



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
DE LA NATION SUD

Project Update

January 18th, 2024





Standing Committee Recognition



- Staff hand delivered thank you gifts to members from the 4 standing committees across the watershed
- Gifts included local products produced on SNC owned land (honey and maple syrup)



Watershed Advisory Committee Recruitment



Recruitment Social Media Campaign, January 2024

- Ongoing recruitment for SNC's new Watershed Advisory Committee
- Accepting applications until January 26, 2024



Highlighting First Nation Partnerships

Stronger Together

The Story of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group

BY AMBER BRANT

There is a small town in Ontario between Cornwall and Ottawa called Monkland where Henry Lickers often stops whenever he heads north towards the Ottawa River. Henry is a Haudenosaunee citizen of the Seneca Nation, Turtle Clan, and Director of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Commissioner on the International Joint Commission.

"Maybe I should go and see my Anishinaabe friends because I'm getting deep into their territory," Lickers says. "Then when they come south, they would say: 'We're getting towards the St. Lawrence, maybe we should go down and see Akwesasne.'" Modern geographers and land managers tend to want to establish a border that is a millimetre thick separating the two land management units, but this approach doesn't reflect traditional Indigenous values for the relationship with Mother Nature.

Shifting the focus away from land claims and territory rights, and towards personal responsibility and duty to the land, is the backbone of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group formed two decades ago by Lickers with Larry McDermott (Shabot Obaadijwan, Algonquin First Nation and Executive Director of Plenty Canada) and Chris Craig (Pikwakanagan, Algonquin First Nation and Senior Forestry Technician at South Nation Conservation Authority). The three land stewardship professionals sought to share a meal and talk about how they can collaborate. Over time, a deeper relationship was formed, and more traditional teachings became the foundation of the Working Group.

The work of the group, open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, is guided by two wampum belts: 1) The Three Figure, referring to the agreement between the first Europeans and the Algonquin people to work and live in harmony with each other; and 2) The Dish with One Spoon, under which those using the land share resources in a spirit of mutual co-operation. The group also gains guidance from the Great Law, the constitution of the Iroquois Nations.

Twenty years ago, those forming the Working Group saw a need to strengthen ethics in land stewardship, especially in response to natural resource management decisions that lacked a commitment to identify and share Indigenous values and knowledge and excluded Indigenous communities. In recent years, there has been a greater effort by settlers to learn about the intergenerational trauma caused by colonialism and the residential school system. Through Truth & Reconciliation, there has been some improvement in the efforts by modern land managers to consult with Indigenous Peoples. "What motivated me was the absence of active engagement at the local level of Indigenous Peoples and other organizations responsible for caring for the land," McDermott says.

The Working Group members noted that First Peoples and settlers are all victims of an education system that has been extremely weak about teaching their shared history. Promises have been made throughout Canadian history about how to care for the land, including in the Canadian Constitution Act which talks about the Proclamation of 1763, then the Treaty of 1764. At that time, treaties and methodologies served as a framework for how we would share this land, including a commitment to the Natural Law. In practice, colonialism has served "to jeopardize a future, Mother Earth's capacity to renew life, and put all of our children's future in jeopardy," McDermott adds.



Larry McDermott, Executive Director of Plenty Canada, speaks at a Reconciliation Community Tree Plant event at The Healing Place located in Shanty, Ontario on the traditional territories of the Algonquin and Mohawk Nations, September 2020. Photo by Forests Ontario.



Community members plant trees and shrubs at The Healing Place. Photo by Forests Ontario.

McDermott compares western science and land management to, "playing with half a deck." By contrast, the Indigenous practice of Two-Eyed Seeing joins Indigenous knowledge systems and western science.

Over the years, the Working Group and its founding members have brought Two-Eyed Seeing into formal practice. This includes influencing the Eastern Ontario Model Forest and forest certification practices (particularly the Forest Stewardship Council's *Principle 3: To identify and uphold Indigenous Peoples Rights*). Indigenous content has also been integrated into the required skills and competencies needed to graduate from an accredited Canadian post-secondary forestry program with the Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board.

Craig seeks to restore South Nation's forests to a higher quality for future generations. In the past, forest management may have included taking the best timber out of the forest, with only the low-quality regeneration left on-site. Today, traditional Indigenous worldviews have helped influence modern forest management to take a more holistic approach, incorporating long-term ecosystem health and plans for decades into the future.

The Working Group has also improved Black Ash management in Eastern Ontario. Akwesasne looked for ways to find Black Ash ("ehsa" in Ahkwehsánsne) and Craig wanted to help. They realized that the ash was misidentified in the historical inventory for forests surrounding the area. Working together, the group not only became experts in identifying and inventorying Black Ash using Akwesasne traditional knowledge, but they were also able to support Akwesasne's basket-making practices. "Certain habitats weren't good for basket making," Craig explains.

"We looked at them instead for seed production for future times. Sometimes there may be half a dozen trees that we want to identify and harvest for the Mohawks, for basket making." This integration of Indigenous values into forest management is similar to birch management for canoe-building by the Algonquins wherein forest inventory, policy, and management works with traditional knowledge and values of the trees shared by local knowledge keepers.

South Nation Conservation Authority has provided administrative support, technology and a physical meeting place for the Working Group. This group succeeds because its members speak from their personal experience, knowledge and values, and don't lead first with their organizational hats. Among the group's accomplishments is the inaugural location for The Healing Place (Tsi Tehshakotitsénhtha | Endajimino-pimaadizi | Lieu de guérison), built in partnership with Ontario Power Generation and Forests Ontario, among other supporters. Located in Eastern Ontario, it serves as a gathering place of reconciliation and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members.

Thomas King, Cherokee Nation, once wrote "the truth about stories is that that's all we are." Storytelling connects people and communities through shared experiences and knowledge. This Working Group is very special and serves as an example of what other communities in Turtle Island can do to come together for the greater good of the inhabitants of the land that surrounded them.

Amber Brant, Restoration Program Coordinator with Forests Ontario, is a Haudenosaunee citizen of the Tyendinaga Kanien'kehá:ka community, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, and is committed to learning more about the culture of the ancestors that preceded her.



Meeting of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group, summer 2023. Photos by Amber Brant, Forests Ontario.



Left to right: Founders of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group including Chris Craig, Pikwakanagan, Algonquin First Nation and Senior Forestry Technician at South Nation Conservation Authority; Henry Lickers, Haudenosaunee citizen of the Seneca Nation, Turtle Clan, Director of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Commissioner on the International Joint Commission; and Larry McDermott, Shabot Obaadijwan, Algonquin First Nation and Executive Director of Plenty Canada.

Forests Ontario's Our Forests magazine article



Multi-Agency Collaboration



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

AGENDA

Federal Aquatic Species at Risk Update Webinar

For Lower Trent, South Nation and Raisin Region watersheds

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – 1:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Conducted via Microsoft Teams

- SNC presented alongside Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Municipal, consultants, CA, and agency staff present in call



Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference



- Staff and Board Members attending the Rural Ontario Municipal Conference
- 1,600 participants from 300 municipalities and organizations
- Delegation to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry on Retrogressive Landslide Hazards in Eastern Ontario



Upcoming Events



Staff at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show, 2023

- Living Locally Fair
 - 9:00am – 2:30pm on Saturday, January 20th, at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School
- Eco Farm Day
 - 8:30am – 7:00pm on Saturday, February 24th, at the Kemptville Campus
- Ottawa Valley Farm Show
 - Tuesday, March 12th to Thursday, March 14th at the Ottawa EY Centre



Natural Hazard Mapping Virtual Open House



Social Media Campaign, January 2024

- SNC is hosting three virtual Open Houses for property owners to view new and updated natural hazards mapping:
 - South Branch - February 20th
 - Bear Brook - February 21st
 - Castor River - February 26th
- Property owners within the mapped areas received invitations to participate in the public consultations



Source Water Protection Plan



Snow storage pile in Winchester WHPA



SDG Counties road salt storage, St Andrew's West

- Source Protection Committee meeting held January 17, 2024
- Updating policies in response to MECP Early Engagement comments
- Stakeholder pre-consultation in spring & public consultation in fall 2024



Demonstrating Safe Access



2393 8th Line Road, Metcalfe

- New access proposed from 8th Line Road
- SNC's review of natural hazards includes safe access
- Requires a site-specific survey by a qualified professional



Winter Trail Grooming

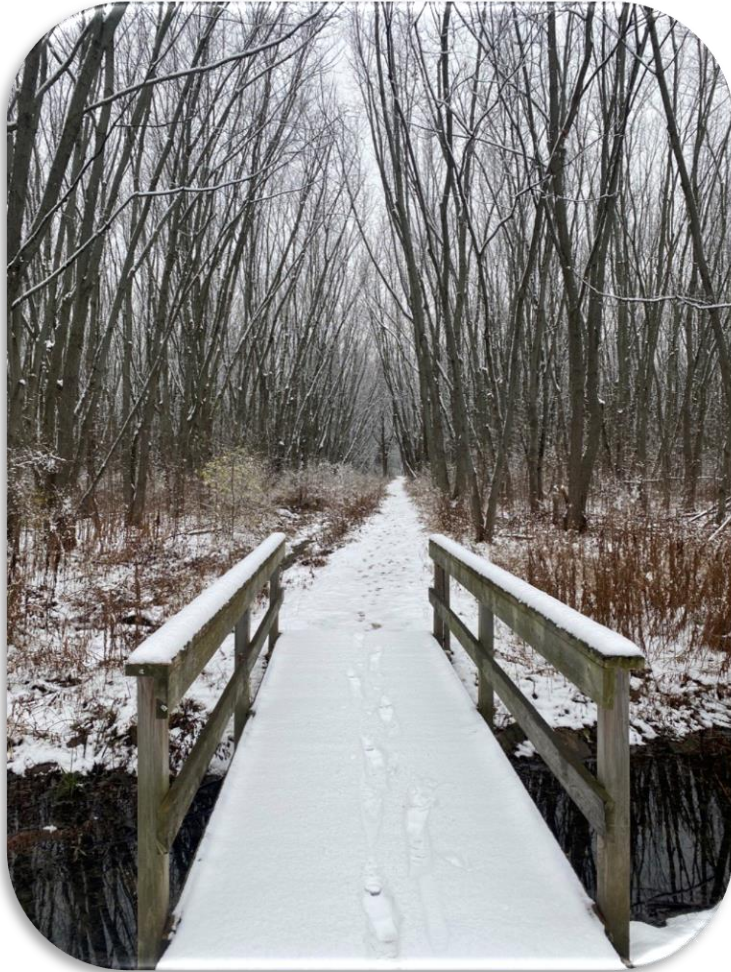


Residents enjoying the fresh snow at J. Henry Tweed Conservation Area, Russell

- Winter trail grooming has started for the season
- SNC grooms the following trails for winter recreation:
 - Robert Graham Forest CA
 - Oschmann Forest CA
 - Warwick Forest CA
 - J. Henry Tweed CA
 - W.E. Burton CA
 - Nokomis Park
 - Russell Recreational Trail



Two Creeks Forest Restoration

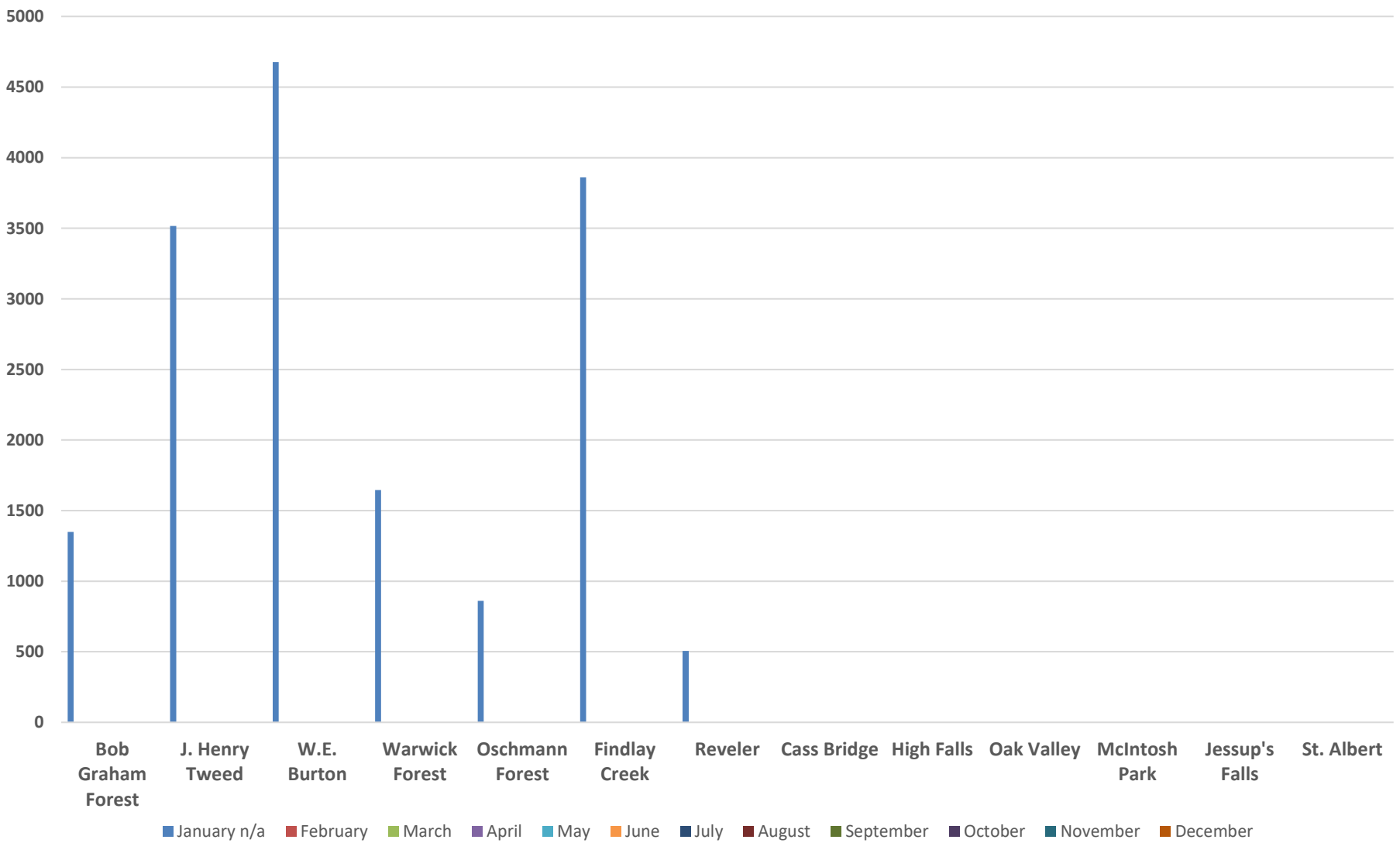


Two Creeks Forest Conservation Area,
South Dundas

- 4 km section of trail now open
- Ongoing management of dead/dying trees
- Multiple funding applications submitted



Conservation Area Stats





Invasive Species Control Funding



2023 European Water Chestnut Removal
Castor River, Embrun

- SNC secured ~\$36,000 in 2024 funding for European Water Chestnut Control
- Partnership with the Invasive Species Centre and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- Castor River and South Nation River



Tree Planting Program Update



2024 planting site, scribed in fall 2023
South Dundas

- 106,000 trees reserved for spring 2024
- 66,000 for Larose Forest
 - Woodlot Recovery Program: 25,950
 - 50 Million Tree Program: 60,410
 - Municipal Tree Giveaway: 5,600
 - Over the Counter: 12,000



Woodlot Storm Recovery Program Update



- Applications received:
 - Prescott-Russell: 102
 - City of Ottawa: 15
- Amount reimbursed to woodlot owners:
\$87,268.19
- Amount paid for contracted services for debris clean-up:
\$71,698.82
- Seedlings planned for planting in 2024:
51,450

Our Local Environment, We're in it Together.



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