

CVC holding information sessions on bird-friendly certified hay

Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) invites hay growers, hay purchasers and rural landowners with land available for growing bird-friendly certified hay (BFCH) to attend one of four information sessions planned in the coming week.

The first will be this coming Monday (Feb. 29) at Caledon Village Place. The others will be Tuesday at the Orangeville Fair Grounds, Wednesday at Terra Cotta Conservation Area and next Thursday at Erin Centre 2000 in Erin. All four sessions will run from 7 until 8 p.m.

The BFCH website (www.birdfriendlyhay.ca) is an online marketplace that allows easy connections between farmers and rural landowners interested in growing and purchasing hay or renting their land to grow BFCH.

"This is an opportunity to make hay while the sun shines," said CVC's Deputy CAO and Director of Watershed Transformation Mike Puddister. "This is a market-based solution that is a win-win for farmers, hay buyers and grassland birds."

With the BFCH program, farmers can add value to their farm business, rural landowners with land to rent can lower their property taxes and horse and livestock owners can use this niche product while helping threatened grassland birds.

"Giving grassland birds time to fledge their young is critical," said CVC Agricultural Specialist Mark Eastman. "For the past two years, 184 eastern meadowlark and bobolink have been spotted in bird-friendly registered hay fields. This program is making a difference in the recovery of grassland birds."

When farmers grow BFCH, threatened grassland birds, such as bobolink and eastern meadowlark, are able to breed and nest in the hay field before it is cut. Hay growers agree to delay cutting until July 15 when the birds leave the nest.

Visit www.creditvalleyca.ca/events for additional details on the BFCH information sessions. For more information on the BFCH program and to register, visit www.birdfriendlyhay.ca or contact Eastman at 1-800-668-5557 ext. 430 or meastman@creditvalleyca.ca