

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Agricultural Forest Cover Committee (AFCC)

Report to SNC Board of Directors

May 18, 2017

AFCC MANDATE

To provide recommendations to SNC's Board of Directors and 16 member Municipalities on measures to increase and/or protect forest cover with SNC's jurisdiction

Communicate recommendations and achievements to the public, agricultural community, and Municipal and County Councils

AFCC MEMBERSHIP

22 Member Committee

Local Federations of Agriculture (8)

Other Agricultural Organizations (3)

At-large Members (6)

Municipal Representatives (5)

Observers

AFCC MEETINGS

Met six times between January and April

Formed committee, chose members

Established a Terms of Reference and decided on facilitation

Held two facilitated meetings (developed vision, goals, priority areas, and draft recommendations)

Met to review draft recommendations and establish writing team

Met to review & approve the draft report/recommendations

PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

Best Management Practices

Education and Promotion

Stakeholder Engagement

Programs

Taxation

Economic Alternatives

RECOMMENDATIONS

MOVING FORWARD

RECOMMENDATION: That the AFCC be permitted to establish a Working Group to implement the recommendations chosen by the SNC Board of Directors; and, that the AFCC continue their mandate, as needed.

PRIORITY: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (MARGINAL LAND MAPPING)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Counties and City of Ottawa work with the Forest Cover Working Group, local farm organizations, and Conservation Authorities to create an online GIS pilot project to identify the marginal lands not conducive to farming (classes 6 & 7) by the end of 2017. Additional collection of soils data through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Counties, crop consultants, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry should be used to update and refine these maps.

PRIORITY: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (MARGINAL LAND MAPPING)

RECOMMENDATION: That Municipalities work with agricultural groups, OMAFRA, stewardship stakeholders, and Conservation Authorities to ask the provincial and Federal Governments to support a pilot project within SNC jurisdiction for the collection of up-to-date soils data; this will better reflect the lands soil potential capability and support good decision-making for planning and agricultural land clearing.

PRIORITY: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP FOR LAND CLEARING)

RECOMMENDATION: That the AFCC Working Group work with the agricultural community, the Conservation Authorities, and OMAFRA to develop a Best Management Practice (BMP) for Land Clearing. This guide should consider input from all stakeholders to develop and promote BMPs for all developments, not just agriculture.

PRIORITY: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (ENHANCED TREE PLANTING)

RECOMMENDATION: That additional funding be allocated to programs that support windbreak planting. The AFCC Working Group should also reach out to the agricultural community, stewardship stakeholders, CA's and municipalities to develop a long-term plan to increase funding for strategic planting of windbreaks within the jurisdiction.

***PRIORITY: EDUCATION AND PROMOTION
(PROMOTE AGRICULTURE)***

RECOMMENDATION: That the AFCC Working Group and local farm organizations actively promote agriculture in our area. Through this promotion we hope to see a positive change in public understanding and more collaborative discussion about forest cover.

***PRIORITY: EDUCATION AND PROMOTION
(AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION)***

RECOMMENDATION: That the AFCC Working Group work with local schools, OMAFRA, the Conservation Authorities, and local Municipalities to promote agricultural education.

PRIORITY: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (MULTI STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE)

RECOMMENDATION: That a Multi-Stakeholder Committee be established comprised of no more than 20 individuals who are representatives from groups/associations/governments and South Nation Conservation that have an interest in the topic of forest cover.

RECOMMENDATION: That as many groups/associations as reasonably possible be contacted to take part in the Multi-Stakeholder Committee.

NEXT STEPS

The AFCC recognizes this report is one step towards achieving our vision for strong and vibrant forest cover in our area.

Suggested next steps:

Establish a Agricultural Forest Cover Committee Working Group to implement and champion the recommendations;

Support the formation of a multi-stakeholder group; refine and add to existing recommendations; and,

Allow the AFCC to continue to meet and support future work.

THE AFCC WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE BOARD FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY

