

OUR FOREST



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WINTER 2021-2022

Reconciliation

Planting trees at Six Nations

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Heritage Tree Odyssey

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New Trees from Coast to Coast

Lets come together to strengthen our forests

Another spectacular year for Forests Ontario has come and gone. Throughout all the challenges of 2021, we have come together as an organization, and with our many partners in the sector, to persevere – and we couldn't have done it without your support. As we reflect on this past year, we know it is our strong, supportive community that has enabled us to succeed in so many ways.

Together with our many partners, Forests Ontario planted an impressive 2.8 million trees across the province this spring through our 50 Million Tree Program. This feat is even more impressive when you consider all the rigorous safety precautions our partners took to keep us all safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we see more and more people exploring and enjoying the green spaces and forests in their communities, interest in tree planting continues to grow and we look forward to another record-breaking year for 2022.

We were thrilled to see great strides in tree planting across Canada through the federal government's 2 Billion Tree initiative. As Forests Ontario has learned over our 15+ years of experience, success comes from collaboration and a deep knowledge of all the components of afforestation from seed collection and nursery stock, to strategic planting, tracking, and survival assessments. Long term planning and investments are integral to the future success of our forests. To help support the government's initiative, Forests Ontario held several roundtables inviting all of our partners across the province to identify what is needed to ensure a successful rollout and get 2 billion trees in the ground by 2030. Our staff, partners, and innovative technologies enable us to track seed from its source to future home, contributing to vast, healthy forests for generations to come. We look forward to continuing this effort, working together with all our partners to create more forests in communities across the country. We are very proud of the fact that we are the only not-for-profit charity across Canada that addresses the complex infrastructure of a tree planting program to ensure the right tree is planted in the right place at the right time. As such, Forests Ontario and our partners are prepared to move forward on this exciting federal initiative.

In November, the City of Toronto approved our Tree Seed Diversity Program. Together with our partners, Forests Ontario will source & supply native source-identified trees & shrubs for the City over ten years. This program will help to halt the spread of invasive species, as well as help local ecosystems better adapt to changes in our climate. We're thrilled that the City of Toronto has recognized the importance of putting in place long-term commitments, and are excited to use this model to support other municipalities in a similar manner.

There's much to look forward to in the new year! Our 2022 Annual Conference will take place from February 9th-11th, with the theme of Strength in Biodiversity. As we have seen for many years now, even more so in 2021, our

real power lies in our communities, in our diversity, and in working together. Our conference will once again be held virtually, allowing for speakers and participants to tune in from across the globe. We look forward to exploring key issues with hundreds of landowners, forestry professionals, students, educators, and those passionate about our forests.

As you gather for the holidays and celebrate the new year, we invite you to also embrace your local forests with a walk in the woods. When you are communicating with your local representatives, mention the numerous values that our forests provide and the importance of private land tree planting. From cleaner air and water, to reducing the catastrophic impacts of flooding, our forests contribute to the health of our communities. We all need to come together to strengthen our forests.

I can't thank you enough for your support of Forests Ontario over the past year. Thanks to you, our corporate and government partners, our planting delivery agents, our seed collectors, and nurseries, we have been able to continue our mission of tree planting, forest education, and raising community awareness about the benefits of our forests. If you're able, please consider making a donation to Forests Ontario to support our work in 2022.

My very best wishes for a safe and happy holidays to you and yours, and I look forward to a bright new year together.

All the very best,



Rob Keen, RPF

CEO of Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada



From left: Rob Keen, Roberta Hill, and Carole Smith at the Reconciliation Community Tree Plant event at Six Nations. Story on page 14.

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Correction

A photograph published in Our Forest, Fall 2021, on p. 19, and reprinted above, depicts an Eastern Tent Caterpillar (ETC). One can identify the ETC from a white line on its back. The Forest Tent Caterpillar (FTC) has a row of keyhole shaped white spots down its back. The ETC primarily feeds on fruit trees such as cherry and apple. The trees have time to refoliate and are seldom seriously impacted by ETC defoliation. The FTC, which despite its name does not construct a tent, regularly causes significant defoliation of maple and aspen forests and tends to reappear on roughly a ten-year cycle. Photograph by Madeleine Bray.

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On the cover: Cardinals and Dark-Eyed Juncos enjoy a meal. Photographed by Jeremy Hynes on March 8, 2021 at Lynde Shores Conservation Area. Follow Jeremy Hynes on Instagram: @hyneseyes

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From left: MPP Chris Glover, Mayor John Tory, Manager, Events & Sponsorships at The Distillery Historic District Nadine Singh, Santa Claus, Rob Keen.

Forests Ontario Supplies Holiday Tree

Silver Fir from Milton lights Distillery District

BY COLLEEN MAHAFFIE

The holiday season officially launched on Nov. 1 with the arrival of the grand tree for The Distillery District's Winter Village. For this year's iconic centrepiece, Forests Ontario and partners sourced a striking Silver Fir tree from Milton that soars the height of a five-storey building.

Shady Lane Expert Tree Care Inc. hoisted the 55 foot tree by crane into a custom steel stand. It was unveiled on Nov. 18 after being adorned with thousands of LED lights and decorations, bringing joy to all who see it.

Working together to communicate the benefits of real holiday trees, Forests Ontario has provided the centrepiece tree for The Distillery Winter Village for the last 11 years. A renewable resource, natural trees have a smaller environmental footprint than their fake counterparts, and their use supports local tree farmers. The Distillery District has made a generous donation to Forests Ontario to support the planting of 1,000 trees, which will help offset the emissions of cutting down this year's holiday tree.

A New Adventure

Forests Ontario moves head office to Barrie

BY JOANA CARREIRA

For the past decade, Forests Ontario has worked out of the top floor of a seven-storey brick building in the heart of Toronto, right across from Union Station. The downtown location served us well, but the pandemic presented a new opportunity for us to move. On Sept. 1, 2021, Forests Ontario opened its office doors at 15 Maple Avenue, Unit #103 in Barrie.

Our new digs are nearer to the forest and directly across from the beautiful Lake Simcoe waterfront. This new office also brings us closer to many of our partners, allowing for more in-person meetings and gatherings.

Although it is sad to say goodbye to the office that held so many memorable experiences, we are excited to create new projects and memories in Barrie!



Sharon Cranstone, Office Administrator, poses at Forests Ontario with her dog, Lucy.



Prashant Pathak, chair, Kingbridge Centre and Innovation Hub.

Innovation in the Forest Industry

Forests Ontario teams up with the Kingbridge Centre

BY COLLEEN MAHAFFIE

Forests Ontario and Kingbridge Centre are partnering to accelerate innovative solutions to contribute to the growth of the forest industry and related community activities. Announced during National Forest Week, the partnership will see the two organizations collaborate on several long-term projects.

Kingbridge Centre and Innovation Hub Chair Prashant Pathak described the partnership as "a cornerstone as our team works to curate, develop and scale solutions and businesses that will contribute towards mitigating the adverse social and economic effects of climate change." Stay tuned for more details on this exciting partnership.

Rooted in Mississauga's History

Red Oak Heritage Tree has survived amid a great deal of change

BY JOANA CARREIRA



In a Mississauga backyard stands a magnificent Red Oak tree. This living monument, more than 200 years old, currently towers 19.5m tall and has a circumference of 770 cm. But its sheer size is nothing compared to its history. Located near the Credit River, this Red Oak lives on the land of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. In 1805, the Mississaugas signed Treaty 13A, selling their land to the British Crown. Since then, this Red Oak has survived the development of one of Ontario's most populous cities, and stands as a living monument to the pre-settlement era of the province.

Staff of Urban Forest Innovations Inc. (UFI) gather in front of 200-year-old Red Oak tree that towers in Gail Corman's Mississauga backyard. Photo courtesy UFI.

In 1979, Gail Corman bought the property and accepted the tree as one of her own. Her children grew up swinging and climbing on the tree and to this day, the Red Oak has helped her foster relationships. "People peek over the fence and ask questions about the tree," Corman said. "Some return year after year to see how it's doing." Corman's one wish is to have the tree celebrated and protected. In June 2021, Philip van Wassenauer, founder of Urban Forest Innovations Inc., nominated the oak through the Forests Ontario Heritage Tree Program, and in October 2021, Forests Ontario recognized the Red Oak as a heritage tree. Corman and van Wassenauer are now working with Heritage Mississauga and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to protect the historic Red Oak under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Trees by the River

A forest takes root on Bruce Peninsula

BY NICOLE BALDWIN

Joan and Andrew Matthews participated in Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program in 2019 and 2020. They worked with their planting partner, Anne Lennox of Lennox Forestry Services, to plant more than 4,000 seedlings on their property in the South Bruce Peninsula. The planting project aimed to convert former agricultural fields, that lay fallow for approximately 25 years, into thriving future forests.

The couple's goals were simple: to increase biodiversity by planting native seedlings adapted to the area and to create wildlife habitat for the many animals that share their land, including deer. The trees on their property are doing even better than expected - their planting partner noted that the Tamarack planted in 2020 are already close to two metres tall. The couple's new forest will enrich this already thriving landscape: the Sauble River runs through the property, providing a great place to kayak and to enjoy the company of the resident otters.



A tamarack is nearly as tall as Joan and Andrew Matthews, a year after it went in at their property on the South Bruce Peninsula.

Strength in Biodiversity

Join us this February for Forests Ontario's Annual Conference

BY ALANNA EVANS

Growing the Community



Nearly 500 people around the world attended last year's online annual conference – a benefit of the virtual age into which the pandemic has pushed us.

We anticipate our 2022 event will be even bigger, and look forward to gathering virtually with new and returning friends February 9-11, 2022, for three days of exciting speakers, sessions, and connection.

This year's theme, Strength in Biodiversity, aims to inspire discussions around how we can work together to ensure our planet's – and each other's – future. On the landscape and in our communities, biodiversity is fundamental to ensuring our ecosystems are healthy, resilient, and productive. We all have a role to play, and we are all connected; when one perspective is missing, we are all impacted. Biodiversity is not only our greatest strength – it is a necessity.

Join the conversation and register today at www.forestsontario.ca.

SEED is Back



We're excited to host Forests Ontario's 3rd annual Student-Employer Engagement Day (SEED) during the annual conference. Bringing together more than 150 high school and post-secondary students,

recent graduates, and prospective employers from across Ontario, this virtual session will explore employment opportunities within the forest sector, and provide advice and insight to the next generation of forest stewards.



Checking up on Forest Health

This past October, Forests Ontario partnered with Natural Resources Canada and Ontario's Ministry of Northern

Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry to deliver a 2021 Forest Health Review. Researchers and experts in the field weighed in on topics such as the status of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in Ontario and high-risk times of year for Oak Wilt establishment. Building on these discussions, the 2022 Annual Conference will provide an overview of the past year and highlight emerging health trends in Ontario's forests.



Get Social with Conference Connections

Our online event space is full of engaging features. When you're not participating in a session, enjoy browsing the platform and interacting with other guests! Be sure to check out:

- Virtual exhibitor booths to learn more about new products and services.
- Private and group chats for networking with sponsors, speakers, and attendees.
- Play to Win! Earn prizes for meeting with conference sponsors and exhibitors, attending sessions, and for completing surveys throughout the event.

Participants gather at the Forests Ontario 2020 conference in Alliston.





Strength in Biodiversity

Forests Ontario's Annual Conference

February 9, 10 & 11, 2022

Virtual



Registration Type

General Admission \$75 ☐

Student Rate \$25 ☐

Membership Rate \$50 ☐

2021 Membership Renewal \$50 ☐

Attendee Information

Name: Address:

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Email: Additional Attendee(s):

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Card Number: Exp: CVV:

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Please mail to: Forests Ontario, 15 Maple Ave Unit #103, Barrie, ON, L4N 2N6

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Above: Danielle Nicholls poses with Royal Oak, Arnprior.



Left: Sugar Maple, Caledon East Public Cemetery.



Discovering Ontario Through its Living History

A Heritage Tree tour proves a great way to see the sights

BY GRADON NICHOLLS

My wife Danielle and I discovered the Heritage Tree program entirely by accident. It was early in the pandemic, and we decided we needed to get out of the house to avoid going crazy. As everything was closed, we settled on taking hikes and exploring the areas around Ottawa, where we lived at the time. On one such walk, we happened upon a massive Bur Oak in Williamstown. As we would later learn, the tree is estimated to be about 270 years old and is located on the premises of the Sir John Johnson Manor House. This property links back to a mill site built in the 1700s. Later, the village of Williamstown grew around the mill.

Attached to the tree we saw a tiny plaque indicating its Heritage Tree status. After googling the program, we found a map of around 100 such trees on the Forests Ontario website. A lightbulb went off at that moment: if we can find interesting trees by exploring historical places, perhaps we can find historical places by looking for interesting trees.

The next chance we got, we went to see the next closest tree: the Royal Oak of Arnprior. Prince Edward—later King Edward VII, planted the tree in 1860 (alas, soon after we learned that this oak experienced significant decline and had become a hazard, requiring its removal). Afterward we enjoyed the sights of Arnprior—including hiking through Gillies Grove, home of the tallest tree in Ontario, a 47-metre tall White Pine, which reaches higher than a 13-storey building.

As Danielle and I found more and more trees, we realised that tree hunting is not just a dorky hobby, but a great way to discover the nature and history of our province. We spent our 2021 fall vacation searching for trees and exploring the surrounding areas. Danielle enjoyed posing beside each tree. Our first stop was London, where we said hello to a 250+ year old White Oak in the Westminster Ponds Conservation Area. The area contains trails which



Left: Red Maple
by Muskoka River,
Port Sydney.



Above: Sugar
Maple, Clearwater
Farm, Georgina.
Photos by Gradon
Nicholls.



Right: White Oak,
Westminster Ponds
Conservation Area,
London.

wind through a beautiful forest and marshy areas, and the tree was one of the most incredible we have seen in terms of its height and shape.

Next, we travelled to downtown London to find a 150-year-old Sycamore on the premises of the Eldon House. The tree itself is not overly distinct, but after finding it, we went inside the house, a well-preserved look into life in 1800s Canada, including furniture and decorations owned by the original family.

On that same road trip, we found our favourite tree of all: the Red Maple of Port Sydney. Located in a little nook called Indian Landing, this spectacular tree hangs over the Muskoka River. Its beautiful colour during the autumn, and the roar of water flowing over Port Sydney Falls, makes it incredibly scenic, and we never would have seen it if not for our tree excursions. If you are ever in the Muskoka region, it is well worth seeing.

We would like to thank Forests Ontario, a key partner in the Heritage Tree program, for all the work they do in making Ontario a greener and better place. We look forward to finding more trees, and hope that this article encourages more people to discover and appreciate Ontario and its trees.

The Heritage Tree Program allows individuals or communities to apply for heritage tree recognition for culturally significant trees. Recognition under the Heritage Tree program by itself does not offer protections, however in some occasions these trees are granted special protections at a local level. Furthermore, the program brings awareness to some of Ontario's most interesting trees. Anyone can nominate a tree for heritage designation: go to forestsontario.ca/en/program/heritage-tree

Crafting a Camp

Peter Gagnon uses reclaimed wood to build family retreat

BY CURTIS HOLOMEK



Peter Gagnon, Forests Ontario field advisor, with Beau, his four-year-old Airedale terrier, at his camp north of Thunder Bay.

After many years of toil, Peter Gagnon, a field advisor with Forests Ontario, can finally take a breather: his camp, or cabin, on McKenzie Lake is almost complete. Not only did Gagnon design and help build the house himself, but, as a kind of homage to his career as a registered professional forester, he constructed the dwelling almost entirely from reclaimed wood – and counts more than a dozen tree species in all.

His family has come to McKenzie Lake, 250 kilometres north of Thunder Bay on Highway 527 near Armstrong Station, for a long time. Gagnon's grandfather bought the land next door and built a camp there in the 1920s. His father, who lived in Armstrong till he was seven, visited often after CN Rail moved his family to Sudbury, and liked the area, so he bought an old camp of his own.

Gagnon grew up visiting his dad's camp for vacations, and worked for the local Lands and Forests Chief Ranger base located in the town. Later, he inherited the land from his father (who at 94 is still alive and well and hopefully can make it up next summer for his 95th birthday), but the building itself was getting old - "one step up from a tent," as Peter's wife Jan used to comment. With the encouragement of his spouse, Gagnon tore down the old structure (he saved a log addition his Dad had built in the seventies which came in handy for storage) and began planning to construct his own camp.

Gagnon had gained some experience woodworking through the Timber Framers Guild, an international not for profit organization dedicated to the ancient art of timber framing. Gagnon decided to use his newly learned skills on his building project.

He began working on plans for his reclaimed wood camp with Norse Log Homes, a company in British

Columbia that designs and builds log homes. However, the 10-hour drive to McKenzie Lake from Gagnon's home in Sault Ste. Marie meant that he could only spend a few weeks per year working on the camp.

Next, the lumber had to be sawn and brought to the site from Sault Ste. Marie. Gagnon began construction of the new camp with the help of Rob Geoghegan-Morphet, a crew leader he met on a Timber Framers Guild build in Penticton B.C. in 2015. Geoghegan-Morphet also teaches carpentry at Fanshawe College, and owns his own framing company, Black River Timber Framing. Geoghegan-Morphet helped Gagnon turn hydro poles and old lumber into usable joinery.

Gagnon began to put up the camp in 2017; today, his camp is now fully livable and insulated, with running water and hydro.

Gagnon has lots of stories from his experience building his camp. For example, he and his son once helped a sawmill worker in Havilland cut up a blown down Red Oak, and received some of the wood for payment - that became the stairs in his camp. The logs in the camp's living room are from a White Pine his neighbour in Sault Ste. Marie had cut down. In all, the camp includes over 16 species of wood.

Building a house from reclaimed wood is a great way to get the most out of our resources. And there's plenty of wood ready to be reclaimed! According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 12,150 tonnes of wood from the United States alone went to a landfill in 2018.

Reusing old wood also prevents pollution. New wood goes through a chemical treatment process to make it last longer. But when one reuses treated wood, it reduces demand to treat new wood. This means less chemicals are released into the environment. Additionally, buying reclaimed wood can often be cheaper than buying new. Getting the most out of existing lumber means we need to harvest fewer trees. Thus, we preserve forests and the services they provide, such as animal habitat, water filtration, temperature regulation, and more. These are but a few reasons why building with reclaimed wood is a sustainable pathway for the future. Maybe someday, the use of reclaimed wood to construct houses and other buildings will be implemented on a more industrial scale than we see today.

Left: A wood stove heats the camp. Gagnon built the camp mostly from recycled and repurposed wood.

Above: The stairs in the camp are made from a Red Oak tree that Peter and his son helped a sawmill operator cut down in Havilland Bay, north of the Sault. The floors are made from b-grade 2x6 tongue and groove Red Pine. Photos courtesy Peter Gagnon.



Forestry Champion Retires After 44 Years

Tim Gray reflects on childhood, colleagues, and counting trees

BY COLLEEN MAHAFFIE

On a rainy Monday in late October, Tim Gray is warming himself by his wood stove, with plans, later that day, to help his wife Carolyn with preserves she is preparing from their garden harvest. Recently retired from his role as a Field Advisor with Forests Ontario, Gray is looking forward to free time to spend on some hobby projects and with his family, although he hasn't fully left the field of forestry just yet. "It's funny," Gray says, "I started out in forestry counting trees, doing survival assessments and now at the end, here I am back again, counting trees, doing survival assessments!"

Gray lives in the Township of Thurlow, just north of Belleville, on a property that has been in his family for generations. His family built their initial homestead next door in Tyendinaga Township in 1840. It was here that he grew up working on the family farm milking cows, raising beef cattle, chickens and pigs, and growing field crops. Farm work included regular trips to the bush with his father to cut firewood, logs, and cedar posts. "It was such a privilege to grow up on the farm and experience farm work at a young age," Gray said. In his early grades, he attended a one room country schoolhouse that provided an education with a rural slant. "In Grade 3, we learned weed identification and that there are 60 lbs in a bushel of wheat. I recall the teacher was quite strict. I got the strap for chewing gum in class!"

Spending time on the family farm stoked Gray's interest in the environment. He studied environmental science as an elective in high school and carried that education on to a diploma in forestry, and another in fish and wildlife at Sir Sanford Fleming College, now called Fleming College. Gray worked with what is now known as the Ministry of



Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry on all things forestry, from private land extension services to Crown forest operations. His early jobs took him to various Ministry districts in the province, from Tweed to Kapuskasing, Brockville, Bancroft, and Algonquin



Top right: Tim Gray examines an American Chestnut burr.
Left: Tim Gray and Glenn McLeod on a field tour, 2016.
Above: Tim Gray poses with Carolyn's VW Bug.

Provincial Park. “It was a fun career that included all kinds of public contact and surveys of all kinds - soils, timber cruising, growth and yield, insect and disease, aerial spraying fish and wildlife, tree marking, timber marketing, parks, and cooperation with sustainable forest license holders.”

Tree planting projects have been a part of Gray’s career since 1977. His first Ontario Forestry Association coordinated tree planting was under Project Tree Cover in 1995. In October 2004, the Ministry loaned him to Trees Ontario Foundation, to assist with the delivery of Forest 2020, a federally funded tree planting program, and later with Trees Ontario (now part of Forests Ontario) with the development of their own tree planting programs. After retiring from the Ministry in 2009, Gray continued with Forests Ontario as a Field Advisor.

Gray worked with Forests Ontario as a Field Advisor for 12 years, retiring this year. In his role, he covered a large section of eastern Ontario, from Prince Edward County north to Bancroft, Renfrew County and from Perth south to Gananoque. His favourite memories relate to the people that he worked with and learned from. “It was a joy to connect with so many people and organizations,” Gray said. “There’s such a wealth of expert knowledge about tree planting and forest management in our forestry family. I hope I have been able to soak up some of that during my time.” Gray particularly enjoyed learning about tree seed from working with Brian Swaile, former Forests Ontario Seed and Stock Coordinator, and manager of the Ontario Tree Seed Plant. He also appreciated working with Forests

Ontario’s dedicated office staff, field advisors, partner agency representatives, and private landowners across the province. “It was easy for me to relate to rural landowners with my farm background, and it was rewarding to carry out the extension work that I discussed with them, like planting trees and managing their woodlands.”

“With all the difficulties and challenges in tree planting, from weather extremes to funding and stock availability, planting trees remains such a good, positive thing to do. It’s a good news story! Trees are amazing multi-taskers – providing wildlife habitat and future forest products, stabilizing water tables, sequestering carbon, providing recreational opportunities. They just go ahead and do all this neat stuff” he says.

Though he’s retired, Gray certainly isn’t slowing down. He has several projects closer to home, including getting his woodworking shop in order, vehicle restoration, and building a log cabin. “It’ll be a forest ranger style cabin, with old maps, traps, furs, and a wood stove. Just a small cabin for the grandkids and I to hang out in.” He and his son are restoring a 1946 GMC one-ton truck, the old farm truck that Gray’s father used and the first vehicle (after the tractor) that Gray drove. Carolyn recently acquired a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle, the same model as her first car, which they are nearly done restoring. And of course, Gray will be hard at work in the spring making maple syrup, which his family has produced since 1880. “I like to think we have learned how to make some pretty good syrup with all our practice!”



Tim Gray on site during a field tour, 2018.

Planting Trees at Six Nations

Reconciliation gathering commemorates past injustices and celebrates community strength

BY ALANNA EVANS

In October, Forests Ontario partnered with Kayanase, an ecological restoration and native plant and seed business, to deliver a second Reconciliation Community Tree Plant (RCTP) at Six Nations near Brantford. This initiative supports First Nations communities and organizations in creating a platform to tell their stories, while highlighting the importance of reconciliation and its intersection with tree planting and restoration.

Kayanase, a planting partner for Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program for over five years, is dedicated to improving the health of Mother Earth using science-based approaches and Traditional Ecological knowledge. At the event this fall, community members and staff from Kayanase, Grand River Employment and Training Inc. (GRETI), Enbridge Gas Inc., and Forests Ontario planted about 170 native trees and shrubs around Kayanase's greenhouse.

Among those planting trees was Roberta Hill, a survivor of the Mohawk Institute Residential School, run at Six Nations by Canada's Anglican Church and later by the Government of Canada. The school, which students nicknamed "The Mush Hole" because of the terrible food, housed Indigenous children for almost 150 years, from 1834 to 1970 -- between 90 and 200 students each year. Hill, chair of the Mohawk Village Memorial Park Board, spoke to Alanna Evans of Forests Ontario about her time in the residential school and why she plans to plant an apple orchard on the site. The interview was edited for space.

Raynee Smith, Miss Pre-Teen Six Nations, and her aunt, Carole Smith of Kayanase, plant an Eastern White Cedar tree as part of a windbreak at the October event. Photo by CNW.



Forests Ontario: Could you tell me a bit about yourself?

Roberta: I was put into residential school as a six-year-old, me and my brothers and sisters, so I was at the Mohawk Institute 1957 - January 1961. We were restricted as to where we could play so we had a very small playground there, but just step a few feet outside of that playground was the apple orchard. We weren't allowed to play in the orchard. We weren't allowed to take any of the apples even if they were on the ground. It was considered stealing.

So, for me, you know you're hungry all the time, kids are hungry all the time. When you walked around the playground you'd always smell the apples in the fall, they smelled so sweet. I could smell them, I could see them laying on the ground. The temptation seemed to be too great. So, I laid behind the tree; I looked out to make sure none of the supervisors or the staff were up on the veranda of The Mush Hole because I knew that I wasn't allowed to cross into the orchard. I didn't see anybody, so I crawled on my belly over to the apples that were laying there. I took an apple and went back behind my tree and ate my apple (laughs). That was so delicious, and it still stays with me because I can still smell it.

Forests Ontario: Can you tell me a bit more about the Mohawk Village Memorial Park?

Roberta: We're putting in the Mohawk Village Memorial Park, where the Mohawk settled along the Grand River. The park is next to the former residential school. Most of the horror stories are in that building. That's the bad place where a lot of the abuse took place, in the building or in the church itself. I don't know how they could even consider it an educational facility. It was a residential school; it was meant to do harm.

We're saying, "Let's create a space where we can have some peace, we can reflect, we can remember what happened in this time in history." This is probably a better way to do it, rather than getting angry and fighting with each other. Let's just have a peaceful place to gather. And it's right beside the school, even better. There are still people who say "I don't want to step foot on that property, it causes me too much pain." And that is unfortunate because it is not ever the land, the land never hurt you. It's the people that did the damage.

Forests Ontario: Your group plans to plant apple trees next year at the park. Is this an effort to reclaim that apple orchard?

Roberta: Yeah, we have to put them back anyways, because the arborist came in and marked trees that were rotten. And so we said, 'We'll cut them out and replace them.' I have good memories, but I also have bad memories of the orchard. To me, it belongs to the community. That whole area that we're

Roberta Hill, a survivor of the Mohawk Institute Residential School, speaks at the Reconciliation Community Tree Plant at Six Nations in October, 2021. Photo by CNW.



developing for the park is Six Nations-owned. It belongs to everybody, not just a few.

Forests Ontario: Next year's tree planting sounds like an event to look forward to.

Roberta: Yes. This fall, a bunch of language immersion students from the Everlasting Tree came to help plant the little cedar trees along the greenhouse at Kayanase. Next year, we will plant our apple trees at a site by the school and those language kids want to come back and help plant those trees in the spring. They want to be involved in this, so that's an important part. The residential school may have destroyed our language, taken it away, but here we are again, how many years later? Look at these children. They're regaining their language. They're learning to speak their language and they want to help.

Alanna Evans also spoke to Carole Smith, Administrative Team Lead at Kayanase.

Forests Ontario: What did the participants plant at this year's event?

Carole: We planted cedars along the greenhouse to create a wind break. We also added trees to the seed orchard. Eventually, we want to nurture a small ecosystem back there because we do have wildlife on our site. On the ecotourism side, they have a snake hibernaculum, salamander areas, a composting area, and a birding area. We know we have rabbits; we see the odd fox or coyote. Between the Longhouse

site and Kayanase, we have a combined 20 acres. The project is basically a living demonstration of how you can support the ecosystem.

Forests Ontario: What do you grow at Kayanase?

Carole: The greenhouse only grows native Carolinian species that are specific to zone 37, our ecoregion. There is a lot of herbaceous stock in the greenhouse but we're trying to narrow down, so that we're growing species that are specific demand. Forests Ontario has identified to us that oaks, hickories and maples are in demand, and that they are something that Kayanase has had success growing in the past.

Thank you to Enbridge Gas Ltd. for the funding that made this event possible, and to TD Bank Group for their continuous program support.

Forests Ontario would like to thank Roberta Hill for telling us her story. We are honoured to share it with our readers. As an organization dedicated to being the voice of our forests, we value our partnerships and collaborations with First Nations communities and organizations across the province. Together, we continue to grow our series of events and activities in 2022, providing opportunities to reflect and learn through Reconciliation Community Tree Plants, and our involvement in The Healing Place, a community green space located on the traditional territories of the Algonquin and Mohawk Nations in Eastern Ontario.

Think Locally When it Comes to Wood

Architect suggests Sugar Maple as a home-grown alternative to Baltic Birch

BY TERI HOANG



Lady Marmalade used Baltic Birch to cover the walls of its restaurant on Broadview Avenue in Toronto. Photos by Teri Hoang.

Lady Marmalade, a beloved local brunch restaurant in my Toronto neighbourhood of Leslieville, closed for about four months a while ago, announcing a plan to re-open in a new location. Locals waited with great anticipation to see the new space. When the eatery re-opened at a nearby building on Broadview Ave., the space had undergone two years of renovations. The restaurant threw open its doors to reveal a newly renovated space, completely covered in a light-coloured wood, essentially resembling a “wooden box”. It was refreshing to see wood being showcased in such a way at the local brunch spot.

Architects covered the restaurant’s interior in 5,000 square feet of Baltic Birch paneling. “The use of the baltic wood panels provided a clean, bright—yet—homey feeling and reflected the food served, non-greasy, locally sourced, and beautifully presented,” Omar Ghandi, the architect, told *The Globe and Mail* in June 2020. Baltic Birch comes from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and is primarily produced in Finland and Russia. We reached out to the architects, but they were unavailable to comment by our deadline.

Building with wood has benefits. It’s the only renewable building material and it sequesters carbon. Wood is also aesthetically pleasing, and exposure to wood contributes positively to human well-being. But what if the wood has come from far away? The carbon footprint is larger, with more CO₂ being emitted to the atmosphere due to it travelling a long distance.

Locally grown Ontario wood such as maple, oak, and pine can help reduce the carbon footprint. Using local wood also ensures that it is sustainably managed and harvested, as Ontario is a world leader in sustainable forest management. David Sisam, Principal Emeritus at Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc., and a member of the board of Forests Ontario, says maple paneling would have achieved similar results to the Baltic Birch. He adds that “the relatively new focus on embodied carbon emissions (the carbon footprint associated with building materials) has given more impetus to use local material, eliminating the carbon emissions resulting from transportation.”

Ontario wood is in our heritage, from the White Pine to the majestic oak and maple. It is sustainably harvested and processed locally, of high quality, supports local communities and economies and is the best environmentally friendly choice. Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario, reminds us “that consumer choices have real consequences for businesses, and everyone should do their part.”

Thinking local shouldn’t just apply to your brunch, it should also apply to the wood products you buy. Before you make your next wood purchase, visit the Ontario government web site, Ontario Wood. It will help you source locally grown, sustainable products such as building supplies, flooring, lighting, furniture, or decorative and seasonal items. Think locally when it comes to wood!

Happy Holidays!



Shelter from the Storm

Plant evergreens to provide animals and birds with a winter home

BY PETER KUITENBROUWER

Winter is a quiet time in the forests of Ontario. Many of the birds, butterflies, and even bats have flown south. Creeks that once trickled and burred lie frozen solid. The chatter of squirrels and scuffle of chipmunks, busy in other seasons gathering nuts, subsides.

But just under its still surface, the forest, even in winter, teems with life. Some amphibians, such as turtles, lie submerged at the bottom of frozen ponds. Other animals remain active. Besides the tips of their ears, Snowshoe Hares turn completely white to blend in, as they continue to forage in the snowy woods. Red Squirrels stay active in elaborate networks of tunnels in the snow. Hidden from harsh winds and predators, deer huddle in the shelter of evergreen trees.

In the winter, dozens of mammal, amphibian, and bird species shelter in the habitat that forests provide. Rural landowners who want to welcome wildlife to their property should consider planting trees under Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP) to enlarge existing forests and provide the connections between woodlots that animals use as travel corridors all year round. The 50 MTP can reduce tree planting costs for eligible landowners with room to plant at least 500 trees. Landowners who want fewer trees can get a discount through Forests Ontario's Over-the-Counter program.

As a bonus, a landowner with four hectares or more of forest cover can write a managed forest plan (or hire a professional to write a plan) and register their forest under the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).

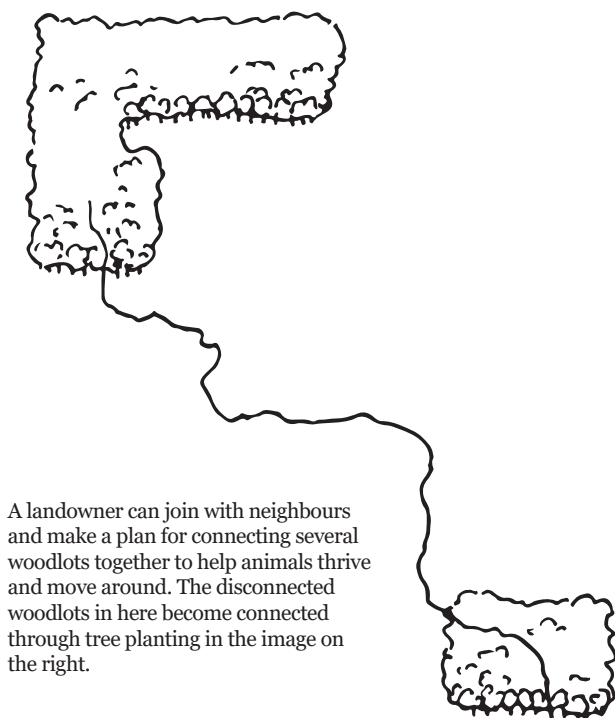
Landowners can see their property taxes drop by 75 per cent on eligible forest land.

The Woodland Management Handbook (Firefly Books, 2009) advises that forest stewards look after, and expand, the parts of their woods that offer wildlife food, water, shelter, and space. Along with streams, wetlands, and natural corridors such as fencerows, the book counsels to promote "stands of coniferous trees that provide shelter for mammals, such as deer, in severe weather or in the winter months."

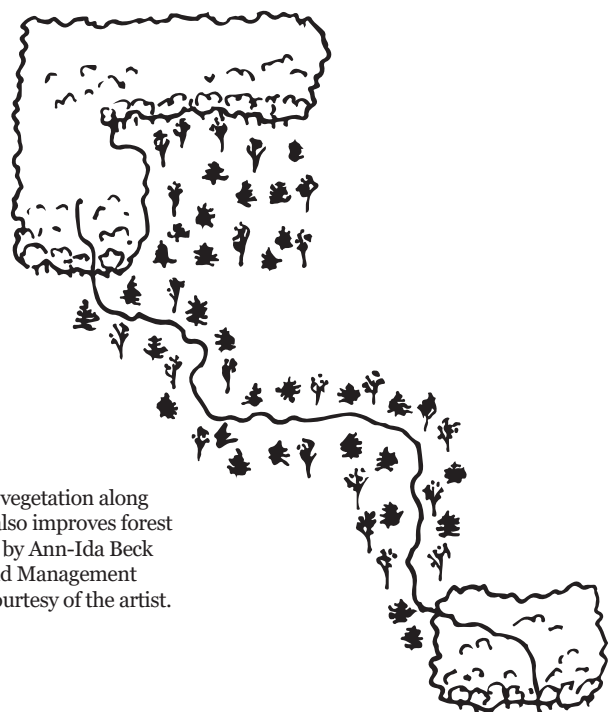
A landowner who wants to encourage wildlife can plant trees to fill in gaps and enhance contiguous woodland with more forest interior habitat. The Ontario government forestry extension note *Conserving the Forest Interior: A Threatened Wildlife Habitat*, published in 2000, notes that species such as the Scarlet Tanager, Red Bat, Red Squirrel, salamanders, ovenbirds, Red Trilliums, and ferns thrive in the forest interior.

A landowner can also join with neighbours and make a plan for connecting several woodlots together to help animals thrive and move around, and even share a trail network through the wooded areas. A word of caution: too many trails can diminish the shelter and safety that dense woods provide for woodland creatures. When planning your forest expansion project, also remember to plant a buffer of vegetation along streams and wetlands.

Depending on the site conditions, Forests Ontario and its partners frequently plant a variety of conifer species such as pine, spruce and cedar which thrive in exposed areas and can compete with heavy grasses and have a



A landowner can join with neighbours and make a plan for connecting several woodlots together to help animals thrive and move around. The disconnected woodlots in here become connected through tree planting in the image on the right.



Planting buffers of vegetation along creeks or streams also improves forest health. Illustration by Ann-Ida Beck from *The Woodland Management Handbook*, used courtesy of the artist.



Planting conifers can attract deer to your property. Come winter, deer and other mammals seek shelter under a forest's thermal cover, which protects these forest dwellers from deep snow and extreme temperatures. Photo by Melodie Belusa.

better chance of survival. It is also recommended to plant native shrubs such as elder, dogwood, Highbush Cranberry, serviceberry, and many more to attract wildlife.

Come winter, deer and other mammals seek shelter under a forest's thermal cover, made up of dense stands of adult conifer trees that protect these forest dwellers from deep snow and extreme temperatures. Conifer thickets block winds and typically have higher ambient nighttime air temperatures and lower daily temperature fluctuations than other forest types. Under the trees, the shallow snow allows easier movement to find food and escape from predators. Here deer can browse on young shrub and tree branches. Deer take up residence in the relatively cozy confines of the thermal cover when the snow falls thick, and stay until the spring thaw.

Conifer plantations are a great way to transform old fields to a mixed hardwood forest. As conifers grow, their roots hold the soil in place, which reduces erosion. As their needles and branches fall, they provide the forest floor with organic matter and nutrients. These trees also provide shade. Come spring in these cool, moist

conditions, other species of trees and plants take root. When a landowner begins to thin a conifer plantation, typically at around 25 years, other species can find light and begin to reach for the sky.

White spruce can be a good choice to attract wildlife. The spruce cones shed seeds in winter, offering food to birds and squirrels. Bur Oak acorns are also a good source of nutrients and stick around on the tree in winter, a pleasing treat for squirrels and deer. Eastern White Cedar releases seeds from its cones in fall, to the delight of goldfinches.

The conifers that you plant can make a cozy winter home for deer and other wildlife, and will draw animals and birds to your property throughout the year.

Printed in the Snow

Animal tracks reveal what keeps wildlife busy in the winter

BY MADELEINE BRAY



Owl strikes are the imprints in the snow made by an owl's wings after it pounces to catch some small prey skittering beneath the snow. Photo by Daphne Christie.



If you're out in the woods this winter, there may be evidence of overlapping animal tracks in all different shapes and sizes, showing the paths that animals walked at some point between your most recent outdoor excursion and the last snowfall. These tracks are mostly invisible all other times of the year, but with the high contrast provided by snow, they become obvious to the eye.

Some animals, such as squirrels and songbirds, are easy to spot in the winter, but not all animals want to make their presence known. In the winter, animals only really travel beyond their dens and nests to search for food and may only be active at dusk or at nighttime. In these cases, the prints left behind after their nighttime excursions may be the only evidence that certain animals live around you. Knowing how to identify animals based on their tracks paints a vivid picture of what happens in the forest when you aren't looking.

Snow provides ideal conditions to identify animals by their tracks, offering a clean slate where fresh prints can be highly visible and very distinct. Clear prints, such as those left by a coyote, are only fully visible in a medium like snow or wet sand where the number of toes, the size of the print, and even the differences between front and rear paws, can be used to provide a positive identification.

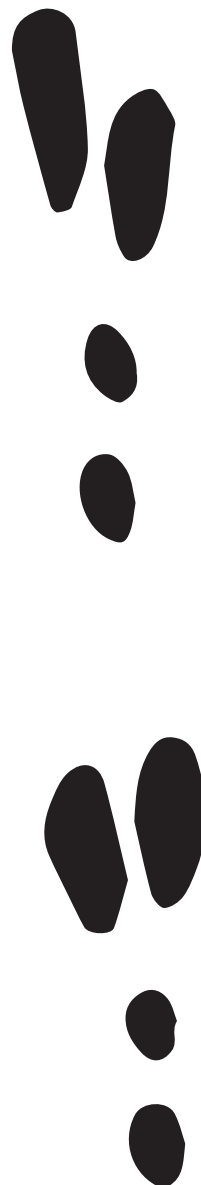
However, clear, well-formed prints can be rare to find. Tracks can be buried in deep leg holes or distorted as snow melts around the print. This can make identification difficult, but not impossible! Such distortions can be overcome by taking in the bigger picture and identifying gait or walking pattern. An animal's gait, such as a rabbit's hop, can tell you what lives nearby at a glance. The distance between tracks (known as the stride),

and the width of the tracks (known as the straddle), can help you identify local wildlife. These are both features that identification guides will describe with measurements and illustrations.

Porcupines, for example, rarely leave behind clear prints in the snow. They walk rather slowly and close to the ground, dragging their feet as they travel from their dens to whatever their source of food may be. As such, a porcupine's tracks in the winter may just look like a deep trench with only vague evidence of their slow, dragging prints at the bottom.

Animal tracks tell you what lives in the forest, and also how they live, too. Tracks tell us where animals go, where they sleep, and even where they hunt. Owl strikes are a dramatic example: these are the imprints in the snow made by an owl's wings after it has heard some small prey skittering beneath the snow. These prints often have a messy hole in the centre where the owl sought to catch its meal.

There are many tracking guide books and online resources. The Ontario Envirothon Mammal Identification and Tracking Guide, from Forests Ontario, can help you identify some of the more common mammals in the province by the tracks they leave behind. The next time you find tracks, try to see what stories they may be telling you.



Top left: Porcupine tracks.
Right: Rabbit tracks.
Illustrations by Madeleine Bray.

Winter Health Hazard

Salt makes travel safer but threatens roadside trees

Dear Silvi



Forests Ontario's experts, known collectively as "Silvi" (short for silviculture), answer your forestry questions. Send questions to info@forestsontario.ca, or c/o Forests Ontario, 15 Maple Ave. Unit 103, Barrie, ON L4N 2N6

DEAR SILVI,

I live on a busy road in Pickering, Ontario. The city plans to widen the road in the next few years, meaning my yard will be much closer to the road edge. I have mature trees in my front yard and I am worried about seeing an increase in salt spray. What should I do to protect my trees from the road salt?

Pondering in Pickering

DEAR PONDERING IN PICKERING,

Road salts, or de-icers, are relied upon for road safety. Road salts can quickly and effectively melt snow and ice that forms during typical winter. The positive safety effects are often compared to the environmental threat road salts have when they enter the natural environment. Salt impacts trees' health, making them more susceptible to insects, disease, and other environmental stressors such as drought.

Soil Contamination and Salt Spray

There are two ways road salts can hurt the health of a tree: soil contamination and salt spray. Soil absorbs road salt through snow melt and runoff. When broken down, road salt becomes sodium

and chloride, both which can have negative effects on a tree when found in large quantities. For example, sodium blocks the tree's ability to absorb essential nutrients and transport water.

When crews plow roads as part of typical road maintenance, the trucks project salt, snow, and ice through the air; the salt can land directly on a tree. Road salt can turn coniferous trees' needles and branch tips brown. When road salts land on a shoot of a deciduous tree, it hampers its growth. A stress response is triggered in the tree, which causes groups of shoots to grow in attempt to withstand the damage the road salts caused.

Road Salt Resistance

Certain tree species tolerate road salts better than others. Selecting tree species to plant on your property that are suited for the soil conditions and have shown salt resistance is a winning combination. White Spruce, White Oak, and Black Walnut may be good choices; connect with your local conservation authority or a forest professional to choose a tree that will thrive on your site. If you have space to plant a row of salt-tolerant trees in front of existing more susceptible species, you can establish what is called a living snow fence. Alternately, ask a professional for advice on how to install physical barriers temporarily over the winter months to add a layer of protection for the trees. You could wrap the trees or the 'spray zone' with burlap or install a snow fence to stop contaminants from hitting the trees.

Yours, Silvi



A roadway in winter. Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock.

Our Forest Photo Contest Winners



First Place

White-Tailed
Deer spotted in
Mississauga.
Maya Davidson,
January 2021.

 @maya.hikes

Second Place

A wintry scene in
Newcastle.

Kristi McManus,
February 2013.

 @shutter.bug.photo



Third Place

A Snowy Owl
perched atop a spruce
tree in Toronto.

Maya Davidson,
January 2021.

 @maya.hikes



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