

OUR FOREST



forestsontario.ca

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FALL 2022



**Farmers and Partners
Team Up for the Recovery
of Species at Risk**

PAGE 14

**An Algonquin Dream
Come True**

PAGE 16

Your Voice Counts

Inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards

With cooler temperatures and shorter days, the beautiful colours of autumn are on full display all around us. And while we are as busy as ever planning for next year's many planting projects, it is equally important to simply stop and truly appreciate what our Canadian seasons have to offer... even if for just a few moments each day.

This fall also marks the start of a new school year, and that is always an exciting time for Forests Ontario and our education team. Our many education programs and hands-on interactive activities are designed to accommodate students of all ages and offer a multitude of curriculum-focussed topics for educators to inspire and foster the next generation of environmental stewards.

Specially tailored for grades four and up, *Forestry in the Classroom* matches schools and community groups with forestry and natural resource practitioners to learn about tree identification, invasive species, the important fundamentals of forest management, and so much more. More than 13,000 students and educators have taken part in Forests Ontario's *Forestry in the Classroom* educational program, with many more presentations lined up in the coming months.

The arrival of cooler temperatures also signifies an important time for our partners across the sector, and the many industries that rely on sustainable forest management for their livelihood. The Ottawa Valley boasts one of Canada's most vibrant forestry sectors and is home to numerous mills that employ thousands of local residents. This is partly due to the province's past tree planting support for over 75 years. In the Ottawa Valley, the resulting forests provide critical timber – as high as 40 to 45 per cent of the current Red and White Pine wood supply – to area mills. The importance of privately-owned forests as a reliable source for future wood supplies, and the need for continued provincial support to ensure the future of the forestry sector in the Ottawa Valley, cannot be overstated.

We are also gearing up for our 2023 Annual Conference and are thrilled to return to an in-person event on February 16 and 17, with a number of virtual elements also planned. Our theme is *Growing a Healthy Tomorrow – For Communities, For Earth, For Life*. Expert speakers, engaging discussions, and incredible networking opportunities will inspire you as we explore human, ecological and climate impacts on our natural spaces, and the integral role forests play in our everyday lives. Be sure to check out our website and social media channels for more information coming soon.

On a personal note, I am very proud, honoured, and humbled to have been awarded the *Clean50 Lifetime Achievement Award* for 2023. I am grateful to work in a field that I have had the privilege of engaging with so many incredibly passionate and committed individuals who have made such positive contributions to our environment.

In particular, I am especially thankful to our Forests Ontario staff, partners, board of directors, and supporters, who make it all happen day-after-day, year-round.

I would also like to take a moment to thank you, our readers, for your continued and valued support. Your contribution to ensuring healthy forests for our future is greatly appreciated and impacts real change year-over-year, something we should all be proud of.

All the best,



Rob Keen, RPF

CEO of Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada



Rob Keen (left) and Elizabeth Celanowicz (right) of Forests Ontario welcome Mayor of Barrie, Jeff Lehman (centre), to Forests Ontario's headquarters in Barrie, Ontario, on September 21, 2022.

Contents

A Message from our CEO, Rob Keen	2
Prism Sweep (News in Brief)	4
Growing Concern For Forestry's Future	8
Forest Adventure Logs: Vanderwater, Backus Woods, Ajax Woodlot	9
History of Roadside Tree Planting in Ontario	12
Farmers and Partners Team Up for the Recovery of Species at Risk	14
Birch Bark Canoe: An Algonquin Dream Come True	16
Member Spotlight: Jim Farrell	19
What to Cut: Careful Harvest Planning	20
Stumped: Make Art Outdoors Using Leaves and Flowers	22

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On the cover: Image of male Bobolink courtesy of Bird Ecology and Conservation Ontario. Photo: G. A. Morris

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Reconciliation Community Tree Plant

TD Bank renews its support through 2025

BY AMY HOWITT

Thanks to the generous support of TD Bank Group, Forests Ontario is expanding its Reconciliation Community Tree Plant program in partnership and collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and organizations across the province. Rooted in the belief that meaningful engagement and shared experiences are crucial steps forward in the journey towards Truth and Reconciliation, the program will build upon the development of the inaugural Healing Place in Shanly, about 80 km south of Ottawa, and The Healing Place Working Group, to create new Healing Place locations led by the needs and objectives of each local community. This program provides a platform for ongoing discussion and cultural

exchange by connecting people with a common goal of benefiting their communities through culturally significant plantings. As a way of connecting these spaces and bringing together the diversity of partners, the program will also launch an online resource to showcase and interact with the various Healing Places across the province.

The continued program support by TD ensures these important, inclusive, and accessible spaces of reflection and healing among nature pay homage to the historical, medicinal, and traditional uses of tree, shrubs, and other plant species, while highlighting the integral role our natural environment plays in our daily lives.



Chris Craig, Senior Forestry Technician at South Nation Conservation Authority, does some weeding prior to planting at The Healing Place in Shanly, about 80 km south of Ottawa, June 27, 2022. Photo: Forests Ontario

Environmental Performance

Copernicus Educational Products supports tree planting in Ontario

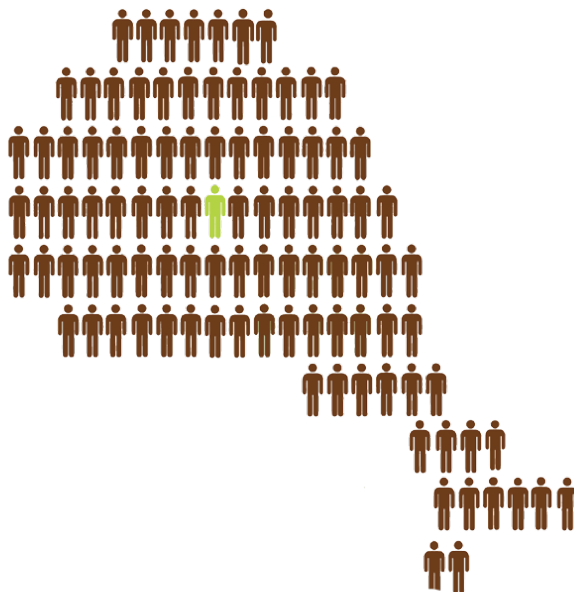
BY AMY HOWITT



Jim Phillips, the owner of Copernicus Educational Products, was brought up on a farm. As a child, he visited Yellowstone National Park. This is how Phillips came to love trees. Since 1992, on both corporate and personal property, he has had more than 70,000 trees planted, many of which were planted through Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program. Copernicus is a Certified B Corporation, a for-profit company that meets rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. The company seeks to reduce and offset negative environmental impacts through land conservation and supporting organizations like Forests Ontario.

Since 2009, Copernicus has also given away over 198,000 tree seedlings to schools through its Trees for Schools program. Forests Ontario thanks Phillips and Copernicus Educational Products for their contributions and dedication to giving back to the environment.

Jim Phillips, owner of Copernicus Educational Products, has had 70,000 trees planted on his own and Copernicus property over the past 30 years.



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Save The Date!

Forests Ontario's 2023 Annual Conference is fast approaching

BY JOANA CARREIRA

Growing A Healthy Tomorrow



FOR COMMUNITIES | FOR EARTH | FOR LIFE

Forests Ontario's 9th Annual Conference will be held from **February 16-17** at the **Nottawasaga Inn Resort & Conference Centre** in Alliston, Ontario. The event will be hybrid, meaning that for the first time in three years, our Annual Conference will combine a live in-person event with virtual components!

The theme for the 2023 Annual Conference is ***Growing a Healthy Tomorrow – For Communities, For Earth, For Life***, and aims to re-energize all of us to take proactive charge of the health of our environment by looking at human, ecological and climate impacts, the integral role nature and forests play in our everyday lives, and so much more. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!

Schooled on a Great Lake

Celeste Schoahs wins James S. Miller Memorial Scholarship

BY MADELEINE BRAY AND ALLISON HANDS

Awarded annually to a graduating high school student in Northern Ontario, the James S. Miller Memorial Scholarship recognizes youth who demonstrate outstanding commitment to environmental pursuits. In addition, recipients must be entering the first year of an environmental program, or related field, at the post-secondary level.

Hailing from Sault Ste. Marie, the 2022 scholarship winner is Celeste Schoahs. Early experiences kayaking, sailing, and windsurfing on Lake Superior helped to foster Celeste's appreciation for healthy aquatic ecosystems. Leading her school's Ontario Envirothon team, working in Ontario Parks, and taking part in two science co-op placements at the Invasive Species Lab, helped to solidify Celeste's passion for the natural world.

Celeste will continue her education journey in the fall when she begins her Environmental Science degree at Algoma University. Looking forward, Celeste is keen to develop the skills and knowledge needed to repair damaged ecosystems and mitigate climate change at an international level.

All of us at Forests Ontario congratulate Celeste on this terrific achievement! To find out more about the James S. Miller Memorial Scholarship, visit www.forestsontario.ca.



Tom Croswell presents Celeste Schoahs, 2022 James S. Miller Memorial Scholarship winner, with \$1,000.00 scholarship cheque. Photo by Casey Croswell at Lake Superior Provincial Park, August 2022.

Ontario Forest Checkup

Check out our 2022 Forest Health Review

BY JOANA CARREIRA

It is time to learn about the health of our forests! On Wednesday, October 26, 2022, Forests Ontario co-hosted the 2022 Forest Health Review with Natural Resources Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. At this free, virtual event, a variety of informative speakers shared Ontario forest health survey results. Featured speakers included Dan Rowlinson (Forest Health Field Coordinator, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry), Erin Bullas-Appleton (National Manager, Canadian Food Inspection Agency), Dr. Sharon Reed (Forest Health Research Scientist, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry), Sadia Butt (Assistant Forest Biologist, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry), Eric Boysen (NewLeaf Forest Services), and Emma Hudgins (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Carleton University).

Find out more by visiting our 2022 Forest Health Review Events page at www.forestsontario.ca.



ASK AN EXPERT

Do you have a question about wildlife, forest restoration, grasslands, or tree ID?

Send us your question with "Ask An Expert" as the subject line, and it may be answered in an upcoming issue of Our Forest magazine. Please write to info@forestsontario.ca.



Past tree plantings lead to current success in the Ottawa Valley as concerns grow for forestry's future

BY MATTHEW BROWN

The Ottawa Valley boasts one of Canada's most vibrant forest industry sectors and is home to numerous sawmills that employ thousands of local residents. According to County of Renfrew Councillor Peter Emon, the area's 20 mills contribute to the employment of approximately 2,200 people and generate over \$85 million in taxes (\$42 million federally, \$32 million provincially and nearly \$12 million municipally as of 2019).

One reason for the area's current prosperity is the past support for tree planting efforts by the Province of Ontario. The province supported tree planting on privately owned lands for well over 75 years. In the Ottawa Valley, the resulting forests provide critical timber – as high as 40 to 45 per cent of the current Red and White Pine wood supply – to some area mills.

"Currently, over 50 per cent of our total wood supply comes from privately owned forest," Dean Felhaber, President, Ben Hokum and Son Limited, said. "Our sawmill has depended on privately owned forest wood supply since the mill was built in 1956."

In 2019, the Province of Ontario cancelled funding of tree planting on privately owned lands. This has caused concern about future wood supply since area mills anticipate that reliance on privately-owned forests will continue to grow.

"Softwood wood supply from private land is projected to decrease over the next few decades without significant tree planting investments locally," notes Matt Mertins, RPF, Wood Fibre Manager, Roseburg Forest Products Canada. "If there was a significant reduction of trees available from private lands, log costs would immediately increase and some of our supplier sawmills would run out of wood or struggle to find cost effective wood for their operations."

"We would be forced to go further afield increasing cost significantly," adds Dean. "This would affect profitability putting our business in jeopardy. It is critical that we continue to have access to private land wood in our region."

Increased costs in the forestry sector also impact the construction industry. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) projects that the housing stock will increase by 2.3 million units per year between 2021 and 2030 for a total of 19 million housing units. However, to restore affordability, an additional 3.5 million affordable housing units are needed by 2030 – which equates to even higher demand on the forestry sector.

"The forestry sector is an important industry today but will be even more important in the coming years. The County of Renfrew is 70 per cent covered by trees and our mills can support Canada's builders but we need the province to re-invest and help plant the trees that support our mills," Councillor Emon said.

Some of the mills in the region include Lavern Heideman & Sons Limited, Ben Hokum and Son Limited, Cascades Containerboard Packaging - Trenton, McRae Lumber Company, Freymond Lumber Ltd., Roseburg Forest Products Canada, Murray Brothers Lumber Company, and Herb Shaw & Sons Limited. Their ability to source wood supply locally is a key part of their success and long-term viability.

"It is not well understood or appreciated how much private land tree planting has contributed to significant employment levels in our region," Dean said. "Up to 40 per cent of our wood supply comes from private land tree plantations which were established in the '60s, '70s and '80s under the Ontario Government. Over 250 direct jobs in our sawmill and woodland operations are attributable to these plantations. Provincial Government support of private land tree planting is critical to maintaining and growing employment levels in this region."

Forests Ontario and representatives from these regional mills have reached out to Graydon Smith, MPP for the adjacent Riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, describing how working together can benefit the future of the forestry sector in the Ottawa Valley.

The Ben Hokum and Son Limited sawmill in the Ottawa Valley.



Travel Adventure Logs

Exploring the vast splendour of Ontario's forests, one trail at a time

Forests Ontario takes every chance we can get to celebrate the beauty and diversity of our province's forests. This year, Forests Ontario asked its staff to share stories of their favourite woodland adventures.



Forests Ontario's Program Coordinator, Amy Howitt, at Vanderwater Conservation Area in December 2019.

Every season is memorable in Vanderwater Conservation Area

BY AMY HOWITT

Vanderwater Conservation Area, about 30 kilometres north of Belleville in Thomasburg, Ontario, is a place that has captured my attention since I was a child. It's a place that I've hiked, biked, and wandered through every season and stage of life. Travelling down one of the six trails, you can find a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified managed forest that was previously farm fields. Depending on the season, you may see evidence of thinning along the main path.

As Vanderwater follows the Moira River, it is worthwhile to make your way to the rapids. Although the area changes throughout the year, it remains stunning no matter the season. There is a fast flow in the winter

that demands respect, to a summer calm that allows you to hop across the rocks and sit among the mini waterfalls and pools.

Each visit to Vanderwater is unique. I remember a day we saw so many garter snakes it became ridiculous. Then there was a bike ride with my brother punctuated by a sighting of what we believed to be a baby black bear that had us riding like our lives depended on it. I even went on an overnight trip with my Girl Guide group there as a kid.

Vanderwater reminds me of days with friends, days with family, curious mosses, curious minds, and beautiful tree canopy above.

Songs of Spring in Backus Woods

BY REBECCA PEARCE-CAMERON

Saturday, April 2, was a warm day and filled with spring energy, so my son and I packed up our gear and took off for a hike in Backus Woods – eager to hear the spring peepers again and to explore this beautiful gem of Norfolk County. A team of Black-Capped Chickadees greeted us at the entrance by coarsely alerting other nearby creatures of our presence and chatting away in the branches. Much like the chickadees, we took off, babbling away to each other on the Wetland Trail. I thought surely we wouldn't hear much as we weren't exactly quiet, but after we passed the first swamp area, we finally heard the spring peepers! My son went quiet. At one-and-a-half-years old, it was his first time truly hearing this special spring chorus!

Excited to get his own hiking in, my son asked to hop out of the backpack, and I realized we had hiked entirely too far! Oh well. It was a beautiful day, and we had no other place to be. On our long, toddling journey back to the car, we stopped to look for Pileated Woodpecker holes, tried to spot signs of the Sharp-Lobed Hepatica flower emergence (we were a bit too early), and learned what White-Tailed Deer tracks looked like thanks to helpful interpretive signs. There was lots to explore.

Soon enough, as migration gets underway with gusto, the Backus Woods spring peepers sounds will be replaced by the many notes of warblers and other songbirds returning after a long winter away – and we will be back to hear a fresh rendition of the spring chorus.

Forests Ontario's Grasslands Restoration Coordinator, Rebecca Pearce-Cameron, and her son visit Backus Woods in April 2022.





The Sellers enjoy a day out in the Lakeside Woodlot, Ajax in spring 2022.

Our Neighbourhood Forest: Lakeside Woodlot, Ajax

BY THE SELLERS FAMILY

Forests Ontario's Director of Business Development, Kim Sellers, and her children share their stories and experience in their local forests.

Kim: My family and I visit our neighbourhood forest often. We either bike or walk on the trail that runs through this forest, which twists and turns between the houses and ends up at Lake Ontario. In the spring we look for the Trilliums, Jack-in-the-Pulpits, Trout Lillies, and May Apples. Later in the year, we remove some of the Garlic Mustard that we see encroaching into the forest. Other times we search for wildlife or animal dens. Plenty of birds and small mammals like orioles, chipmunks, and possums live nearby.

Brooklynn, age eight: Me and my friends go to the park. We play grounders [a form of tag] and play manhunt. When we play manhunt, we always run into the forest. We go home at 5 p.m. for dinner. Dinner is always good. The next day, we do the same thing, over and over. It is a lot of fun in the forest. Today we saw my friend and we played grounders. It is very fun playing grounders. It is so fun! You should try it. Maybe you might think grounders is the best game ever. The End.

Gryffin, age 10: In the forest, I go play manhunt. I go bike riding in the forest, climbing trees, and collecting fallen branches to make forts. We run, we play, we make stick traps (that don't work). One time, I climbed this tall pine tree and went as high and as far as I could. I almost went to the top. When I was standing, I saw Lake Ontario. That's what I do in the forest to have fun.

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The Long Road

Maple Leaves Forever continues Ontario's rich history of planting trees along its thoroughfares

BY PETER KUITENBROUWER

Roadside trees do so much: they beautify the countryside, absorb carbon, prevent erosion, block wind and drifting snow, help pollinators, pump out oxygen and purify groundwater. But not everyone protects these trees. For more than 150 years, environmentally minded locals have worried about how to preserve trees and grow new trees along roadways across rural Ontario.

Ontario's longstanding encouragement of tree planting along roadways continues today through the efforts of Maple Leaves Forever (MLF), a non-profit that has helped landowners plant thousands of native Sugar Maples, Red Maples and Silver Maples across the province. To date, MLF has subsidized the planting of more than 130,000 native maple trees, the equivalent of over 1,200 km of maple-lined Ontario roadside.

Roadside tree-planting in Ontario has a rich history, as chronicled through research by Terry Schwan, a retired Registered Professional Forester (RPF). In a recent history of roadside tree planting, Schwan wrote: "The clearing of the forest by the settlers was causing some concern in

Old Ontario among progressive farmers and conservation minded men. These men worried about the loss of forests, of water in the soil, with the resultant drying of springs, soil erosion from the spring melt and from unobstructed winds, as well as the clearing of soils unsuitable for agriculture."

Four years after Confederation, in 1871, the Province of Ontario passed its first tree law, "An act to encourage the planting of trees upon the highways of this province." About a decade later, Ontario decided to provide more encouragement to plant perimeter trees. The Ontario Tree Planting Act, 1883, "to regulate the planting of trees on public highways," allowed municipalities to pay landowners up to 25 cents each to plant ash, basswood, beech, birch, butternut, cedar, cherry, chestnut, elm, hickory, maple, oak, pine, sassafras, spruce, tulip, and walnut trees along the highway, and along the boundaries of their property. The town paid the landowner, and the Province reimbursed the town half of the cost. To pay for the trees, the province set aside \$50,000 (a princely sum in the 1880s) in the Ontario Tree Planting Fund.

Toronto 1878. A fanciful drawing of Richard Thomas Farm showing roadside trees, homestead, orchard, and fields. H. Beldon & Co. 2001 Edition of Illustrated Historic Atlas of the Counties of Northumberland and Durham.





Maple Leaves Forever Founder Ken Jewett. Photo: JP Moczulski

In 1884, Robert W. Phipps, the province's Clerk of Forestry, reported seeing on the property of a certain "Mr. Clark" in Scarborough, "one row of maples by the roadside, only three years planted, a full mile in length: they are now twelve to fourteen feet in height and seem to be in every way successful." The farmers found that mulch and manure helped their maples to grow, though the trees did face threats from wind, mice, drought and trampling by cattle.

Encouraging roadside tree planting proved an uphill battle in Ontario; a study in 1895 found that only 49 of 661 municipalities had made claims to the tree planting fund, which had paid out just 10 per cent of its money. Thomas Southworth, clerk of Ontario's Bureau of Forestry, noted that Ontario had planted just 75,000 or so roadside trees in 10 years. By contrast, he observed Kansas planted about 1.5 million trees every year. Among trees planted in Ontario, maple was the most popular, followed by elm, spruce, and cedar.

Today, there is no provincial program to help property owners who wish to plant roadside trees. And Schwan notes that, "sadly, many roadside trees have been lost to reasons other than age. Modernization of roads has taken its toll. Roads have been widened... ditching built, and hydro infrastructure has deformed the shape of trees."

Still, there is hope for our roadside trees. In 2000, Ken Jewett, who had earned his money in the prepared foods industry, founded Maple Leaves Forever to encourage landowners to plant maples along their fencelines and along roads, as their ancestors had done. Landowners who

commit to plant 10 to 50 trees with a minimum height of 175 cm, grown at one of 18 recognized nurseries, can receive a 25 per cent subsidy.

A few municipalities aggregate Maple Leaves Forever funding with other programs to get more trees along roads. Clarington, east of Oshawa, offers a Trees for Rural Roads program. In the past decade, the program has distributed close to 8,000 native trees and shrubs to rural property owners in Clarington for planting along roads - funding has come from the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, Maple Leaves Forever, Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign, as well as municipal support. Maple Leaves Forever invites municipalities across the province to benefit from the same success as Clarington, and join its campaign to plant more roadside maple trees. Tree planting is a key opportunity to mitigate climate change and what better tree to choose than the native Canadian maple?

To encourage interest in roadside maple trees, Maple Leaves Forever created a scavenger hunt this summer, with a \$150 prize to each of the first 50 people to submit a photo of a row of at least 10 native maple trees. Find out more at www.mapleleavesforever.ca.

Along with his deep commitment to the cause of native maple trees, Ken Jewett has for many years offered generous support to Forests Ontario's tree planting and education initiatives. Forests Ontario is grateful to Jewett for his unwavering support.

Farmers and Partners in Eastern Ontario Team Up for the Recovery of Species at Risk

Projects combine farm productivity and habitat protection goals

BY REBECCA PEARCE-CAMERON



Above: RRCA staff recorded over 25 Bobolink sightings while monitoring the late-cut hayfield in North Glengarry. Photo: Raisin Region Conservation Authority

At right: Bobolink nestlings at eight days old courtesy of Bird Ecology and Conservation Ontario. Photo: G. A. Morris

Next page: Female Bobolink courtesy of Bird Ecology and Conservation Ontario. Photo: G. A. Morris



As we arrive in the fall season, most often noted (and for good reason) is the shift our forests experience as the colourful hues of autumn begin to paint deep reds and cheery yellows across the canopy. However, if you take a moment to quietly sit outdoors, you may also notice the bubbling activity of birds moving across the landscape back to their wintering grounds. As fall progresses, you may observe Dark-eyed Juncos in parts of Ontario as they return from the boreal forest, or Sandhill Cranes passing through on their way to their more southerly wintering habitats. Migration is on!

In Ontario, a number of bird species rely on grassland habitats in the summer to breed successfully, and recovery efforts are underway to protect and restore critical habitat for these important birds. According to the 2019 report, *The State of Canada's Birds*, from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and North American Bird Conservation Initiative Canada (NABCI), since 1970, grassland bird species have declined across the country by 57 per cent. Over the same period, species found in agricultural landscapes have declined by 39 per cent. Fortunately, farmers and landowners in Eastern Ontario are taking steps in their farm management to care for not only their farm productivity, but also for species at risk in their region.

South Nation Conservation (SNC) and Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) work with Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program and Grassland Stewardship Initiative (GSI) to connect with landowners and deliver a range of land stewardship programs and services. Committed farmers and landowners are working with SNC and RRCA to enhance the habitat quality of existing hayfields for species at risk, including Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. These farmers delay cutting the hay until after the birds have fledged.

Brent Harbers, Watershed Biologist, SNC, notes these landowners have struck a balance between productivity and conservation: "Working landscapes can provide a benefit to not only people economically, but to wildlife and birds. We've been able to do projects, these grasslands that are going to be late-cut hay, so the landowners will be able to make some income off their land, but at the same time do it in a way that is compatible with nature."

Harbers also drew attention to SNC Site 164, enrolled in the GSI last year, a habitat enhancement and delayed haying project near Shanly, about 80 km south of Ottawa. Conserving the diversity of habitats by enhancing the

existing hayfields and establishing a delayed haying program has had numerous benefits for not only the species that inhabit this site, but also those visiting the area.

Harbers encourages the public to learn more about grassland habitats. "We made it one of our goals to promote it as a place for the public to get out and go birding," he said. The conservation authority has made this site a designated E-bird "Hotspot" - a known public birding location that allows birders to contribute sightings at this site to the significant biological citizen-science program. "It's really the diversity of habitats that this property has, not only grasslands but there's hedgerows, wetlands on one side, and a good diversity of birds," Harbers adds.

"We made it one of our goals to promote it as a place for the public to get out and go birding..."

This site is directly adjacent to The Healing Place, an initiative with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, Algonquin First Nations, SNC, Ontario Power Generation, Plenty Canada, and Forests Ontario. Please visit plentycanada.com/healing-place to learn more about this important initiative that is a community safe space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come learn and journey together in reconciliation.

Further to the East, Jessica Herrington, Stewardship Coordinator for the RRCA, highlighted a landowner in their region who was motivated to learn how to assist species at risk after they observed dozens of Bobolink pairs breeding in their hayfields once they transitioned their fields from annual crops to hay.

"Avid birders, the landowners wanted to encourage the numerous Bobolinks returning to their hayfields each year to nest and raise their young," Herrington wrote in an email.

Grasslands Ontario supported RRCA on this site, providing financial assistance to offset the cost of delaying the hay to allow for successful breeding of species at risk, providing a bridge between farm productivity and species at risk recovery. "Over 25 Bobolink adults and many fledglings were recently observed at this location, confirming the importance of delayed hay cutting practices for this site," she added.

Herrington continued: "The RRCA enjoys a strong partnership with landowners and agricultural producers in its jurisdiction. Many property owners are well-attuned to the various species found on their land. As primary stewards of their land, they are uniquely positioned to have lasting impacts on species at risk recovery through the stewardship best management practices."

As migration is underway and we look to the skies to bid an autumn farewell to the many birds fledged in GSI projects this summer, Grasslands Ontario would like to thank the dedicated network of steadfast landowners and partners for their collaborative work in increasing important high-quality grassland habitat cover across Ontario.





An Algonquin Dream Come True

A project to build a birch bark canoe unites communities

BY MATTHEW BROWN

For Chuck Commanda and Christine Luckasavitch, an Algonquin birch bark canoe is more than just a traditional means of transportation. It is a link to the past and a way to bring communities together. Over two weeks this August, the dream they had for nearly 10 years of building a birch bark canoe in Algonquin Provincial Park finally became a reality.

“I knew Chuck from him doing a couple of canoe builds in local communities. We became friends and were talking about how cool it would be to do a canoe build in Algonquin Park – most of which is unceded Algonquin territory,” Luckasavitch, Algonquin (and mixed settler ancestry) and Owner of Waaseyaa Consulting, said.

Commanda is the grandchild of Algonquin master canoe builders William and Mary Commanda, who shared their knowledge with him during his childhood in Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, in the Gatineau Hills north of Ottawa.

“My grandparents taught me how to build canoes. The first thing I ever learned to do was to knit snowshoes and then I slowly moved on to canoe making,” Commanda said.

After learning to make canoes as a youth, Commanda moved on to other work. Then, a twist of fate returned him to his roots: a car accident in 2007 injured his back. During his rehabilitation, Commanda began to make traditional Algonquin birchbark baskets. He got so good at it that the National Museum of the American Indian invited him to share his craft at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

“Once I got home, I got a call from my grandfather. He asked me if I could build him a canoe. He started a foundation called The Circle of all Nations and the theme for his meeting with elders that year was the watercraft,” Commanda adds. “I found the material and I built the canoe. He came over and he inspected it and gave me the green light. I knew then that the circle had become complete – I’m no longer the student; I’m the teacher.”

Lukasavitch and Commanda’s dream of building an Algonquin birch bark canoe in Algonquin Park came together with help. A key partner was Algonquin Outfitters, a fixture in the park that has provided equipment and supplies to generations of visitors.

“We wanted to do a project that involved the Algonquin community – that featured their people and their traditions first,” Brent Ellerson, Social and Community Coordinator at Algonquin Outfitters, said. “Since we are a canoe outfitting company 61 years strong that started right here at Camp Pathfinder in Algonquin Park, along with Christine and Chuck we felt an Algonquin canoe build was the right choice.”

Lukasavitch had worked at Algonquin Outfitters as a teenager and again when she returned from university. When Rich Swift, owner of Algonquin Outfitters, asked her how to engage with local Indigenous community members, she knew a canoe build would be the perfect answer. This August, working for one week at Algonquin Outfitter’s Lake of Two Rivers location, and one week at its Lake Opeongo location, Commanda built a canoe alongside Algonquin community members, members of other local First Nations, Park staff, and hundreds of visitors who watched and helped.

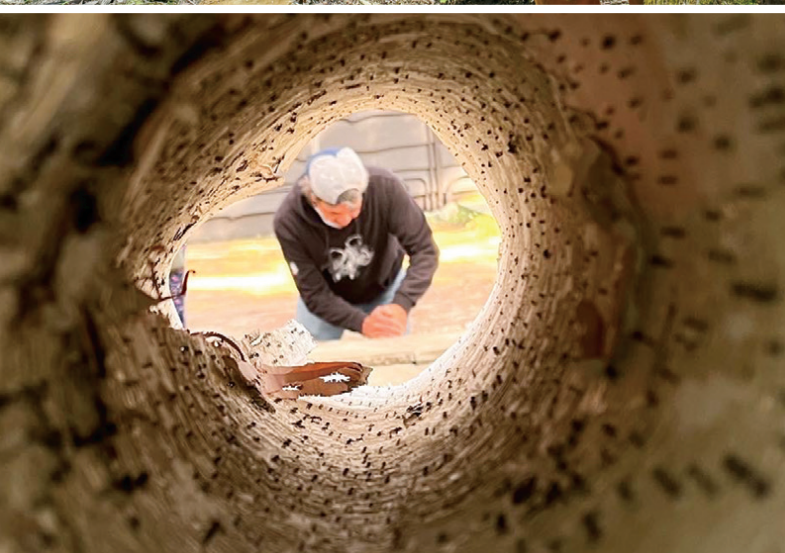
“The two-week build was incredible and absolutely moving. It’s been emotional on so many levels. There was a constant flow of diverse people from different communities,” Ellerson said.

Visitors who came to support to the canoe project included John Swick, Algonquin Provincial Park Superintendent; legendary park rangers including Craig MacDonald and Kirk MacEathron; Gord Cumming, Chief Forester at the Algonquin Forestry Authority; Kim Smith, Board Chair of The Friends of Algonquin Park; as well as Camp Pathfinder campers, staff, and owners, plus staff from Camp Ahmek and Camp Wapomeo.



Left: Interior of the birch bark canoe Commanda built in the summer of 2022
Photo: Matthew Brown

Above: Christine Luckasavitch and Chuck Commanda at Lake Opeongo.
Photo: Matthew Brown



Above: Chuck Commanda sources wood for the canoe. Photo: Algonquin Outfitters

Below: A view of Commanda through the birch bark. Photo: Algonquin Outfitters

“This entire project has been an amazing demonstration of community. Being on unceded Algonquin territory and being able to invite Chuck in, who is from an Algonquin community in Quebec, and have him teach members of my home community – it is the return of this practice back to my community,” Luckasavitch noted. “It is reestablishing connections and relationships that were almost lost.”

When the canoe was finally complete and touched water for the first time, Commanda couldn’t help but think of his grandparents and all the ancestors that helped that moment to happen.

“I feel them in every canoe build – my grandparents. I feel proud but still humble. I see articles and social media posts that give me so much praise and my reply is always to give most of the credit to my ancestors,” Commanda said. “When I start a canoe build, I always do a Smudge ceremony. I ask my ancestors to come and help me and work through me.”

Thanks to Algonquin and Indigenous community members, including Chuck Commanda and Christine Luckasavitch, Algonquin Outfitters, Ontario Parks (Algonquin Park), the Friends of Algonquin Park, Camp Pathfinder, the Canadian Canoe Museum, and Algonquin Forestry Authority.

This birch bark canoe will remain in Algonquin Park, where it will be shared for workshops, learning opportunities, and Indigenous community celebrations.

FORESTRY IN THE CLASSROOM

Every year, Forests Ontario connects the next generation of forest stewards with forestry and environmental professionals through our free Forestry in the Classroom program. Developed for grades four and up, Forestry in the Classroom matches classes and community groups with forest sector practitioners to learn about our forests. Presentation topics include tree identification, invasive species, forest management and careers, and more.

For more information about our Forestry in the Classrooms program, please email our Education Manager, Allison Hands, ahands@forestsontario.ca



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FORESTS
ONTARIO

Member Spotlight: Jim Farrell

This forester's ties to Forests Ontario go back decades

BY AMY HOWITT

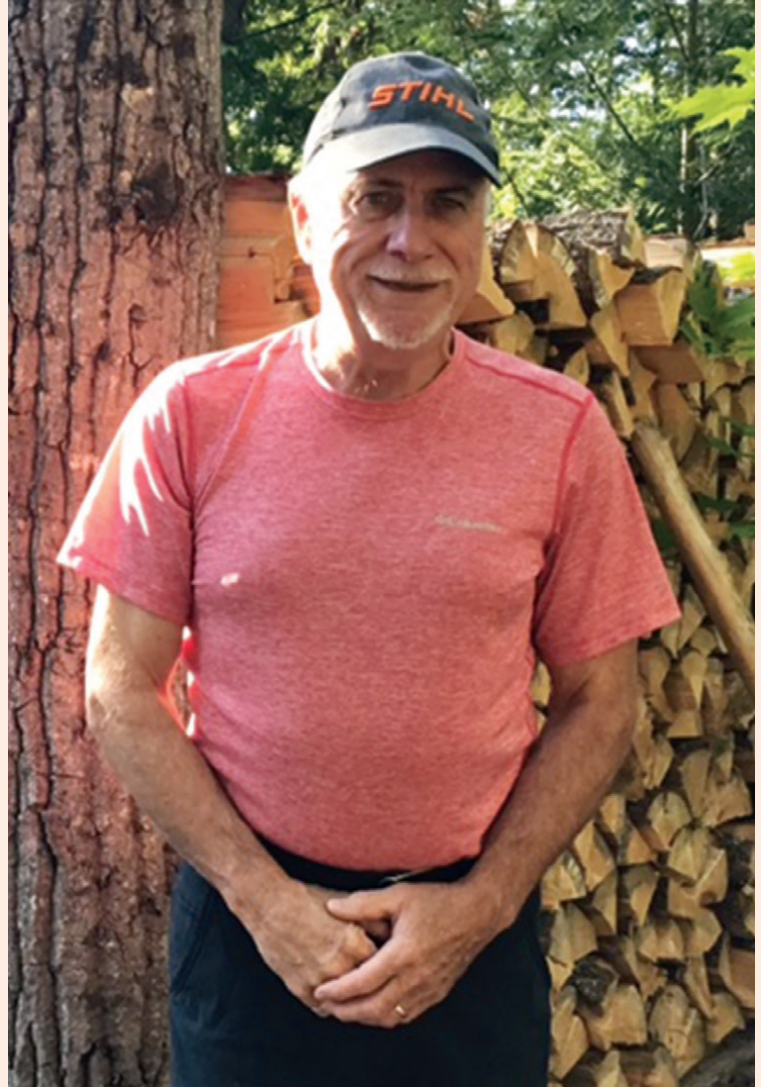
As a city kid growing up in Toronto, Jim Farrell wanted a career that would get him out of the city. He attended University of Toronto and graduated with a Forestry Degree in 1975, directly leaving for a bush camp in north-central Manitoba to work for a paper company.

“While the goal in that job was primarily to convert vertical trees to horizontal ones and haul them to a papermill, my interest and affection for forests and trees only grew over time, particularly as I learned more about forest ecosystems, biodiversity and our changing climate,” Jim said.

After seven years at Abitibi Paper Company (later Resolute), and a short stint with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Farrell started with the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan as District Manager, where he delivered a federal-provincial forestry agreement for four years. He continued managing forestry development for the CFS in Ontario when he was transferred to Great Lakes Forestry Centre and directed programs such as Tree Plan Canada, Model Forests and Silvilog '93, as well as science programs in fire and landscape management as well as the Forest Insect and Disease Survey. In a 1997 move to Ottawa, Farrell was responsible for establishing a Forest Industry Division which became the driver for a myriad of initiatives and resulted in the creation of FPInnovations, which supports Canada's forest sector. In 2006, he became Assistant Deputy Minister of CFS/Natural Resources Canada and retired in 2011.

Since retirement, Farrell has kept busy with consulting and participating as a board member of several organizations, including the US Endowment for Forests and Communities, Genome Canada, and, most recently, Forest History Ontario, where he serves as Chair. With five grandchildren under age seven, Farrell says that trying to understand the mind of kids “remains an ongoing and fascinating mystery.” Farrell is also interested in conservation of both forested and unforested natural endowments, and the applications of science and information to achieve conservation goals.

His involvement with Forests Ontario goes back to the early 1990s. As a former board member of the Ontario Forestry Association, he was supportive of the 2014 merger with Trees Ontario to become Forests Ontario, a move that provided the organization with greater opportunities to focus on education and awareness and become a major force in private land tree planting. Farrell adds that education programs like Envirothon, Forestry in the Classroom, Tree Bee, and Forestry Connects, are “investments that will show important and memorable dividends for all of us as these young people mature and take their places in the world.”



Jim Farrell at his cottage at Lac McGregor in Val des Monts, Quebec. Firewood pictured from a pine that fell during a May 2022 storm.

Forests Ontario would like to thank Jim Farrell and all our members for their valued support. Your contribution continues to make our urban and rural communities healthier through the creation, preservation and maintenance of new forests and grasslands. Forests Ontario will be highlighting our members in each issue of Our Forest magazine. If you are a Forests Ontario member and would like to share your story in our magazine, please contact bmcclelland@forestsontario.ca.

What to Cut

Careful harvest planning is crucial to long-term health and value of forest

BY PETER KUITENBROUWER

Woodlot owners cut trees to expand trails, to make firewood, to produce lumber or fenceposts, and to improve the health of their forest. Autumn is a good time to plan a forest harvest, since the best time to cut trees is winter, when frost protects the ground from damage and the trees from harm, and before spring, when woodland birds and mammals bear their young. But how do you decide whether to cut any trees, and if so, which trees to cut?



A thorough inventory of your forest precedes any harvest. Illustrations from *The Woodlot Management Handbook* (Firefly Books, 2009) reprinted with permission of the artist, Ann-Ida Beck.

One good first step is to hire a Managed Forest Plan Approver to write a forest plan for your woods, under the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP). As a bonus, such a plan reduces property taxes by 75 per cent on eligible portions of your property.

“As a bonus, such a plan **reduces property taxes by 75 per cent** on eligible portions of your property.”

Your forest plan will include an inventory, which may suggest you have enough trees to sustain a forest harvest. To ensure you select the appropriate trees for removal, contact a local forestry professional through the website of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA), where you can search by name, location or service required.

“A professional forester, like a medical doctor, has the scope to understand the tradeoffs of any human activity on the landscape,” said Fred Pinto, executive director of the OPFA. “It’s not just a mechanistic thing of making tables. It’s understanding the plants, the trees, and the animals.”

A carefully planned forest harvest can leave your forest healthier than before. It can also protect tall trees to produce seed for the next generation of trees. “If I do some harvesting,” Pinto adds, “I will try to learn from nature, and remove those trees that would be most likely to die.”

As you plan a harvest, here are things to keep in mind.

STREAMS, PONDS, AND OTHER WATERWAYS

Protect the banks of streams, rivers, ponds, or lakes with a buffer zone where you let the trees live. These areas support diverse and abundant wildlife. Tree roots prevent erosion of soil into streams; tree shade cools water, which benefits fish. Dead trees that fall in the water provide cover for fish; leaves and logs that rot in the water are important to waterway health. Eagles, ospreys and wood ducks hunt and forage along forested shorelines; wildlife use the forest by the water’s edge as a travel corridor.



Forest before thinning.



Thinning the forest removes deformed trees.

TREE MARKING

Forests Ontario and the Canadian Institute of Forestry train tree markers. You can hire a certified tree marker (one who is not a logging company representative) to mark your trees with paint to indicate which trees to cut and which to retain. The tree marker follows the consultant's prescription for the harvest. Tree markers will also protect trees with nests for birds, and dead trees that provide habitat for small mammals and birds, as well as mast trees (such as oaks, whose acorns are a source of food), and younger trees that will become more valuable when left to grow. "It is important to retain healthy live trees for ecological services," Pinto said.

ASH AND BEECH

In Ontario, foresters expect the Emerald Ash Borer to wipe out almost all ash trees. Beech Bark Disease threatens beech trees. "It is preferential to remove some trees that are dying and would die," adds Pinto.

SIGN A CONTRACT

A forest consultant will help you solicit bids from several loggers and select one. Then, sign a contract that outlines all the details of the job. The consultant will visit during the harvest to make sure loggers follow the plan.

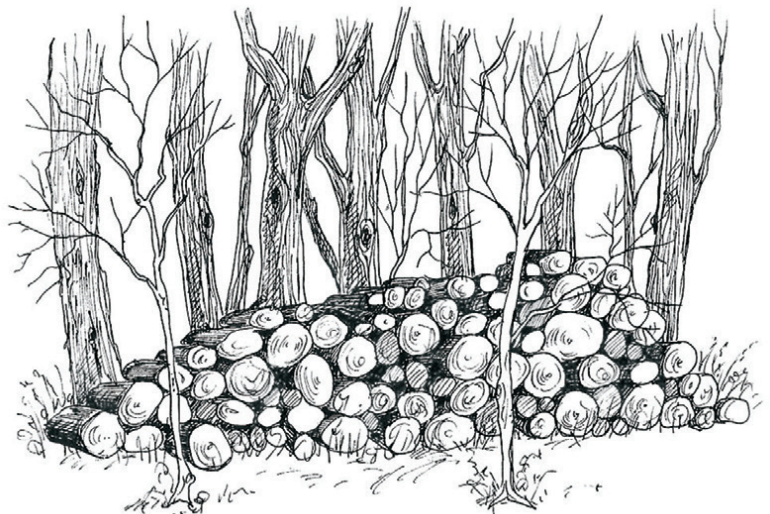
TIME THE HARVEST

A landowner's contract with a logger should specify when to cut. For example, avoid harvest in spring or a particularly rainy fall when wet ground means more rutting and damage

from machinery to the roots and bark of trees that you want to protect for the future. Harvests do least damage in winter when the ground is frozen, minimizing compaction by heavy equipment. "The contract will indicate that under these conditions, such as if it is really wet, the logger will stop operations," Pinto notes.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Your forest has grown for centuries; make careful decisions and it will thrive for centuries more.



One reason for a selection harvest in a hardwood forest is to produce firewood.

Stumped: Japanese Printmaking

Make art outdoors this fall using plants and flowers

BY CATHERINE ROSE

My students and I tried this fun printmaking activity at Forest School and created art using the plants growing around us! Many forest schoolers exchanged their art as gifts and made more prints at home with their families.

This art form is simple to make with beautiful results. The art is a Japanese form of printmaking called Hapa Zome, which translates to leaf dye.

STEPS:

1. **Find an outdoor area to work** in that has nearby plants and a flat surface —this may be a table, stump, or cement block. Set up your workstation with your materials.



MATERIALS:

Cotton or thick printmaking paper
Parchment paper or paper towel
Hammer, mallet, or rock
Flat surface
Plants, leaves, and flowers

Photos: Catherine Rose, Forests Ontario



2. **Go on a foraging walk** around the area and gather plants, leaves, and flowers to create your art piece. Consider the shape, pattern, and colour of the plants while you harvest. Flat plants that have lots of moisture work well for this activity, as well as brightly coloured flowers. Avoid waxy leaves and white flowers; you'll have trouble getting the pigment to transfer onto your cotton or paper.

3. **Lay your plant materials over the cotton** and create your design. You may want to take a picture of your plan so you can go back to it while you're creating. If you want to free-hand your design and create as you go, that works too!
4. **With your cotton or paper lying against a flat surface**, pick a plant to start with and position it over the cotton/paper. Then, place your parchment paper over the leaf so it is fully covered.



5. **Begin to hammer your plant** into the cotton using your tool of choice. Hammer close to the plant with precision, ensuring every part of the plant has been hammered into the paper. You can go over the plant multiple times while keeping it in place to ensure you get a pigmented transfer.



6. **When the plant looks pulpy**, it's time to peel back the parchment paper and rub the remaining plant material off the cotton to reveal your print!

Your prints will be sensitive to sun bleaching, so it's best to hang or store them in a shaded place. My students and I made twig frames for our prints and sewed beads into the fabric as a finishing touch. Decorate your art however makes you happiest!



Catherine Rose is a land-based arts educator working in Kingston, Ontario. She is a student of sociology, Indigenous studies, and concurrent education at Queen's University; in summer 2022, she interned with Forests Ontario.

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