

THAMES TALBOT LAND TRUST

Ta TTLe^r



Diversifying Conservation: Where We Go from Here

Over the last two years, Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) has been running an outreach program called Diversifying Conservation, which has been generously funded by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. TTLT had done some diversity work in the past with programming such as the Mood Walks partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), but had never actively pursued racial/ethnic diversity in our outreach programming. With all that was going on in the world, we knew that it was important for us to make diversity a priority and to understand how we could do better for our local community and the conservation community at large.

It started off simple enough – create four to six events over the course of a year that had diversity, inclusion, and equity at the top of mind. Events would be aimed at Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities and individuals, who have typically been excluded from accessing nature and participating in outdoor recreation and conservation. Our goal was to connect with these communities, build relationships, work with community partners to offer opportunities that interested their communities the most, help people access nature with reduced barriers, and incorporate our learnings into all of our programming.

We began reaching out to community members to see if they would be interested in helping us shape the program with their communities in mind. Where We Are Now (WEAN) Community Centre and the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (LCCLC) were the first to answer the call.

We met multiple times to discuss the barriers that each community faced, how we could alleviate those and to what degree. Of course, COVID-19 put a few wrinkles in our plans. We had a lockdown that spring (2021), which pushed back many of our event dates. Our first event, Nature Biking, was held a week after the lockdown was lifted, and as a result, we didn't see very many participants. As COVID-19 restrictions lifted throughout the summer and people became increasingly interested in being outside, we saw an uptick in event participation and engagement.

One of our most successful events was the Butterfly Catching and Nature Hike held at Meadowlily Nature Preserve and Meadowlily

Woods ESA. Hikes were led by TTLT experts Rebecca Launchbury and Cathy Quinlan in the ESA to learn about plants and animals and participate in nature bingo. Butterfly catching (and releasing) was led by Dr. Nusha Keyghobadi, Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Western University, and Kevin Park, one of her



Pastor Charmaine from WEAN Community Centre at the 2021 Butterfly Catching & Nature Hike event. Photo by TTLT Staff.

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Help Protect Nature by Becoming a Nature Guardian!



Your love of nature can contribute to a legacy of protected areas that are rich in biodiversity, sustain life and nourish a sense of wonder and inspiration for all people. By becoming a **monthly ly donor**, you will join a community of committed Nature Guardians who are **vital to the long-term protection of nature**.

Become a Nature Guardian online or call us at 519-858-3442 for more information.

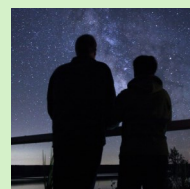
UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and register for events at www.ttl.ca or contact us at 519-858-3442.

Passport to Nature: Virtual Constellation Walk

January 19, 2023 from 7pm-8pm via Zoom

Join Trevor Chandler, professional geoscientist and lifelong amateur astronomer, to learn about prominent stars and constellations of the winter sky.



*People stargazing.
Photo by Trevor Chandler.*

Registration opens December 19, 2022.

Passport to Nature: What's on Your Nature Bookshelf?

February 16, 2023 from 7pm-8pm via Zoom



*Stack of books.
Photo by Vicki Hammond.*

Have you heard of the "Canada Reads" debates for best book? Well, join us for "Thames Talbot Reads!", moderated by TTLT Board members Vick Hammond and Adrienne James.

Registration opens January 16, 2023.

Passport to Nature: Spring Wildflower Primer

March 7, 2023 from 7pm-8pm via Zoom

Join naturalist Winifred Wake as she discusses why some woodlands have wonderful displays and others don't, and learn about some of the native spring wildflowers that grow in our area.



*Spring Beauty.
Photo by Dave Wake.*

Registration opens February 7, 2023.

Diversifying Conservation: Where We Go from Here (Continued)

enthusiastic lab students. Many families and a few individuals, generally completely new to TTLT, attended throughout the 4-hour window of the event. We received so much great feedback on this that we decided to make it one of the main events in the program in the following year (2022).



Hikers & hike leaders during the 2021 Fall Hiking event. Photo by TTLT Staff.

In developing this program to incorporate more diversity, equity, and inclusion, we wanted to address some of the main barriers that the BI-POC community faces, as well as specific obstacles to our local community. To reduce the barrier of transportation, we offered events at more localized locations in the City of London (TTLT or otherwise) that were accessible by bus and provided free bus tickets to make the journey more feasible. LCCLC identified the most common languages amongst newcomers to London so that we could translate outdoor safety information sheets and provide interpreters upon request. Our partners also recommended that we have snacks and drinks available to make the event more appealing to families as well as provide an opportunity to access food for those who may be experiencing food insecurity. We actively sought out diverse leadership for events to increase representation, so that participants could feel safer and see themselves in nature. We also pro-

vided honorariums to diverse leaders to acknowledge their time, experiences, and willingness to share their stories and their journey with participants. One of the biggest learnings that we're still working on implementing is meeting people where they are at rather than asking them to meet us somewhere. Yes, we want everyone to be out in nature, but the first step to any lasting relationship is to build trust, respect, and understanding, which can happen anywhere.



Young child searching their net for a butterfly. Photo by TTLT Staff.



Artwork from a youth taking part in an Origami & Decorating event. Photo by TTLT Staff.

We learned a lot in that first year of the program and wanted an opportunity to implement some of this new knowledge as well as nurture our new partnerships within this safe and established space. This led to Diversifying Conservation Part 2 which is currently on-going until March of 2023. This year, we have formed new partnerships within the community, have tried different activities with different audiences, and are continuing to learn and grow in our effort to be better allies to everyone.

- Darby Alderson



Global Recognition for Climate Leadership



On October 4th, TTLT and its partners in the Deshkan Zibi Conservation Impact Bond (DZCIB) received international recognition. Thames Talbot Land Trust, Deshkan Zibiing (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation), Carolinian Canada, VERGE Capital, and the Ivey Business School at Western University, received the Finance for Future Climate Leader Award for collaborative work on the DZCIB. DZCIB was recognized as a Climate Leader among 33 finalists from 13 countries.

"Being a climate leader is creating gifts for future generations. We are all accountable for or affected by the irreparable harm to people and nature through colonial economic systems. This is one small way to start to shift those systems to make positive impacts," said Michelle Kanter, Executive Director, Carolinian Canada Coalition at the ceremony livestreamed from London, England.

Auzins Nature Sanctuary Celebration

Approximately 100 people gathered under favourable skies on Saturday, September 17 to celebrate Auzins Nature Sanctuary (ANS), the final reserve of Thames Talbot Land Trust's (TTLT's) Vision 20/20 Campaign.

Bernie VanDenBelt, a member of TTLT's Land Securement Committee who assisted with the project, welcomed everyone and began the ceremony with a land acknowledgement and some opening remarks for context.

Karen and Eric purchased their property on Woodhull Road in 1985. Two years later, they moved into their newly constructed home and embarked upon a long-term effort to also make the site a sanctuary for nature.

After caring for and enjoying the property for many years, Karen and Eric were looking for a way to permanently protect this place they so treasured. They turned to TTLT, an organization they already knew well as they were among its very first supporters over 20 years ago. Their plan was to sever – and convey to TTLT – the wooded slopes and valley lands while retaining ownership of the house and surrounding agricultural fields.

The severance and rezoning applications associated with this project were complicated by the fact that the property straddled two municipalities, Middlesex Centre and the City of London. This came about as a result of London's most recent annexation process, with the new boundary bisecting the property.

Fortunately, both municipalities were supportive of the project, and the assistance of both Dan Fitzgerald and Barb Debbert – planners with Middlesex Centre and London respectively – were acknowledged. The contributions of Terry Grawey, a retired planner with the City and a long-time TTLT volunteer, were also noted.

Present to offer congratulations on behalf of Middlesex Centre was Mayor Aina DeViet. She recognized the importance of natural heritage protection, applauding the efforts and vision of both the Auzins and TTLT. Also in attendance was Brad Scott,

Delaware ward councillor for Middlesex Centre. London Mayor Ed Holder was not able to be present but sent a congratulatory letter that was shared with those in attendance.

TTLT Executive Director Daria Koscinski then spoke of the reserve's ecological features. ANS protects 21 ha (51 acres) of forested lands in the ecologically-rich Dingman Creek corridor. Species such as Skunk Cabbage, Marsh Marigold and Sycamore thrive in the floodplain while the valley slopes feature species such as Maple, Oak and Cherry. The variations in topography and moisture levels result in many habitats that support a wide variety of insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals.

Karen, in her remarks, reflected on childhood experiences in northern Ontario that kindled her love for nature. Many years later, this love of wild places led the Auzins to naturalize the area around their home, set up bird feeders, and put up the "Welcome" sign to a host of wildlife including such favourites as Wild Turkey. Over the years, many creatures have found refuge there.

Karen shared her hope that a more streamlined process could be implemented for those wishing to donate conservation lands, so that the process would not prove too onerous to potential donors. She also expressed her gratitude to all those who assisted in bringing their vision to fruition. Karen concluded with some practical suggestions to protect the biosphere upon which we all depend.

Following the formal ceremony, Karen and Eric cut a ceremonial cake decorated with a forest motif. Many attendees took advantage of the opportunity to tour a portion of the new reserve. Due to the steepness of the slopes, hikers did not descend into the floodplain but enjoyed impressive views of both the slopes and valley lands from the top.

As the afternoon drew to a close, it was time to depart with the hope that the Auzins Nature Sanctuary would be just the first in a series of protected areas in the Dingman Creek corridor.

-Bernie VanDenBelt



People mingling at the Auzins Nature Sanctuary Celebration. Photo by Rob Paterson.

New Snake Program Thanks to Nature London

Learning about snake populations – which species are present and how abundant they are – is an important first step in understanding their conservation needs. We often focus our attention on rare or at-risk species, since these are the species that need the most immediate help. However, it's also important to pay attention to more common species so we can address any issues as they arise.

With this in mind, TTLT has been working with Ontario Nature in their long term snake monitoring program. The idea is to survey for snakes each year for at least 10 years in order to learn which snakes are present and how their numbers compare year over year. The program is province wide and collects data on all snakes, whether common or rare, which will help to estimate a baseline and detect population increases and decreases, as



Garter snake. Photo by Scott Gillingwater

well as range shifts, over time.

This year, with the help of an Eco-Grant from Nature London, we completed our first year of monitoring! Volunteers journeyed out into nature with us to look for snakes in the early morning and late evening, and completed eight surveys in the spring and early summer. It started off slow, but we were rewarded a few weeks in with our first Garter Snake sightings. Other exciting observations along the way included Blue-spotted Salamanders and Six-spotted Tiger Beetles. We're excited to see what

else we might discover in the coming years!

A big thank you to Ontario Nature, Nature London, and all the volunteers who helped bring the monitoring program to life!

- Rebecca Launchbury

Goodbye and Hello

Another summer has come and gone and so have some amazing staff members. Matthew Palarchio, Erik Vasseur, and Kaitlyn Schatteman held positions through the Canada Summer Jobs program from May to August. Hopefully, you had the chance to meet them and welcome them into the TTLT community.

We also said goodbye to Colin Johnson, former Stewardship & Outreach Coordinator. We are incredibly grateful for all of his work and will miss him and his many dad jokes. In parting, Colin had this to say:

"It has been incredibly rewarding to work for TTLT. Everyone comes from different backgrounds but has the same passion for nature, leading to great strides in achieving our common goal of protecting nature forever. I also got to experience some of the greatest biodiversity in all of Canada through TTLT's nature reserves. Although I have moved on from the environmental field, I look forward to my new endeavor of taking over the family business in the new year at the Alibi Roadhouse. I look forward to catching up with TTLT staff and volunteers on the trails or

over a pint at the Alibi."

The Stewardship & Outreach Coordinator position didn't stay vacant for long. By early September, the newest member of the TTLT crew joined us – please welcome (back) Payton Landsborough! We are very excited to have her back to share her plant and fungi expertise and love of nature.

- Darby Alderson

Green Leader Awards

On October 13th, Thames Talbot Land Trust received the Environmental Impact Award as part of London Environmental Network/Green Economy London's Green Leader Awards.

This award recognizes a non-profit group that has had a significant impact on the local environment through emission reduction, biodiversity conservation, waste reduction, water conservation, or educating the public.

We are grateful and honoured to be recognized as green leaders in our community.

The School BioBlitz Pilot Project

In the fall of 2021, an idea began to brew inside the mind of a fairly new but enthusiastic Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) volunteer, Chelsea Hicks-Webster. She was inspired by the TTLT BioBlitz Fundraiser and how much fun her kids had had exploring the plants, animals, and insects at Meadowlily Nature Preserve. She wanted all kids to have this kind of opportunity and she felt that TTLT would be a great way to facilitate such a positive experience. Chelsea was already doing teaching and coaching through her social enterprise, Creating Me (www.creatingme.ca), so her mind quickly started racing about ways to offer this programming in schools. She reached out to us with this big idea and began the process of creating and launching the School BioBlitz pilot project.

Preliminary discussions began of what a BioBlitz could look like across the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB). Chelsea made contact with the Experiential Learning Lead at TVDSB who in turn brought in the Learning Coordinator for Environmental Education, Science, Experiential Learning K-12 and the Learning Coordinator K-8 Science, Environmental, and Experiential Education. We met a few times and began to create an outline of the project which would be developed for grade 7/8 classes and focus on invasive species. Later on, we were joined by the Learning Coordinator - Science, Environmental Education, Experiential Learning (7-12) and Environmental Educator at TVDSB.

The School BioBlitz pilot project started in April with teacher/student input sessions delivered virtually. TTLT presented the project to a select few classes (who had previously expressed their interest in the project) to provide some background information on how it would work and provided the opportunity for teachers and students to ask any questions. In early May, we offered a virtual pre-BioBlitz module on invasive species from which teachers would conduct a Question Formulation Activity with their students, a technique that emphasizes student-led exploration of individual interests within a single topic. TTLT provided videos and how-to instructions to prepare teachers and students for the BioBlitz where students would go out into their school yards or local green spaces, use the Seek app to identify plants in these areas, identify if they were invasive or

not, and mark any invasive species they found on a printed map of their BioBlitz area. We also provided a sheet for them to record all species, so that they could take a deeper look at the biodiversity in these areas.

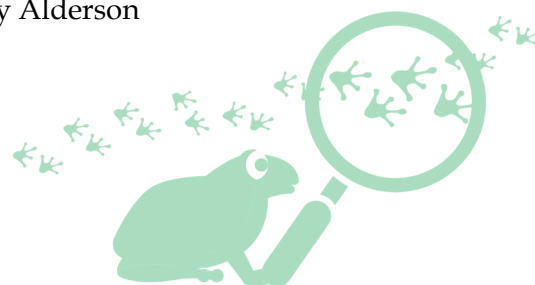
We weren't sure how hands-on TTLT would need to be for the BioBlitz, so we divided the participating classes into two: half would rely on the resources provided and the other half would receive in-person support. On the day of the BioBlitz, Chelsea along with four TTLT staff members supported two classes at an elementary school in St. Thomas. It was a full day that started in the school yard and ended in the Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area. It was a real eye-opening experience in terms of the capacity we would be able to provide for the project in the future.

Once the BioBlitz had been completed by all classes, we provided a post-module presentation highlighting how TTLT manages invasive species, and how students could manage or make a management plan for invasive species in their school yards and at home. This led to another Question Formulation Activity by their teachers to understand how they could use their collected data for invasive species management.

Feedback surveys were handed out and several teachers and students participated. Their comments were discussed to help us restructure the project for future years. There have also been discussions around the project becoming a potential source of funding for TTLT on an annual basis.

As this article comes to a close, we would like to give a shout out to Chelsea. Chelsea was the driving force behind this whole project and it would not have happened without her. With her enthusiasm and positive attitude, she took the initiative and kept the project rolling from start to finish. She helped us develop a stronger partnership with the TVDSB and create a project that will have lasting impacts within TTLT and the community.

-Darby Alderson



Why More Canadians are Leaving a Gift to Charity in their Wills

We are so very lucky! Supporters of Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) are thoughtful individuals, who share a concern for nature protection and conservation and are committed to building a better future for all.

Often people think about contributing to the causes they care about with monthly donations or volunteering time, but there is a growing number of people who are going one step further to leave a gift to charity in their Wills. These people are ordinary Canadians who've realized they can make a powerful contribution that will last for generations to come, without taking away from the resources they or their families need.

This new mindset among Canadians of all ages has been triggered, to some extent, by the intensity of recent global events and the realization that it's possible to do more just by giving in a different way.

In fact, if more Canadians left even a minuscule percentage of their estate to charity, the sum of all their efforts could represent as much as \$40 billion to advance causes like protecting, restoring, and nurturing nature.

When you look into it, you may be surprised to learn that a donation of as little as 1% of your estate can result in a bigger contribution than you ever thought possible. You are still leaving 99% of your estate to support your loved ones, and you're not using any of the money you need now.

The best part is that leaving a gift in your Will can be a very simple process. Here are a few suggestions that can help you take the next steps:

1. Calculate your donation. You can determine how much you want to leave to charity, and how much you want your loved ones to receive, with a simple calculation. You can make that calculation using the Legacy Calculator tool developed by Will Power (www.willpower.ca/legacy-calculator), a national public education campaign designed to inspire Canadians to think differently about charitable giving.



An ordinary Canadian family. Photo Courtesy of Will Power.

2. Discover the tax benefits. Did you know the Canadian government has created some of the best tax incentives in the world to encourage more giving to charity, especially from your estate? Just to cite an example, this article illustrates how a couple's financial advisor helped them give big to charity and take advantage of the tax benefits, all while leaving a sizeable inheritance for their daughters (see www.willpower.ca/tax-benefits-of-charitable-gifts-in-wills for more details).

3. Ask a financial advisor. Consulting a financial expert can help you maximize your donation and ensure it works in your favour. You can use Will Power's Financial Advisor Finder to match with an expert in your region (www.willpower.ca/profession/financial-advisor). There is also a handy guide available to start the conversation with your advisor (www.willpower.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Guide-Talking-to-Your-Advisor-About-a-Gift-to-Charity-in-Your-Will_v1b.pdf).

4. Find out how to keep the love going. Learn how a gift in your Will to TTLT would be used to advance nature protection and conservation here: www.willpower.ca/charities/thames-talbot-land-trust. Or you can contact Daria Koscinski at 519-858-3442 to find out more.

Who would have thought of a Will as a powerful tool to make change in the world? But more and more Canadians are harnessing the power of their Wills to become larger-than-life philanthropists who continue to inspire others and make an impact on the future. Join the movement and keep the love going for what matters to you!

-Adapted from materials provided by Will Power. Will Power is a national public education effort designed to inspire Canadians to make a significant impact on the causes they care about, with a gift in their Will to charity.

Logic Puzzle: A SAR Contest at TTLT

Make it a challenge—donate to TTLT if you can't finish the puzzle! Solution available on our website.

In a partly fictitious scenario, our TTLT staff organized a contest in June, where everyone would report on a species-at-risk (SAR) sighting on one of TTLT's nature reserves. Using logical deduction and the clues provided, match each of the eight staffers with the day of the month their report was filed, the SAR sighted, and the nature reserve the sighting took place. Use "x" and "." to help you solve the puzzle.

1. Ayesha, Darby, Erik, and Matthew each reported on a bird, whereas Colin and Daria each found a plant species.
2. The reports were given in the following order: Darby's, the Gillies visit, the Monarch sighting, Colin's, the Driedger visit, the Bobolink sighting, Ayesha's, and the Bebensee visit.
3. Six people are Ayesha, the one who reported on the 3rd, the one who spotted the Acadian Flycatcher, the one who visited Meadowlily, Daria, and the one who filed on the 17th.
4. The Snapping Turtle was spotted at the Five Point Forest Driedger Tract. The Red-headed Woodpecker was not seen at

	2	3	5	8	12	17	23	30	Bobolink	Dogwood	Flycatcher	Green	Monarch	Turtle	Wood thrush	Woodpecker	Bebensee	Driedger	Gillies	Meadowlily	Newport	Sitler	Tanager	Wardsville
Ayesha																								
Colin																								
Darby																								
Daria																								
Erik																								
Kaitlyn																								
Matthew																								
Rebecca																								
Bebensee																								
Driedger																								
Gillies																								
Meadowlily																								
Newport																								
Sitler																								
Tanager																								
Wardsville																								
Bobolink																								
Dogwood																								
Flycatcher																								
Green dragon																								
Monarch																								
Turtle																								
Wood thrush																								
Woodpecker																								

Wardsville Woods nor was the Monarch at Newport.

5. Matthew filed his report earlier than Erik, and Kaitlyn filed before Rebecca.

6. The visit to Meadowlily Woods and Wardsville Woods took place on odd-numbered days.

7. The Wood Thrush was seen at Tanager Woods, but not on the last day.

8. Colin did not visit Sitler Woods this summer, nor did he report the sighting of a Flowering Dogwood.

Staff	Date	Species at risk	Nature Reserve
Ayesha			
Colin			
Darby			
Daria			
Erik			
Kaitlyn			
Matthew			
Rebecca			



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www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca

Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) is a registered charity. Our mission is to protect, restore, and nurture nature within Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford, and Perth counties and the City of London, contributing to a stable climate, human well-being, and healthy habitats for all species. We recognize that these lands have been cared for and remain under the care of Indigenous Peoples from time immemorial. We aim to work in the spirit and practice of reconciliation, and we are honoured to take part in sustaining and nurturing nature in this region.