

## **Forests Ontario's Annual Conference Highlighted Forestry Leaders**

*Canopy Growth Receives Green Legacy Award at Province's Largest Forestry Conference*

**Alliston, ON [February 18, 2020]** – Forests Ontario's 6<sup>th</sup> annual conference brought together nearly 400 landowners, forestry professionals, Indigenous leaders, educators and students on February 14<sup>th</sup> in Alliston.

"It's fitting that our conference is on Valentine's Day, as a love for forests repays a thousand-fold," said Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario. "Our forests provide us with food, shelter, and warmth; they support the ecosystem services we depend on; they fight climate change – when we take care of our forests, they take care of us."

This is the largest forestry conference of its kind in the province and featured presentations, local exhibitors, a silent auction for charity, and an awards ceremony which recognized important contributors to forestry.

- **Robert de Pencier Award:** This award, presented to an individual for outstanding activities in private land forest management and strong support of forestry promotion, education and understanding, was received by **Sambath Kumar** for his efforts bringing awareness to the provincial cancellation of funding for the 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP), as well as to the general importance of tree planting. Kumar, a Windsor resident, created a petition to rescind the order to cancel 50 MTP funding, which accumulated 100,000 signatures.
- **Green Legacy Award:** This award is presented to a visionary corporate partner that has been instrumental in ensuring a green legacy for future generations. This year, **Canopy Growth** was recognized for their \$100,000 contribution to Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program.
- **Most Valuable Planter Award:** This award recognizes an outstanding individual or organization for contributions to restoring ecosystem health via tree planting initiatives. This year, **Wayne Pawson**, a Planting Delivery Agent for First Resource Management Group Inc., was awarded the designation of Most Valuable Planter for his dedication and his achievement of planting 600,000 trees with Forests Ontario.
- **White Pine Award:** This award, which recognizes contributions to forest education and awareness, was presented to **Natalie Heyblom**. Heyblom is a Master of Forest

Conservation candidate at the University of Toronto and a volunteer for the Forestry in the Classroom program.

- **Susan Wiecek Forestry Education Award:** This award is presented to individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to forestry education in Ontario. This year, the award was received by **Craig Todd**, Resource Management Coordinator for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, for his work as the Ontario Envirothon Coordinator for Grey/Bruce and as a frequent volunteer for the Forestry in the Classroom program.
- **Forests Ontario Award:** This award is presented to individuals for outstanding achievements and contributions to forestry education in Canada and beyond. The 2020 Forests Ontario Award was presented to **Martin Streit**, a Registered Professional Forester who has dedicated his career to ensuring forest sustainability in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region.
- And new this year, the **Maples Leaves Forever Envirothon Award:** Presented to an individual or organization which has demonstrated exceptional leadership, involvement, or dedication to the Ontario Envirothon program at the regional or provincial level. The award was presented to **Terry Schwan**, a Registered Professional Forester and an outstanding contributor as a forestry specialist and Envirothon supporter.

Speakers at the conference included, but were not limited to, the following industry leaders:

- **Rob Keen:** CEO of Forests Ontario and Forest Recovery Canada.
- **Carol Phillips:** Partner at Moriyama and Teshima Architects, fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, member of the Markham and TCHC Design Review Panels.
- **Tim Johnson:** Director of Nations 360°'s Indigenous Education Initiative, Artistic Director of The Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map, and the Artistic Producer for Celebration of Nations.
- **Jennifer Court:** Executive Director of the Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition.
- **Dan Rowlinson:** Provincial lead of the forest health monitoring program.
- **Katrina Van Osch-Saxon:** Coordinator of the Arboriculture program at Fleming College, co-founder of the Women in Trees conference, and professor of Urban Forestry, Forestry, and Arboriculture.

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### 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](http://www.forestsontario.ca) or follow us @Forests\_Ontario to find out more.

**For more information, photos or to arrange an interview please contact:**

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