

2020 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**FORESTS
ONTARIO**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	A Message from the President & CEO
6	Who We Are
8	Tree Planting & Maintenance
14	Our Delivery Partners
16	Community Engagement
20	Education & Awareness
24	Partnerships
26	Statement of Operations
28	Statement of Financial Position
29	Board of Directors and Staff

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

As the voice for Ontario's forests, Forests Ontario (FO) works towards a greener future by facilitating large-scale tree planting and forest stewardship, advancing forest education, and increasing awareness for our sustainable forests in communities across the province. Our skilled staff, extensive partnerships, and well-established programs create healthy forests that support healthy communities and economies for generations to come.

This year has been a challenging one for many. As COVID-19 measures and government guidelines continue to adapt to an ever-changing landscape, FO pressed on – the 2021 Annual Conference was hosted virtually for the first time with great success, we had one of our best years for tree planting under the 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP), and we expanded relationships with our partners and the federal government in support of the national 2 Billion Trees Program (2 BTP).

Increased forest cover is an essential component of a healthy environment and healthy communities. Our forests help to clean our air and water, lower temperatures, and reduce the risk of flooding.

Thanks to our staff and network of partners, we planted 2.8 million trees across Ontario through the 50 MTP. These efforts created approximately 1,400 ha of new forest. Planting also took place across the country, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, through our national division, Forest Recovery Canada.

As a complement to our spring planting season, we were excited to announce the publication of a new study from Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN), *Growing Our Future: Assessing the Outcome of Afforestation Programs in Ontario, Canada*. Elizabeth Celanowicz, Forests Ontario's Chief Operating Officer, co-authored the paper, which found that more than 83% of trees planted under the 50 MTP are thriving on the landscape, and will sequester significant amounts of carbon over time. The study was published in *The Forestry Chronicle*.

We are pleased to support the re-elected federal government's commitment to investing in nature-based solutions to climate change. As the leader in large-scale afforestation, Forests Ontario created a technical task team with representatives from our planting, nursery, and seed partners to provide guidance, recommendations, and advice on the 2 BTP. Working in collaboration with our exceptional network across the country, we are excited to continue advising the federal government on the rollout of their significant initiative. Close, productive relationships with all levels of government remain one of our strongest assets as an organization.

The Grasslands Stewardship Initiative (GSI), administered through our division Grasslands Ontario, helps to ensure biodiverse landscapes and ecosystems across the province. The GSI program provides awareness and support towards the creation, enhancement, and maintenance of grassland habitat. Thanks to new funding from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, as well as from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the GSI program now has a dedicated coordinator on staff to manage site projects.

While the pandemic has disrupted our in-person school programs, we have not let it stop us from reaching students and teachers interested in learning about the social, economic, and environmental importance of forests. Core FO programs such as the Ontario Envirothon, Forestry in the Classroom, and Tree Bee were delivered online through our various educational materials and resources, reaching students across Ontario. FO's It Takes A Forest initiative, along with the Ontario Labour Market Partnerships' Bridging the Gap project, continues to engage and foster our forest stewards of the future.

We are proud of our continued work with many different communities across the province, nationally, and globally, to advocate for our forests. FO was recognized

this year as a Restoration Implementer of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (Decade). As a Restoration Implementer, FO will be helping to promote the Decade, strengthen restoration capacities, and lead restoration efforts. Through our Reconciliation Community Tree Plant program, we partner with Indigenous communities to offer a platform to share stories and knowledge, while highlighting the importance of reconciliation and its intersection with ecological restoration.

FO will continue to serve as leaders in afforestation, both locally and abroad. We thank our partners, staff, and sponsors for their tremendous support over the last year. We will continue to adapt to oncoming challenges, and we will never lose sight of our mission to be the voice for our forests.

All the best,



Malcolm Cockwell
President and Chair
Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada



Rob Keen, RPF
CEO
Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada



Rob Keen
CEO



Malcolm Cockwell
President and Chair

WHO WE ARE



This year kicked off the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, dedicated to the protection, conservation, and revitalization of ecosystems worldwide. Forests Ontario has teamed up with the United Nations as a Restoration Implementation Partner, one of just a few in North America. Together with our innovative infrastructure of partners, we celebrate and champion the relationship between healthy forests, healthy communities, and a healthy economy.

Our forests are needed now more than ever. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, wildfires, and high heat days are on the rise. The trees we plant do so much to benefit our communities. Shade from trees can cool neighbourhoods by 5°C. Trees absorb water, helping to prevent floods. Forests filter the water we drink, and sequester the carbon released into the atmosphere that is warming our Earth. Over the course of 50 years, the trees we have planted will capture the equivalent of the carbon emitted by a million cars driving from Montreal to Vancouver – and back.

Since 2004, we have planted more than 38 million trees through our planting programs – one tree per Canadian. As a leader in successful afforestation, we understand that you can't plant a tree and walk away. This belief sets us apart. To ensure our efforts yield the maximum restoration and biodiversity benefits, we monitor the seedlings that we have planted. We also equip landowners with resources to manage their own forests. We track the health of *every single tree* we plant – a commitment unmatched by any other tree planting organization.

Forests Ontario is the voice for Ontario's forests - a voice that can be heard across all our initiatives as we foster the next generation of forest stewards.

VISION

Ontario's forested landscapes sustain healthy people and a healthy economy.

MISSION

To be the voice for Ontario's forests by supporting forest restoration, stewardship, education and awareness.

TREE PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

Our forest restoration efforts have supported the planting of nearly three million trees per year. To enhance ecosystem resilience and adaptation in the face of new and mounting environmental challenges, Forests Ontario works with our many partners to increase forest cover through large-scale planting and effective forest management, seeking the maximum ecological, hydrological and social benefits from all restoration activities.

FOREST EDUCATION

Forests Ontario's education programs empower youth to understand natural ecosystems and develop the skills and knowledge required to become future environmental stewards. Our learning tools, resources and interactive experiences connect students to nature and inspire a life-long passion for the outdoors.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

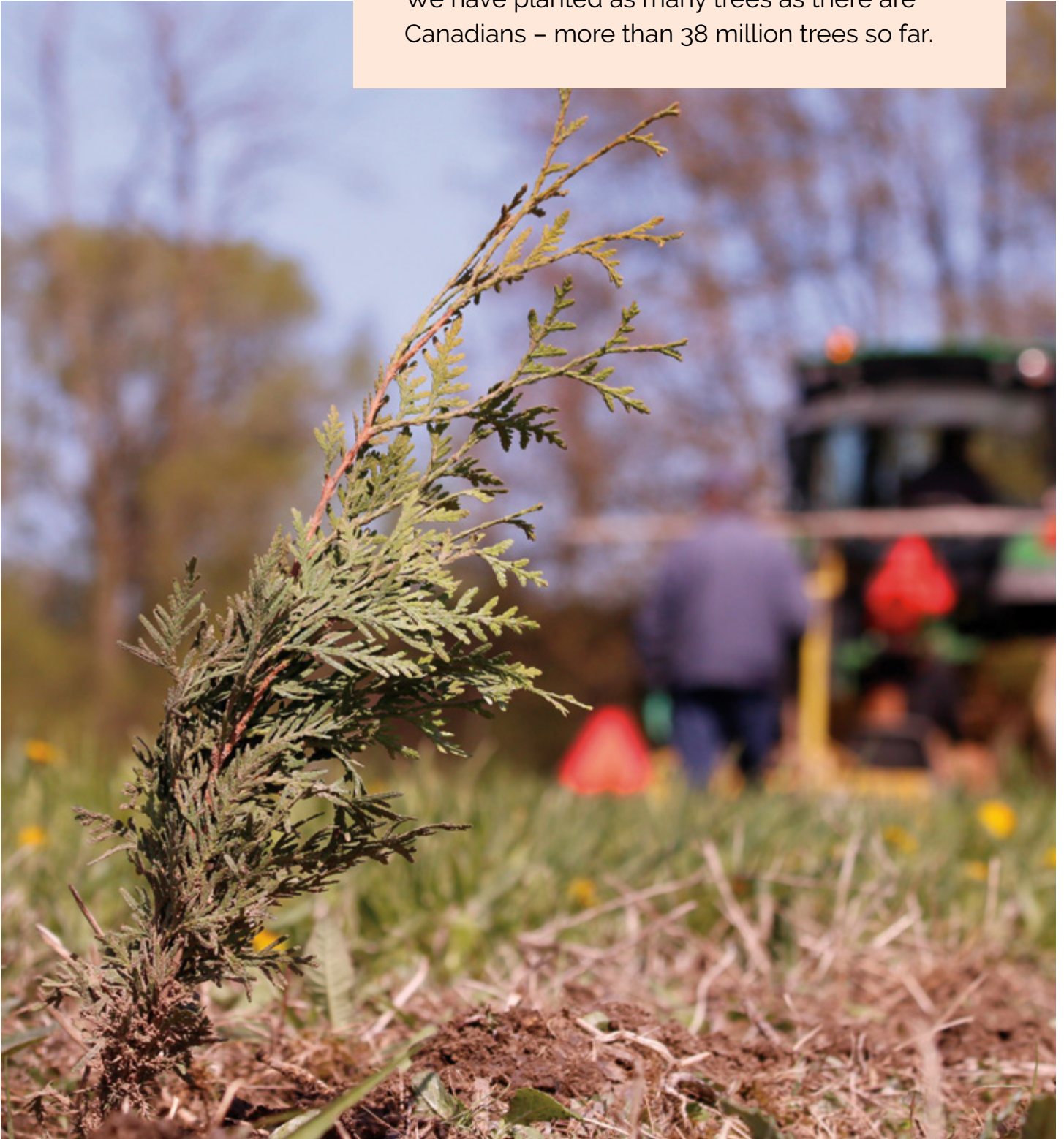
Forests Ontario focuses its awareness efforts on telling the story of forest management in Ontario, and its integral role in fostering healthy and prosperous communities. We celebrate and promote our forests and the work of forestry professionals through various digital platforms, publications and presentations, events and collaborations.



TREE PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

38 million trees

We have planted as many trees as there are Canadians – more than 38 million trees so far.



We have planted as many trees as there are Canadians – more than 38 million trees so far. Forests Ontario's planting programs are comprehensive, from seed to forest. We know that we can do our part for the environment by ensuring we plant the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason. And we certainly couldn't do it without our

significant infrastructure and network of partners: more than 90 seed collectors, nurseries, and planting delivery agents; more than 5,000 landowners across the province; over 200 million seeds in storage for future planting projects, and our dedicated staff and our many sponsors and donors.



HIGHWAY OF HEROES TREE CAMPAIGN & GRANDTREES

Forests Ontario has partnered with both Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign and GrandTrees to reduce tree planting costs for eligible landowners. The Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign plants trees along Highway 401 to honour Canadian veterans and those currently serving in the Armed Forces, and helped more than 878,000 trees take root this spring alone. GrandTrees, a group formed by climate-concerned grandparents, focuses on increasing tree cover in the Greater Toronto Area. This season, GrandTrees supported the planting of more than 101,000 trees.

GREENBELT FOUNDATION

This fiscal year, Forests Ontario signed a two-year agreement with the Greenbelt Foundation, an organization that is dedicated to promoting and sustaining the Greenbelt for the future. This partnership provides additional savings for Greenbelt landowners to plant trees on their property in conjunction with Forests Ontario's 50 MTP. Landowners who live within the Greenbelt, and have space for at least 500 trees, may be eligible to apply.

GRASSLANDS ONTARIO

Grasslands Ontario, a division of Forests Ontario, supports the creation, enhancement, and maintenance of grassland habitat across Ontario. With funding from the Species at Risk program of the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Grassland Stewardship Initiative (GSI) is supporting nearly 250 hectares of grasslands across southern Ontario.

The 2020-2021 fiscal year saw Forests Ontario hire a dedicated Grasslands Restoration Coordinator to manage and support GSI projects, and saw the addition of new funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

FOREST RECOVERY CANADA

Forest Recovery Canada, Forests Ontario's national tree planting division, delivers coast-to-coast large-scale tree planting with an emphasis on increasing forest connectivity. During the fiscal 2020-2021 planting seasons, Forest Recovery Canada planted more than 26,000 trees in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.





SEED COLLECTION & FORECASTING

Forests Ontario recognizes the crucial role local seed plays in ecological integrity. Monitoring how climate change affects our forests and ensuring that the forests we plant come from local tree seeds, are both key to our overall mission.

Federal funding supports our growing seed acquisition program. Forests Ontario employed 40 seed and cone collectors province-wide, and processed 8.6 million viable seeds this year. In total, our seed bank holds 205 million viable seeds.

We continue to work with partners like the Forest Gene Conservation Association to develop guidelines for seed forecasting under climate change.

GROWING OUR FUTURE: ASSESSING THE OUTCOME OF AFFORESTATION PROGRAMS IN ONTARIO, CANADA

A study by The Canadian Forest Service, at Natural Resources Canada, used aerial imagery in conjunction with Forests Ontario's data to analyze tree survival on about 12,500 hectares planted through the 50 MTP from 2007 to 2016. The study found that more than 83 % of trees planted under Forests Ontario's 50 MTP are thriving on the landscape and, over time, will sequester significant amounts of carbon.

The study concluded that, if undisturbed for 54 years, the forests will remove about 2.24 megatons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Co-authored by Forests Ontario's Chief Operating Officer, Elizabeth Celanowicz, the study appeared in *The Forestry Chronicle*.

We are the only Canadian charity that tracks projects from **seed to successful forest.**



OUR DELIVERY PARTNERS



A close-up, slightly high-angle shot of a dense field of tall, green grasses. The grasses are long and thin, with some showing signs of being cut or broken. The lighting is bright, creating a mix of green and brownish-yellow tones. A semi-transparent text box is centered over the middle of the image.

Thank you to the nurseries, seed and cone collectors, and planting partners whose expertise and collaboration enabled us to complete another successful planting season. Together, we are growing a greener Ontario for generations to come.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



2020 TORONTO CHRISTMAS MARKET

For the tenth year in a row, Forests Ontario participated in the Toronto Christmas Market held at The Distillery District. Due to COVID-19, the market was scaled back to comply with public health measures and did not have its usual vendor activations. Those interested in buying a tree pre-purchased online through Forests Ontario's new e-commerce platform and followed a convenient drive-through contactless pick-up system on-site.

Forests Ontario sold more than 300 locally grown Christmas trees and wreaths, with all proceeds going towards our tree planting programs. Sourced from Schomberg, Ontario, we also provided the nearly 45-foot Balsam Fir centerpiece which was adorned with 60,800 new LED lights and thousands of decorations.

Though pandemic related circumstances changed the typical format of the Toronto Christmas Market, Forests Ontario continued to reach countless Ontarians with the message that real, locally sourced trees are the green choice.

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Forests Ontario's 2021 Annual Conference, *Growing Our Future*, took place virtually February 3-5, and attracted more than 500 attendees. The virtual platform, EventMobi, provided a central event space for keynote and plenary sessions, speaker interaction, attendee networking, sponsorship and exhibitor engagement, and interactive games. Although the pandemic shifted the event online, this innovative platform provided us with new opportunities to reach our audience and speakers globally.

This conference marked the first annual stand-alone Forest Health Review, presented in partnership with NRCan – the Review attracted nearly 200 attendees, and featured six speaker presentations. Our third annual Student-Employer Engagement Day (SEED) event ran concurrently with the Annual Conference and brought together more than 150 high school and post-secondary students, recent graduates, and prospective employers from across the province.

Growing Our Future hosted a diverse range of global speakers, including keynote speaker Dirk Brinkman, of Brinkman Reforestation Ltd., and Canadian hip-hop science communicator Baba Brinkman, who provided "Rap Ups" of entire sessions, and a final performance at the end of the three-day event.



RECONCILIATION COMMUNITY TREE PLANT

Going into its second year, Forests Ontario continues to partner with First Nations communities and organizations across the province to deliver its Reconciliation Community Tree Plant program. These events provide communities with a platform to share their stories and knowledge, while highlighting the intersection of ecological restoration and reconciliation.

Forthcoming events will take place on October 6, 2021, with Six Nations of the Grand River at Kayanase in Ohsweken, Ontario, and on October 14, 2021, to expand The Healing Place—a collaborative project developed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners of The Healing Place Working Group—and create a children's garden on-site in Shanly, Ontario.



NATIONAL FOREST WEEK

National Forest Week ran September 19-25, 2021, and this year's theme was *Our forests – continually giving*.

Established in 1920, this week-long celebration encourages Canadians to become aware of their ecological surroundings and learn more about our country's forest heritage.

This year, Forests Ontario took Canadians on a virtual hike through the Eldred King Tract, a popular forest in York Region. The approximately 20-minute virtual guided hike was accompanied by an activity kit with tips and tricks for hiking novices, a detailed outline of what to expect and look out for on the hike, and fun activities such as a scavenger hunt. The video and activity kit were developed with support from the Regional Municipality of York.

Forests Ontario also celebrated National Forest Week with our Forest Fun Booklet, an interactive resource featuring a variety of activities and games for kids including BINGO, a scavenger hunt, and a colouring sheet. In September, the Forest Fun booklet was downloaded close to 250 times.

HERITAGE TREE

In partnership with the Ontario Urban Forest Council, Forests Ontario launched the Heritage Tree Program in 2009, to collect and share the stories of Ontario's unique trees from residents across the province. This program draws attention to the social, cultural, historical, and ecological value of trees.

This year, the program approved two new Heritage Trees: a Bur Oak in Hamilton and a Red Oak in Mississauga. Forests Ontario also relaunched our interactive Heritage Tree website, providing the opportunity to virtually visit and learn about more than 100 recognized Heritage Trees.





EDUCATION & AWARENESS



A core tenet of Forests Ontario's mission is forest education. By working with educators, students, and community organizations, we are developing Ontario's environmental stewards of the future, ensuring healthy landscapes for generations to come.

IT TAKES A FOREST

Led by Forests Ontario, It Takes a Forest (ITAF) is a collaborative initiative with the goal of providing fact-based information on Ontario's forest sector, the sustainable management of these forests, and the fundamental role of our forests as one of the province's most sustainable resources.

This year, ITAF partnered with the Ontario Forest Industries Association's Ontario Labour Market Partnership, and received funding from the Ministry of Labour, Trades, and Skills Development to complete the Bridging the Gap project. The project will investigate

and provide mechanisms to address the labour force and skills shortage in the forest sector through several avenues, including a youth perception survey, an employee survey, and a gap analysis.

ITAF is continuing its collaboration with FedNor and Canadian Wood Council/Ontario WoodWORKS! to install 24 new billboards across the province. The initiative also received funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to further its work on forestry education and career promotion efforts. ITAF continues to reach new audiences on social media and through traditional media outlets.



“Many thanks to Forests Ontario for teaching us at Keele St. Public School about the four Ontario forest regions, how forestry impacts our daily lives, various careers in forestry, the current challenges Toronto urban forests face as well as potential next steps or actions we can take!”

– Valerie Vavala, Keele St. Public School

FORESTRY IN THE CLASSROOM

Every year, Forestry in the Classroom connects students and teachers with environmental and forestry professionals. Volunteer-led presentations allow students in grades four through twelve a rare glance at the types of green jobs available to them within the forest sector. Other presentation topics include sustainable forest management, tree biodiversity and identification, and urban forests. Our volunteers include foresters, arborists, scientists, and environmental technicians.

This year alone, Forests Ontario successfully conducted 32 virtual lessons, and engaged with more than 900 students from across the province.

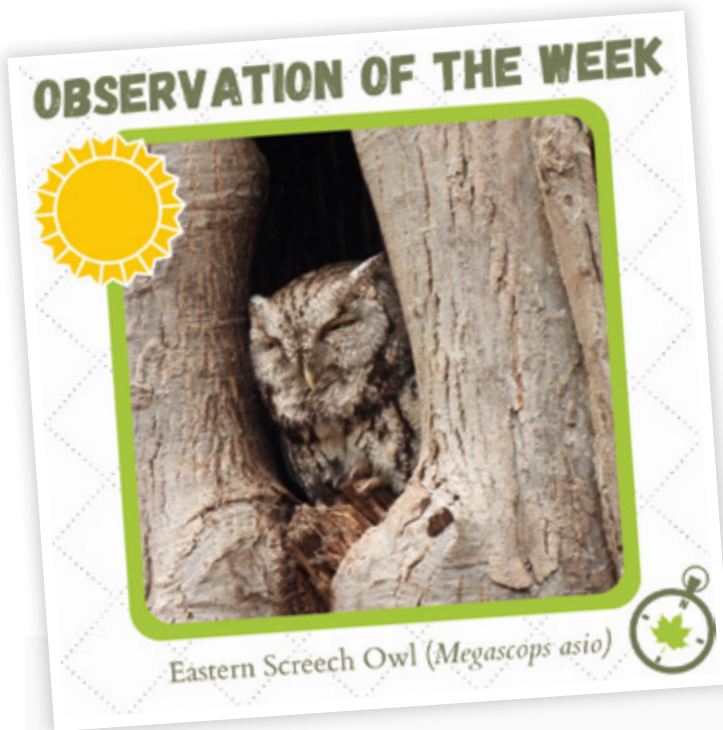
TREE BEE

For 65 years, students have participated in Tree Bee, Forests Ontario's longest running educational program. The program originated as a tree identification competition for students but has since evolved into a program that encompasses conservation education, online tools, and face-to-face competitions.

This was the fifth year that York Region hosted a Tree Bee competition. As with previous years, students were quizzed on tree identification and forest management knowledge using photos and multiple-choice questions. The event saw 66 students from five schools register, with 40 students deciding to put their newfound tree identification skills to the test in the competition component. The 2020 York Region Tree Bee championship title was awarded to students from Aurora Home School.

ONTARIO ENVIROTHON

Led by Forests Ontario, Ontario Envirothon is a unique academic team-based competition that immerses high school students in environmentally themed hands-on learning and discovery. Four core topics are explored – forestry, aquatics, soils and wildlife – with a unique and current subject area added each year; this year's addition was nature-based solutions for climate change.

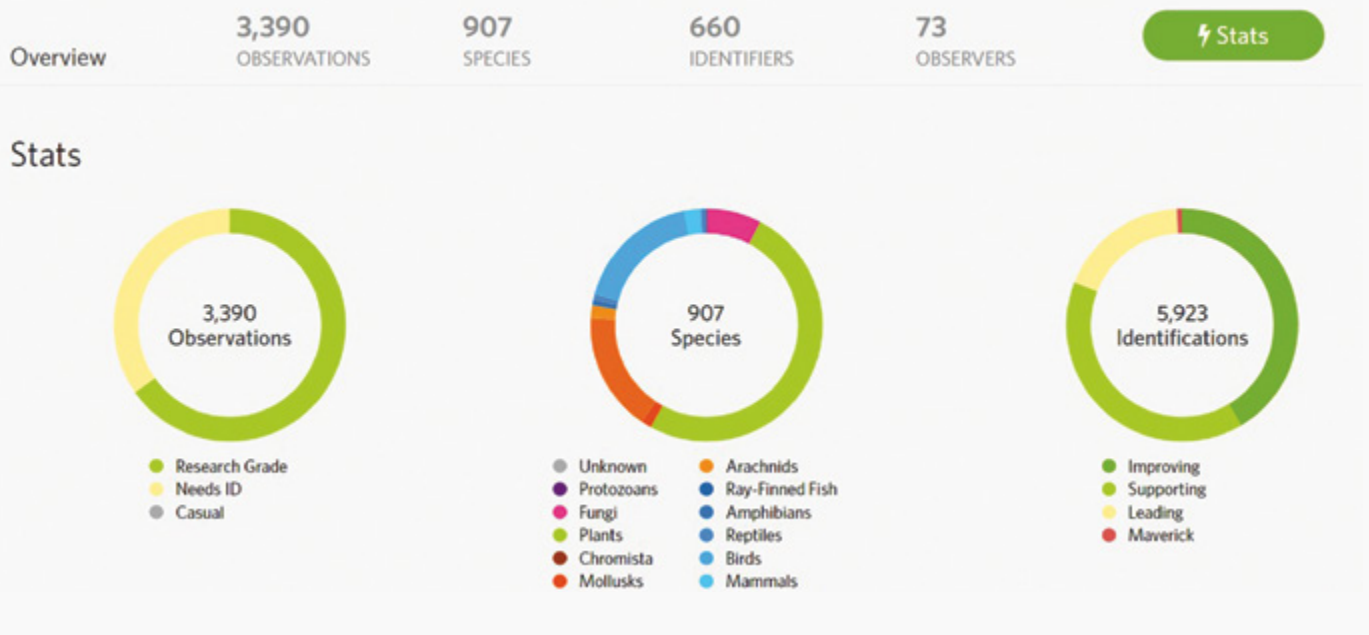


Through this program, Forests Ontario offers budding environmental leaders a chance to experience educational opportunities and career paths in the natural sciences and network with established environmental professionals.

With COVID-19 restrictions still in place, the 2021 Ontario Envirothon adapted to a virtual format using iNaturalist as an observational platform where teams completed up to five challenges. In total, there were more than 3,000 observations submitted by competing teams.

A total of 20 teams from 12 schools registered to participate in the 2021 Ontario Envirothon program. All 20 teams participated in the Regional Competition, with 16 teams advancing to the Provincial Competition. Teams then selected from two presentation scenarios, and had 48 hours to prepare their presentations, which were presented virtually over video conferencing platforms to a panel of volunteer judges.

The winning team, from University of Toronto Schools, went on to participate in the NCF-Envirothon virtual competition held in Nebraska, and came in 8th place overall, making them the highest-ranking Canadian team in the competition.



PARTNERSHIPS



OUR PARTNERS



Colleges and
Institutes Canada



Greenbelt
Foundation



Karen Green
Charitable Trust



Ministry of Environment
Conservation and Parks

Ministry of Natural Resources
and Forestry

Ministry of Labour, Training
and Skills Development



Private Family
Foundation



Algonquin Forest Authority
Association of Hemophilia Clinic
Directors of Canada
Association of Power Producers
of Ontario
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Bevel Wood
Bill and Jean Somerville Foundation
Burlington Lions Club
Canada Helps
Canadian Institute of Forestry
Charities Aid Foundation of Canada
City of Temiskaming Shores
City of Toronto
Conservation Ontario
Copywell
County of Simcoe
DeckPlus
Domtar
Dundee Recycling
Durham Land Stewardship Council
EACOM Timber Corporation
ECO Canada
Facedrive
Federation of Northern Ontario

Municipalities
Fleming College
Forest Products Association of Canada
Grain Farmers of Ontario
Grand River Conservation Authority
Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd
Herb Shaw & Sons LTD
Jones Funeral Home
Kingbridge Conference Centre
Lallemmand Plant Care
Limberlost Forest and Wildlife Reserve
Mackenzie Investments - Strategic
Charitable Giving Foundation
Maple Cross
Ministry of Labour, Training
and Skills Development
Natural Resource Solutions Inc.
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Nawiinginioka Forest Management
Corporation
Oak AR Productions Inc
Pineneedle Farms
Project Learning Tree - Sustainable
Forestry Initiative Inc.
Raw Materials Company Inc.

Rayonier Advanced Materials
Reese Madison & Co
Resolute Forest Products
Footprint (Smith + Andersen)
SENTALER
Shell Foundation
Somerville Seedlings Nurseries
Stelco
Stoney Lake Snoriders/CEA Snowmobile
Region
TD Friends of the Environment
Foundation
T.H. Industrial Solutions
The Distillery Historic District
The Mills Team
Thompson Emergency Freight Systems
Trees CO2
Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.
United Way
Vector Institute
Voice Directed Tally Systems Inc.
Weyerhaeuser Canada
Regional Municipality of York

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

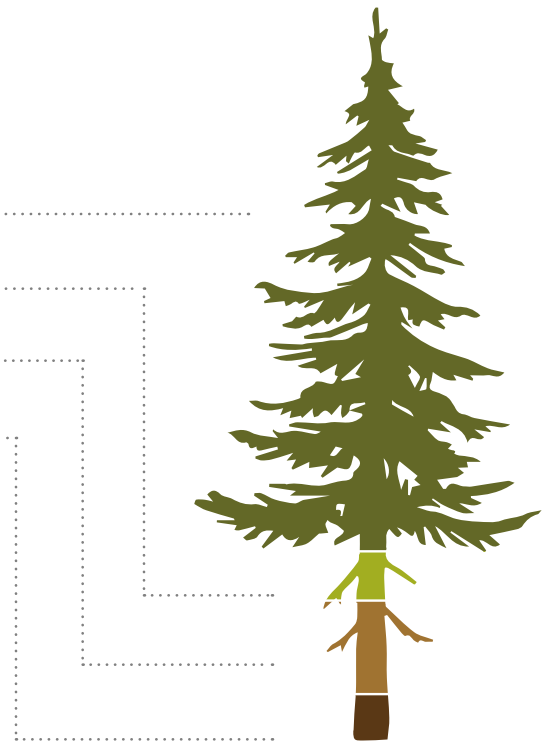


STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2021

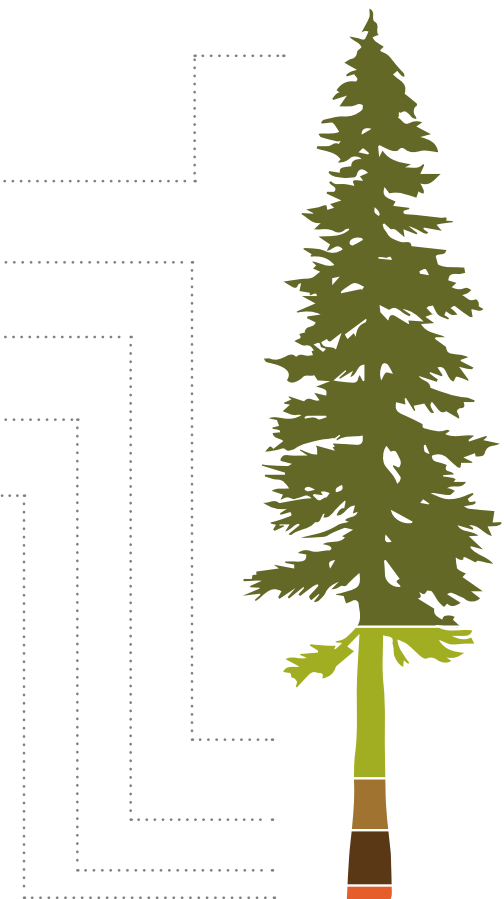
Revenue

Government funding	\$ 4,471,614	74%
Individual & corporate contributions	\$ 407,916	7%
Not for profits & charities	\$ 779,463	13%
Investment & other income	\$ 383,294	6%
	\$ 6,042,287	



Expenditures

Programs	\$ 4,018,317	69%
Human resources	\$ 970,760	17%
Communications & program development	\$ 318,954	6%
Office & general	\$ 371,601	6%
Professional & consulting fees	\$ 109,889	2%
	\$ 5,789,521	



Excess of revenue over expenditures \$ 252,766

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

SEPTEMBER 2021

Assets

Total cash & investments	\$ 7,705,901
Accounts receivable	\$ 757,684
Inventory & prepaid expenses	\$ 475,131
Fixed assets	\$ 117,075
Total assets	\$ 9,055,791

85%

8.5%

5.5%

1%



Liabilites

Trade payables & program commitments	\$ 1,057,276
Deferred program revenue	\$ 6,576,144
	\$ 7,633,420

14%

86%



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



BOARD

Malcolm Cockwell, President
Christine Leduc, Vice President
Riet Verheggen, Secretary
Michael Klasner, Treasurer
Ian Buchanan
Gail Beggs
Kim Gavine
Steve Hounsell
Peter Johnson
Sydney Oakes
David Sisam
Bonny Skene

STAFF

Rob Keen, RPF, CEO
Elizabeth Celanowicz, Chief Operating Officer
Nicole Baldwin, Forestry Program Manager
Fraser McLaughlin, GIS/Database Technician
Hayley Murray, Forestry Operations Coordinator
Rebecca Pearce-Cameron, Grasslands Restoration Coordinator
Mark McDermid, Seed and Stock Coordinator
Al Corlett, Silvicultural Specialist
Eleanor Reed, Field Advisor
Jim Hendry, Field Advisor
Peter Gagnon, Field Advisor
Tim Gray, Extension Forester
Martin Streit, Forestry Specialist
Scott Jackson, Director of Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations
Kim Sellers, Director of Business Development
Brooke McClelland, Donations/Membership Coordinator
Augusta Lipscombe, Communications & Stakeholder Relations Manager
Colleen Mahaffie, Communications Officer
Peter Kuitenbrouwer, Editor
Joana Carreira, Communications Assistant
Teri Hoang, Stakeholder Relations Officer
Alanna Evans, Community Engagement Specialist
Amy Howitt, Program Coordinator
Allison Hands, Education Manager
Madeleine Bray, Education Outreach Coordinator
Ruth Hall, Office Administrator
Susan Cummings, Legacy Financial Accounting







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