

ERCA celebrates restoration project success

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

LASALLE – The Essex Region Conservation Authority is enjoying its most successful year for tree planting in more than a decade.

Last spring, ERCA planted and distributed over 200,000 seedling trees in Windsor-Essex, restoring more than 350 acres of natural habitat.

On Aug. 23, ERCA members presented an example of their tree planting strategy during a media tour at a 23-acre restoration project site on Front Road in LaSalle.

The property, owned by LaSalle resident Brad Vollmer, has been planted with a diversity of more than 15,000 trees and shrubs, including hickories, oaks and maples.

“In this area, we have a loss of natural forests and wet lands,” said restoration biologist Mike Nelson. “A lot of native species depend on these types of areas to survive. This project is improving natural habitat conditions and also the water into the Canard and Detroit rivers.”

ERCA’s goal over the next 15 years is to increase the amount of natural forest and wetland in Windsor-Essex from 7 1/2 to 12 per-

cent.

According to Matthew Child, coordinator of habitat and aquatic resources, projects such as Vollmer’s LaSalle property will help ERCA reach its goal.

“We’re looking for private landowners who are interested in receiving wooded areas on their property,” Child said. “We also need to continue to have very generous contributions from our municipal, provincial and federal governments,” he said.

Under the Clean Water – Green Spaces program, partnership funding from all levels of government can provide up to 75 percent of the costs of a tree-planting project.

Planting trees on Vollmer’s 23-acre site cost approximately \$30,000. He paid a quarter of the amount.

Child said although a project of that size can cost the landowner a “big chunk of money,”

ERCA also works to develop smaller projects, such as five-acre sites that cost a landowner around \$1,500 - \$2,000.

“It’s still a significant amount of money but it’s something that many families can afford given the return on their investment,” Child said. “They are get-

ting five acres of woodlot that they can enjoy in any way they please.”

One way Vollmer is enjoying his investment is by constructing a dirt bike track through the middle of the woodlot.

Still, it will take about 10 to 12 years for the forest to mature into a functioning eco-system.

Over the next three years, ERCA will assist in maintaining the budding forest by mowing weeds in between the rows of trees to stimulate growth.

Vollmer’s property is one of about 20 large sites ERCA has developed with local landowners.

The largest project to date is a 100-acre woodlot that was planted near McGregor in 2001 and 2002.

Next spring, an additional 20 acres of trees will be planted to the north and south of Vollmer’s property.

ERCA’s main cost for developing the site is offsetting the value of the rich LaSalle land, Nelson said. Generally, the cost of restoring an acre of agricultural land into seedling trees is about \$1,200.

“This is very valuable land for development ... for the growth of fruits and vegetable crops,” he said. “For that reason, we’ve planted cherry and tulip trees, which grow in well-drained soils and draughty conditions.”

To ensure the sustainability of the project, Vollmer signed a stewardship agreement with ERCA, agreeing not to alter or destroy the works for a period of 15 years.



ERCA restoration biologist Mike Nelson inspects a young tulip tree at a 23-acre tree planting project site on Front Road in LaSalle. The project is an example of ERCA’s effort to increase the amount of forest and wetland cover in the area from 7 1/2 to 12 percent.

D & J CONSTRUCTION
Specializing In
Seamless Eavestrouthing, Siding, Soffit, Fascia, Decks, and all your building needs
Dave Myles: 519-919-1277
John Spitse: 519-796-3238

Countryside Upholstery
“For all your furniture needs”

- Foam for cushions
- Furniture Reupholstery
- Repairs
- Antique Restoration
- Pick-Up & Delivery
- Free Estimates

737-6720
Proprietor Tom Collins
“Serving the Community for Over 30 Years”

CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYER
Impaired... assaults... threats...
traffic tickets
Criminal Pardons at a reasonable cost.
Why miss work or school for court?
CHRISTINA SWEET
Barrister-at-Law
Weekend and evening appointments in Essex
253-0140 Res. 776-8983

ESSEX AUTOMOTIVE SALES • SERVICE • LEASING

ESSEX
Pontiac Buick GMC AUTO SALES
We Give a Little More... And Take a Little Less.

548 West Cty. Rd. 34
Box 440
Essex, Ontario
519-776-7354

www.essexautosales.com

390 Talbot St. N.
Essex, Ontario. N8M 2Y1

SALES & LEASING

PHONE:
776-6447

Dave Hitchcock
ESSEX

DAVE HITCHCOCK CHEVROLET LTD.

224 TALBOT ST. N., ESSEX, ON N8M 2C8

PHONE: 776-4222

JOE MALYK'S
Countryside

CHRYSLER - DODGE LTD.

458 TALBOT RD. N.
ESSEX, ONTARIO
776-5287
OPEN DAILY 9-8:30