

Tree-planting partnerships could nurture new economic opportunities

The Editor,

I am writing in response to Mr. (Bill) Gilsdorf's letter last week. (Sept. 24, "Tree plan: Use it or reforest it.")

I get it, lots of trees got cut on your road in the last few years, and it doesn't look pleasing to the eye.

You moved from the city to come to the Glengarrys 25 years ago, to escape the city life and get some peace and quiet. I'd be the same way if I were in your situation. There's just one catch. Your suggestion of more regulation goes against many Glengarrys' reasons to live here. Less government.

You see, the drive to escape the massive bureaucracy that is the province of Québec led many of us to this beautiful area. I chose the one to two-hour drive to work over moving my family from Ontario to the Island. One just has to look on the other side of the border to see people being regulated and taxed incessantly. And it's not working out for them, now is it?

The problem, you see, is that your idea, while noble in intentions, means allowing local government to tell you what you can and cannot do with your land. It means setting up a bylaw and having a bylaw enforcement officer spend more time and money

policing the community. Can we afford this? We need federal assistance for basic infrastructure needs, so we definitely cannot afford higher costs.

You also have to see it from another angle. The land was cleared for one reason and one reason only: money.

"We do not want government telling us what we can do on our land."

You see, for a landowner trying really hard to make ends meet, clear-cutting and selling the timber may mean being in the black instead of the red for that year. And if cutting 200 acres is what is needed to make the numbers work, then there is certainly no money left to replant. It means giving a fine to those who have no money to avoid the fine.

Did you know that there are tree nurseries in the area that offer tree seedlings as low as \$1 a tree? At one tree per four square feet, that's still \$11,000 an acre. But if one buys the

seeds directly, and plants them by themselves, the cost is around \$500 an acre.

How about approaching the landowners and discussing the situation with them? Arrange for helping to replant the lot? How about a partnership?

They own the land, and you plant trees on their land for forestry use later? Fifty Black Walnut trees can be sold for timber after 25 years for an estimated \$20,000. At around 200 trees per acre, that's a estimated value of \$80,000 per acre of trees. Add inflation and that can be a nice "retirement fund," even after splitting 50/50.

We're a little far north on the range of the Black Walnut; how about Oak? Good timber, and acorn flour currently retails between \$20 and \$25 a pound. A mature white oak can produce up to 1,500 pounds of acorns. Can you hear the money now?

All I'm saying is that when it comes to problems like these, you have to think outside of the box. Let's not try to impose our will on others. This unfortunate situation can become a huge economic opportunity! Anyone interested?

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