

WE DO MORE THAN JUST PLANT TREES...





We Grow Healthy, Resilient Forests and Grasslands

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A Message from the Chair & CEO

At Forests Ontario, we like to say that we do more than just plant trees: we grow healthy, resilient forests.

That may sound simple, but the fact is that we have worked for decades to put ourselves in the unique position as one of the foremost restoration experts in Canada.

With roots going back to 1949, Forests Ontario has built strong relationships with a comprehensive network of experienced partners who understand the transformative power of healthy forests. These partners – from seed collectors and nurseries to technical advisors and forestry specialists – have the expertise to manage every aspect of tree planting, from seed to healthy, thriving forests. We look forward to celebrating 75 years of operation in 2024.

The expertise of our partners and staff is not just theoretical. Over the past 20 years, Forests Ontario has supported the planting of over 43 million trees across Ontario and throughout Canada – including planting 2.5 million trees this year alone.

It is this kind of consistent effort year-in and year-out that has led to Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada becoming a go-to choice for all levels of government as well as many private enterprises and individual landowners looking to invest in healthy forests that can sustain biodiversity, healthy people, and a healthy economy. From our

municipal Take Root program partners at The City of Guelph, to provincial support of our 50 Million Tree Program from the Province of Ontario, to federal support from the Government of Canada's 2 Billion Trees program, we are proud to be an important part of restoration projects across Canada.

Our demonstrated ability to improve climate resiliency and biodiversity in our natural environments is also why Forests Ontario was named an official Restoration Implementer of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. As an official Restoration Implementer, we have the knowledge and ability to help communities and corporate partners achieve their United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Our children and generations to come deserve a world and a future that is equitable and healthy and vibrant. At Forests Ontario, we believe that collaboration and partnership are the means to that end. As we head further into 2024, we will continue developing our new 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

It is an exciting time, and we are thankful to be able to rely on our individual donors and corporate sponsors, trusted nurseries and seed collectors, expert planting professionals, Indigenous community partners, local groups, government partners and conservation authorities to help us build a better, greener and healthier future for all.

All the best to you and yours in the coming year,



Malcolm Cockwell
Chair, Forests Ontario




Jess Kaknevicius
CEO, Forests Ontario



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United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in global partnership.

Forests Ontario's various afforestation, conservation, restoration, education, and community engagement programs contribute toward a variety of these important goals.

As you read this Annual Report, you'll see icons representing many of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. To learn more about each goal, please visit: sdgs.un.org/goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND



We Grow Healthy, Resilient Forests and Grasslands

Forests Ontario is committed to restoring our forested landscapes to sustain biodiversity, healthy people and a healthy economy. We offer innovative and adaptive opportunities for individuals, businesses, and government to invest in the restoration of Canada's forests and grasslands.

Healthy, connected and diverse forests provide critical benefits to society. In 2023, Forests Ontario and its partners supported the planting of approximately 2.5 million trees on more than 700 project sites for over 500 landowners as part of our 50 Million Tree Program. Over the past 20 years, Forests Ontario has supported the planting of more than **43 million trees on over 8,000 project sites across Canada – creating approximately 51,000 acres of new and restored forests and**

grassland habitats, equivalent to more than 38,000 football fields!

Planting millions of trees each year isn't an easy task. To scale up for an ambitious project like this, our seed collectors need to collect more source-identified, native seeds; our trusted nurseries need to plant and grow more seedlings and know they will be sold; and our planting partners across Canada need to be properly equipped and staffed and get those trees in the ground.

As we prepare to plant tens of millions of trees over the coming years, we know that we can't do it alone and we are grateful for every one of our members, donors, and corporate partners who support us on this journey.

Forests Ontario is proud to partner with the Government of Canada's 2 Billion Trees (2BT) program, which covers up to 50 per cent of project costs. The other 50 per cent of the costs needed to properly plant millions of trees will come from our corporate partners, donors, members, and all levels of government who are committed to improving climate resilience and biodiversity in our urban and rural natural environments.



United Nations
Sustainable Development
Goal #13: Climate Action

Take urgent action to combat
climate change and its impacts.

Did you know Forests Ontario is home to Grasslands Ontario?

Grasslands Ontario, a division of Forests Ontario, supports the creation, enhancement, and maintenance of grassland habitat across Ontario, helping to protect and recover populations of species at risk like Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark, with the added benefits of improved soil quality and carbon capture. This past planting season, Grasslands Ontario worked with 21 landowners to create and restore grasslands covering 320 acres.

Learn more at grasslandsonario.ca.



*United Nations Sustainable Development
Goal #15: Life on Land*

*Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of
terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests,
combat desertification, and halt and reverse land
degradation and halt biodiversity loss.*

Forests Ontario's promise of planting the right tree in the right place for the right reason starts with our group of seed collectors who do an extraordinary job forecasting, sourcing and collecting the seed we need to sustain our successful restoration programs.

Our provincial seed and cone collectors acquired approximately 14 million viable seeds this year, **bringing the total number of seeds in our seed bank to 205 million seeds.** We are future-proofing restoration efforts and looking for ways to support adaptive practices to ensure we are growing climate resilient forests – and that starts with a seed.

It all starts with a seed.

While the seeds of some species of trees and shrubs may be more difficult to acquire due to the natural cycle of seed crops, seed quality, environmental factors or wildlife pressures, we work with our network of trusted partners across the country to ensure alternatives are available.

Forests Ontario will continue to work with our partners, such as the Forest Gene Conservation Association, and cultivate relationships with new partners across Canada to ensure our partner nurseries have the seed they need to provide inventory for projects coast-to-coast.



Tree Seed Diversity Program

In 2023, Forests Ontario supplied its second shipment of source-identified and appropriate hardwoods, conifers and shrubs that were planted by the City of Toronto as part of our 10-year partnership with the city's Tree Seed Diversity Program. We are proud to partner with the City of Toronto to enhance the genetic diversity and resiliency of the city's forests, parks, ravines, river valleys, meadows and wetlands. Another allotment of stock was planted this fall by the City of Toronto's field crews and volunteers in restoration programs.



While the focus of this important collaboration is to secure and provide a reliable and consistent supply of source-identified, adaptive native plant material for the city's Urban Forestry division, the program also includes native seed forecasting, seed collection, tracking, monitoring, and coordination to grow the stock.



In fact, Forests Ontario has so far banked close to two million viable seeds for Toronto's Tree Seed Diversity Program, sourcing them from a variety of appropriate areas (ecodistricts) that will benefit the landscape of Canada's largest city for years to come.



*United Nations Sustainable
Development Goal #11:
Sustainable Cities
and Communities*

*Make cities and human
settlements inclusive, safe,
resilient and sustainable.*

Building capacity and engaging with our partners

Forests Ontario works hard to build strong relationships with partners who understand the transformative power of forests – to combat climate change, to clean our air and water, to support biodiversity, and to provide economic and recreational opportunities in our communities.

October 2022 | Since 2015, Forests Ontario has been supporting the delivery of the Community Forest Managers (CFM) and Tree Bylaw Officers (TBO) network. The network gives specialists in the field access to the most up-to-date news, information and resources on community forest management and tree bylaw topics, as well as connect members with others in their field and provide support through a centralized contact.

With help from a steering committee, Forests Ontario hosted the CFM-TBO Annual General Meeting in Cobourg, Ontario on October 12-13, 2022. This event was attended by 41 people and provided the network with an opportunity to connect with invited experts that shared various current topics of interest in forestry. During this event, field tours of the Alderville Black Oak Savanna and the Woodland Trail in Northumberland County Forest were well-attended and encouraged good discussions.

February 2023 | Forests Ontario's 2023 Annual Conference provided an opportunity for our community to come together to learn, network, and grow connections across the restoration and education sectors. With over 250 attendees, and over 35 expert panelists and guest speakers from a variety of professional backgrounds and all levels of government, the event offered countless opportunities to share, network and learn from each other to achieve greater outcomes on the landscape.

June 2023 | Forests Ontario's Restoration team held its annual Post-Plant Meeting to support capacity building with the organization's Planting Delivery Agents (PDAs). This important event ensures that we are delivering high-quality programs that service the needs and desires of landowners, while achieving our goals of long-term forest health. This meeting also provided a platform for knowledge exchange, trained those who are new to the restoration sector, continued to build a network of connected planting partners, and enhanced overall program delivery.

September 2023 | The Restoration team hosted a Site Plan Development course at the Koffler Scientific Reserve, University of Toronto. This course provided much-needed training for our planting network on stock requirements, soil sampling and identification, stock and species selection, stock handling, site preparation, and cover crops and alternatives. This critical capacity building opportunity supported our efforts to build a network of trained professionals that are delivering high-quality restoration projects.



*Did you know that Forests Ontario's 2023 Annual Conference generated
more than 50,000 impressions on social media?*

We Connect Communities

Take Root

Investing in greener communities is an investment in our own health. Whether it be the cooling shade provided by a favourite leafy backyard tree or the sound of birds and wildlife echoing through our local parks and forests, our experiences in nature are constant reminders of the vital role that healthy trees play in our daily lives.

Many municipalities recognize the need to increase urban biodiversity and forest cover. Although there are often limited planting opportunities on municipal lands, Forests Ontario's Take Root program provides the opportunity to engage and encourage homeowners to plant on their own properties, helping to improve urban canopy cover in their community.

Launched in 2023, Take Root works with community organizations and municipal governments to provide residents with **access to low-cost or no-cost trees**, and provides training on tree selection, planting and maintenance, making planting trees accessible for more residents.

Learn more at treestakeroot.ca.



Did you know that Forests Ontario's Take Root program, in partnership with the City of Guelph and Trees for Guelph, distributed 1,757 native trees to residents of Guelph in 2023?



United Nations Sustainable
 Development Goal #10:
 Reduced Inequalities

Reduce inequality within
 and among countries.

Reconciliation Community Tree Plant

Forests Ontario continues to look for ways to partner with Indigenous communities in the development and delivery of Reconciliation Community Tree Plant events and Healing Place creation. In collaboration with Plenty Canada, Bruce Trail Conservancy, Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, and the

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Forests Ontario is supporting the creation of a Healing Place near Waterdown that will be a permanent community space designed to reflect and represent practices recognized by both Western science and Indigenous knowledge systems.



We Educate and Inspire Youth

*Building skills and
career awareness to
support long-term
capacity in the forest
and restoration sector.*

Inspiring the next generation to learn and connect with nature may ignite a passion and create a future forest steward. Whether it be through classroom visits, experiential learning opportunities in the forest, or hands-on training, Forests Ontario is growing future forest leaders who will help grow healthier, resilient forests, and help sustainably manage Ontario's most important natural resources for decades to come.

Ontario Envirothon

After a busy spring that saw 48 teams from communities across Ontario competing in virtual and in-person Ontario Envirothon events, York Region's Markville Secondary School was crowned the Ontario Envirothon champion for 2023.

In-person events were hosted in Algoma, Grand River, Grey/Bruce, Southwestern Ontario, Toronto, Thunder Bay, and York Region, with 19 teams advancing to the virtual provincial competition where students prepared and delivered presentations focusing on species at risk, forestry, aquatics, wildlife, and soils while building essential STEM, teamwork, and communications skills to support their career development.

From the 19 teams that advanced to the provincial competition, the three top-ranking teams were:

First place: Markville Secondary School, York Region

Second place: University of Toronto Schools, Toronto Region

Third place: Elliot Lake Secondary School, Algoma Region

Markville Secondary School advanced to the NCF-Envirothon at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick and finished third against competition from throughout Canada and the United States.



Did you know that 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of Ontario Envirothon? Learn more at forestsontario.ca/envirothon30

Bridging the Gap

Industries across Canada are seeing a large portion of their workforce retire without the ability to replace them, and the forestry sector is no exception.

To address this issue, Forests Ontario and the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA), with support from an advisory committee, collaborated on Bridging the Gap Between Ontario's Youth & the Provincial Forest Sector, an Employment Ontario research project funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

The objectives of the Bridging the Gap research project were twofold. First, the project generated a detailed understanding of job vacancies and the associated training and educational requirements needed to fill these openings. Secondly, the project provided critical insight into the perceptions of youth and Indigenous youth, teachers, and parents with respect to forestry and the forestry sector as a potential area of employment.

Learn more at: forestsontario.ca/en/resource/bridging-the-gap.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #8:
Decent Work & Economic Growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Tree Bee

Tree Bee sparks curiosity in nature for students and introduces them to the trees in their backyards and communities through online resources, engaging activities, and friendly competition. Students in grades 4 through 6 collaborate to identify tree species and answer a series of multiple-choice questions related to forests and forest management.

In preparation for a Tree Bee competition, educators are provided with free teaching resources to engage students with nature and foster a meaningful and lasting connection to our forests.

The province's most successful Tree Bee is in York Region, which saw 25 groups register with a total of 497 participants – a new record for the York Region Tree Bee! The top-three ranking teams were:

First place: St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School

Second place: 20th Aurora Guides Troop

Third place: Triple R Tree Bee Club

Forestry in the Classroom

Every year, Forests Ontario connects the next generation of forest stewards with forestry and environmental professionals through our Forestry in the Classroom program.

Forestry in the Classroom matches schools and community groups with forestry and natural resource practitioners to facilitate the delivery of hands-on and engaging lessons on a range of topics including tree identification, forest careers, invasive species and forest management.

This past year, there were 25 Forestry in the Classroom sessions in-person and one virtual – reaching 942 students across Ontario. Since 2012, we have coordinated more than 450 school visits, engaging over 13,000 youth and educators.



*United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #4:
Quality Education*

*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education
and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*



We are Building Organizational Resilience

Staff and Board

Staff

Jessica Kaknevicius	CEO (current)
Rob Keen	CEO (2014-2023)
Elizabeth Celanowicz	Chief Operating Officer
Sylvia Nelson	Office Manager
Scott Cameron	Director of Finance and Administration
Audrey Davies	Bookkeeper
Val Deziel	Director of Restoration Programs
Nick Courtney	Restoration Programs Manager
Peter Moddle	National Program Manager
Amber Brant	Restoration Program Coordinator
Aidan O'Brien	GIS/Database Technician
Dan Beausoleil	Restoration Program Coordinator
Eleanor Reed	Field Advisor
Jim Hendry	Field Advisor
John Enright	Field Advisor
Peter Gagnon	Field Advisor
Viginia deCarle	Extension Forestry Coordinator
Mark McDermid	Seed and Stock Specialist
Martin Streit	Forestry Specialist
Ron Reid	Grasslands Technical Advisor – Consultant
Season Snyder	Grasslands Coordinator – Consultant
Nairn Hay	Seed Capacity Project Coordinator
Kim Sellers	Managing Director of Business Development
Brooke McClelland	Donations & Membership Coordinator
Brittany Haines	Development Coordinator
Emily Hart	Operations & Public Engagement Manager
Meghann Wright	Events Coordinator
Amy Howitt	Program Coordinator
Sandra Iacobelli	Director of Marketing & Communications
Matthew Brown	Communications Manager
Joana Carreira	Marketing & Communications Specialist
Andi Darell Alhakim	Digital Marketing Coordinator
Teri Hoang	Stakeholder Relations Officer
Peter Kuitenbrouwer	Editor, Our Forest Magazine Consultant
Allison Hands	Education Manager
Madeleine Bray	Education Outreach Coordinator
Sarah Wylie	Legacy Financial Accounting
Susan Cummings	Legacy Financial Accounting

2022–23 Board

Malcolm Cockwell	President
Christine Leduc	Vice President
Riet Verheggen	Secretary
Michael Klasner	Treasurer
Gail Beggs	
Kim Gavine	
Robert Hyland	
Peter Johnson	
Sydney Oakes	
David Sisam	
Bonny Skene	

Statement of Operations

Forests Ontario		
Revenue	Sep-23	Percentages
Government funding	\$10,036,441	86%
Individual & corporate contributions	\$636,559	5%
Not-for-profits & charities	\$618,577	5%
Investment & other income	\$417,371	4%
	\$11,708,948	
Expenditures		
Programs	\$8,284,696	73%
Human resources	\$1,807,594	16%
Communications & program development	\$654,556	6%
Office & general	\$332,746	3%
Professional & consulting fees	\$197,302	2%
	\$11,276,894	
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$432,054	

Statement of Financial Position

Forests Ontario		
Assets	Sep-23	Percentages
Total Cash & investments	\$3,893,186	63%
Accounts receivable	\$1,771,807	29%
Inventory & prepaid expenses	\$437,738	7%
Fixed assets	\$53,629	1%
	\$6,156,360	
Liabilities		
Trade payables & program commitments	\$2,167,114	54%
Deferred program revenue	\$1,880,368	46%
	\$4,047,482	

Our Supporters



AGF Rebar Inc.
Alectra
Algonquin Forestry Authority
Amazon
Anew Canada
Attis
Backcountry Hut Company
Ben Hokum and Son Ltd.
Bond Brand Loyalty
Brinkman Reforestation
Busch Systems International Inc.
Canada Life Reinsurance
Canada's Forest Trust
Canadian Institute of Forestry
Castlemore Public School
City of Temiskaming Shores
Conservation Ontario
County of Simcoe
DECKplus Ltd.
Distillery District
Domtar
Dundee Recycling
Evergreen Thrift Store
Everyday Farm Girl

Falcon Lumber
First Resource Management Group
Fleming College
Forest Gene Conservation Association
Forest Products Association of Canada
Four Season Sunrooms
Freymond Lumber Ltd.
GoldFenix Communications
GWG Resources Services
Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd.
Herb Shaw & Sons Ltd.
Interfor
Invasive Species Centre
Invizij Architects Inc.
Kayanase
Keilhauer
Lane Four
Lavern Heideman & Sons Ltd.
Legacy Accounting Services
Liberation Tours
Limberlost Forest
McRae Mills Limited
Ministry of Detail Events
Nawiinginiima Forest Management Corporation

Nelson Arthur Hyland Foundation
Newman Forest Products
Ontario Energy Association
Ontario Woodlot Association
Pineneedle Farms
Porsche Centre Oakville
PRT Inc.
Pur Projet
Raw Materials
Resorts of Ontario
Roseburg Forest Products
Silvacom
Simply Superior Services
Somerville Nurseries Inc.
South Grey News
Sustainable Forest Initiative
T.H. Industrial Solutions Inc.
Thomas J. Neuman Ltd.
Thompson Emergency Freight Systems
Turner Fenton Secondary School
Vector Institute
Wavelength Media
Wildlife Habitat Canada
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

Forests Ontario by the Numbers

17

The number of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, all of which are contributed to by different aspects of forestry

33

The number of dedicated Forests Ontario staff, including Leadership, Restoration, Education, Business Development, and Communications teams, as well as our Field Advisors

320

The number of acres of new and restored grasslands created by Grasslands Ontario this past year

500

The number of landowners Forests Ontario worked with this past season to plant trees

1,757

The number of trees distributed in our pilot Take Root program in collaboration with City of Guelph and Trees for Guelph

13,000

The number of youth and educators that have been engaged by Forests Ontario's Forestry in the Classroom program since 2012

51,000

The number of acres of new and restored forests and grassland habitats Forests Ontario has planted in the past 20 years – equivalent to more than 38,000 football fields

2.5 million

The number of trees that Forests Ontario supported the planting of this year alone

31 million

The number of trees to be planted by 2031 through Forests Ontario's national division, Forest Recovery Canada, as part of the Government of Canada's 2 Billion Trees program

43 million

The total number of trees Forests Ontario has planted in the past 20 years – more than one for every person in Canada

205 million

The total number of viable seeds in Forests Ontario's seed bank – including 14 million seeds collected by our provincial seed and cone collectors this past year



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