

Rehabilitation of Rodney Lagoon



The upcoming rehabilitation of the Rodney Lagoon provides the opportunity to complete the necessary work while also allowing us to maintain and enhance the ecological bio-diversity that the lagoon supports. As noted in the recent article in the Chronicle on March 18th, “Southwestern Ontario is one of the most important regions for protecting endangered species in Canada”. The recent Covid situation has heightened the awareness among all of us for the need to protect the natural world and lessen our negative impact whenever possible. The Rodney lagoon is a haven for a wide variety of wildlife. The size of the property, along with its distance from roadsides, provides a much needed home for our local plants, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds.



The lagoon supports a healthy population of Midland Painted Turtles and Snapping Turtles, which are both listed as species of Special Concern. The distance from the road allows the turtles to reproduce without the risks of crossing busy roads that are one of the main causes of mortality. It also supports a healthy population of all seven our local frog and toad species (Wood Frog, Spring Peeper, Chorus Frog, Green Frog, Leopard Frog, Gray Tree Frog and American Toad).



A total of 188 species of birds have been reported at the Rodney lagoon over the years. It has long been recognized by local naturalists as an important migration stop over point and nesting area. In the spring and fall the lagoon supports a wide variety of duck and shorebird species, in the summer it provides nesting habitat for some locally rare species typically associated with marsh environments– Least Bittern (Special Concern), Pied-billed Grebe, Sora, Virginia Rail, Marsh Wrens, along with more than 50 other species. During the summer the lagoon provides a feeding area for our local aerial insectivorous species – three species listed as threatened Chimney Swift, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, along with Tree Swallow, Cliff Swallow, and Purple Martins.



Over the past number of years there has been increased media coverage over concerns raised over the plight of our insect communities, specifically pollinators. The native plant community at the lagoon supports a wide variety of insects and butterflies and the lagoon provides important feeding and breeding habitat for dragonflies and damselflies.



Topics to be considered during the planning and execution stage of the project.

Eradication of Phragmites.

Adding Basking logs along shore line.

Installation of nest boxes for aerial insectivorous birds.

Investigation into the timing of the completion of the work to minimize ecological impact.

Investigate optimal gradient of the lagoon banks and varying water depths.

Planting of native and encouraging growth of native plant species, including grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and cattails.

Similar Projects

There are a number of similar initiatives that have been completed in the area over the past few years. Each project is unique due to the details of the location and the scope of the project. These include Eagle Ponds, Port Stanley lagoons, Strathroy lagoons and Port Rowan lagoons.

Conclusion

The West Elgin Nature Club is willing to commit to working in conjunction with the municipality to discuss how these items and other items could be successfully implemented during the rehabilitation with little or no extra cost to the project. There are a number of funding sources that the West Elgin Nature Club could tap into to support these initiatives.

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” Dr. Jane Goodall.