

## Local Couple is Passionate About Trees and the Great Outdoors

*Award recognizes Bud and Jill Guertin as Green Leaders for land stewardship*

Brighton, Ontario, February 22, 2017 - Bud and Jill Guertin have many stories to share about acquiring and tending their 100-acre parcel of land in Brighton, Ontario. Although neither grew up on a farm, they purchased the land in 1960 and quickly became self-taught farmers.

Bud and Jill first met in the summer of 1957 in the Milton area, where they were both conducting inventory field work. That summer, a fairly progressive man in charge of the fisheries department decided to hire women to carry out field work, unlike many other employers at that time.

"Jill was one of the first hires, that's how we met. I was in charge of the forestry crew and she was part of the fisheries and wildlife crew," says Bud.

He jokes about their relationship, "I don't know why she chose me because there were forty-five other single men!"



**Forests Ontario's Green Leaders Bud and Jill Guertin on their property in Brighton, Ontario.**

Though Bud started his career as a forester and Jill as a biologist, the couple have since branched out to delve into a variety of projects. They became teachers, tried their hand at cattle farming, grew Christmas trees, and even started an antiques shop at their farm that they continue to pursue.

Today, Bud and Jill are recognized as Green Leaders for their commitment to tree planting. When they purchased their land, they initially planted trees for erosion control – and the couple hasn't stopped. Over the last 56 years, they've planted more than 50,000 trees and have earned the award for greening their property and their ongoing commitment to serving as stewards of their land.

The Guertins first learned about the 50 Million Tree Program after meeting one of Forests Ontario's field advisors at the Trenton Woodlot Conference. Along with providing funding assistance to plant trees, the program also connects landowners with experienced forestry professionals who manage the planting process so that minimal effort is required from the landowners. The Guertins were

connected with Laird Nelson from the Northumberland Tree Planters. Laird worked with the couple to develop a site plan, provide information on tree maintenance and forest management, and conduct follow-up survival assessments in the first, second and fifth years after the initial tree planting.

“Bud’s a guy who appreciates the forest and the trees, and for that reason lots of people go to him for advice,” says Laird.

Though they were aware of the benefits of planting trees, the couple had a simple vision for their property when they first started out. “We just wanted a nice place to live out in the country where we could be free walking around and enjoying the outdoors,” Jill says. “As a biologist, I’m also interested in different types of ecosystems and we have them all. It’s my own park.”

Bud too, likes walking in the outdoors. “We just enjoy it. Planting trees is good for the environment and it’s good for us,” he says. Jill adds, “Our family likes to come back to visit. Our grandkids have a good time climbing trees and picking apples and doing all that, so it’s an escape for all of us. It’s also preserving the land.”

Now retired, Bud and Jill remain actively engaged with their antiques business. Planting trees also keeps them in good shape. They keep an eye on the trees on their property and tend to them as needed.

“Landowners like Bud and Jill are a positive example for landowners across Ontario, helping us to build a greener future with the impressive number of trees they have planted,” said Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. “Every year more and more organizations and individuals are working with us to achieve our goal of planting 50 million trees in Ontario, making our communities greener, healthier and fighting the threat of climate change.”

“We are proud to collaborate with dedicated landowners who have worked so hard to put their land to good use” says Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario. “The Guertins are a perfect example of Ontarians who are truly making a difference to help combat the effects of climate change.”

Together, the Guertins demonstrate dedication as land stewards, who have devoted countless hours and effort into ensuring that their land continues to provide benefits for them, their family and all of Ontario.

To learn more about the *50 Million Tree Program* and other tree planting programs, as well as local tree planting workshops, visit: [forestsontario.ca/50MTP](http://forestsontario.ca/50MTP).

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### **About 50 Million Tree Program**

Forests Ontario administers the government of Ontario’s 50 Million Tree Program, part of the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign. The United Nations’ goal is to plant one billion trees worldwide each year. Ontario is committed to planting 50 million trees by 2025.

The 50 Million Tree Program is designed to significantly reduce the costs to landowners of large-scale tree planting and thereby increase the number of trees planted across the province.

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The Voice for our Forests

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### **About Forests Ontario**

Forests Ontario is the voice for our forests. Working to promote a future of healthy forests sustaining healthy people, Forests Ontario is committed to the re-greening of Ontario through tree planting efforts on rural lands and in urban areas, as well as the renewal and stewardship of Ontario's forests through restoration, education and awareness. Visit [www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca) or follow us @Forests\_Ontario.

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