



## **Ontarians Eager to Help Find Homes for Tree Seedlings**

***Landowners attend tree planting workshop in Belleville to learn about incentives in place to help reach tree planting goals***

Belleville, ON - February 19, 2009 – Ontarians are enthusiastically stepping up to help the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources meet its 2009 goal to plant 50 million trees by 2020 – the largest single commitment to the United Nations Billion Tree Program.

Last night, seventy local landowners attended a community workshop hosted by Trees Ontario, the Ontario Forestry Association and the Quinte Conservation Authority to learn about tree planting techniques, financial incentives like the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) that can help reduce property taxes by up to 75%, along with ways to reduce their environmental footprint and how to participate in the 50 Million Tree Program.

The 50 Million Tree Program, announced in August 2007 by Premier McGuinty, is the single largest commitment to the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign.

“Landowners see the value in the Ontario government’s tree planting incentives and are working with us to green up the province and reduce the effects of climate change while saving a significant amount of money,” said the Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources. “With this growing interest, we should be well on our way to meeting our 50 Million Tree Program goal.”

Seven similar workshops are being held across the province this winter. The free tree planting workshops are designed to inform and gain the commitment of Ontario landowners to participate in the 50 Million Tree Program. Local forestry experts share information on subsidy and tax incentive programs, good forestry practices and how to plant trees and reduce costs.

“The winter series of workshops follows the highly successful fall workshops that saw many landowners from across the province step up and make planting commitments for the spring of 2009,” said Michael Scott, President and CEO, Trees Ontario. “With these spring workshops, we are attracting more landowners – those converting their farmland, with vacation properties and those wishing to create a legacy. Everyone wants to help improve our environment.”

Some of the financial incentives range from \$0.10/tree to as high as \$1.25/tree, which can reduce the cost to the landowner to as low as \$0.15, depending on the size of their land and the number of trees planted. In addition, the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP), administered by the OFA, can provide significant property tax reductions for landowners who own at least 10 acres or more of forested land. Eligible landowners work with a plan approver to prepare and follow a forest management plan. Upon acceptance into the program, the forested portion of the property is reassessed as managed forest and taxed at a reduced rate the following year for a period of 10 years.

Other workshop dates and locations are available at [www.treesontario.on.ca](http://www.treesontario.on.ca).

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## **Trees Ontario**

Trees Ontario, working with its partners, is the largest, not-for-profit tree planting partnership in North America. It is committed to the re-greening of Ontario through a range of tree planting activities. Trees Ontario is also partnering with the Ministry of Natural Resources to help deliver the Ontario government's commitment to plant 50 million trees by 2020.

The goal of Trees Ontario is to restore the province's tree planting capacity, especially throughout southern Ontario on private lands, by providing funding and planning support for its tree planting partners. These include local Conservation Authorities, Ontario Stewardship Councils, municipal governments and community volunteer groups.

Last spring Trees Ontario, with its partners, planted over 2.4 million trees. Its goal is to increase tree planting to 10 million trees every year by 2015. Visit the Trees Ontario website at [www.treesontario.on.ca](http://www.treesontario.on.ca).

## **Ontario Forestry Association**

The Ontario Forestry Association (OFA) is a non-profit, registered charity. It is dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of all aspects of Ontario's forests, and to develop commitment to stewardship of forest ecosystems. The OFA has been involved in public education around forestry and environmental issues since the 1940s. Over the years they have been involved in major initiatives involving restoration, commemoration and the management of our forests and natural environment. To this day, they continue to increase public education and knowledge of forestry and environmental issues. Visit the OFA website at [www.oforest.on.ca](http://www.oforest.on.ca).

## **50 Million Tree Program**

In August 2007, the Ontario government introduced a program to fund the planting of 50 million trees across the province by 2020, as part of its commitment to help fight climate change and green the province.

The 50 Million Tree Program is Ontario's commitment to the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign. The program is also the most ambitious program of its kind in North America and the largest goal of any jurisdiction, anywhere.

All kinds of good can come from setting this goal: like offsetting carbon; diversifying Ontario's landscape; moderating local climates by providing shade, moderating temperature extremes and reducing the effects of storms; creating more habitats for wildlife; improving soil and water conservation; and boosting local economic opportunities – to name just a few.

The 50 Million Tree Program can significantly cut landowners' costs of large-scale tree planting and boost the number of trees planted.

