

Risky business: Farming in climate change

Our climate is changing. How could this affect the long-term productivity of your farm?

By the end of the century, we're likely to see average annual temperatures increase, have more extreme heat days and see more frequent extreme rainfall and droughts. On your farm, this means unpredictable planting and harvest dates, heat and moisture stressed crops, and pest infestations.



Many farm businesses are beginning to assess their farms' vulnerability. They're taking steps to prepare their farms for a changing climate.

Improving the health of your soil is one of the best risk mitigation actions you can take.

You can start building healthy soils that drain quickly during

flooding and hold moisture longer during droughts. Consider:

- reducing tillage
- using organic fertilizers such as manure or compost
- cover cropping
- rotating crops

These steps help improve the likelihood of timely planting and harvest operations. They stabilize

yields from one growing season to the next.

If you still see wind or water erosion, consider planting windbreaks or creating a soil erosion control structure such as a berm or grassed waterway.

Left unaddressed, erosion rates will grow over time, affecting your farm's long-term profitability.



Did you know?

CVC can help you design a living snow fence for your property to block heavy winds and help manage blowing and drifting snow. Keeping snow off roads improves safety, lessens the need for road salt and creates habitat for wildlife.

Photo credit: Nathan Munn, Grand River Conservation Authority

connect with us

We'd love to hear from you.

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At Credit Valley Conservation we create **connections** between people and nature, knowledge and action. We **lead** the protection, restoration and enhancement of our local natural environment, and we **inspire** a deep appreciation for the role of nature in keeping us connected, healthy and happy.



Connect with the land you love



Less than one per cent of forests in southern Ontario have trees older than 120 years. That's because most forests were cut down as land was cleared for agriculture and timber during European settlement. In the early 1900s, reforestation efforts began. Those trees are today's mature forests.



We classify mature forests by many factors, not just by the size of the trees. Trees in open areas with lots of room, sunlight and water grow quickly compared with

trees growing in more challenging conditions.

How might you recognize mature forests?

- Look for large and small trees of the same species growing together. This means old trees have started to replace themselves.
- Notice the ground. Older trees with large roots tend to topple over, creating pits where their roots used to be. A mound of earth forms where the roots have decomposed over time.

- Check for diverse tree species.

The Burt farm near Hillsburgh has been in the family for generations. Nancy and Mark Latam are this

generation's owners and the property's careful stewards. Their forest has trees up to 125 years old.

“We love our forest and the beauty of different tree species,” said Mark.

In winter, they enjoy taking pictures of different animal tracks in the snow. They relish the calls of owls, hawks and woodpeckers on trail walks with their dogs.

It's never too late to start growing a forest for the future. Plant trees and nurture vibrant, healthy forests.



Act now on climate change

Protect nature for the future

Ecosystems like forests and wetlands are nature's life-support systems. They clean our air and water, create fertile soil, cool temperatures and help control flooding.

Have you ever walked into a forest on a scorching summer day? Do you remember the immediate effect of feeling cooler? Forests are nature's air conditioners. They block hot sunrays and reflect sunlight back to space. They help keep the Earth cool.

If forests are the air conditioners, then wetlands are nature's sponges. They absorb water and most importantly, slowly release it during low flow and drought conditions. Slowly releasing water helps clean it.

More wetlands mean more sponges, less flooding and cleaner water.

Protecting our forests and natural areas is critical as our climate changes. We need healthy ecosystems to help us adapt to a changing climate.

As a landowner, you have the most direct impact on local natural spaces by the way you manage your land. And CVC will help.

We can connect you with knowledge about natural solutions that you can put into action on your own property. This will make your property more adaptable to changing weather and more resilient to climate change.

We'll work beside you to protect, enhance and manage your forests, wetlands, grasslands and streams.

Future Climate Trends

By the end of this century, we can expect five times as many extreme heat days (above 30 degrees Celsius) in the Credit River watershed than today.

Warmer air means more rain in spring and winter, and more dry spells between heavy rainfalls.

We're likely to see more floods and may experience more ice storms than ever before.



from the expert



Genetic tree diversity

By Roy Mosher,
Senior Coordinator,
Naturalization

Many people understand biodiversity - the variety of plant and animal species on Earth. Differences within species, however, are also important. Dogs, for instance, are a good example of how individuals within a species can have different genetic traits.

Differences are not always obvious. For example in tree species, it's hard to see genetic differences between all elms in Ontario.

Genetic variety (diversity) helps species survive when disease strikes.



Photo credit: Dan Mullen, Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Dutch elm disease, for example, is threatening elm trees in Ontario. Conservation programs look for healthy elm trees that show resistance to the disease. This is helping ecologists understand genetic differences within the elm species. This knowledge, connected with shared action, could potentially save the whole species.

You're an important key to identifying and protecting disease-tolerant trees and their genes.

Visit the Forest Gene Conservation Association at fgca.net to discover how you can help.

GRANTS AVAILABLE

Caring for Your Land and Water Workshop

Saturday Feb. 24
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Acton Town Hall Centre, Acton

Wednesday May 2
6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Terra Cotta Conservation Area,
Halton Hills

Create a plan for your property

Learn how to care for nature and protect your investment with environmental improvements.

- Attract wildlife
- Care for septic and wells
- Restore a wetland
- Grow a forest

Register: cvc.ca/events

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