



Nature London

The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Inc.

2014/2015

ANNUAL REPORT

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A Brief History of Nature London

The origins of Nature London go back to 1864. In that year, William Saunders, a local druggist, and several of his contemporaries organized the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada. The study and collection of insects was a popular hobby during Victorian times and the society flourished. In fact, local interest was so strong that, by the early 1870s, the parent society had moved its headquarters, insect collections, and the publication of its monthly scientific journal to London which, for several decades, functioned as the entomological capital of Canada.

In 1890, the Entomological Society broadened its interests to include other branches of natural history. Accordingly, sections devoted to botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy were organized. These prospered for a time, and meetings, field trips, and collecting expeditions were held to study insects, plants, birds, fossils, rocks and microscopic life.

William E. Saunders, son of William Saunders, was the founding president of the ornithological section and was to remain its driving force and most prominent member until his death in 1943. In 1902, the ornithological section became the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, in honour of Thomas McIlwraith of Hamilton, the foremost ornithologist in Ontario at the time.

By 1904 interest had waned, and all four sections – botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy – had ceased active operation. Two years later, the parent Entomological Society moved its headquarters to Guelph. For a number of years, no London organization having natural history as its focus held formal meetings, though members of the ornithological section continued to associate, go on field trips, and maintain bird records.

London's annual Christmas Bird Count – first organized in 1909 by two local school boys – soon after came under the auspices of the McIlwraith group. Today it stands as the longest continuously running count in Canada.

The only branch of the Entomological Society to survive the decade-long hiatus of meetings was the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. Reorganized in 1915, this time without ties to the Entomological Society, it has met continuously ever since. In 1965 its name was changed to the McIlwraith Field Naturalists to reflect an expanded interest in all aspects of natural history. A constitution was adopted in 1970, and the society was incorporated in 1972. In 2009, MFN changed its common name to Nature London while retaining as its business name The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Incorporated.

In its early years the revived club met in a variety of locations including members' homes, the Collegiate Institute, Normal School, YMCA, and London Life. In 1940 it began meeting in the new library at 305 Queens Avenue, where it remained for 56 years. In 1996 the meeting place became First-St. Andrews Church, and in 1998 the Civic Garden Complex on Springbank Drive, which is the current venue.

Initially, meeting programs focussed on birds and relied on study skins, with later transitions to films, slides and, more recently, digital images. Over time there was a gradually increasing interest in non-bird species and also in conservation issues. Field trips were, and continue to be, held on a regular basis. A quarterly publication, *The Cardinal*, first appeared in 1951.

At various times over the years, among other things, the club sponsored public lectures, Audubon film nights, inventories of natural areas, non-credit courses in natural history, junior naturalists' groups, Trees for London (which promoted the planting of native trees and shrubs), and local and regional reptile and bird research and

protection initiatives. Several times the club has hosted conferences of its national and provincial affiliates – the Canadian Nature Federation in 1974 and 1990, and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in 1949, 1962 and 1981.

A conservation committee was established in 1966 and an archives in 1967. Nature London’s nature reserve, Cedarcroft, located near Delaware, was officially opened in 1983. A Birding Wing, for those particularly interested in birds, began meeting in 1988. In 2000, a group of MFN members was instrumental in setting up the Thames Talbot Land Trust, which maintains close links with Nature London.

A highlight of Nature London’s year is the annual Conservation Awards banquet. The club conducts the London Christmas Bird Count each December, and the Skunk’s Misery Butterfly Count in July. The popular *Guide to the Natural Areas of London* . . . first appeared in 1995; a fifth, much expanded edition, was published in 2015. Nature London’s Information Line (519-457-4593) and website (www.naturelondon.ca) keep members and others informed of nature sightings and club activities. Nature London representatives sit on several advisory committees that work to protect various natural areas and parks.

During 2014, many special events were held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada, the group to which Nature London traces its roots. For more detailed information about Nature London’s history, please see *150 Years: The Nature London Story 1864 to 2014*, published in 2015.

Winifred Wake

REPORTS from THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT & PAST PRESIDENT

President’s Report for 2014-2015

In my first year as President I felt overwhelmed by expectations and humbled by the amount of time and effort that other volunteers were dedicating to the club.

In 2014-2015 our club concluded the celebration of our 150th anniversary with an exhibit “Nature London at 150” at Museum London. Developed in collaboration between the museum and Winifred and David Wake, the well-attended exhibit included artifacts from club members, Museum London, the University of Guelph and Western University.

Many of the ideas that were articulated during the Strategic Planning process in 2013 were implemented this year. To engage more children and families, Cathy McCrae and Bernie Vandenberg organized a Christmas Bird Count for Kids in early December. With support from many club birders, about two dozen young birders with their parents and Girl Guide Leaders observed 27 species of birds on routes through Springbank Park. A family-specific hike at Gibbons Park was organized in the spring. To reinforce several speaker’s presentations, Cathy McCrae and Carol Agocs paired outings with two indoor events including Mothing at Night and Bumblebee Pollinators. In response to requests for on-line payment options, Chuck Summers developed a webpage supporting PayPal to allow the on-line purchase of a membership, banquet tickets, ordering the Natural Areas Guide and/or making a donation to the club. More activities were planned at Cedarcroft, including a potluck supper, guided hikes and several work days. Brief presentations by Conservation Action Committee or Cedarcroft Committee members were added to the regular monthly meetings with topics

including activities at Cedarcroft; how to access the City of London website to provide comments on the draft Official Plan, and how to obtain details about proposed public meetings on environmental assessments.

James and Roslyn Moorhead offered to update the *Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Vicinity*, last published in 2007. The fifth edition, now titled *Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Region*, was printed in June 2015. It is the result of contributions from 70 volunteers and includes revised and updated description of 108 sites, and new maps, and a chapter on Landforms by the late Jack Lorimer. It is being sold at club meetings, on field trips, through local clubs and at commercial outlets in London and region.

Nature London joined a new environmental umbrella organization that was established in London in 2015, called the London Environmental Network. With the stated mission of *Let's Make London's environment better, together*, and including 32 member organizations, Chuck Summers is our representative on the organization which an opportunity to share information, educational events, news and resources through emails, a shared website and some shared events.

Karen Auzins continued to prepare “the scrollies” containing information about upcoming club events and items of general interest to the membership, and displayed as a PowerPoint slide show before each Birding Wing and Regular club meeting.

A new vehicle for communication within the club was developed by Sandy and Ric Symmes who took on the role of “e-mail Co-ordinators” in September 2014. Once or twice a month they e-mailed the club membership a “Nature London News and Events” letter. This included brief descriptions of news items or events and links to more detailed information, as appropriate. This method of communication was well-received and the Nature London “e-mail newsletter” is now sent to over 300 e-mail addresses.

Hugh Casbourn’s analysis of our membership database indicated that Nature London had 407 memberships by year end. This is a record high during the time that Hugh has managed the database, and probably reflects over 600 individual members. Among these, there are over 60 people who are active volunteers as appointees, Directors, officers or committee members. Although within the 2014-15 year we did not find new editors for the Cardinal, a coordinator for indoor meetings or a Vice-President, there were new members and new Directors on the Board and in many committees, and a record number of award recipients.

We would like to acknowledge the Lawson Foundation’s generous donation \$5000 in celebration of Nature London’s 150th Anniversary. Their support is much appreciated and the funds were used during the year to support our regular programs.

Many active volunteers are keeping Nature London strong. I feel privileged and proud to have been President.

Muriel Andreae

Past-President’s Report 2014-2015

In September of 2014 I passed the reins of being president onto the most capable hands of Muriel Andreae and took on the responsibilities of being past president.

One of those responsibilities is to gather volunteers to serve on the club’s nominating committee and I was very pleased that last year’s members; Catherine Burr, Norm Corrin, and Ray Robertson, agreed to serve once again. Many concepts and ideas were discussed by this group but probably the most significant concept that the

nominating committee brought to the board for approval was to change the structure of the board of directors. The officers – president, past president, vice president, secretary and treasurer – would remain as before but the rest of the directors would be called “directors at large” and would not have specific job functions but would have a liaison responsibility with a number of members who were in the appointed positions. The board approved this change which would start to be phased in in the following year.

A personal goal I have had since joining the board of directors was to work with the board to update our club’s manual and finally this year I really got going on that. The members of the nominating committee were most helpful in making suggestions and recommendations and when various sections were brought forward to the board modifications were suggested and made and by the end of the year a great chunk of that manual had been revamped. It was most helpful to have updated descriptions of the responsibilities of the various positions held by members serving on the board of directors and in appointed positions both for those members themselves and for members of the nominating committee to use when seeking new volunteers to fill vacant or soon to be vacant positions. However, there still was a lot to do and so this would continue to be one of my goals for the following year.

I also worked with members of the board of directors as they decided who would be presented with awards for the year - those which would be presented at the annual banquet in November and those which would be presented at regular meetings in the year. Please consult the last page of this report to read the names of this year’s most worthy recipients.

Compiling the submissions from the directors and appointees to create Nature London’s Annual Report is another responsibility of the past president. The 2014-2015 report was of particular significance since it involved special reports relating to Nature London’s 150th Anniversary.

Having the opportunity to work with such capable and dedicated individuals that make up Nature London is an honour and a privilege and one I look forward to being able to continue in the next year.

Karen Auzins

REPORTS from the DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES & COMMITTEES

Archivists’ Report 2014/15

Nature London’s 150th anniversary: The archivists served on NL’s 150th anniversary committee, chaired by Sue Read. Some of the roles they undertook from Sept 1, 2014 to Aug 31, 2015 were

- Provided photos to *The Cardinal* in support of anniversary-related features.
- Researched and prepared three articles covering the most recent 75 years of Nature London’s history (published in Nov 2014 and Feb and Apr 2105 issues of *The Cardinal*).
- Worked with the editors of *The Cardinal* to compile a 64-page compendium of all articles relating to Nature London’s history as published in *The Cardinal* (Nov 2013 to Apr 2015).
- Prepared field trip history summaries for leaders of designated NL heritage field trips.
- Organized and/or led three NL heritage field trips: Kains Woods, UWO to view botanical and zoological collections, and Oil Springs to learn about oil history.

- Prepared and mounted a display on William Saunders in the London Room of the Central Library (Oct 1 to mid-Nov 2014).
- Prepared and delivered a presentation on the life of William Saunders, Oct 28, 2014, as part of the London Public Library's fall series of history lectures (attendance 32).
- For Nov 21, 2014 banquet, prepared a scrolling slide show and an ice-breaker game on Nature London history.
- Worked with Museum London staff to mount an exhibit entitled "Nature London at 150", which ran from Dec 20, 2014 to Mar 29, 2015 (official opening Jan 30).

Additional articles in *The Cardinal* (Aug 2015): Using archival records, we wrote articles on orchid decline, the Thames River breeding bird census, and items wanted for the archives.

Acquisitions: During the year, three items were catalogued (Accession Numbers 725 to 727).

Professional development: Both D. and W. Wake maintained membership in the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of the Archives Association of Ontario (SWOC). WW helped staff the registration desk at the annual AAO conference held at Fanshawe College in June. This was a valuable opportunity for networking with other members of the archival community.

Storage and organization of Nature London fonds: Efforts continue to gradually bring the NL archives into compliance with current accepted archival standards. During the year more items were transferred to acid-free storage containers, and additional progress was made in organizing items by series (of related documents) rather than by chronological date of acquisition. The NL fonds is stored (rent free) in the London Room of the Central Public Library.

UWO student project: During March and April, 2015, five students in archival studies carried out a course project in the NL Archives, under the supervision of Lutzen Riedstra of UWO. The students continued to systematically assess the contents of the Nature London archives and make recommendations for organizing materials into series. They continued the process (begun by students the previous year) of digitizing all accessions and descriptions into a single master file.

Requests for information: The archivists responded to inquiries on the following topics: W.W. Judd and his publications, history of Gibbons Park, W.E. Saunders, William Saunders and his publications, and the procedure for changing Nature London's name. One request originated in England while the remainder came from London and elsewhere in Ontario.

Winifred and David Wake

Brochure Producer/Editor's Report 2014-2015

Nature London produced and distributed 2 editions of the brochure in 2015 - early January and early September. The January issue had 1,200 brochures distributed and the September issue had 800.

The largest distribution was to the libraries with 75 copies going to the Central Library and 15 to each of the Branches. Nature in the City gave out 210 copies. Retail outlets in the city including Featherfields, Van Horick's Nursery, Mountain Coop and Springbank Gardens Nursery received 230 copies. Not-for-

profit organizations including Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Tourism London, butterfly banding at Hawk Cliff and Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex received 65 copies. The remaining brochures went to NL volunteers including the Conservation Committee, Field Trip Coordinator, Publicity Administrator, Membership Secretary and Board of Directors.

Our membership secretary, Gail McNeil reported that 19 new memberships were registered for the year from the brochure application form

In the past, members of NL have relied on the brochure to inform them of the activities of NL - indoor meetings, field trips and special events. At the same time the brochure was expected to inform and attract outsiders to become members. With the growth and expansion of NL's events the brochure has not been able to properly serve both of these goals. The recent enhancements to our website and e-mail news releases provide excellent views of the upcoming events leaving the brochure able put more emphasis on attracting new members.

Some features of the brochure have changed and other changes are coming to help show the value of Nature London to people interested in "preserving and enjoying nature."

Eight volunteers were involved in providing input and helping to "get it right." Thank you to those NL members. If you can help by a) suggesting new outlets for the brochure, b) assisting in the distribution and/or c) in other ways, please let us know.

Ray Robertson

Butterfly Count Co-ordinator's Report 2014-2015

On July 5, 2015 37 participants enjoyed a warm sunny day at Skunk's Misery and in 11 ½ hours noted 53 butterfly species.

Ann White

The Cardinal Report 2014/2015

Nature London published four issues of *The Cardinal*, in November 2014, and February, April, and August 2015. The M & T Printing Group printed between 440 and 485 copies of each issue, similar numbers per issue as were printed in the last few years. The November 2014 *Cardinal* was 44 pages long, the February 2015 issue 48, and the April and August 2015 issues 52 pages long. Reminders to those who had not renewed their membership were mailed with the November issue. Renewal and volunteer forms, and an invitation to a Columbia Sportswear Employee Store sale, were mailed with the August issue.

Most *Cardinals* go to club members, but there are also complimentary copies sent to organizations (mainly other naturalists' groups) and London Public Library branches, and a few copies given to individuals and organizations on a promotional basis.

The November issue was the last of the 2014 *Cardinals* recognizing Nature London's 150th anniversary year. The front and back covers were in colour, and consisted entirely of images of Northern Cardinals.

Most were submitted specially for the cover. History articles and reports of anniversary events continued into the February and April 2015 *Cardinals*.

Thanks go to Nature London members, as well as some non-members, who submitted articles, reports, artwork, photos, or ideas to *The Cardinal* during the year. Many people were very generous in making their work available to us. *The Cardinal* was completely dependent on these contributions, for which we were very grateful. Not all contributions can be used immediately; many, especially photos, were saved for future use.

The *Cardinal* Editorial Committee had its usual four meetings. All committee members discuss and advise on all aspects of *The Cardinal*. At the end of the 2013/2014 year, Roslyn Moorhead retired after four years – which seemed too brief! – as the *Cardinal* committee representative on the Board. Continuing on the committee this year were Barbara Bain; Leslie Kostal, Ron Martin, Leslie Rockwell, and Susan Thauer as Section Editors; Jack Lorimer as editor of Ask the Cardinal; and ourselves. We were very happy to welcome John Berry to the committee in January; John took over the management of the image database from Hugh. Soon afterwards, we were very saddened and shocked by the death of Jack Lorimer on February 1. Jack’s enthusiasm for his *Cardinal* work lasted until he died, and his last Ask-the-Cardinal item appeared in the April *Cardinal*.

Our editorial work was greatly helped this year by the expertise and “eagle eyes” of a number of Nature London members who were not on the *Cardinal* committee. Mary Carnahan and Pat Dewdney edited articles, and Pat also proofread draft *Cardinals*. Others who proofread draft *Cardinals* over the last couple of years are: Marguerite Annen, Susan Cole, Phyllis Ede, Suzanne Frank, Gerry Pierce, Mike Robertson, Carolyn Stratton, and Lissette Verbeem, as well as committee members Barbara Bain, John Berry, and Ros Moorhead.

Gail McNeil, club Membership Secretary, provided membership information for *Cardinal* mailings, Shirley and Denzil D’Mello prepared the *Cardinals* for mailing, and Mike Channon did the final sorting and mailing.

The August issue was our last as *Cardinal* Editors or Acting Editors. Before retiring, we undertook one final project recognizing Nature London’s 150th anniversary year, with Winifred and Dave Wake. Between November 2013 and April 2015, *The Cardinal* published a six-part series by the Wakes, “The Nature London Story”, as well as additional articles on club history by Roslyn Moorhead and Bill Maddeford and reports on special anniversary events. These have been collected into a single, 64-page compendium, featuring two of the colour covers used for 2014 *Cardinals*. About 75 copies were pre-ordered. Orders were received from club members, London and Middlesex public libraries, Attic Books and Museum London’s Muse shop. Printing of the compendium did not occur until November 2015, in the 2015/2016 Nature London year.

Betsy Baldwin and Hugh Casbourn, Acting Editors

Cedarcroft Committee Report 2014-2015

Wow, where did the year go? The Cedarcroft Committee accomplished a banner year completing a wide variety of projects. Three meetings were held (November 6, February 5, and April 24) and successful outings were conducted throughout the year.

The Cedarcroft Potluck was held on September 6. Seventeen participants were led on a hike by Club Field Trip Coordinator Cathy McCrae and Gail McNeil and together feasted on the potluck picnic offerings. It was a pleasant end to a cool summer with good food and old and new friends.

The fall meeting on November 6 determined that a new bridge would replace the far easterly bridge on the property. All the bridges are showing their age and will need to be replaced. Jeff Paul and his son volunteered to remove the old one and a new bridge was built. The bridge was completed through the summer and the old bridge wood was piled up ready to be burnt if necessary. The Committee and Nature London owe the Paul family a huge vote of thanks for the effort and work put into our new bridge.



During the fall season it became evident that the ash trees that had been killed by the Emerald Ash Borer were becoming a hazard to walkers in Cedarcroft. Our neighbour whose house adjoins our property on the east side also expressed concern about damage to his house from falling branches and trees. As a result the dead ash trees closest to his home as well as those beside the new bridge were cut down and the majority of the branches piled up. As a further precaution new signs were placed at the entrances to the property warning of the risk of falling branches and trees.



During the winter committee members took a turn each month to do a walkabout through Cedarcroft to check on the cabin as well as the trails. Deer were plentiful throughout the winter utilizing Cedarcroft as bedding sites and munching away at the shrubs and cedars. No incidents of vandalism were reported.

Throughout the winter the Committee worked on revisiting the old 1984 Cedarcroft Management Plan under the capable direction of Ray Robertson. . Because the 1984 document was a mixture of what they envisioned Cedarcroft to be and actions that should be taken the Committee’s first step was to restate the 1984 plan as a set of Standards. That set of standards was then updated to reflect what the committee believed Cedarcroft should be in 2015. Periodic evaluations of Cedarcroft can be made using the Standards as guidelines and from the evaluations, recommendations can be made. The new guidelines “Cedarcroft Property Standards” have been submitted to the Nature London Board for approval.



Spring Clean-up Day at Cedarcroft, May 9 turned out to be picture perfect weather for an outing to Cedarcroft. Twenty-six hands (there were thirteen of us) made a serious dent into the work that had to be done. The ladies again tackled the garlic mustard that aligned itself along the path to the cabin and around the pond.

The men moved some of the rip-rap from the east side of the pond embankment onto the west side of the pond embankment to minimize the potential for erosion. Several new steps were installed on the Beech Point Trail going down to the new, eastern bridge. The new proposed trail and bridge locations were traversed and

several trail modifications and bridge locations were viewed. All together a lot was accomplished and we enjoyed the company and weather.

At the April meeting it was agreed that a licensed herbicide applicator would be contacted to see if the periwinkle which is slowly overtaking our native plants (trilliums, wild ginger, blood root, etc.) can be limited to its present location and constraint the spread. The location of a proposed new circular trail was reviewed. It was agreed that Bridge #2 and #3, both which have deteriorated need to be closed. Two new bridges, one replacing the original Bridge #4 which washed out and a new bridge at the west end are proposed. The trail names agreed to are Beech Point (easy), Pond (easy), River (medium) and Lookout (difficult).

During the year Daisy McCallum and Barb Kaiser did a lot of work at Cedarcroft walking the trails, cleaning up branches, labelling plants and keeping everyone apprised of activities including a tour and the potluck. Our thanks to them.

Many Committee members participated and my apologies if I missed their significant contributions. As always Cedarcroft is our precious “oasis” away from the busyness of life and a pleasure to work in. Thank you to all who contributed to a very successful year.

Herb Bax, Cedarcroft Manager

Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London Report 2014-2015

To match the annual Chimney Swift year, this report covers the period Nov 1/14 to Oct 31/15. The following summarizes activities carried out by or under the auspices of Nature London’s Chimney Swift Liaison during the reporting period.

Education/Outreach

- Maintained posting on Nature London’s website of 2 educational documents on swifts.
- Helped create text and select support materials for Chimney Swift component of exhibit “Nature London at 150” at Museum London (Dec ’14 to Mar ’15).
- Wrote citation for NL Conservation Certificate awarded to Swift Care Ontario (Nov ’14).
- Wrote article in *The Londoner* (Nov ’14) urging swift chimney at Kingsmill’s be saved.

- Wrote article in *Tidings* (Aug '15) re keeping dampers closed in swift chimneys.
- Twice gave PowerPoint on swifts (May 22/15) to grade 6 groups at Lord Roberts School.
- Contacted Ryerson School re chimney preservation and celebrating school's swifts.
- Provided info to a home heating company re ensuring chimneys are safe for swifts.

Monitoring / Data Collection

- Recruited and mentored volunteers for roost blitzes and weekly Ontario SwiftWatch monitoring.
- Provided ongoing support to Ontario SwiftWatch coordinator at BSC.
- Made 78 monitoring visits to 53 different London chimneys and submitted data to BSC.
- Surveyed selected sections of London to identify potential chimneys used by swifts.
- Began assembling a photo catalogue of the 167 London chimneys known to be used by swifts since 2004 (including 4 chimneys first discovered in 2015).

Conservation

- Provided information in response to various inquiries, e.g., potential swift chimney demolitions, disturbance during installation of solar panels, supplier of access panels for swift chimneys, use of hollow trees, swift chimneys in Old East, swifts nesting in a barn, location of roosts in south London, outcome of NL letters to Fanshawe College and mayor seeking commitment to save Kingsmill's chimney.
- Rescued an adult swift (Jun 21) that had come down the chimney of a downtown church.
- Assisted Swift Care Ontario of Komoka and Le Nichoir of Hudson, PQ in selecting best release locations for hand-reared swifts; arranged attendance of monitors at one such event.
- Along with Swift Care Ontario, provided info re contacts, design specifications, monitoring methodology, etc. to Fanshawe College after its decision to tear down Kingsmill's chimney and construct an artificial one (replacement not occupied in '15).
- Provided info to City of London Planning Department re swift use of chimneys in McCormick planning area.

During reporting period, NL swift liaison put in 338 hours of volunteer time. Many additional hours were put in by a dozen other NL volunteers who assisted with the monitoring program.

(BSC = Bird Studies Canada)

Winifred Wake

Conservation Action Committee Report 2014-2015

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

CAC = Conservation Action Committee

CMP = Conservation Master Plan

EEPAC = Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

EA = Environmental Assessment

ESA = Environmentally Significant Area

MNRF = Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

NL = Nature London

OMB = Ontario Municipal Board

UTRCA = Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

This year's Conservation Action Committee consisted of 11 Nature London members: Sandy Levin, Chair; Anita Caveney, Will Lyons, Daphne Lowe, Roslyn Moorhead, Norm Corrin, Gerald Pierce, Carolyn Beacroft, Bill Maddeford, Jack Blocker, and Susan Blocker.

The CAC met 4 times during the period of this report: September 30, 2014, and January 6, April 13, and August 4, 2015.

1. ESA Visits. CAC members visited The Coves and Meadowlily Woods in order to record the presence of significant species of flora and fauna and to note and, if necessary, to report to the appropriate authority possible violations of City by-laws. In addition, CAC members visited several other ESAs to provide tours for City Council members, as noted below under "City Council Contacts."

2. Work Undertaken: The CAC monitored numerous items and attended a variety of public meetings throughout the year. In many cases, the CAC initiated correspondence with the City of London, Provincial and Federal Ministries, UTRCA and other groups or agencies for the purpose of stating the CAC's support, opposition or recommendations. For some issues, comments were submitted to the Ontario Environmental Registry. Issues monitored or addressed included:

- City Council Contacts - CAC members met with all members of the Council newly elected in October 2014, as well as the Mayor, and invited and accompanied Council members on tours of Killaly Meadows, Kains Woods, The Coves, and Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESAs.
- Komoka Provincial Park - MNRF has plans to construct new entrances and close existing ones, but these depend upon future environmental assessment and funding availability. As has been the case for the previous five years, a seasonal Park Warden/Resource Steward has been employed at the park during the summer to pursue education and monitoring efforts. Ontario Parks hopes to begin a consolidated consultation process this summer to address a number of initiatives including amalgamation of the parking lots and associated trail work; amendment of the management plan concerning permitted uses; and changes to the boundary regulations needed to add two provincially acquired parcels to the park. Public consultations were to be held in Spring 2014 to consider non-conforming uses such as horseback riding and mountain biking as well as the proposed new access points, but they appear not to have taken place.
- The Coves – The CMP for The Coves has been adopted by City Council. CAC member Daphne Lowe will continue to be involved as a member of the local advisory committee. The City has not acquired the orchard at the centre of the Coves. In 2015, this ESA was added to the management contract between the City and the UTRCA. In June, the OMB approved Rand Developments' proposal to build two 14-story buildings on the site of a former Toyota dealership on Springbank Drive overlooking The Coves ESA. The proposal was opposed by City planning staff and by Thom McClenaghan, president of the Friends of the Coves. Rand hopes to begin construction by the end of 2015.
- Sifton Bog – The City has awarded a contract for monitoring of the storm water management facility adjacent to the Bog.

- Signage at ESA entrances – Following suggestions by CAC for more effective signs highlighting the most common prohibited behaviours, the City has redesigned its signage accordingly.
- Medway Valley Heritage Forest - The development application for rezoning of 161 Windermere Road to allow construction of additional dwellings was at City Council in April 2015. Council accepted the staff position – approval with holding provisions as previously presented after the election but before the installation of the new Council. As mentioned previously, the City accepted the recommendation of the proponent’s consultant on the ESA boundary delineation in this area. The developer, Tridon Management, has appealed this matter to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The hearing will be in October. The CMP for the ESA has also been delayed due to the recent City strike.
- Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills – A community meeting was held on October 2, 2014, to review progress in implementing the Conservation Master Plan, 2005 (CMP) for this ESA. NL and other organizations attended. Linda McDougall, Ecologist Planner, reported that 95 percent of the 86 recommendations made in the CMP are being addressed. (Her presentation may be found at <http://www.london.ca/residents/Environment/Natural-Environments/Pages/Conservation-Plans.aspx>.)

Sarah Mainguy, a biologist working for North-South Environmental, one of four consulting organizations that conducted the recent review, stated that a species inventory found more diversity than was reported after the last review, in 1981. Significant amphibian and reptile breeding habitat was found in a variety of wetland types. Noteworthy species recorded included a salamander, Wood Frog, Snapping Turtle, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. Invasive species Common and Glossy Buckthorn are a continuing problem. (A draft report on proposals for removal of invasive buckthorn has been posted on the City’s website for this ESA. Also to be found on that website are volumes 1 and 2 of the draft inventory and management zones report:

<http://www.london.ca/residents/Environment/Natural-Environments/Pages/Conservation-Plans.aspx>.) Linda McDougall noted that the Westminster Working Group (WWG) is very active in targeting urban planning, public safety, active transportation, accessibility, and food availability issues. It is working with the City to promote a safe pedestrian crossing over the CN spur line north of the ESA.

Parks Planning Manager Andrew Macpherson reported on the Western Counties Cultural Heritage Landscape Plan. Although the Western Counties Cultural Landscape falls outside the ESA boundary, it is adjacent to the ESA and the site is of historical interest. The Plan recognizes natural environment, historical, physical, and personal connections with the ESA. The site is one of only three remaining Veterans’ care facilities built in Canada after World War II. Subject to budget approvals, implementation of the Plan will start in 2015.

UTRCA representative Steve Sauder praised the work of the Advisory Committee for the CMP and the long-running contributions of the Rotary Club of London West (RCLW), which was awarded an NL Conservation Award at the 2013 banquet. Particularly noted was the unflagging commitment of NL and RCLW Past President Karen Auzins.

EEPAC critiqued the work by North-South Environmental which was an update to the CMP to apply the document *Planning and Design Standards for Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas* (2012) to this ESA and to do water quality analysis. It raised concerns about the quality of the work (the hydrologists on EEPAC were not in agreement with the conclusions of the water quality work) and the application of the *Standards*. CAC, too, is concerned about how the *Standards* are being applied for trail planning in other ESAs to which the document was not intended to apply.

- Official Plan Review – CAC has been involved continuously in the public consultations around the drafting of the new London Plan, focusing primarily on maintaining the essential distinction between ESAs and other types of open space.
- Thames Valley Corridor Plan / Thames Valley Parkway – A connection for the Thames Valley Pathway system, from the University Bridge at Richmond Street to Adelaide at the Sports Fields (with an eventual side connection to Stoney Creek) is the subject of an EA. The second Public Information Centre (PIC) in June was cancelled due to the strike. No new notice has been published.
An EA is also under way for a proposed pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Richmond Street north of Sunningdale Road. A second PIC was postponed due to the recent city strike. These documents may be seen at <http://www.london.ca/residents/Environment/EAs/Pages/Pedestrian-Recreational-Crossing-of-Richmond-Street.aspx>. CAC members are monitoring this process, with particular concern about the provincially significant wetlands which are part of the Arva Moraine Wetland Complex and about possible connections through the Medway Valley ESAs.
- Kains Woods – The City has now acquired the land or an easement to relocate the trail at point 13 (west) on the City’s map for this ESA, and the UTRCA’s ESA team will relocate the trail and recycle the boardwalk/bridge to a new location. Work has started on new barriers.
- Conservation Award – The 2014 Conservation Award recipients were Swift Care Ontario and David Crockett.
- Strategic Planning Initiatives – In each of the *Cardinal* flights during the reporting period, the CAC has included in the Conservation section a boxed notice urging members to take action on a specific issue. The CAC has also presented 5-10 minute talks at indoor meetings focused on a specific issue or ESA and has commissioned volunteer articles to be submitted to *The Londoner* to educate the general public on issues affecting London’s natural heritage (three have been published).
- Earth Day Colloquium – CAC members represented NL at this colloquium at the University of Western Ontario in April.
- Enviro Hero Award - The Board accepted the CAC’s proposal to create an Enviro Hero Award for singular contributions to natural heritage conservation. No nominations have been made as yet.
- New ESA: Pottersburg Valley/Kiwanis ESA - An Environmental Impact Study and Environmental Assessment have been carried out for a proposed new ESA in the Pottersburg Creek Valley. These have been reviewed by EEPAC and recommendations made concerning pathways, removal of invasive species, mitigation of construction impacts, and tree planting. The EEPAC report noted that, following removal of soccer pitches, the area where they were previously located has quickly begun to revert to a natural state.

Complete information on the above items is detailed in the CAC meeting minutes. Selected details were published in the Conservation section of *The Cardinal*, flights 237, 238, 239 and 240.

Jack Blocker, Conservation Liaison, on behalf of the Conservation Action Committee

E-mail Coordinator's Report 2014-2015

July 2014 marked the initial application of the Can Spam regulations for distribution of “bulk email” in Canada. The key requirements for an organization like Nature London were:

- All such mail must have a contact address for the sending organization on every message
- There must be a mechanism for speedy removal of a name and address from any bulk mail – an “unsubscribe” mechanism
- Initially, Nature London could use our old member list, but by 2015 there must be a positive “opt in” record for each subscriber.

The Email Coordinators made a presentation to the Nature London Board in October 2014, and several operating points were agreed:

1. We would test an internet mailing service, starting with MailChimp, to hold our email list and distribute email newsletter to members

2. The Membership Secretary and Database Manager would be asked to provide the Email Coordinators with names and email addresses for all active members wishing to receive the newsletter, and to update that list from time to time. This list would then be uploaded MailChimp

3. Given that sending too much email would result in some members using the easy “unsubscribe” function, it was decided we should find an alternative to forwarding each individual message or notice separately. It was proposed (and agreed) that the Email Coordinators would prepare a monthly or bi-monthly concise list of NL events and announcements. In addition, we could include with selected news from our partner organizations like Thames Talbot Land Trust, London Environmental Network and Ontario Nature.

4. The Email Coordinators were encouraged to use the newsletter to increase traffic on the Nature London web page

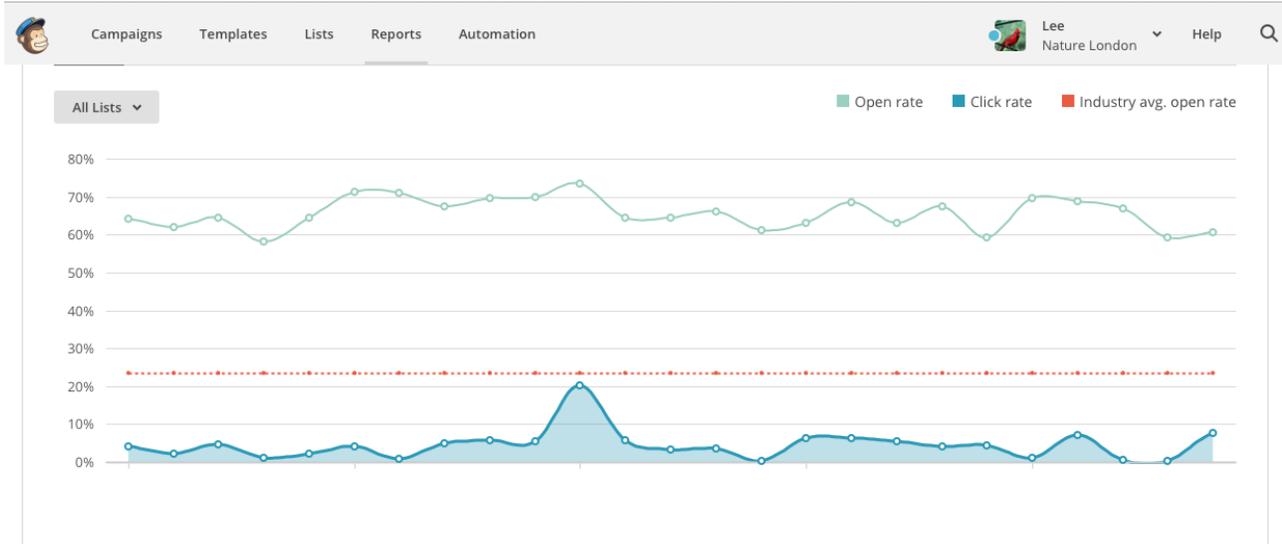
5. The Email Coordinators would review all incoming email and forward it to the appropriate volunteers for answers

Newsletters So Far

In the past year, the Email Coordinators have distributed 18 newsletters (some months do not require a mid-month update), plus 4 “extras” (one item distributions to correct dates, or add urgent items).

Member response has been favourable, as the number of subscribers has increased from 193 in September 2014 to 246 in December and 310 in October 2015. During that time there have been only three persons who “unsubscribed”. The “opening rate” (number of subscribers who actually opened and looked at a newsletter) has remained quite consistent at about 61 %. This is far higher than the NGO industry rate as shown in the graphic below.

Sample Report from MailChimp October 2014 to October 2015



The “click rate”, that is the number of persons who click on a “link” and go to a web page, has varied with the items in the newsletter. However, our rate remains well above the industry norm as reported by Mailchimp.

It would appear that the MailChimp service (free) is working well for us and is practical for our needs so far. It is proposed that we continue this system into the new year, and include a questionnaire at some point seeking areas to improve.

Cooperation Makes this Possible

Producing a concise bi-weekly digest is practical because much of the material is copied from the Nature London web page. The amount of text in each email is greatly reduced by the use of links to the web page where additional directions and information is posted. This email newsletter is only possible because of the great cooperation and support of the Webmaster, Mady Hymowitz, the Membership Secretary, Gail McNeil and the Database Manager, Hugh Casbourn. We are anxious to acknowledge this fact and extend our thanks.

Submitted by: *Ric and Sandy Symmes*

Field Trips Report 2014-2015

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
Sept. 6/14	Cedarcroft	C. McCrae, G. McNeil, Cedarcroft Committee	4 hours	17	partly cloudy, warm	- hike and picnic - Pine Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, White Snakeroot

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
Sept.13/14	Oil Museum and Fairbank Properties	Charlie Fairbank, D. and W. Wake	5.5 hours	16	chilly, some showers	toured museum and driving tour around oil history in the Petrolia area
Sept. 20/14	Westminster Ponds ESA	V. MacPhail	2 hours	21	sunny, mild	- caught and identified various bees
Oct. 5/14	Kains Woods ESA	D. and W. Wake	2 hours	15	cloudy and cool	- historical use of trail - many tree species
Oct. 26/14	Medway Valley ESA	C. McCrae	1.25 hours	26	sunny and cool	- hilly terrain - Fox Sparrow
Nov. 2/14	Kettle Point Area	I. Platt and J. Taylor	7 hours	15	partially cloudy, little wind	- 64 bird species included Horned Grebe, Lapland Longspur
Nov. 16/14	Fanshawe C.A.	C. McCrae	1.75 hours	22	overcast, breezy	- Winter Wren, American Coot
Dec. 6/14	Springbank Park Area	B. Vandenberg, C. McCrae and others	3 hours	38 (24 kids)	cool, overcast	- first annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids - 27 species, 1483 birds
Jan. 1/15	Springbank Park area	C. McCrae	2 hours	37	cold, windy	- 17 bird species- - Green-winged Teal
Jan. 17/15	St. Clair River and Sarnia	C. McCrae	9 hours	15	partly sunny, cold	- Snowy Owls, Longtail Ducks, Peregrine Falcons, Short-eared Owls
Feb. 7/15	UWO Biology Dept. Collections	D. and W. Wake with N. Zitani	1.5 hours	21	indoors	- toured zoology and botany collections - plant collection demonstrated - viewed study skins
Feb. 21/15	Winnett's Swamp	G. Cameron	2 hours	18	snowy	- a lot of Hooded Mergansers and Northern Cardinals

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
Mar. 8/15	Greenway Park	G. McNeil	2 hours	40	sunny and warm	- good variety of ducks on the river
Mar. 29/15	Aylmer WMA	C. McCrae	2 hours	12	cold but sunny	- 500 to 800 Tundra Swans, Ross's Goose, Snow Goose
Apr. 12/15	Hullett WMA	C. McCrae	8 hours	20	overcast, cool	- average number of bird species but lower than expected number of ducks
Apr. 29/15	Kilally ESA	M. Dawdy	1.5 hours	40	clear, seasonal	- heard and saw territorial display of American Woodcock
May 3/15	Kilally ESA	C. McCrae and G. McNeil	2.5 hours	14	sunny and warm	- Beginning birder outing - Palm and Blackburnian Warblers
May 6/15	Meadowlily ESA	M. Channon	1.5 hours	19	warm and sunny	- a nice array of spring wildflowers and some nice views of returning birds
May 10/15	Circle R Ranch	G. McNeil, J. Russell, D. and W. Wake	2 hours	28	warm and partly sunny	- close to 30 species of wildflowers
May 11/15	Corner's Corner	J. Bristow	2 hours	6	perfect	- photography outing - great display of trilliums and various trees
May 13/15	Warbler Woods ESA	C. Quinlan	1.5 hours	15	cool and clear	- nice variety of trees and wildflowers
May 16/15	Meadow-woods (Caveney property)	S. and A. Caveney	3.5 hours	22	cool and drizzly, becoming sunny	- 38 bird species, 33 tree or shrub species, 27 herbaceous plant species

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
May 20/15	Sifton Bog ESA	B. Gallagher	1.5 hours	16	partly overcast, seasonal	- interesting plants including Sundews
May 22 – 24/15	Bruce Peninsula	C. McCrae	2 days	14	sunny to partly sunny, warm	- 96 bird species - some good views of migrants
May 22/15	Komoka PP	S. and A. Caveney	2.25 hours	10	drizzly, then clearing	- great variety of native plants and wildflowers and some good bird views
May 30/15	Cedarcroft	D. McCallum and B. Kaiser	1.75 hours	8	cloudy, humid	- numerous butterflies and dragonflies
May 30/15	Gibbons Park	J. Schwindt and C. McCrae	1.25 hours	5	cloudy, seasonal	- family outing - electro fishing demonstration and birding
June 6/15	Pinery PP	V. MacPhail	4 hours	6	seasonal, mostly sunny	- bumblebee survey - caught 16 individuals and several fly mimics
June 7/15	Westminster Ponds ESA	C. McCrae and G. McNeil	2 hours	32	cloudy, breezy, humid	- Trails Open London walks
July 5/15	Skunk's Misery	A. White	11 hours	37	sunny, no wind	- annual Butterfly Count - Aphrodite Fritillary and Hackberry Emperor

Director Cathy McCrae, Field Trips Coordinator

Guide to the Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Report 2014-2015

The fifth edition of the *Guide to Natural Areas in London & Region* was completed and 1500 copies printed in June, 2015. It contains descriptions for a total of 104 sites, plus four extended trail systems. Seven sites were dropped from the list in the fourth edition, usually because of public access problems,

and 21 new sites have been added. The new sites are from Hullet Marsh in the north, to Backus Woods in the southeast, to Clearwater P.P. in the southwest.

The Guide is a spiral bound book with fold out maps, information on landforms, and separate lists of favourite areas for birding, hiking, wildflowers and trees, and butterfly/dragonfly viewing. Listings for each site give a little of the history of the area (if germane) and a brief description of natural features to expect. Available web and print references are given for each site.

Compiling this edition was a group effort. 75 people volunteered their help, by visiting the sites, updating or writing descriptions, providing advice and book design suggestions, and helping with layout and editing. Most are NL members, but members of the Stratford Field Naturalists and personnel from UTRCA, ABCA, LTVCA, and Pinery P.P. have also been of great assistance. The books are being sold at all NL events and in several retail outlets for \$15.

Jim and Roslyn Moorhead, Editors

Indoor Meetings Annual Report 2014-2015

The following speakers and topics comprised the agenda for the 2014-15 year.

September 19, 2014

Victoria MacPhail is a Pollinators at Risk Initiative Biologist with Wildlife Preservation Canada, as well as Co-Chair of Pollination Guelph, a volunteer-run charitable organization that works to protect pollinators and their habitats. In her talk entitled “Plight of the Bumblebee,” Victoria explained that pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat and the reproduction of over 80% of all flowering plants, but many species are now in trouble. Her presentation discussed reasons for pollinator declines and what we can do to help, and offered tips to help identify common pollinators.

The following morning Victoria led a group of adults and youth on a field walk in a meadow at Westminster Woods ESA. Participants learned how to identify bees, flies, butterflies and other pollinators in the field and recognize potential food and nesting sites for them.

October 17, 2014

Dr. Anne Bell, Director of Conservation and Education at Ontario Nature, spoke on the topic of “Standing up for Ontario’s Endangered Species.” In September, 2013, Ontario Nature and Wildlands League launched a suit against the provincial government over its decision to exempt major industries from many of the requirements to protect species at risk under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Ecojustice is providing the two groups with legal counsel. Anne explained the ins and outs of this legal action, including the rationale and hoped-for outcome.

Banquet: November 21, 2014

Peter Middleton of Owen Sound is a past member of McIlwraith as well as a Director at Large on the Board of Ontario Nature and chair of its Nature Reserves Committee. Given his history with Nature London and his years as a naturalist, teacher, tour leader and environmental spokesperson, Peter was the ideal keynote speaker to help Nature London to celebrate its 150th anniversary at this year’s banquet. In his presentation, titled “Reflections,” Peter recounted the experiences of a naturalist in Ontario over the

past sixty years. From early years in London to a career in outdoor education and worldwide guiding, the span of years have provided a remarkable view of changes in the world around us. Peter reflected on questions of why, how such change has occurred and what might lie ahead.

January 16, 2015

Danielle Way, Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology at Western University, spoke about her research on “Forest Responses to Climate Change.” In a multi-factor perspective on climate change, she discussed some reasons why warming and rising CO₂ levels may not benefit forests if there are unfavourable changes in water availability and day length. Drought may be a stronger control of plant mortality in a warmer world.

February 20, 2015

Paul O’Hara is owner/operator of Blue Oak Native Landscapes in Hamilton, and is a field botanist, landscape designer and native plant gardening expert. Paul helped us to think ahead to spring and summer with his talk on “Native Plant Gardening in Southern Ontario”. As suburban development pushes on the edges of rural areas in Southern Ontario, it has become increasingly important to preserve, enhance and create wildlife habitat in our urban spaces. Paul highlighted his experience designing and building native plant gardens and naturalization projects in the Golden Horseshoe, and offered tips to Nature London members wanting to beautify and nurture wildlife on their properties.

March 20, 2015

Brenda Gallagher, a Forestry Technician and Vegetation Specialist at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, gave an illustrated presentation entitled “Exploring Wetlands.” Southern Ontario is home to four types of wetlands: bogs, fens, swamps and marshes. Brenda’s talk explored the unique features of each wetland and how they function, and identified some of the mysterious plants and animals that inhabit these fascinating ecosystems.

April 17, 2015: Members’ Night

The following members and topics comprised this year’s Members’ Night lineup:

Sue Southon: “Eat, Tweet and Be Merry”

Barb Kaiser, “What’s New at Cedarcroft in 2014-15?”

Linda Bristow, “Garden Gems: Birds, Bugs and Blooms”

Paul Morris, “ Burnaby Lake Regional Nature Park Nest Box Program”

Sarah Richer, “Diversity of Moths”

Jim Bristow, “ Colours of Kiwanis Park”

The presentations were enriched by outstanding nature photography.

Carol Agocs, Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator

London Advisory Committee on Heritage Report 2014-2015

Built heritage is the most prevalent item on our agendas, below is a list of issues dealt with that had some relevance to natural heritage.

- 1 Coves - The east coves woods trail building is underway and nearly completed and the old paint factory site near the trailer park is still not resolved.

- 2 Cultural Heritage Landscape work is continuing for the Meadowlily area and may be advanced as consultants work is completed. A historical designation for the ruins of the Mill, east of the bridge is being worked on. A survey and mapping of the site is eminent.
- 3 The introduction of intrusive multiuse path ways in ESA's is still an ongoing issue despite strong opposition.
- 4 In an attempt to save some historic homes on Oxford St near Wharncliffe from road widening we suggested relocating the homes further back on the deep lots, but someone at city hall pointed out that trees in the back yards could prevent that option. Suddenly they are concerned about saving trees from development.

Jim Cushing

Membership Secretary's Report 2014-2015

Our membership for 2014/2015 was at an all time high with 406 members. There were 61 new members of which 6 were free memberships. 1 was given at Nature in the City and 5 given during a promotion on field trips in the spring. 5 of our members chose to give a membership to Nature London as a gift.

Let us continue to enjoy the many activities of Nature London and encourage others to be part of this growing club.

Gail McNeil

Membership Database

Hugh Casbourn continued to provide support for the Membership Database, adapted it to accommodate and track changes such as use of PayPal and memberships awarded at Nature in the City or on field trips, and prepared summary reports as needed. .

Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee Report 2014-2015

There were no meetings held this year and so there is nothing to report. The Middlesex Council is presently debating the needs for various committees and I have been told they will be making changes to the structure of various committees and I will find out the changes sometime soon.

Pete Read

Middlesex Stewardship Council Report 2014-2015

The Middlesex Stewardship Council (MSC) entered its third year under a new partnership arrangement with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA), after the Ministry of Natural Resources ceased supporting the stewardship program. The Council is made up of volunteers representing different organizations including agriculture, environmental (Nature London), angling/hunting clubs and rural landowners.

After over 15 years as a Stewardship Council, the MSC realized it was getting too difficult to recruit new members and seek new funding. Thus, the MSC endorsed a Dissolution Strategy to close down by

December 2015 after their commitments with the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the Upper Sydenham River improvement project are met.

The council concentrated its efforts this year on spending its remaining unallocated funds on approved stewardship projects in Middlesex County.

In September 2014, the council approved funding for six wetland construction/restoration and tree planting projects, on rural properties totaling over \$24,000. In 2015, the council approved 38 projects for projects ranging from wetland restoration, erosion control, tree planting and tallgrass prairie planting to environmental education programs. The council allocated \$147,700 in 2015. Most of the projects were collaborations with the local conservation authorities who provided technical advice and coordination for landowners.

A bus tour was held in July, taking council members and guests to three habitat restoration project sites in the Upper East Sydenham River watershed and Strathroy-Caradoc Sand Plain.

In November 2015 the council had its final meeting with a celebratory lunch and business wrap-up. The remaining funds held by the council were dispersed to the participating conservation authorities (Upper Thames River, St. Clair Region, Ausable Bayfield and Kettle Creek) who will continue to do stewardship work in Middlesex County. The SCRCA will continue to keep files, equipment and provide any lingering reports and support needed.

Representing Nature London over the last 15 years or so on this council has been a good experience for me. Advocating for native species and habitat restoration projects that help both farmers and wildlife has been very well received. The partnership approach has had a positive impact on all who participated.

Cathy Quinlan

Nature in the City Report 2014-2015

A milestone, tenth year of Nature in the City took place at the Central Public Library for six weeks in January and February and saw new and familiar faces, both amongst the crowd and the speaker lineup.

The series kicked off with an informative presentation on white-tailed deer, given by management biologist Kyle Stanley of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Bruce Parker, a citizen scientist and Monarch tagger, was our second speaker. Bruce's lively and fascinating talk on Monarch butterflies showed us that you don't have to be a professor to give great lectures.

Conservation biologist Mhairi McFarlane of the Nature Conservancy of Canada shared with us some regional initiatives in restoration ecology and inspired the audience to look for ways to introduce native species of plants to our own gardens and planters.

Brent Sinclair from Western's Biology Department presented a stimulating talk on how insects survive our winters. Two of his colleagues from Western rounded out our series, with Brock Fenton returning to

Nature in the City to help us celebrate and appreciate bats, and Greg Thorn, who had taught us about mushrooms in a previous series, sharing the beauty of the Medway Valley Heritage Forest.

Average attendance at the talks was 253, despite the bitterly cold weather for most of the weeks, and Nature London received eight new member applications. Ann Henderson sold \$311 worth of field guides to attendees. An earlier start time of 7:00 p.m. ensured that there was ample time after each lecture for questions and mingling in the hallway.

The partnership between Nature London and the London Public Library has continued to be a fruitful one, with the library supplying tech support and volunteers to usher in the crowds, along with printing flyers for distribution; and Nature London providing the speakers, event organisation, and preparation of the promotional material.

Thanks to Paul Nicholson's weekly column in the London Free Press, the event received media coverage to encourage attendance, along with the positive word-of-mouth that a popular, ongoing event like this generates.

The organising committee for this year's successful series included Paul Nicholson, Winifred Wake, Leslie Rockwell, under the guidance and leadership of Pat Tripp. Lisa Bilty is a recent recruit to the committee and will be on board to assist in preparations for next year's series.

Thanks to all members who came out to support Nature in the City and to our speakers for sharing their wealth of knowledge and passion.

Report written by Lisa Bilty and submitted by Pat Tripp

Nature Line Coordinator(s) Report 2014-2015

Every week throughout the year one of the three volunteers, Bob McGee, Gail McNeil or Rick Martin, collected information about bird, butterfly & other sightings in the area that would be of interest to naturalists and along with information about NL's indoor and outdoor activities prepare a recording each Thursday for inclusion on the Nature Line (519-457-4593) . People dialing this line would then be able to hear this message and they could leave a message as well. If a message was left, one of the three volunteers would endeavour to contact the caller and provide an answer.

Bob McGee

Nominating Committee Report 2014-2015

A major initiative of the Nominating Committee this past year has been an update of the Operating Manual which outlines roles of leadership and other volunteer positions within Nature London. Thanks to the initiative of Karen Auzins much of this task has been completed and reviewed. The task should be completed in the coming year and will be a valuable resource to the organization for years to come.

The Nominating Committee also worked hard at its primary role of filling Board and annual appointment volunteer positions. Thanks to Nominating Committee members Karen Auzins, Catherine Burr, and Ray Robertson.

This year is the first that we have been receiving volunteer signup sheets on line. A number of new young members and volunteers have come to us in this way. Thanks to the many members who say yes in the past year to the jobs that make Nature London the great organization that it is. Thanks also to the many who have remained committed year after year to important roles in the organization

In the coming year the Nominating Committee plans to continue to involve and engage new and existing members in the cause of the conservation and enjoyment of the natural world.

Norm Corrin – Chair

Ontario Nature (FON) Report 2014-2015

Nature London representatives continue to attend the fall and spring meetings of the Carolinian West Region (CWR) of the Ontario Nature Network, which are hosted by member groups. The meetings provide an opportunity for naturalists to share ideas and report on successes and failures of programs they have undertaken, as well as seek advice from the umbrella organization. Staff representatives from Ontario Nature give an update on their organization's conservation science programs, Nature Network, youth programs, and educational programs. The regional group may draft resolutions about issues of concern, and move and approve them before they are sent to Ontario Nature, which checks the wording carefully. Ontario Nature presents the resolutions to its membership for a vote at the AGM and, if approved, the resolutions are submitted to the Provincial Government. Through these Network meetings, Nature London is able to keep abreast of regional and provincial matters relating to nature heritage. Ontario Nature is an important 'voice' at the provincial level for all its member groups.

This year, regional meetings were hosted by the Sydenham Field Naturalists at the Wallaceburg Service Centre in Wallaceburg on October 25, 2014 (Anita Caveney and Muriel Andreae represented Nature London), and by the St Thomas Field Naturalist Club Inc. at the Schoolhouse at Springwater Conservation Area on March 28, 2015 (Anita Caveney and Muriel Andreae represented Nature London). Anita Caveney, in the second year of her 2-year term as Ontario Nature's Carolinian West Regional Director, chaired the regional meetings. Full reports on these meetings were published in the February 2015 and August 2015 issues of *The Cardinal*.

Anita and Stan Caveney, Pat Tripp, and Dave and Winifred Wake represented Nature London at Ontario Nature's 84th AGM and Gathering, *A Day on the Grand*. It was held at the *rare* Eco Centre (part of the *rare* Charitable Research Centre) along the Grand River near Cambridge on May 23, 2015, and included illustrated talks, guided hikes, the AGM, Conservation Awards Ceremony, and a Wine and Cheese Reception.

Two dominant issues on Ontario Nature's agenda were the Endangered Species Act lawsuit that Ontario Nature and CPAWS – Wildlands League brought against the Provincial Government, with legal assistance from Ecojustice, regarding exemptions to Ontario's Endangered Species Act; the Provincial Government's Pollinator Health proposal to enhance pollinator health and reduce the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in Ontario; and the 2015 Review of the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Greater Golden Horseshoe Plan.

Some Nature London–Ontario Nature interactions during the year are listed below:

- Dr Anne Bell, Ontario Nature’s Director of Conservation and Education, was Nature London’s guest speaker at the October 17, 2014 indoor meeting. Her topic, *Standing up for Ontario’s Endangered Species*, included reasons for Ontario Nature’s lawsuit against the Provincial Government, which was launched in September 2013.
- Ontario Nature urged its member groups to submit comments to the EBR Registry on the Ontario government’s *Pollinator Health: A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario*. Anita Caveney submitted comments in January 2015 on behalf of Nature London to support the proposal and provide suggestions for strengthening it.
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) *2015 Co-ordinated Review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, Greenbelt Plan, and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area*: Ontario Nature asked that its Nature Network organizations sign on to a letter of comments that it, EcoSpark, Earthroots, and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine group (STORM) was submitting to the MMAH, and that each Network organization submit its own comments. Nature London’s president, Muriel Andreae, signed the Ontario Nature letter. Anita Caveney submitted comments in May 2015 on behalf of Nature London to the EBR Registry.

No resolutions were moved by the Carolinian West Region for consideration at the 2015 AGM.

Anita Caveney
Nature London Representative at Ontario Nature Regional Meetings
Carolinian West Regional Director, Ontario Nature

Publicity Report 2014-2015

Publicity efforts for Nature London during this reporting period were again satisfactory. As in recent years, the approach was very low cost and multi-modal. Flyers were printed and distributed seasonally by various Nature London members at various events. These were also distributed through other organizations (e.g. libraries.) Nature London programs and events were promoted in local newspapers and web sites as well as through e-mail and social media. Aspects of Nature London’s efforts were featured in [The London Free Press](#) and [The Londoner](#). There were also dozens of brief references to Nature London initiatives in many Southwestern Ontario dailies over the course of the 12 months. Information was also shared routinely at Nature London events, other events, and of course word of mouth. Partnerships (e.g. with the London Public Library for the Nature in the City series) again allowed for low cost cross-promotion. Most recently, efforts have been made to boost awareness of the 5th edition of updated the *Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Region* that was published in August 2015.

Paul Nicholson

Sales Co-ordinator Report 2014-2015

At the Nature London meetings both sales of various books and guides and donations were up really well this year resulting in net sales for the year of \$1032.00.

Nature in the City sales were less than half the previous year, including some nights when only sold one guide was sold. Maybe our new Guide to Natural Areas will do well for us.

We received 50 copies of the new Reptiles guide from St. Thomas Field Naturalists and they are selling very well as have the new Natural Areas Guides.

The remaining 150th Anniversary bags will be used as gifts for speakers, and a variety of Field guides will continue to be ordered from the St. Thomas Field Naturalists for future sales.

Ann Henderson

Saunders Library Report 2014-2015

THE W. E. SAUNDERS MEMORIAL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS FOR 2015-2016

Nature London donates \$1000 annually to the London Public Library for the W.E. Saunders Memorial Library. The books or other items purchased are related to nature, conservation, or the environment. Multiple copies of some titles were bought.

London Public Library card-holders may place holds on these books at the London Public Library web site, www.londonpubliclibrary.ca

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

Art of Natural Building: Design, Construction, Resources by Catherine Wanek

Attracting Native Pollinators: The Xerces Society Guide to Conserving North American Bees and Butterflies and Their Habitat by Eric Mader

Carnivore Way: Coexisting with and Conserving North America's Predators by Cristina Eisenberg

Complete Guide to Organic Lawn Care: Everything You Need to Know Explained Simply by Atlantic Publishing Group Staff

Growing and Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal and Other Woodland Medicinals by Jeanine Davis

How to Build, Maintain, and Use a Compost System: Secrets and Techniques You Need to Know to Grow the Best Vegetables by Kelly Smith

New Trailside Cookbook: 100 Delicious Recipes for the Camp Chef by Kevin Callan

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Bird Watching for Kids by George Harrison

Birdology by Monica Russo

The Call of the Osprey by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

Flowers are Calling by Rita Gray

The Nitty-Gritty Gardening Book by Kari Cornell

To the Rescue: Amazing Stories of Courageous Animals and Animal Rescues by National Geographic Kids

Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall by Anita Silvey

Pat Tripp, Saunders Librarian Liaison

Strategic Planning Committee Report 2014-2015

Strategic Planning Committee Members: Carol Agocs, Roslyn Moorhead, Muriel Andreae, and Jenna Allain

Nature London's 2013 Strategic Plan identifies 31 specific recommendations for action. As of September 2015, an impressive amount of work has been done to implement the recommendations. Below is a summary of implemented and ongoing activities.

Fully Implemented Activities:

- Greater variety of locations and leaders for outdoor activities (novice birder outings, family outings, and new locations have been added);
- At least 2 youth-oriented walks (Children's CBC, Fanshawe Scavenger Hunt, and May 2016 outing planned);
- *Guide to Natural Areas* updated and published;
- Increased online presence by posting *Cardinal* online;
- Links to other environmental sites, watches and alerts provided on website;
- Improved membership service by arranging for online payments and donations through website;
- Email reminders for NL activities are sent to members in a monthly eBulletin;
- Identified essential club positions, created a nominating committee, had incumbents provide input, and encouraged nominating and mentoring for succession planning;
- Gave a brief presentation about Cedarcroft at meetings, and distributed Cedarcroft information sheet in *Cardinal*;
- Held youth and family programs at Cedarcroft (Fall Family Picnic);
- Have colour coded name tags for newcomers at NL meetings and ensure the calendar is on the website.

Initiated and Ongoing Activities:

- Enhancing field trips by mentoring new leaders;
- Coordinating an indoor meeting with a walk (bumblebees talk and hike 2014; moths talk and field trip 2015; nature photography talk paired with a walk planned for 2016);
- Improve engagement with youth, new Canadians, and other groups (e.g. Bug Day with the Children's Museum, September 12th, 2015);
- Host at least 1 family event a year (2 events planned for fall 2015);
- Hold a Christmas Bird Count or Butterfly Count for kids (Kids CBC in 2014 and 2015);
- Recruiting new members from NITC attendees;
- Interaction with community groups and schools (Wood Duck box project, Girl Guides at CBC 2014, Children's Museum 2015);
- Strengthen partnerships with other conservation organizations through donations (donated to TTLT, joined London Environmental Network);
- Provide education of NL members on effective environmental advocacy (five minute presentations at indoor meetings, indoor meeting topic, October 2015);
- Report on ESA advocacy accomplishments (included in Conservation Report);
- Present rewards as appropriate (established Enviro-Hero Award);

- Ongoing and long-term website upgrades and maintenance;
- Have educational signage of natural features at Cedarcroft;
- Eradicate invasive species at Cedarcroft (spring work parties).

Roslyn Moorhead

Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) Report 2014-2015

The idea of a local land trust developed within the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (Nature London) in the late 1990s. In the year 2000, the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) was launched as a separate entity. TTLT is a registered Canadian charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

From these early beginnings to the present, the two organizations have worked together to protect ecologically significant land in the London region. TTLT currently owns 12 conservation properties and holds one conservation easement. The trust employs a small staff consisting of an Executive Director, Conservation Property Manager and a Development/Communications Officer.

Here are a few highlights of Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) activities during the period September 2014 to August 2015.

During the fall of 2014, fund-raising commenced for the Lusty Family Woods, a 22-hectare parcel of forested wetland in western Elgin County. The campaign was successful and a celebration event was held on May 3, 2015. Two weeks later, TTLT conducted a Bioblitz at the property. This was a great opportunity for the public to help find and identify a range of lifeforms including plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles.

The TTLT annual Speaker Event was held in February, timed to follow the Nature in the City series. Scott Gillingwater of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority delivered an inspiring presentation, entitled “Rethinking Reptiles.” At the Annual General Meeting in April, members elected new directors, adopted a new by-law, and enjoyed a presentation on Restoration Ecology, by Mathis Natvik.

“Celebration on the Thames,” a fun event that generated funds for the work of TTLT, was held at the home of Brad and Leslie Skinner on May 28. A highlight of the evening was recognition of Carol and Rick Richardson, for their 2002 donation of Meadowlily Nature Preserve, TTLT’s first property.

Management of TTLT properties is overseen by the Conservation Property Manager. The property management program was strengthened in 2015, through two grants. The first provided for employment of a Stewardship Intern, while the second enabled the hiring of two students for the summer.

Volunteers are essential to the work of TTLT, and assist in many ways. In addition to serving on the board and committees, opportunities abound at TTLT properties, especially at spring and fall work days. People help with maintenance of trails and removal of invasive species including garlic mustard, buckthorn and autumn olive. In December 2014, more than 20 volunteers helped plant 2 hectares of native meadows at Wardsville Woods. In April, a controlled burn was undertaken there, as part of the ongoing restoration program for the property.

The Vistas of the Thames photo contest invited photographers to submit their favourite photos of the Thames River. Winning entries will be selected for inclusion on a poster that will be sold to raise funds for TTLT.

Through the summer of 2015, preparations were underway for the launch of the largest campaign in TTLT's history. The focus of this campaign is Hawk Cliff Woods, a 230-acre parcel of upland and ravine forest along the Lake Erie shoreline, near Port Stanley. Extending inland nearly 1 kilometre, Hawk Cliff Woods is one of the largest remaining deep interior forests in Elgin County.

There are several ways to keep up to date on the activities of TTLT. Members and friends of TTLT receive a newsletter, the *Tattler*. Electronic communications include email updates, the website, facebook, and twitter.

Donations from the broader community are essential the ongoing work of the trust. TTLT thanks Nature London and its members for ongoing support. We look forward to working together on more projects in future.

Dave Wake, TTLT Liaison

The Urban League of London Annual Report 2014-2015

Urban League of London: Annual Report from Nature London's Representative

The Urban League is a non-profit registered charity that serves as an umbrella organization for community and neighbourhood organizations in London. As of June, 2014, it included 26 member organizations including Nature London. The Urban League provides information and support to its member organizations to assist them in implementing their own programs. It also advocates for citizens and local communities in relation to ongoing local issues including those related to the environment.

The Urban League meets at Grosvenor Lodge, 110 Western Road, at 7:00 pm on the last Thursday of September, October, November, and the months of January through May. Its AGM is usually held in June. All are welcome to attend meetings. See <http://urbanleague.ca> for further information about the Urban League's history and objectives.

During 2014-15 the following topics, among others, were considered at meetings of the Urban League: London's draft strategic plan, London's 2015 budget, the City's Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy, its Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, the Thames Valley Corridor Plan, the Back to the River Strategy, the Urban Forest Strategy, and the London Plan, which guides land use planning.

The League appoints representatives to the City's Striking Committee which nominates individuals to serve on a number of important boards and committees dealing with matters related to Nature London's concerns. These include the boards of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, as well as the Advisory Committee on the Environment, the Planning Advisory Committee and the Trees and Forestry Advisory Committee. These committees are advisory to London's Council.

Gail McNeil was Nature London's Membership Coordinator and Nature London's representative to Urban League until June 2014, at which time Carol Agocs became Nature London's representative and ceased her previous role as a Director at Large on the Board of Urban League.

Carol Agocs

Website & Facebook Annual Report 2014-2015

The main innovation this year is that it is now possible to join/renew membership, purchase banquet tickets, purchase the Natural Areas Guide, or make donations to Nature London online. Many thanks to Chuck Summers for setting up Paypal access for NL.

We continue to look for ways to update the NL website; suggestions and comments for the website are welcome. The website and Facebook page are increasingly integrated with the NL email list. As of December 2015, the Nature London Facebook page has 242 "Likes". Some of the highest traffic on the Facebook page has been generated by announcements for Nature in the City.

Our website continues to be hosted from the generosity of Ken and Gail Dimson through their company Cambrian Software. Thank you Ken and Gail for donating the computer resources, for your continued assistance, and for paying the domain fees.

Mady Hymowitz

AWARDS 2014-2015

W. E. Saunders Award of Merit

Gail McNeil

Conservation Award

Swift Care Ontario
David Crockett

Thank-you Award (Suncatcher)

Eric Auzins, Ann Day, Sharon Jorgensen, Rick Martin, Roslyn Moorhead, Pete Read, Bernie VanDenBelt

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2015

President	Muriel Andreae
Past President	Karen Auzins
Vice-President	Vacant
Treasurer	Henry Przysieszny
Recording Secretary	Bob McGee
Cedarcroft Manager	Herb Bax
Conservation Liaison	Jack Blocker
Indoor Meeting Co-ordinator	Carol Agocs
Field Trips Co-ordinator	Cathy McCrae
Director at Large	Norm Corrin
Director at Large	Chuck Summers

APPOINTMENTS 2014/2015

Archivists	Dave Wake, Winifred Wake
A/V technician	Eric Auzins
Awards Banquet Coordinator	Karen Auzins
Birding Wing Program Co-ordinator	Dave Martin
Brochure Producer	Ray Robertson
Butterfly Count Co-ordinator	Ann White
(Acting) Editors, <i>The Cardinal</i>	Betsy Baldwin & Hugh Casbourn
Chimney Swift Liaison	Winifred Wake
Christmas Bird Count	Pete Read
Conservation Action Committee Chair	Sandy Levin
Cookie/Coffee Co-ordinator	Linda & Jim Bristow
E-mail Co-ordinator(s)	Ric & Sandy Symmes
Facebook Co-ordinator	Mady Hymowitz
Friends of the Coves Sub-watershed Rep.	Daphne Lowe
Guide to Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Editors	Jim & Roslyn Moorhead
Heritage Co-ordinator	Jim Cushing
Manual Secretary	Cathy Quinlan
Membership Secretary	Gail McNeil
Membership Database Support	Hugh Casbourn
Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee	Pete Read
Middlesex Stewardship Council	Cathy Quinlan
(Bird) Migration Secretary	Pete Read
Nature in the City Co-ordinator	Pat Tripp
Nature Line Co-ordinators	Bob McGee, Gail McNeil, & Rick Martin
Ontario Nature Representative	Anita Caveney
Publicity Administrator	Paul Nicholson
Sales Co-ordinator	Ann Henderson
Saunders Library Liaison	Pat Tripp
Thames Talbot Land Trust	David Wake
Urban League of London	Carol Agocs
Web Host	Ken Dimson
Webmaster	Mady Hymowitz

**This annual report has been compiled by
Karen Auzins, Past President 2014-2015**