris Leys  
Ric Symmes

Sarah Hodgkiss  
Kim McCabe  
Bernie VanDenBelt

### Committee Chairs:

Finance, Jack Smit (Apr-Sep), Adrienne James (Sep-Jun)  
Land Securement, Cathy Quinlan  
Property Management, Kaitlin Richardson

Governance, Jim Rule  
Membership & Marketing, Elaine Gamble

### Staff 2017

Executive Director, Suzanne McDonald Aziz  
Conservation Property Manager, Daria Koscinski  
Stewardship Coordinator, Rebecca Launchbury  
Development & Communications Officer, Julia Eastabrook  
London Environmental Network (LEN) Coordinator, Skylar Franke  
LEN Summer Communications & Outreach Assistant, Kaitlyn Tyschenko  
Summer Web & Graphic Design Marketing Intern, Julia Ricciuto  
Summer Property Stewards, Drew Murphy & Lauren Linseman  
Co-op Students, Kate-Lynn Wolf, Eva Visscher, Emma Pilkington



Protecting, restoring and nurturing habitats in Middlesex, Elgin, Perth and Oxford Counties since 2000.  
Thames Talbot Land Trust is a member of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance (CLTA) and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA)  
Charitable Registration Number 86745 7475 RR0001

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