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Contact Us

We love to receive your feedback and comments, drop us a line if you have a story suggestion or comments.

[Kelly Johnson, St. Clair RAP Coordinator](#)

[Ken Hall, FOSCR Webmaster](#)

Help FOSCR delist the St. Clair River

Friends of the St. Clair River is a registered Canadian charitable organization. Your financial support for our programs will help FOSCR progress towards delisting the St. Clair River as an Area of Concern in the Great Lakes.

Contributions can be sent to:

Mr. Terry Burrell
 Friends of the St. Clair River
 514 Christina Street North
 Sarnia, ON N7T 5W4

All donations will receive a tax receipt.

Call Terry at 519-336-5545 for more information,

PLEASE join us.

Where We've Come from and Where We are Headed

Since being designated an Area of Concern over three decades ago the St. Clair River has gone through numerous changes on both sides of the border. Over this time, numerous Beneficial Use Impairments have been identified and removed due to human improvements.

Aesthetically, the river water is most likely as good as it has ever been since the pre-industry era. The City of Sarnia has significantly reduced the amount of combined sewer overflows and Chemical Valley Industries have dramatically improved incidents of accidental spills.

Sturgeon spawning reefs have been created in several areas on the American side of the river, Walleye (Pickerel) fishing has been fantastic for several years, Lake Trout are being caught more regularly in the river in early spring and smallmouth bass and musky fishing continues to improve annually. Bald Eagles are now regular visitors and even nesting along the River. We are certainly at a point in time where the St. Clair River is at its healthiest state in several decades.



Although development continues along the shoreline, slowly the vertical steel breakwall that stretches along much of the Canadian and American shoreline is being converted to a more natural armoured stone, reducing wave energy and providing habitat for fish, native vegetation and wildlife alike.

Gone are the days of the St. Clair River Blob, consistent raw sewage overflows and regular chemical spills from industry. However, work still remains to be completed; most importantly is the removal of contaminated sediment on the river bottom at three locations between Sarnia and Corunna.

Since the River was identified as an Area of Concern, countless individuals have devoted their time, energy and passion to help remediate the problems concerning the river. From local individuals and agencies, First Nations, Industry, Municipalities and Provincial and Federal Governments, many in our community need to be applauded for these significant improvements.

One person who deserves a great deal of credit is outgoing Friends of the St. Clair River President, Darrell Randell. Darrell's term as President of this group has been long, one in which he has dedicated an enormous amount of his time and knowledge for the betterment of the River and its watershed. As new President and on behalf of the other members of Friends of the St. Clair River, I'd like to thank Darrell for all of his dedication and knowledge in helping improve the quality of the St. Clair River.

I look forward to continuing to work with Darrell as we move towards finally seeing the official delisting of the St. Clair River as an Area of Concern in the future.

Sincerely,

Craig Griffiths
 President
 Friends of the St. Clair River

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Another Step in the Restoration of the St. Clair River Area of Concern

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) has been granted funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and Dow Canada to initiate a detailed engineering design for management of contaminated sediment in the St. Clair River.

The funding supported the hiring of a project manager by the SCRCA who is responsible for procuring a consultant, and then overseeing the design process. The consultant will be responsible for developing a detailed engineering plan to implement a sediment remediation strategy for three priority areas in the river. The design phase of this project will outline logistical details to carry out the work and provide a more accurate estimate of costs. Communication with the public, First Nation communities and key stakeholders about the proposed work is an important aspect of this project.

Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and Dow Canada have collaborated in the evaluation of the sediment management options identified in 2013. The objective of this effort has been to develop a remediation plan that will guide the cleanup of contaminated sediment in the St. Clair River and reduce the risk of mercury bioaccumulation in fish. Through this work, the size and shape of the three areas previously identified as requiring cleanup have been refined.

Further information on the design phase of this project including tasks and timelines will be available at the upcoming project engagement sessions noted below. Once the engineering design is complete, discussions will begin regarding implementation of the project.

Monday, April 15, 2019
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Clearwater Arena – Lower Community Room, 1400 Wellington Street, Sarnia
 Presentation at 6:30 pm

Wednesday, April 17, 2019
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Wallaceburg Municipal Office – Multipurpose Room, 786 Dufferin Avenue, Wallaceburg
 Presentation at 1:00 pm

Wednesday, April 17, 2019
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Courtright Fire Hall, 1550 Eighth Street, Courtright
 Presentation at 6:30 pm

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Asian Carp Information Session lures in Sarnia community



The Invasive Species Centre, through the Asian Carp Canada program, brought together a panel of experts to discuss the threats and risks of Asian carps, and the measures being taken to keep these invasive species out of our Great Lakes.

Featuring a presentation from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and panel of experts with representatives from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the author of *Overrun: Dispatches from the Asian Carp Crisis*, and a commercial

fisherman, the Asian Carp Information Session, held at the Sarnia Yacht Club attracted (# number of attendees if applicable) people from across the community. Attendees learned about the environmental, and economic risks of Asian carps, and the efforts in place to monitor and respond to them.

"Beyond the tremendous socio-economic cost for the commercial and recreational fisheries, the establishment of Asian carps into Canadian waters poses a threat to native species and overall biodiversity because Asian carps are likely to alter fish habitat, compete with native fishes for food and space, and act as carriers for diseases or parasites," explains Tracey Cooke, Executive Director at the Invasive Species Centre.

'Asian carps' refer to four species of carps (Bighead, Black, Grass, Silver) that are native to China and southern Russia. While not considered established in Canada, all four species have escaped into the wild in the United States and have established self-sustaining populations, particularly in the Mississippi waterway system. There is immediate risk for these species to become established within the waters of the Great Lakes. Invasive species include terrestrial and aquatic

species that are introduced to Canada from other places and which spread threatens the environment, economy, or society, including human health. The effects of invasive species are often irreversible and once established, they are extremely difficult and costly to control and eradicate. Education, outreach and mitigation before establishment are the most cost effective way to reduce these impacts.

Asian Carp Canada, supported by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, is a resource for information and news regarding Asian carp developments in Canada. "Our website connects visitors to the most recent prevention technologies, early warning measures, response efforts, and the overall threat of Asian carps to the Great Lakes and beyond and we strongly encourage people to visit our site and learn more about this invasive species," says Cooke.

About Asian Carp Canada

Funded by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Asian Carp Canada program engages environmental professionals and the Canadian public about the threat of Asian carps to the Great Lakes. It also builds practical response tools. The Asian Carp Canada website provides both French and English resources and information on the prevention, early detection and response. On a technical level, the project has produced a webinar series, and a secure database of contacts and resources to enhance response capacity.

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Preventing the Spread of Invasive Species on Waterways

Information below was collected from *The Invasive Species Centre in Sault St. Marie*. The ISC works on a variety of policy and technical work to enhance invasive species management. They provide comments on policy changes or new legislation such as the *Invasive Species Act* and prepare technical reports such as socio-economic risk assessments. To learn more visit <https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca>

Why are Invasive Species a Big Deal?

Invasive species are among Canada's greatest threats to the survival of our wild animal and plant life. These invasive species arrive, often accidentally, from elsewhere in the world and, in the absence of natural predators, kill, crowd out or otherwise devastate native species and their ecosystems.



These invasive plants and animals not only threaten to transform the wildlife, woodlands and waterways that Canadians depend on, they cost this country billions of dollars in losses to forestry, agriculture, fisheries and other industries affected by their impact. We encourage you to view the list of invasive species that are present in Canada and learn about their impacts.

Invasive Species Can:

- Cause irreversible damage to the environment and leave lasting scars on the landscape
- Reduce biodiversity by out-competing desirable native species
- Require significant outlays of money to clean up the aftermath of invasive species or to prevent further damage
- Negatively impact trade and the economy, and those industries that rely on natural resources for their livelihoods
- Affect municipalities, communities and individuals
- Reduce recreational spaces and compromise outdoor opportunities and experiences
- Directly affect human health and societal well being

Invasive Fish and Invertebrates

Invasive aquatic species pose a significant threat to all water bodies from small streams to the Great Lakes. Most invasive aquatic species dramatically alter food web structures, decreasing the food available for native species. This direct competition leads to population decline and loss of biodiversity. The loss of native fish species also dramatically impacts the fishing industry, both commercial and recreational. Invasive aquatic species pose a serious threat to the use of water bodies, making it difficult and even dangerous to swim and boat. Human activity is a primary reason why invasive aquatic species spread; improper equipment cleaning and illegal transportation of fish has made it possible for the invasion of isolated water systems. All water sport equipment, clothing, and pets must be cleaned thoroughly after they come out of the water. Also, it is illegal to transport invasive fish between water bodies and to possess live invasive aquatic species.

Asian Carp

Asian carp refers to four species, bighead, black, grass, and silver carp. Asian carp are native to China and southern Russia but were brought into the U.S. as a biocontrol method in aquaculture; they escaped into the wild and have become established in the eastern United States. Asian carp thrive in cool water temperatures, reproduce rapidly, eat up to 20% of their body weight in plankton a day, and displace native species competing for food and space. Also, when they feel vibrations through the water, carp will leap up to 3 metres into the air which can cause serious injury to boaters and other water users. It is illegal to have live Asian carp in your possession in Canada; any information regarding importing or distribution and any potential sightings of this invasive aquatic species should be reported immediately. Also, bait must only be used from the area you are going to fish and must not be transported. For in-depth information regarding Asian carp and what is being done to keep them out of the Great Lakes go to Asian Carp Canada at asiancarp.ca.



Sea Lamprey

Sea lampreys are eel like fish that cylindrical and can be 30 to 80 centimetres long. They have dark grey or brown leathery skin with dark markings and a light underbelly. They have two thin dorsal fins and seven distinct gill holes on each side. Their mouth is a large sucker with rings of sharp teeth and a raspy tongue, used to latch onto the side of fish and feed on its blood. If the fish survives the lamprey attack it will be left with a large open wound that normally becomes infected, causing the fish to die. This invasive aquatic species has reduced the number of sport fish in the Great Lakes as only 1/7 of fish attacked survive. If a fish is caught with a sea lamprey attached, the lamprey should be killed and put in the garbage. Never return a sea lamprey to the water, and contact the Sea Lamprey Control Centre of Fisheries and Oceans Canada at 1-800-553-9091 regarding any sea lamprey questions.



Rusty Crayfish

Rusty crayfish are large and aggressive, with adults reaching a body length of 7.5 to 13 centimetres (not including claws). This invasive aquatic species gets its name from the rust coloured patches that run down either side; the rest of the body is gray/green to red/brown. While the rusty crayfish look similar to native crayfish they are distinguishable by the oval space between their closed claws, and their pinched concave rostrum. Because of their size and aggressive feeding nature, they out-compete native species for food and space. They also damage fish populations by consuming aquatic vegetation needed for fish to spawn in and raise young. It is illegal to transport any crayfish species, dead or alive, and they can only be used for bait in the water in which they were caught.



Zebra and Quagga Mussels

Zebra and Quagga mussels are invasive freshwater mussels that are throughout the Great Lakes. They are, on average, around two centimeters and do not sit flat. They are light with dark brown markings; zebra mussels have a zigzag pattern and quagga mussels have dark concentric rings. Mussels filter plankton out of the water, which depletes it as a food source for native species. Large colonies can take over fish spawning areas and beaches, cutting the feet of potential swimmers. They also clog water intake lines because of their dense colonies. These invasive mussels also increase the presence of toxic algal blooms which can have health impacts on native wildlife. Zebra and Quagga mussels latch on to boats and are easily passed from water to water; ensure that all plants, animals, and mud is removed from boats and trailers before leaving an area.



Round Goby

The round goby is a small, bottom dwelling fish that aggressively feeds on small aquatic organisms and can spawn several times each year. Adult round goby can be between 6 and 16 centimeters long with a cylindrical body and rounded snout. They are fully scaled and are mostly brown or olive with dark brown and black spots. Round goby decrease the levels of native fish by eating eggs and young and by out competing them for food. It is also suggested that round goby pass a strain of botulism to the birds and fish that eat them; this toxin comes from the zebra mussels that the goby eat and causes fish and bird death. It is illegal in Canada to possess live round goby or use them as bait. Never transport fish from lake to lake and make sure to always wash your equipment after being in the water.





Northern Snakehead

The northern snakehead is a predatory fish that can live in a wide variety of water conditions; they have the ability to "walk" short distances on land and its lung-like organ allows them to survive out of water for up to four days. Northern snakeheads can reach up to 85 cm and have a dark and light brown mottled, thin elongated body. They have a large mouth filled with teeth and a single long dorsal fin. This fish can consume a wide variety of food including fish, amphibians, insects, invertebrates, small reptiles, birds and mammals. Although not in the Great Lakes yet, the northern snakehead is capable of adapting to Ontario waters easily. It is against the law to have a live snakehead in your possession. Do not transport and release live fish into any waterbody.



Killer Shrimp

Killer shrimp are an aggressive predatory freshwater invasive invertebrate. They grow up to three centimetres long; have two tail cones, and two large powerful mandibles. Killer shrimp can either be solid in colour or have a striped pattern. It is so named because of its aggressive feeding habits, the killer shrimp consumes large amounts of aquatic insect larva and food that native fish rely on. They also kill large amounts of organisms but don't actually consume them. This feeding behaviour disrupts food webs and decreases native biodiversity. Killer shrimp can survive up to four days outside of water making it very easy to accidentally transfer them from water body to water body. It is very important that all fishing equipment is properly cleaned between uses and that your boat is washed off before switching water bodies.

If you would like to learn more visit the Invasive Species Centre at: invasivespeciescentre.ca

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4th St. Clair River Science Symposium set for April 10, 2019

Enjoy an evening of informative presentations on *Fish Diversity, Health and Habitat*

Date: April 10, 2019

Time: 5:30—6:30 Buffet & 6:30 — 8:00 Presentations

Venue: Bogart's Banquet Hall, 2849 St. Clair Parkway, Sombra

Seats are limited so RSVP asap.

Kindly provide your full name and number of guests in your party in your email.

RSVP: April.White@Canada.ca

Funding for Conservation Available

An exciting new Grant Program has been initiated by Lambton Wildlife Inc. to support the conservation, preservation, and protection of the natural environment in Lambton County.

Lambton Wildlife Inc. is inviting community groups and organizations, schools, Conservation Authorities, and Indigenous groups to submit applications for funds to enhance the ecological value of land in Lambton County.

A total of \$10,000 is available for 2019 with awards ranging from \$500 to \$5000. Applications are due by April 15 with successful applicants being notified by

May 1, 2019.

For additional information, and to apply on-line, please visit our website at lambtonwildlife.com

Contact: Roberta Buchanan

Lambton Wildlife Inc. Habitat Fund Committee Chair

habitatfund@lambtonwildlife.com

<http://www.friendsofstclair.ca>

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Friends of the St. Clair River (FOSCR-Canada) are an all-volunteer registered Canadian charitable organization. FOSCR works to promote conservation, beautification and other environmental restoration projects along the Canadian shore of the St. Clair River. The group was created to assist in the development and implementation of the St. Clair River [Remedial Action Plan](#) (RAP).

BPAC is a community-based partnership including governments, industry, First Nations, academia, as well as environmental organizations and private citizens that work collectively in helping to improve the health of the St. Clair River. Our key goal is to implement the Canadian Remedial Action Plan (RAP) in order to restore the beneficial uses and remove the River from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.



This E-Newsletter is produced with support from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment