

Ontario government invests \$2.1 million for tree planting through Forests Ontario

Barrie, Ont. (February 17, 2023) – At Forests Ontario’s Annual Conference in Alliston, Ontario today, the Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and MPP for Parry-Sound Muskoka, announced that the Ontario government is investing \$2.1 million in tree planting through Forests Ontario.

“We are proud to support Forests Ontario’s mission to make our forests greener,” Minister Smith says. “With this investment, our government is taking action to ensure the long-term sustainability of Ontario’s forests and forest sector businesses, while creating stability for workers, families and communities that depend on this sector.”

The one-year investment will support tree planting through Forests Ontario’s tree planting programs. Through our comprehensive network of partners and programs, Forests Ontario has planted more than 41 million trees to date, resulting in 20,500 hectares of new forest created across more than 8,300 project sites.

“Forests Ontario and our planting partners are excited to work with the Ontario government not just to plant trees, but to grow forests,” Rob Keen, Chief Executive Officer of Forests Ontario, and Registered Professional Forester, says. “Forests Ontario has developed unrivaled expertise and infrastructure to grow and track tree planting from seed to healthy forest and those forests will benefit communities across Ontario for generations to come.”

Healthy, resilient forests provide clean air, enhanced biodiversity, and are one of the most effective, nature-based solutions in combating climate change. There are also countless economic benefits to sustainably managed forests throughout Ontario as well. One out of every 100 Ontarians is employed in the forest industry sector and in the example of the Ottawa Valley, the area’s 20 mills contribute to the employment of approximately 2,200 people and generate over \$85 million in taxes (as of 2019).

“Private land tree planting contributes to significant employment levels in the Ottawa Valley,” Dean Felhaber, President, Ben Hokum and Son Limited, says. “Over 250 direct jobs in our sawmill and woodland operations are attributable to these plantations. Provincial government support of private land tree planting is incredibly important to maintaining and growing employment levels in this region.”

Today’s announcement from the Ontario government follows news from November that Forests Ontario has partnered with the Government of Canada’s 2 Billion Trees program to plant 7.2 million trees over three years.

“Forests Ontario is the province’s leading charity dedicated to the creation, preservation, and maintenance of forest and grassland habitats,” Keen says. “We are incredibly proud to partner with both our provincial and our federal governments to improve the future of our forests.”

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

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About Forests Ontario & Forest Recovery Canada

Forests Ontario is the province’s leading charity dedicated to the creation, preservation, and maintenance of forest and grassland habitats. Our ambitious, large-scale tree planting initiatives, extensive educational programs, and decades of community outreach result in millions of trees being planted each year.

Together with our national division, Forest Recovery Canada, we work with our many partners across the country to plant native trees and ensure our efforts today thrive and grow into tomorrow’s diverse, healthy, and resilient forests.

Forests Ontario is the voice for our forests.

Visit www.forestsontario.ca or follow us @Forests_Ontario to find out more.

Photo



The Voice for our Forests

www.forestsontario.ca



Pictured (left to right): Rob Keen, Registered Professional Forester and Forests Ontario CEO; Malcolm Cockwell, Forests Ontario President; Matt Mertins, Registered Professional Forester, Wood Fibre Manager, Roseburg Forest Products; Elizabeth Celanowicz, Forests Ontario COO; and the Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and MPP for Parry-Sound Muskoka.