



Credit: David Zimmerly: A view of the 1998 ice storm on Lakewood Drive near Perth.

News Release:

**Perth and District Canadian Federation of University Women /
CFUW and Friends of the Tay Watershed Association
upcoming public forum:
Local Perspectives on Climate Change: A Call to Action!**

Time: Monday April 15, 2013. 7:30 sharp-9:30pm

Place: Perth-upon-Tay Canadian Legion, 26 Beckwith Street.

Floods, droughts, ice storms and damaging winds--these extreme weather events may well continue to affect us all as our climate patterns change. To learn about the environmental, economic and personal impacts we can expect in our area, and what we can do about them, plan to attend this forum which is open to all. A panel discussion will feature both politicians and environmental authorities including Mayor John Fenik of Perth, Lanark County Warden Bill Dobson, Bruce Reid, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's Director of Watershed Science and Engineering, Mississippi Valley Conservation General Manager Paul Lehman and Environmental Consultant Jackie Oblak. The forum will be moderated by Lynn Preston of the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds.

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The public is invited and encouraged to enjoy the discussion, ask questions, share ideas and begin a dialogue about what we can do locally to build resilience into our environment and economy in the face of climate change.

Why This Forum Now?



Mississippi Valley Conservation: Indian River at the Mill of Kintail, August 2012.

Changing climate trends are already touching many areas of our lives, from the local economy and tourism to people's health. A warning of possible spring flooding came as recently as March 7th from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, stating that near-record snowpack could melt quickly, depending on weather conditions, resulting in flooding of vulnerable areas. Meanwhile last July was the driest since 1931, part of a serious drought throughout Lanark County, accompanied by extreme heat warnings. Wetlands are still in recovery mode. And who can forget the ice storm of 1998? Our small towns and largely rural

communities must develop plans and strategies to attempt to slow down accelerating rates of climate change related to global warming and to adapt to new climate trends.

It is certainly not too soon or too late to begin such planning, and in Ontario there is already an example for us to consider. The Lake Simcoe watershed area has an official climate change action plan in place following extensive consultations with the public, municipalities, scientists, economic development, environmental and academic groups and more. This plan which began as a study by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will be discussed at the forum as a possible model which could be customized for this area, its boundaries to be determined.

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Questions, Questions, and Maybe Some Answers

Discussion topics will focus on our state of readiness to cope with climate-related challenges. How will dry riverbeds and lower lake levels threaten some species or our water supply? Will the beauty of our natural environment be affected by the changing landscape? What about the consequences for tourism, property values, agriculture, food security and more? Just think of the dollars required to rebuild damaged infrastructure after severe storms or of the losses that farmers suffer when crops fail.

This meeting will also provide opportunity for those affected already to share their challenges and concerns, and for everyone to consider do-able follow-up actions, including building a local climate action network of our own.

Where is leadership coming from?

In the absence of adequate planning from higher levels, demand must come from below. That's us, everyone! On April 15, panelists will discuss what they think will be needed to guide us through the coming changes, and the Lake Simcoe plan. Appropriate actions that individuals can take will be suggested and the need for extensive on-going collaboration amongst all sectors will be emphasized. Public input is vitally important for a made-in-Lanark strategy. Come to the forum on April 15th to discover what we can do here and now. The event is free and refreshments served before the meeting starts. . See you then!

For more information, contact:

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