



## **Forests Ontario Intends to Continue to Plant Trees and Speak for the Forest**

29 April 2019



Despite the recent Ontario government announcement to cut the 50 Million Tree program, Forests Ontario expects to find a way, with existing and new partners, to plant trees, educate Ontarians and speak for the forest and all forest users, the tree planting and forest advocacy group said today.

Forests Ontario, Canada's largest tree planting charity, remains optimistic that now that the provincial government better understands and appreciates the importance and popularity of the tree program, they will continue to fund tree planting.

"This cutting of the 50 MTP has generated unprecedented concern about the future of tree planting in Ontario and an outpouring of support for Forests Ontario's efforts," said Rob Keen, chief executive of Forests Ontario. "People from all corners of the province and all

stripes are speaking loud and clear: they believe it is vital to continue to plant trees.”

“There is a lot of pressure on us,” Keen added. “We are working to find our way forward. Even so, with support from all sectors and with continued collaboration of all our partners, we will work to ensure that we have healthy forests for our future and our children’s future. It is critical to have forests that will support healthy economies and healthy communities in Ontario and across Canada.”

Health and education are key stated government priorities, and support for a healthy tree canopy across the province is an equally important priority, Keen added. In a time of flooding across eastern Canada, it is important to remember that trees act as a sponge to soak up water. Trees also reduce air pollution and erosion. Trees cool the air, purify water and provide a home for trees, birds and wildlife.

A study commissioned by Forests Ontario this spring found that the trees planted under the 50 Million Trees program provide \$83 million in annual ecosystem services.

The Ontario Government has funded tree planting in southern Ontario for more than a century. Since 2007 Forests Ontario has planted 27 million trees in Ontario on over 4,000 properties covering close to 15,000 hectares. Forests Ontario is working with the province to ensure the trees grown for the 2019 season get into the ground.

*Forests Ontario, a non-profit, charitable organization with members across the province, is the voice of Ontario’s forests. Forests Ontario works in three areas: restoration, education and awareness.*

Source: <https://saultonline.com/2019/04/forests-ontario-intends-to-continue-to-plant-trees-and-speak-for-the-forest/>