

# St Marys River Area of Concern

# NEWSLETTER

## Tributary Enhancement Project

### WHAT IS AN AREA OF CONCERN? (AOC)

Areas of Concern (AOCs) are locations that were identified under the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement as having experienced high levels of environmental harm.

### WHAT IS NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION?

Non-point source pollution is the accumulation of contaminants from across a landscape as opposed to a single, identifiable source. Examples of non-point sources of pollution include driveways, lawns, farms, etc.

### WHY FOCUS ON THE TRIBUTARIES?

Tributaries are an important source of water for the St Marys River and ultimately any impairment of water quality within these tributaries will have a negative impact on the river as well. There is a significant need to restore the natural environment surrounding these tributaries.

### What is the Tributary Enhancement Project?

The Tributary Enhancement Project began in the summer of 2022 with the focus on improving water quality and overall health of the St Marys River by improving the water quality and habitat of 5 flood control channels that flow into the river.

Initiatives such as stream cleanups, invasive species removal, rain garden construction, artificial nesting box construction and near-shore riparian planting aim to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat.



### How does this project relate to the RAP?

The St Marys River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) is a three-phase plan that aims to protect and restore the AOC. Canada and the United States work together with conservation authorities, municipalities, Aboriginal communities, environmental groups, industry, special interest groups, and others to develop and implement the plans. Within these partnerships the St. Marys River RAP aims to address the Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) in the watershed including actions such as FF-2 and FF-3 which can be found in the Stage 2 report<sup>1</sup>. Action FF-2 and FF-3 are recommended remedial actions to improve water quality and habitat in tributaries leading to the St. Marys River. Specifically, Bennett, West Davignon, East Davignon and Fort Creek flood control channels. The Tributary Enhancement Project compliments the RAP's remedial actions and monitoring initiatives, while focusing on areas outside of the AOC boundary.



1. The Stage 2 document outlines a strategy to remediate the impaired beneficial uses and defines a set of criteria to measure progress toward delisting the AOC. It contains, in addition to a large number of restoration and monitoring actions already underway, descriptions of approximately sixty recommended actions to restore the beneficial uses.



# What we have done so far!

## Stream cleanups

Large amounts of garbage, some hazardous, can become breeding grounds for rodents and insects, cause pollution, and create unsanitary conditions that encourage the development of health problems and diseases.

4 stream cleanups were completed, and 280 kg/617 lbs. of litter/debris was removed from the flood control channels.

## Invasive species removal

Invasive plants impact species diversity and species richness by competing heavily for resources such as light, moisture, and soil nutrients that native plants require to establish and grow. Ultimately, invasive species removal activities can help strengthen the intricate linkages that make ecosystems strong and resistant.

A total of 8 invasive species were targeted and managed.

## Rain garden construction

Rain Gardens are shallow, sunken gardens that are designed to collect, capture, soak up, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff. They are filled with native plants tolerant to periods of both inundation and drought.

Approximately 25 m<sup>2</sup> of rain garden was constructed along the Central Creek flood control channel. To date, the garden is home to 10 different native plant species.

## Bird box construction

Artificial Nesting Structures are man-made structures that can increase the number of nesting sites available for cavity-nesting birds. Nesting structures will provide necessary protection for cavity-nesting birds that utilize these corridors and ultimately, may help to reverse the trend of declining cavity-nesting bird species.

Volunteers gathered at an event hosted at Sault College where bird boxes were constructed. A total of 20 boxes will be placed along the tributaries in Spring 2023.



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TRIBUTARY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT?

Visit [http://bpac.algomau.ca/?page\\_id=4039](http://bpac.algomau.ca/?page_id=4039) to learn more about this project and get involved.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER FOR THE TRIBUTARY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT?

If so, please email John Rankin at [john.rankin@algomau.ca](mailto:john.rankin@algomau.ca) for more information.



**St. Marys River**  
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