



# Our Forest, Our Future: Dufferin County Forest Operating Plan 2010-2015 ~ Executive Summary



The Dufferin County Forest covers an area of 1,050 hectares (2,596 acres) distributed over twelve tracts in all six of Dufferin County's rural municipalities. The forest properties have many important functions, including erosion and water control, natural heritage and biodiversity protection, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and support of the rural economy through timber production.

From 1930 to 1991, the Dufferin County Forest was managed on behalf of the County under the Agreement Forest program, first by the Department of Lands and Forests and later by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Past management activities included tree planting (particularly in the early years), thinning, pruning, fire protection, road maintenance, and pest control; until the 1990s the focus was on timber management.

In 1991, when the most recent agreement with the MNR expired, the County of Dufferin decided that a new, comprehensive, long-term management plan would have to be written for the forest properties before a new agreement was signed. The new plan would recognize that the Dufferin County Forest had a wide variety of uses.

The new plan, *Our Forest, Our Future: Dufferin County Forest Management Plan 1995-2015* was passed by Dufferin County Council on June 8, 1995. This long-term plan included an operating plan for the period 1995-2000. While the management plan continues to provide the overall goal and objectives for the management of the County Forest, the operating plan provides more details on the activities that will be conducted in any given five-year period. The operating plan that is summarized here is for the five-year period 2010-2015.

In order to give context to the activities that are outlined in the operating plan for 2010-2015, the following section highlights the operations over the last five years.

## Highlights of Past Operations 2004-2008

### Public Use & Relations

- ◆ strong partnerships were continued with the Dufferin County Museum and Archives and the Dufferin South Simcoe Land Stewardship Network, enabling the County to more efficiently use its resources in the area of public use and relations for the Forest
- ◆ signs were replaced as needed
- ◆ the marking of the roads in the Main Tract was completed
- ◆ involvement with the "Envirothon" program for high school students and the "Environmental Escapades" program for elementary school students
- ◆ the Ontario Competitive Trail Riders Association held two or three horseback riding events annually
- ◆ the Mansfield Outdoor Centre continued to lease cross-country ski trails annually
- ◆ the County continued to contract off-duty OPP officers to enforce the County Forest by-law (2003-50), in particular with regard to motorized vehicles
- ◆ in co-operation with the Town of Mono a fully accessible trail was established at the Hockley Tract
- ◆ development, and ongoing updates, of County Forest information at [www.dufferinmuseum.com/forest](http://www.dufferinmuseum.com/forest) and [www.dufferincounty.on.ca](http://www.dufferincounty.on.ca)
- ◆ annual participation at local home shows
- ◆ annual tree and/or wildflower identification walks
- ◆ responding to numerous information requests
- ◆ two stands in the Randwick Tract were part of larger research study into the causes of red pine decline; a

stand in the Main Tract was used to study the effects of alternatives to borax in the treatment of red pine stumps against colonization by the root rot disease *Heterobasidium annosum*

### Environmental & Resource Management

- ◆ over all five years there were public timber tenders which continue to be the main source of revenue from the Forest. The revenue generated in this way goes back into the management of the Forest.
- ◆ on an annual basis, stands to be selection harvested were professionally marked. All stands were marked prior to harvesting because cutting in the Dufferin County Forest is done on an individual tree selection basis.

Activity	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Site preparation (hectares)	0	0	0	0	0
Reforestation (hectares)	0	0	0	0	0
Marking (hectares)	60.0	44.0	35.0	28.0	31.0
Non-commercial tending (hectares)	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial harvesting (hectares)	60.0	47.0	35.0	28.0	31.0
Commercial harvesting (m <sup>3</sup> )	2,235	1,911	972	1,409	1,744
Borax application (hectares)	0	0	0	0	0

### Administration

- ◆ in order to diversify its revenue stream, the County instituted fees for large recreational events in 1995, and required hunters to purchase forest use permits starting in 1997. The Mansfield Outdoor Centre continues to pay for its lease of the cross-country ski trails and mountain biking trails in the Main Tract.

# Operating Plan Highlights 2010-2015

## Goal

To protect the quality and integrity of ecosystems in the Dufferin County Forest, including air, water, land and biota; and, where quality and integrity have been diminished, to encourage restoration or remediation to healthy conditions; while providing a variety of social and economic benefits to the public.

## Forest Certification

The County will begin the process of gaining certification of its forest management operations. Forest certification is defined as: *a procedure whereby an independent third party inspects forest management and utilisation practices to assess compliance with a set of ecological, economic and social standards for sustainable forestry.* The

accepted standard will

## Objective Streams

- ◆ Public Use & Relations
- ◆ Environmental & Resource Management
- ◆ Administration

address all aspects of the County's forest management operations: public use and relations, environmental and resource management, and administration.

## Public Use & Relations

- ◆ formalize a Forest Watch program modelled on the Road Watch program
- ◆ production of signs, maps, and pamphlets to inform the public about the Dufferin County Forest
- ◆ handling of comments, concerns, and requests for information in a timely manner
- ◆ continuation of established access procedures for large groups and researchers
- ◆ continuing to make users aware of hunting seasons through signs and advertisements

## Environmental & Resource Management

- ◆ strategies to mitigate potential effects of climate change will include continued diversification of single species conifer plantations and management activities to maintain a healthy, vigorously growing forest
- ◆ monitoring and, if necessary, management of exotic invasive plants
- ◆ all forest management activities will emulate natural disturbances as much as possible, specifically: protecting and encouraging natural regeneration and protecting snags, mast, downed, and cavity trees
- ◆ forest management activities in the Little Tract, evaluated wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and areas where vulnerable, threatened, or endangered species are known to exist will be limited to those that will maintain or enhance habitat characteristics
- ◆ healthy wildlife populations will be maintained through the maintenance of a diversity of habitat types
- ◆ timber production will continue on a sustainable basis

## Administration

- ◆ an annual budget for the Forest will be prepared as part of the County's budget planning process
- ◆ continuation of the established use plan that divides the forest properties into Dufferin County Forest Natural Area (management activities and recreation restricted) and Dufferin County Forest Resource Management Area (management activities and recreation in accordance with the objectives of the plan)

## For more information:

County Forest Manager  
c/o Dufferin County Museum and Archives  
PO Box 120 (Airport Road & Highway 89) Rosemont, ON L0N 1R0  
Phone: 705-435-1881 or 877-941-7787 Fax: 705-435-9876  
forestmanager@dufferinmuseum.com www.dufferinmuseum.com/forest

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