

Deforestation definitely is affecting us all

The Editor:

I share in Theresa Bergeron's concern about the vigorous "trend" to clear-cut every tree, shrub, and piece of brush from the horizons ("Deforestation affecting us all," *Winchester Press*, Wed., March 27).

As a transplant from the city, my husband and I arrived in this area with a concept that farmers were naturally in touch with the ecology in which they spend their day, and from which they make their living. While that may be true of some, what I have witnessed in the past three years is nothing short of raping the land to claw up another few feet of space for crops.

My own research into various agricultural studies confirms that the tiny bit of added income is far outweighed by the overall depleted quality of the land, crops, and water table due to the lack of trees on the edges of the fields.

The negative impact to our water supply, soil erosion, lack of windbreak, and loss of property values is real and immediate.

Left in place, the trees and shrubbery pay for themselves many times over in keeping the land and crops healthy, providing forage and shelter for our wildlife neighbours, providing shade and shelter for crops and

farm animals, and encouraging a healthy ecosystem that supports, for example, valued pollinators.

A thorough study of the agricultural causes of the Great Depression – such as Ken Burns' documentary *The Dustbowl* – is a bleak reminder that when the land is treated with disrespect and rabid greed, the cost to everyone is devastating and can last for decades. Our planet's health is not as robust as it was in our grandparents' or even our parents' time. As a result, our attitudes must change.

A secondary point in Bergeron's letter was the added concern of the air pollution caused by burning piles of trees and brush, garbage, bale wraps, tires, and more.

Perhaps they are unaware of the deadly toxins they are sending up in the air, and into their neighbours' lungs. They may also be unaware that many of the petroleum based products they are burning leach toxins into our soil, and, therefore, into our water table.

All of us pay eco-taxes to allow many of these items to be recycled – for free! Couple that with a more-than-adequate recycling program at our landfill and weekly garbage pickup, and there is no reason to add to the poison

levels of our planet.

I am not painting everyone with the same brush – I am sure there are true stewards of the land out there who work extremely hard to maintain the natural balance on their properties. I applaud them and the sacrifices they make. But last summer's drought, and our increasingly extreme weather conditions should be a clear

warning that everyone needs to be on the same page.

I am reminded of the phrase "what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves." As such, each one of us shares the responsibility to diligently protect our most valuable resource – the land – so that it will be here for generations to come.

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