



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
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Larose Forest Biodiversity Project

South Nation Conservation (SNC), as part of a three-year partnership with Ontario Power Generation and the United Counties of Prescott-Russell worked to restore an area of Larose Forest where red pine plantations deteriorated due to wet conditions.

Tree plantations are generally very low in terms of biodiversity; typically, only 2-3 species of trees are planted, and any other species found on site are introduced by wildlife or wind.

This project utilized innovative ideas including recreating pit and mound topography (using salvage-cut Red Pine stumps), migration trials of Carolinian species (such as Witch Hazel) and testing alternative native species for suitability in sandy soils and wet-prone sites.



Photo of Witch Hazel

A salvage cut in 2012 removed marketable trees, leaving some dead, standing Red Pine behind.

In 2017, stumps from the salvage cut were flipped over to emulate wind-throws, a habitat termed “pit and mound topography”, often seen in forests; creating wet and dry zones promoting diversity of vegetation.

Pits are often extensively used by amphibians, as they hold water in the spring and provide critical habitat for vernal pool-obligate species that require fish-free areas to lay their eggs.



Photo of Pit and Mound Topography

Abandoned agricultural drains from the farmland preceding Larose Forest underwent construction to add natural channel forms such as meanders and pools. Additional plantings added over twenty new native species of plants to the site.

Trees, such as the Swamp White Oak are being monitored for their success at competing with the Red Maple that tends to dominate in Larose Forest. Forest managers and naturalists are eager to see if the Carolinian species, such as Witch Hazel, will survive in this area.

Projects such as this provide invaluable information on species trials, site techniques and habitat rehabilitation. SNC continues to be a leader in environmental remediation and conservation.

Support was provided through the Ontario Power Generation's Regional Biodiversity Program.