

The Chatham-Kent & Lambton Children's Water Festival (CKLCWF) Oct 3 – 5, 2023



Helping Our Kids Learn About Water ...Through Community Partnerships.

- This annual water festival has delivered our water education program (with core messages around water) to a succession of Grade 4 / 5 students over the last ten years in hopes that a new generation of positive thoughts and actions around water and associated issues may develop.
- We believe there is a strong need for a variety of outdoors, hands on educational experiences around a number of environmental themes in our local area. Themes dealing with water and water issues are particularly relevant in this area of the province where a variety of rural and urban issues around use of water, water contamination and aquatic habitat issues are currently very topical.
- We are bordered by the Great Lakes and interconnecting waters with a wide variety of basic water “lessons” to be learned.
- We are not aware of any other program that provides the type of hands on experiential learning that we are able to provide to our local students. Teachers have told us this on many an occasions. We have heard many anecdotal stories of where students have “changed course”, have been inspired and made career decisions from exposure to our annual festival.

OVERVIEW / BACKGROUND OF THE Chatham-Kent & Lambton Children's WATER FESTIVAL

- The Chatham-Kent & Lambton Children's Water Festival (CKLCWF) has been delivering a variety of water themed topics to elementary school children in the Chatham-Kent and Lambton County areas since 2007. Website link: www.cklwaterfestival.com
- During this time period over 18,000 elementary school children at the Grade 4 and 5 level, 3300 high school students, 2400 teachers / parents and up to 500 adult volunteers have participated in this annual 3 day event. Over 200volunteers / day assist in delivering the festival material.
- We are celebrating our 12 th Annual Festival this coming year (Oct. 3 to 5, 2023).
- The festival delivers hands on interactive activities covering 5 water themes: Water Science, Water Technology, Water Conservation, Water Protection and Water Attitude. 45 hands on activities are offered each year on a 6 acre day use area at the CM Wilson Conservation Area just south of Chatham. A two acre

pond adjacent to the site provides an aquatic setting to add to the outdoor experience. Teachers and volunteers have described the event as a giant outdoor classroom. The CKLCWF provides important water messages through a balance of both rural and urban activities and scenarios relevant to the southwestern Ontario landscape. Some of the activities include First Nations Traditional Ecological Knowledge and highlight our partnerships with local First Nations communities in our watershed to enhance stewardship and species at risk efforts. The water festival also includes messaging around climate change, and specifically shares with and teaches youth about the local impacts climate change has on our communities e.g. lakeshore flooding and erosion, algae blooms in the lakes and rivers and methods to reduce phosphorus run off.

- Elementary school children come from both urban and rural backgrounds and the communities served include those touching on Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River and Lower Lake Huron. The majority of schools are located in the Lower Thames River watershed (Chatham-Kent) and the Sydenham River watershed (northern Chatham-Kent and southern Lambton County), as well as schools located along the St Clair River from Port Lambton to Sarnia and local First Nations communities.
- Four school boards are involved in the festival (Lambton Kent District School Board, St. Clair Catholic District School Board, the French School Board and the Chatham Christian School Board). The CLKCWF provides important leadership and training skills for over 300 high school students each year.
- A variety of groups are involved each year in assisting in the festival including municipal and provincial agency staff, ground and surface water experts, Lower Thames Valley and St. Clair Region Conservation Authority staff, service clubs , and a variety of agricultural related groups (4-H, OMAFRA, OFA) and outdoor educators. A large number of retired school teachers assist each year.
- **Partners and Contributions**
 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Staff - committee, administration, implementation,
 St. Clair Region Conservation Authority - committee, implementation
 Lambton Kent District School Board - committee, registration, funding,implementation
 St. Clair Catholic District School Board - committee, funding, implementation
 Chatham Sunrise Rotary - committee, implementation, volunteers,funding
 Chatham Kent Kiwanis Club - implementation, volunteers, funding
 Captain Garnet Bracken IODE - implementation, volunteers, funding
- St. Clair College - Police Foundations and Border Security - volunteer security for the festival
- Maple City Citizens on Patrol - volunteer security for the festival.
- Municipality of Chatham Kent - Public Utilities Commission, Environmental Services, Chatham Public Library, Chatham Public Health - funding, implementation, volunteers
- Chatham 4H - implementation, volunteers, tent

- Toronto Zoo (Great Lakes Program)
 - Ontario Parks, Rondeau
 - East Kent Vintage Farm Equipment Group – volunteers, tent
 - MM Dillon Consulting - volunteers, implementation, funding
 - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food - volunteers
 - Retired Teachers and Retired Teachers of Ontario -committee, volunteer recruitment, volunteers
 - Dover Rod and Gun Club, Kent Cloverleaf Conservation Club
 - Ontario Nativescape – Cargo Trailer
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- ***Anticipated Outcomes – Quantitative**
 - 2000 elementary students will receive hands on learning around water topics in an outdoor environmental setting.
 - 300 high school students will experience leadership opportunities through instruction of 45 activities to 2000 elementary students as well as providing valuable life-experiences in teaching and managing groups of young students that may influence future career choices. This will also raise awareness of water related problems and challenges to a growing community.
 - 400 teachers and parent volunteers leading and assisting in the educational experience will learn about a variety of basic water related concepts and local water issues. They will also be able to meet and network with other project partners (environmental organizations, community groups)
 - 150 adult volunteers leading activities and involved in other festival volunteer positions will learn about water issues and are provided opportunities to meet and connect with other water festival partners.
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- All activities are linked to the Ontario School Curriculum in ways that help students achieve the desired expectations in Science and Technology, Social Studies, Environment, Mathematics and Physical Education.
 - One of the goals of attending the festival is for students to learn and become catalysts for change by taking the knowledge and newfound respect for water back to their homes, schools and communities. The wide diversity of community groups (both rural and urban) that come together during this 3 day event provides a great networking opportunity and a chance to develop new partnerships. Teachers, parent leaders and students always come away from this event with new ideas and positive perceptions around environmental initiatives and it is our hope that this leads to future citizens with more awareness of environmental issues.