

Clause No. 4 in Report No. 6 of the Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on March 27, 2014.

4

**2013 GREENING STRATEGY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated, February 14, 2014 from the Commissioner of Environmental Services:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

**2. PURPOSE**

This report provides Council with an update on the activities and achievements of the Greening Strategy in 2013.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**Since 2001 the Greening Strategy has guided actions to enhance the natural environment including reforestation efforts towards achieving the Regional Official Plan target of 25 per cent forest cover**

Since adoption of the Greening Strategy in 2001 it has been a requirement that achievements be reported to Council annually. Refined in 2012, the intent of the strategy is to achieve hands-on action consistent with forward-thinking environmental policies in the Regional Official Plan. A component of the Strategy includes maximizing opportunities to increase forest cover to 25 per cent of the Region's total land area as prescribed by Regional Official Plan. The four Action Areas of the Strategy are:

- Environmental land protection and preservation – acquisition of key conservation lands
- Enhancement and rehabilitation – tree, shrub, wetland and prairie planting
- Leadership, innovation and knowledge – facilitating research, science and technology transfer
- Stewardship and education – environmental education and landowner outreach

Greening Strategy programs include funds for both hands-on environmental projects and land protection and preservation activities.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

Council has demonstrated a commitment to protecting, rehabilitating and creating natural areas through approval of the Greening Strategy. The intent of the Strategy includes action toward increasing York Region's forest cover to 25 per cent. Forest cover includes woodlands equal to or greater than 0.2 hectares as defined in the *Forestry Act*. In 2013, further progress was made to increase forest cover in York Region. A complete list of Greening Strategy initiatives, summarizing actions and deliverables, is appended as *Attachment 1*.

Significant achievements were made this past year, including leveraged funding, land protection and preservation, and environmental education.

#### **79 partners contributed to Greening Strategy achievements and leveraged \$3.6 million in additional project funds**

The Greening Strategy is delivered by the Natural Heritage and Forestry Services section of Environmental Services. In 2013, the total expenditure associated with Greening Strategy delivery, including leveraged funds through 79 partnerships, was \$6.2 million with partners contributing \$3.6 million (58 per cent) of these funds. Delivery through partnerships is a strategic and respected approach to leverage funds and make use of expertise and resources within our partner organizations. This approach allows the Region to achieve more results on the ground.

Leverage funding contribution ratios range from project to project. For example, the 2013 Backyard Tree Planting Program value was \$167,000 of which Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests contributed \$87,000. Under York Region's partnership agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to deliver environmental land protection and preservation, total project costs of \$3 million included \$2.9 million leveraged funds.

#### **One millionth tree planted on National Tree Day (September 25, 2013) at Maple Health Centre, City of Vaughan**

A significant Greening Strategy milestone was achieved in 2013. The one millionth tree was planted and celebrated on National Tree Day at the Maple Health Centre. The Centre's residents joined York Region Public Health and Environmental Services staff to celebrate and plant a maple tree in celebration of 12 years of Greening Strategy achievements and to recognize the link between healthy communities and healthy trees.

**Environmental land protection covered 120 hectares, three sites totalling \$4.8 million in land value**

Three sites, two in the Township of King and one in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville totalling 120 hectares of land (\$4.8 million appraised value) were secured by the Region or through renewed partnership agreements. Table 1 shows 2013 achievements through the environmental land protection and preservation action area. The following describes characteristics of each property:

- Located on the Oak Ridges Moraine, the 55 hectare Drysdale Woods property acquired by York Region as a partial donation through Environment Canada’s Ecogift program will increase the York Regional Forest to 24 tracts spanning 2,365 hectares. Tree planting and recreational trail opportunities contribute to the value of this property.
- Supported through York Region’s partnership agreement, the Nature Conservancy of Canada worked with the Barnett family to purchase a 29 hectare property within the Happy Valley Area of Natural and Scientific Interest on the Oak Ridges Moraine. This property contributes to an assemblage of protected properties managed by Nature Conservancy of Canada, York Region and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.
- Nature Conservancy of Canada celebrated the protection of 36 hectares of the Love property in the spring of 2013 with the donating family. Found within the Happy Valley Area of Natural and Scientific Interest this property connects to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority property Humber Source Woods on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

**Table 1**  
 Properties Secured in 2013

<b>Property</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>York Region Contribution</b>	<b>Leveraged Funds</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
<b>Drysdale</b>	Whitchurch-Stouffville	55 ha	\$1,850,640	\$462,660	\$2,313,300
<b>Barnett</b>	King	29 ha	\$60,000*	\$908,000	\$968,000
<b>Love</b>	King	36 ha	\$60,000*	\$1,966,000	\$2,026,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>120 ha</b>	<b>\$1,970,640</b>	<b>\$3,336,660</b>	<b>\$5,307,300</b>

\*The Region has a land protection and preservation agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada with an annual contribution of \$120,000 in accordance with a Council approved three year partnership agreement (2013 to 2016).

The focus of environmental land protection and preservation is primarily on empowerment and support for partners already active in protecting conservation lands within the Region. Since adoption of the Strategy in 2001, properties totalling 1,108 hectares have been protected. Environmental lands are acquired for environmental protection purposes, based on Council endorsed criteria, with a priority on lands with opportunities to increase forest cover.

### **Community interest in environmental stewardship and education programs continues to increase**

Participation in the Region's forest environmental education program, *Nature's Classroom*, continues to show an upward trend from 2010 as shown in Attachment 1. Community and school group programming included delivery of 48 guided hikes and in-class programming to a total of 1,142 participants. Nine public forest events and two seasonal forest festivals were held in 2013, with a total of 795 people attending. Collaboration on more than 36 partner-led events reached more than 6,000 people. In 2013, with the assistance of internal partnerships with Public Health, Forestry staff continued to cross promote active living and the benefits of trees to healthy and sustainable communities.

### **Through partnerships, agreements and contracts, more than 45,907 trees and shrubs were planted in 2013 – including 24 hectares of new forest**

The following are some Greening Strategy program achievements which increased forest cover and urban canopy cover, and rehabilitated or established urban forests and natural areas:

- York Natural Planting Partnership subsidized large-scale private land reforestation in partnership with the Conservation Authorities (26,327 trees and shrubs)
- Adopt-a-Stream Crossing program delivered 17 Adopt-a- Stream Crossing events in six municipalities with 318 volunteers, planting more than 1,025 trees and shrubs around streams within Regional road rights-of-way
- York Regional Forest tree planting in the Bendor and Graves Tract, Town of East Gwillimbury, and Nobleton Tract, Township of King (5,201 trees and shrubs)
- York Region Property Naturalization includes Streetscaping and a community planting event at 90 Bales Drive Transportation Operations Centre, Town of East Gwillimbury (3,484 trees and shrubs)
- Backyard Tree Planting Program of urban residential trees delivered in partnership with Local Enhancement and Appreciation for Forests (LEAF) (468 trees and shrubs)
- Greening support for community and local municipal naturalization events funding support toward tree costs for community tree planting events hosted by municipalities and/or municipal partners (850 trees and shrubs)

In 2013, 45,907 trees and shrubs were planted through the initiatives mentioned above, along with other Green Strategy initiatives listed in Attachment 1 and \$269,945 in funds were leveraged through partnerships and agreements. This included creating 24 hectares of new forest. These planting numbers only include those delivered through Greening Strategy initiatives.

**Assessment of the Region’s forest cover has indicated that there has been an increase of 569 hectares of forest since 2009**

York Region’s Official Plan forest cover target is 25 per cent. This amounts to 44,388 hectares of forest (as measured by woodlands equal to or greater than 0.2 hectares). Based on 2009 air photography, the forest cover was previously assessed at 22.5 per cent (39,964 hectares) of York Region’s total land area. In 2013 staff conducted a re-assessment based on 2012 aerial photography. This current assessment indicates an overall increase in forest cover in eight of the nine local municipalities as shown in Table 2 comparing 2009 and 2012 data.

**Table 2**  
 York Region Forest Cover

Local Municipality	Land Base (ha)	Forest Cover 2009		Forest Cover 2012		Gain/Loss (ha)
		(ha)	(%)	(ha)	(%)	
King	33,665	8,127	24.1	8,326	24.7	199
Whitchurch-Stouffville	21,119	6,036	28.6	6,106	28.9	70
Richmond Hill	10,152	1,290	12.7	1,349	13.3	59
Markham	21,259	1,313	6.2	1,391	6.5	78
Aurora	4,943	859	17.4	882	17.8	23
Newmarket	3,819	327	8.6	333	8.7	6
East Gwillimbury	24,762	7,430	30.0	7,428	30.0	-2
Vaughan	27,432	3,057	11.1	3,132	11.4	75
Georgina	30,399	11,525	37.9	11,586	38.1	61
<b>York Region</b>	<b>177,550</b>	<b>39,964</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>40,533</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>569</b>

Current assessment indicates:

- forest cover has increased by 569 hectares (0.31 per cent) since 2009
- more than 67 per cent of the Region’s forest cover is located in three municipalities (Georgina, King and East Gwillimbury)
- greatest increases in forest cover were in the Township of King and Cities of Markham and Vaughan

The scientific community agrees that a ten year cycle of growing seasons is an appropriate timeframe to assess changes in forest cover. This interim assessment provides a snapshot of the current status. Over the next five years forestry staff will be collaborating with Conservation Authorities to harmonize forest cover assessment tools,

integrate monitoring and align implementation objectives as the 2019 assessment approaches.

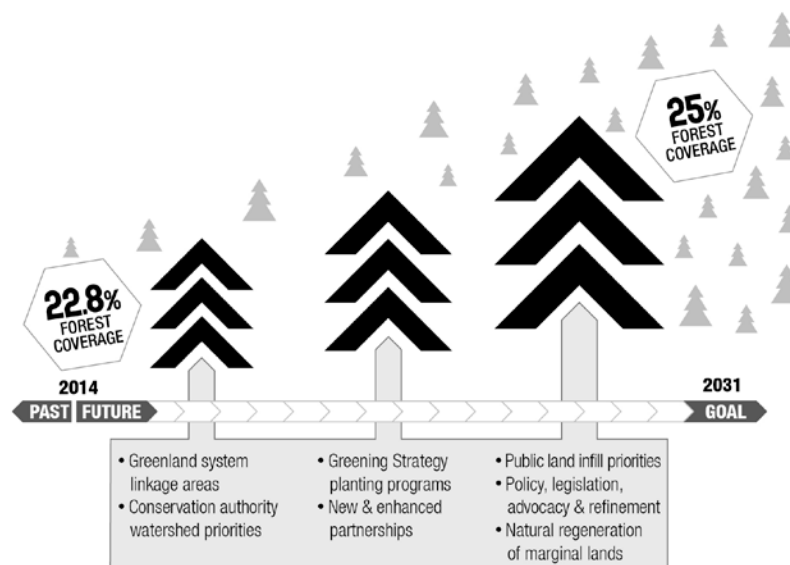
### **New forest cover can be attributed to natural regeneration and planting efforts through the Greening Strategy and by other organizations**

Greening Strategy implementation partnerships achieve approximately 45 hectares of reforestation per year. Other new forests are planted each year by organizations (Forests Ontario, Trees Ontario, Tree Canada etc.), local municipalities, environmental associations and public initiatives. Natural succession and regeneration of forests on undisturbed lands also account for areas of new forest, particularly in wetland buffer areas, valley lands and old agricultural fields. York Region staff continues to work in collaboration with Conservation Authorities to both harmonize planting activities and ensure priorities are being addressed.

### **Focused efforts on reforestation, including identification of priority opportunities is required to meet forest cover target by 2031**

To gain an understanding of the on-the-ground opportunities to achieve 25 per cent forest cover, staff conducted a preliminary review of available lands within York Region which have potential for reforestation and having regard for the Regional Official Plan land use designations. A series of potential implementation priorities and opportunities are integral to working towards achieving the forest cover target (Figure 1). It is important to recognize that success is dependent on both public land planting opportunities and private landowner's willingness to participate.

**Figure 1**  
Opportunities to Achieve 25 per cent Forest Cover by 2031



### **Need to recognize challenges to increasing forest cover in advancing the approach to meet 25 per cent target by 2031**

The forest faces environmental challenges on many fronts. Invasive species, including the Asian Long Horned Beetle or more recently the Emerald Ash Borer, will destroy thousands of trees in our urban areas and across the landscape. Losses to trees, canopy cover and forests from the recent ice storm may also be substantial. These and other impacts to forest cover have significant environmental, social and economic consequences and present an ongoing threat to the overall forest area and integrity of our forests. These and other factors that emerge over the coming years will be assessed and integrated into an approach to increase forest cover.

Current policies, plans and implementation tools to help mitigate impacts to forest cover include: implementation of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan, update of the Forest Conservation Bylaw, update of the Regional Official Plan and development of urban forest management plans.

### **Developing an approach to increase forest cover by 3,855 hectares requires exploration of challenges, opportunities and mechanisms to maximize results**

To achieve 25 per cent forest cover in York Region requires a region wide net gain of 2.2 per cent or 3,855 hectares of forest. Using the Regional Official Plan target date of 2031, an increase of 203 hectares per year (since 2012) would be required to achieve the 25 per cent target. Staff will be taking a more direct role in harmonizing efforts to achieve the forest cover target. *Attachment 2* illustrates some of the key milestones over the next five years to help us achieve the forest cover target by 2031, including partnerships, integrated monitoring and focused planting projects.

### **Urban forest canopy cover contributes to healthy sustainable communities**

Although not entirely captured in a forest cover assessment, single isolated trees and smaller treed areas provide leaf area and canopy cover within urbanized areas, this contributes to healthy sustainable communities. Together with local municipalities, recent urban forest studies, supported in part through the Greening Strategy, have identified how urban forests provide benefits to communities. Some of these benefits include carbon sequestration, improved air quality, human health benefits, stormwater management and energy savings. For example, trees reduce the demand for heating and cooling in buildings by shading and cooling homes during summer months, and providing protection from cold winds in the winter. In the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill, the estimated reduction in annual energy costs from the existing urban forest canopy cover has been modelled at more than \$5 million.

In addition to calculating the benefits of forests, these forest studies identify opportunities for rehabilitation and habitat enhancement, which support a targeted approach for on-the-

ground action. Our partnership planting programs (i.e. LEAF) continue to benefit canopy cover and the urban forest. Municipalities have already begun using the data in the development of Urban Forest Management Plans. These plans will help guide restoration initiatives, inform street tree programs and assist with park planning initiatives.

### **Town of Aurora initiated Urban Forest Study in 2013 to provide data on tree canopy cover and associated benefits**

In 2013, the Town of Aurora partnered with York Region to undertake an Urban Forest Study using the iTree modeling program developed by the United States Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division. Toronto Region Conservation Authority provided the technical expertise for this study and collected data that will be used to assess urban forest canopy cover and priority planting areas. These studies will help inform the development of municipal Urban Forest Management Plans as required in the Regional Official Plan (policy 2.2.50). To date, York Region has worked with the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill to complete Urban Forest Studies.

### **Link to key Council-approved plans**

Delivery of the Greening Strategy, specifically through partnerships, agreements, incentives, community engagement and financial leveraging, is consistent with the Regional Official Plan and Strategic Plan fundamental principles of Economic Vitality and Good Government. The strategy protects and promotes a linked greenlands system, and provides for habitat creation and increased forest cover in the Region through partnerships and community engagement. Achievements of the Greening Strategy support the principles of Healthy Communities and Sustainable Environment from the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan. The Greening Strategy is recognized as an influential document for Vision 2051 and its delivery supports seven of the eight goal areas.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Through partnerships, the Greening Strategy leverages funds for projects in each program area. In 2013, the total expenditure associated with Greening Strategy delivery, including leveraged funds through 79 partnerships, was \$6.2 million with partners contributing \$3.6 million (58 per cent) of these funds, resulting in a 1.4:1 ratio. Funding ratios vary with each project and often exceed this ratio through individual partnerships. Greening Strategy programs and funds are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with Regional objectives. In 2013, \$1.7 million was allocated to deliver the Greening Strategy, including land protection and preservation. The Greening Strategy reserve balance at 2013 year end was \$2.1 million.



## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

Local municipalities are important partners in the Greening and Securement Strategies. They are consulted or involved in a number of implementation programs and projects, including urban forest studies, local municipal tree planting projects and environmental land protection and preservation initiatives. Local municipal staff are active members at all Greening Strategy working groups and forums. These forums provide an opportunity for regular communication and engagement.

All nine local municipalities have benefited directly from the Greening Strategy and have a strong history of involvement in environmental projects and programs. The Greening Strategy clarifies the Regional interest and program delivery continues to provide local municipalities and residents with opportunities to enhance the natural environment.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

For more than a decade, York Region has been recognized for its innovative leadership in the development and implementation of the Greening Strategy. The strategy has proven to be an effective and successful delivery mechanism, achieving significant results toward a sustainable natural environment. Continued emphasis on reforestation efforts toward achieving 25 per cent forest cover are a key deliverable through the Greening Strategy. Achievements also contribute to the health and wellbeing of the Region's residents and represent a sound investment in green infrastructure. Programs and achievements continue to help realize the Region's environmental policies and objectives as articulated in the Regional Official Plan, Strategic Plan and Vision 2051.

For more information on this report, please contact Laura McDowell, Director of Environmental Promotion and Protection at Ext. 75077 or Ian Buchanan, Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry at Ext 75204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Attachments – 2

# GREENING STRATEGY ACHIEVEMENTS 2013



# BENEFITS

Greening Strategy benefits are achievable, measurable and contribute to the environmental, social and economic success of communities.

## How We Benefit from Trees

### Reduced Energy Costs

Urban forest studies undertaken by York Region in partnership with Town of Richmond Hill, City of Vaughan and City of Markham concluded existing forest canopy cover is responsible for a cumulative reduction in energy costs of more than \$5 million.

### Economic

The economic value of ecosystem services in the Lake Simcoe watershed basin is estimated at \$975 million per year. This translates to \$2,780 per capita annually.

- *Report commissioned by the David Suzuki Foundation, Lake Simcoe Basin's Natural Capital: The Value of the Watershed's Ecosystem Services*

### Better Health

On average, one person breathes in 306 kg of oxygen every year. This amount is equivalent to the oxygen produced on average by two and a half mature trees. Urban Forest Studies estimate forest canopy cover in the southern part of York Region will mature to produce enough oxygen for 655,000 people — that's 85 per cent of the Region's population.

**Tree Facts**

Species: Sugar Maple / *Acer saccharum*  
Hug Diameter: 90 cm  
Life Expectancy: 75 years

	Annual	Lifetime
Water Runoff Intercepted:	20,672 L	407,437 L
Energy Conserved:	177 kWh	4,093 kWh
Carbon Sequestered:		6,385 kg

**Benefits:** Sustainable healthy community, Energy cost savings, Employment opportunities in ecotourism, Source Water Protection, Improved air quality, Reduction in urban heat islands, Climate change mitigation, Storm water retention, Opportunities for more active communities and more ...

**Fact:** Takes approximately 40 L of sap to produce about 1 L syrup.

### Well-being

Contact with nature has positive effects on human health. Two minutes in nature provides stress relief, two hours improves memory performance and attention span and two days increases the levels of cancer-fighting white blood cells by 50 per cent.

- *David Suzuki Foundation*

### Resilience

"Ontario needs to prepare for the twin challenges of a rapidly growing population and a less predictable future climate, marked by more extreme weather events and higher flooding risks. Green infrastructure can increase the resilience of our communities and landscapes, and help us face the stormy weather ahead."

- *Ontario's Environmental Commissioner in the 2010/2011 Annual Report*

### Ecological Footprint

New York City's Green Infrastructure vision estimates an acre of green infrastructure vegetation could provide an annual benefit of US\$8,522 in reduced energy demand, US\$166 in reduced carbon dioxide emissions, US\$1,044 in improved air quality and US\$4,725 in increased property value.

- *New York City's Green Infrastructure Vision 2010*

# ENVIRONMENTAL LAND PROTECTION & PRESERVATION

A healthy and connected system of natural features is essential to preserve the Region's natural heritage and biodiversity. Through continued partnerships and investments, the Greening Strategy protects key lands with a focus on connecting and enhancing York Region's "Greenland System."

## **GOAL: Protect core natural areas and restore linkages**

### **Renewed Environmental Land Protection and Preservation Partnerships**

Since 2001, York Region has fostered successful conservation partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust. Nature Conservancy of Canada received \$120,000 from the Region to focus on local efforts. York Region gave \$50,000 to the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to assist with costs to secure strategic conservation lands within York Region.

#### **Drysdale Woods**

The York Regional Forest grew by 55 hectares to 2,365 hectares due to a generous land donation from the Drysdale family in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

#### **Barnett Property**

Through its partnership with York Region, the Nature Conservancy of Canada worked with the Barnett family to secure a 29 hectare property within the Happy Valley Area of Natural and Scientific Interest on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

#### **Love Mountain**

King Township's Happy Valley Forest, a rare jewel in the GTA, grew by 36 hectares due to the generosity of the Love family. In May, the Love family hosted a celebration attended by stewards of Happy Valley Forest.



# LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION & KNOWLEDGE

Through inclusive forums and working groups, York Region provides opportunities for its partners and neighbouring Regions to share successes, challenges, information and lessons learned.

**GOAL: Share knowledge, demonstrate leadership and be innovative in the protection and promotion of the natural environment.**

## Technology and Innovation

### Urban Forest Study

Partnered with the Town of Aurora and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to collect data for an urban forest study which will determine the tangible benefits of Aurora's urban forest.

### Biochar Study

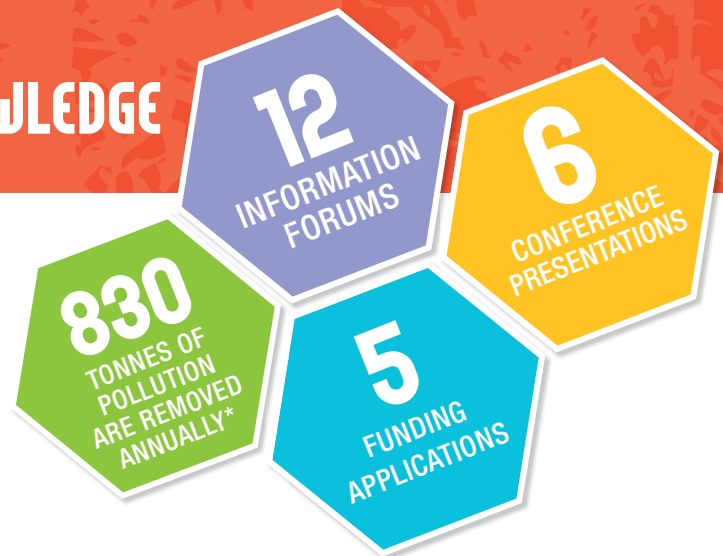
Initiated a study to investigate the effectiveness of Biochar (a type of charcoal created from waste wood) on street tree health and growth on 112 newly planted street trees.

### Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan Implementation

Continued to actively manage Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), which includes monitoring the insect's spread, removal and replacement of EAB-infested trees as they become hazards, protecting large healthy trees with insecticide and educating residents.

### Accessibility Guidelines for Forest Trails

Developed guidelines for the design and construction of accessible trails. These guidelines will ensure all residents can experience the York Regional Forest.



*\* By the urban forest in York Region's southern municipalities.*

## Knowledge Sharing

### Forums

Facilitated regular forums to discuss: Urban forestry, Emerald Ash Borer, Environmental Land Protection and Preservation and Environmental Action and Stewardship.

### Presentations

Presented at the International Society of Arboriculture's Annual Conference, Public Health Knowledge Exchange, 20th Annual Latorell Symposium and the Annual Municipal Urban Foresters Conference.

## Sustainable Communities

### Partnerships

Collaborated with York Region's Public Health and Forestry and entered into a memorandum of understanding with other GTA public health units, conservation authorities and the David Suzuki Foundation.

### Forest Conservation Bylaw Update

Updated the bylaw to align with current legislation. Stakeholders included: Ontario Woodlot Owners Association, Regional Forest Advisory Team, York Agricultural Liaison Group and York Environmental Stewardship.

### Investigating Funding Opportunities

Submitted applications to: Environment Canada Lake Simcoe/South-eastern Georgian Bay Clean Up Fund, Ministry of the Environment Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund and Trees Ontario Tree Planting Initiative and the Invasive Species Centre Fund.

# ENHANCEMENT & REHABILITATION

York Region Public Health and Environmental Services joined residents to plant the ONE MILLIONTH tree on National Tree Day at Maple Health Centre to commemorate 12 years of achievement.

**GOAL: Enhance and rehabilitate the natural environment on both public and private lands.**

## Private Land Tree Planting

### York Natural Planting Partnership (YNPP)

*{ 26,327 trees and shrubs planted }*

This program enables eligible or private property owners to receive financial assistance to reforest their property.

### Backyard Tree Planting Program

*[ 468 trees and shrubs planted ]*

Homeowners receive native trees and shrubs at a subsidized cost and receive expert service from a certified arborist. Participants also receive education around urban tree care.

### Seedling Distribution

*[ 7,396 seedlings distributed ]*

Eligible residents may take advantage of this Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority subsidized program that targets the Lake Simcoe Watershed. The Region partners with local municipalities and Environmental Advisory Committees to offer seedlings to residents and staff during Earth Week.



## Public Land Naturalization

### Local Municipal Naturalization Program

*[ 850 trees and shrubs planted ]*

York Region provides funding for naturalization initiatives at the request of the local municipality, who work with local environmental stewards and volunteers to naturalize areas in their communities.

### Special Projects

*[ 1,156 trees and shrubs planted ]*

In 2013, a project supported by York Region and delivered by Ontario Streams restored stream banks at three sites in York Region.

The York Children's Water Festival, held annually at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area, includes a tree-planting component.

## Naturalization of Regional Properties

### Adopt a Stream Crossing Program

*[ 1,025 trees and shrubs planted ]*

Rehabilitation of stream crossings at Regional roads has been taking place since 2001.

### Regional Forest Tree Planting

*[ 5,201 trees and shrubs planted ]*

Many forest tracts are in transition from conifer plantations to mature mixed forests. Tree and shrub seedlings are planted annually based on the York Regional Forest Management Plan and individual site plans.

### York Region Property Naturalization

*[ 3,484 trees and shrubs planted ]*

Staff coordinate with property managers to identify Regional properties that may benefit from rehabilitation. In 2013, trees and shrubs were planted behind two facilities on Bales Road in East Gwillimbury.

Community awareness is vital to the protection of a healthy natural environment for future generations.

**GOAL: Educate residents about the value of green infrastructure and provide opportunities to connect with nature and inspire action.**

## Educational Programming

### Nature's Classroom

[ 1,142 participants ] [ 48 events ]

This Regional environmental education program enables community groups to learn in a forest setting. Since 2001, annual participation in the program has increased as costs have decreased.

### Envirothon Competition

[ 43 participants ] [ 2 events ]

Staff educate York Region secondary school students about four core environmental topics in a forest setting in preparation for the annual Ontario Envirothon competition. In 2013, 31 teams participated in the provincial competition and seven of those were trained at the York Region workshop.

## Outreach Events

### York Regional Forest Events

[ 795 participants ] [ 11 events ]

Events help spread awareness about fragility of forest ecosystems and of the natural and social heritage of the York Regional Forest.

### Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

[ 216 participants ] [ 15 events ]

Workshops and information sessions were held to educate residents and raise awareness about EAB.

## Partner-Led Event Participation

[ 6,200 participants ] [ 36 events ]

York Region participated in many partner-led environmental initiatives. Highlights include:

- Hosted four Emerald Ash Borer information workshops coordinated by Trees Ontario
- Improved trails in the Brownhill Forest Tract with Durham Mountain Bike Association
- Partnered with Trees Ontario for Community Tree Planting Event
- Collected garbage in the forest at the annual 'Green Up Clean Up'
- Supported, for the second time, the Fantastic Forest Experience component of the SPLASH Floating Water Festival

## Volunteer Environmental Action Events

[ 422 reached online ] [ 15 events ]

2013 events and action items include:

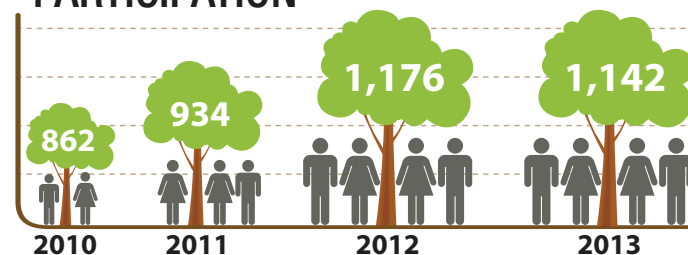
- Planted trees at the Spring Forest Festival and the Annual Boy Scout tree-planting event
- Celebrated the One-Millionth tree planted on National Tree Day
- Hosted an invasive plant removal event

## Creating Engagement and Marketing Opportunities

[ 93,723 reached online ]

- Implemented an online forestry photo contest
- Used online and social media marketing techniques
- Printed resources (brochures, fact sheets, etc.)
- Partnered with York Region Public Health

## Nature's Classroom PARTICIPATION



# 2013 SUCCESSES

**127**  
EVENTS



**93,723**  
RESIDENTS  
REACHED



**45,907**  
TREES AND  
SHRUBS  
PLANTED

**6**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONFERENCE  
PRESENTATIONS



FACILITATED  
**12**  
TECHNICAL  
FORUMS



**120**  
HECTARES  
PROTECTED

PURSUED  
**5**  
FUNDING  
APPLICATIONS



# 2014 OUTLOOK

The ultimate target for the Greening Strategy is to increase forest cover to 25 per cent of the Region's total land area (York Region Official Plan, 2010). The 2013 interim assessment of forest cover shows a forest cover increase of 22.8 per cent.



**2**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONFERENCE  
PRESENTATIONS



FACILITATE  
**4**  
TECHNICAL  
FORUMS



REACH  
**50,000**  
RESIDENTS

PROTECT  
**65**  
HECTARES

PURSUE  
**3**  
FUNDING  
APPLICATIONS

PARTICIPATE IN  
**100+**  
EVENTS

PLANT  
**70,000**  
TREES AND  
SHRUBS





**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK**  
**Environmental Services Department**  
Administrative Centre - 1st Floor  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON CAN  
L3Y 6Z1

1-877-464-9675 ext. 73000

[www.york.ca/forestry](http://www.york.ca/forestry)



# Achieving Forest Cover Target by 2031

key milestones to 2019+

22.5% forest cover (2009)

1994 OFFICIAL PLAN OBJECTIVE 25% FOREST COVER

22.8% forest cover (2012)

2012 GREENING STRATEGY REFINED

2001 GREENING STRATEGY ADOPTED

Ice Storm 2013

mitigating impacts

review of conservation bylaw best management practices + guidelines



2015 INPUT TO GREENBELT + OAK RIDGES MORaine

2014/15 INTEGRATED MONITORING STRATEGY



2014 PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION



align partners and increase tree planting capacity



2015 PRIORITIZE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2015 GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT



Invasive Species

mitigating impacts

2014 - 2017+ advance local municipal Urban Forest plans



2016 REPORT ON URBAN FOREST STUDIES



2016 INTERIM ASSESSMENT FOREST COVER TARGET

2019 10 YEAR ASSESSMENT FOREST COVER TARGET

2016 UPDATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS



ongoing monitoring and assessment

