

50 Million Tree Program Reduces the Cost of Tree Planting for Landowners in Lower Thames Watershed

Forests Ontario has planted more than 500,000 trees in the Lower Thames region

Chatham, ON [Feb. 6, 2020] – The Lower Thames watershed will have its forest-cover increased by tens-of-thousands of trees under Forests Ontario’s 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP) in 2020, according to new data.

The 50 MTP is a tree planting program for landowners that increases forest cover on private and municipal lands. In 2019, the Government of Canada committed up to \$15 million over four years to support the program. Funding also comes from corporate sponsors and donors.

Interest in the program increased after Forests Ontario announced new criteria: now, anyone with room to plant 500 trees may apply.

“The 50 MTP is better and more accessible than ever,” said Rob Keen, Registered Professional Forester and CEO of Forests Ontario. “The new, expanded criteria opens the program to more land and property owners, meaning more trees in the ground. It’s a win-win for landowners, who save on tree planting costs, and for the environment.”

In southwestern Ontario, the importance of maintaining forest cover became apparent after the Great Thames River Flood of 1937, which was caused by excessive forest clearing for agriculture. Increasing forest cover promotes healthy landscapes and trees play an important role in flood reduction; trees soak up water with their roots, trunks, branches and leaves.

Since 2008, 510, 234 trees have been planted in the Lower Thames watershed through the 50 MTP. Forests Ontario partners with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority for these plantings.

Forests Ontario has facilitated the planting of more than 29 million trees through the 50 MTP across the province. More than 5,000 landowners have planted trees, yielding more than 16,500 hectares of new forest and sequestering more than 22,000 tonnes of carbon annually. The 50 MTP also supports approximately 300 full-time, seasonal jobs.

Forests Ontario is currently taking applications for the 50 MTP. Those wishing to apply for the program can visit www.forestsontario.ca.

About Forests Ontario

Forests Ontario is a not-for-profit charity dedicated to re-greening the province through the support of forest restoration, stewardship, education and awareness. We promote Canada's greatest natural resource – our forests – because healthy forests sustain healthy communities and healthy economies. Forests Ontario is the voice of our forests. Visit www.forestsontario.ca or follow us @Forests_Ontario to find out more.

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