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## **Durham Region partners with five Conservation Authorities to plant future forests**

Wednesday, April 20, 2022, Whitby, ON – The [Region of Durham is partnering](#) with its five local Conservation Authorities—[Central Lake Ontario](#), [Ganaraska Region](#), [Kawartha](#), [Lake Simcoe Region](#), and [Toronto and Region](#)— to form [Durham TREES](#), a new subsidized tree-planting program for private landowners willing to plant at least two acres of land with a minimum of 500 native trees.

Recognizing the numerous benefits of trees, this climate action initiative is a nature-based solution, with the goal of environmental management, protection, and enhancement by increasing forest cover in the Region by over 30 per cent over the next five years. With approximately 90 per cent of property in Durham Region being privately owned and approximately 84 per cent of that land base classified as Rural, this private land stewardship program was designed to plant trees and improve forest cover across the whole of the Region, to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The devastating effects of climate change are being experienced on a global scale. Conservation Authorities' science-based research and ongoing monitoring of watershed health consistently points to trees as a solution to addressing drought, flooding, invasive species, and many other aspects of climate change including carbon sequestration. "What has been learned from the Conservation Authorities in Durham Region—who have been planting trees for more than 60 years, as part of their conservation efforts—is that the value of planting a tree or a forest far outweighs the risk associated with the anticipated impacts to that same tree from climate change," says Pam Lancaster, Conservation Lands Coordinator, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority. "We know that a mature tree can absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide each year, removing and storing carbon while releasing oxygen back into the air. It makes sense to plant more trees for our future generations, especially knowing that we need to reduce our carbon footprint," concludes Ms. Lancaster.

The TREES program offers up to 85 per cent of funding for eligible projects, full planting services, and native tree seedlings. Properties will be planted either by hand or machine, depending on the site. Tending and maintenance schedules will be provided for ensuring a successful project. With over 50 years of planting and forest management experience, the Conservation Authorities' professionally trained staff will assist landowners throughout the process: from funding assistance, to planning and planting, to tending their growing forest. Funding for this program comes from the Region of Durham and other conservation partners.

In addition to the tremendous funding incentive, participating landowners could also realize these additional benefits from planting a future-forest, including: an increase in property value; an opportunity to qualify for a property tax credit; increased privacy; reduced home energy costs from shade and shelter; a beautiful view and a place for play; reduced mowing and maintenance; protection and improved water quality in the streams and ponds on their property; transformed open fields; creation of habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife; and a development of a sense of well-being through their contribution to the natural environment.

Residents of Durham Region live within one of five jurisdictions managed by a Conservation Authority. Using the TREE program's [mapping tool](#), residents can easily identify their Conservation Authority and contact their Conservation Authority's Tree Planting Expert. Residents that don't qualify for this program, can also contact their Conservation Authority to see what other tree-planting and stewardship programs are available for private landowners. Visit the TREES website at [durhamtrees.org](http://durhamtrees.org).

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