

# The fallout of forest loss

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With deforestation continuing throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, United Counties officials are trying to assess, and possibly arrest, the loss of forest cover in the region.

Widespread clear-cutting of wooded areas to create more cropland should concern everyone, pointed out SDG Director of Transportation and Planning Services Benjamin De Haan, adding that the removal of trees affects air and water quality, erosion and fields.

"It's difficult for me to see forest going down. I am working so hard to try to maintain it at the existing level or to help increase it. It's a big challenge," commented Normand Genier, forestry specialist with the Raisin Region Conservation Authority.

A report on the issue will be presented by counties staff at the December 21 council meeting.

"I don't think it will be any surprise to anyone that preliminary numbers show there is a reduced amount of forest cover," said Mr. De Haan.

Ideally, forests would cover 30 per cent of the counties' total land surface. Several problems arise when forest cover drops below that level.

When wildlife habitation shrinks, "You will have decreases in certain species," Mr. De Haan said.

People will notice a difference in water quality. "The more trees on a landscape, the cleaner the water you will have," said Mr. De Haan.

Adequate forest cover is also important for carbon sequestration since trees absorb carbon dioxide and help reduce pollutants in the atmosphere.

Trees also help prevent flooding from Spring thaw since they absorb water.

"If you take out a forest next to an agricultural field you will have more wind and wind erosion. You will have more cooling of the crops because there is more wind com-



**ROADSIDE DETRACTION:** Roadside trees are becoming rare sights in Glengarry where county road crews have been clearing away any growth deemed to pose safety hazards. This maple near Dunvegan was felled recently, despite the presence of residents that it presented no danger. RONNA MOGELC

## PIPELINE PROTEST



Three protesters chained themselves to an Enbridge natural gas pipeline near Dal Mills Monday. Two men had locked their necks to a valve, part of a contentious Enbridge will use to move oil through the district to Montréal. A third had chained himself to a fence around the valve station. The demonstration, which began at ended Monday afternoon when Sûreté du Québec officers removed the protester from the site. The Line 9 plan has drawn opposition from people who are worried about the project's potential impact on the environment. More inside STEVEN WARRINGTON



He was subsequently charged

The suspect, who was subse-

## Cutting

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ing in, so there is less protection of the soil," added Mr. De Haan. "Everything is connected."

The counties will be looking at what it can do about deforestation.

He observed: "I think that is occurring not only in SDG but throughout Ontario we're seeing that. It's not intended to be a negative thing about using land for farming. It's a matter of trying to find the appropriate bal-

ance. What do we want to target and how do we want to get there?"

The counties, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the South Nation and Raisin Region conservation authorities are together compiling a study to assess forest cover changes.

SDG owns a large amount of forested land and hires South Nation Conservation to carry out road-side tree planting.

Raisin Region Conservation has been involved in planting between 50,000 and 75,000 trees in the watershed.