

## **Lanark County takes step to protect turtles along county roads**

Lanark County Public Works staff are playing a part in reducing turtle mortality on county roads, and the public is invited to help!

“Road mortality and habitat loss are two major factors in the reduction of turtle species in Ontario,” explained Hillary Fleming, Lanark County’s Climate/Environment Intern. “At this time of year, as nesting is taking place, we see more turtles along our roadways, which increases the demand for us to help in saving them in order to decrease the loss.”

This year, Lanark County Public Works has added new practices to assist in saving injured, non-injured and nesting turtles on county roads. The county has partnered with Tammy MacKenzie from Observing Understanding Rescuing (OUR) Turtles to create policies, install nest protectors, transport injured turtles and report turtle movement by public works employees.

“The policies have had great uptake thus far, with various reports from our staff in one week and various nests already saved by having an OUR Turtles volunteer installing nest protectors,” Fleming said.

The public can also get involved. If an injured turtle is in public possession on the road, please call the Ontario Conservation Centre (OTCC) at 704-741-5000 or visit <https://ontarioturtle.ca/ourmission/drop-off/> for information and instructions. This centre oversees sending volunteers to the location of the injured turtle for transportation to proper care at the OTCC centre. Motorists should only pull over to the shoulder of the road and enter the traveled portion of the roadway if it is safe to do so.

The OTCC website includes instructions on how to safely help move uninjured turtles across the road and what to do if the turtle is injured. If the turtle is injured and needs to be removed, it is important to note the location (road, major intersection and mileage) to ensure it can be released in the same place, according to provincial regulations.

For information about nesting turtles see Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) websites or OUR Turtles. Be sure to make note of the location of the nest without disturbing the turtle and contact OUR Turtles at [4ourturtles@gmail.com](mailto:4ourturtles@gmail.com) so that volunteers can install nest protection according to provincial regulations.

“The public may see nest protectors installed along county roads,” added Director of Public Works Director Terry McCann. “These installations meet certain specifications and should not create a hazard to the public or affect road maintenance or construction. The installation takes place in collaboration with OUR Turtles volunteers. They should not be installed without proper approval of specifications and training.”

“Climate and environment are a priority for Lanark County Council this term and protecting and enhancing the natural environment is a core strategy in our strategic plan,” said Warden Brian Campbell (Tay Valley Township Reeve). “This new policy and partnership with OUR Turtles is an excellent step toward making a difference in protecting turtles in Lanark County.”

Watch Lanark County’s Facebook and Twitter feeds for more details about how the program has been progressing!

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