

## Land Care Niagara: Rural Tree Planting Program

### Overview

Our Rural Tree Planting Program is a large-scale reforestation program that works with private and public landowners to plant trees on their properties. The many benefits of tree planting include:

- Providing shade / buffer / windbreak
- Restoring native forest cover
- Providing a legacy to descendants
- Eligibility for the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program
- Carbon Sequestration; Mitigating climate change
- Reducing stormwater runoff; reducing flood risk
- Improving water, soil, and air quality
- Mitigating heat island effect
- Improving biodiversity & wildlife habitat
- Many socio-economic benefits

Please note that the tree stock planted is **bare root**, meaning the trees are young (1-4 years old) and planted while in a dormant state in the spring. Bare root stock is industry standard and a cost effective method to plant large quantities of trees.



LAND CARE NIAGARA

## **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for this program, the subject property must be within the Niagara Region and have the capacity to plant a minimum of 1 acre of land. This equates to approximately 800 trees. Additionally, the site must fall within one of the following categories:

**Afforestation:** A planting area that is open or mostly open with no previous tree cover (E.g., an old agricultural field).

**Riparian Buffer:** A site adjacent to the banks of water bodies such as creeks, streams, ponds, and rivers.

**Windrow:** A row(s) of trees planted to create a windbreak or a wildlife corridor.

**Forest restoration:** Sites that have been impacted by disturbance including climate change events such as fire, wind/ice storm damage, insects (EAB), or others and/or require underplanting to establish regeneration for future forest growth.

The landowner is required to enter into a 15-year Stewardship Agreement with Land Care Niagara, agreeing to protect the planted area for 15 years. A financial contribution is also required by all participants to be eligible for the program. Final landowner costs are dependent on the total project costs. Should funding applications be denied with no other available funding opportunities to cover the cost of the project, then the project will be put on hold until the following year.

## **Costs**

The landowner contribution is typically 20% of the overall project costs and ranges from a minimum of \$1,000 up to \$10,000. Larger projects will require larger financial contributions from landowners. An example breakdown of project costs is provided below. Please note that costs can vary from year to year depending on the cost of seedlings, storage and delivery of plant material, contractor costs, and site-specific considerations like the location/difficulty of specific planting sites. As a non-profit organization, Land Care Niagara is eligible to apply for additional funding to assist with the various costs of the program. Depending on what funding receives approval, the cost for the site may increase or decrease from year to year.

**\*LCN Admin and overhead fees include insurance and liability, staff services which include on-site management of contractors and securing funds to apply towards project costs, securing contractors and seedlings, budget management and accounting fees, registered forester fees, planting prescriptions, delivery, and mandatory reporting requirements, follow up survival assessments 2 and 5 years post planting.**



# BUDGET ESTIMATE



<u>Cost</u>	<u>Total</u>
Tree Seedlings (3200)	\$5760
Contracting	\$5695
Cold Storage/Delivery	\$363
Site Preparation	\$904
Coordination & Admin fees	\$6000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,722</b>
Available Funding	\$8000
Landowner Contribution	\$2,140

This is an estimate of the prospective costs associated with your site. As a non-profit organization, we are always trying to source additional funds to help support these projects. Site preparation fees will be removed from the project total pending funding. Coordination and admin fees include fund management, site visits, flagging, reporting, stock and contractor procurement. Landowner contributions are based on the total cost of the project after available funding is applied. Your contribution is 20% of total project costs. Should more funding come available, you will be partially to fully refunded your contribution.

We appreciate your involvement in our programs and for taking the initiative to improve Niagara's natural environment!

## **Timeline & Project Overview**

Landowners will be contacted at least 1 year prior to the start of a project (E.g., Spring of 2022 for plantings occurring in Spring of 2023). Each landowner will be registered by LCN's staff as a landowner on the Forests Ontario database.

Landowners are also required to complete a screening questionnaire and provide Land Care Niagara with a map of their property outlining the areas they wish to plant.

[Click here to fill out the questionnaire.](#)

If Land Care Niagara determines a property is eligible for the program, a site visit will be scheduled during the summer to discuss the details of the project and address any questions or concerns. Following the site visit, LCN staff will prepare a map of the property and



quantify the number of trees/acres that can be planted. Following the review and approval of the landowner, LCN will provide the following documents:

1. A 15-year Stewardship Agreement is to be reviewed and signed by the landowner
2. A detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the project, including the required landowner contribution value.

Once all items are completed and returned to LCN, staff will secure your spot in the tree planting program for the following year. In the fall, a field tour will be conducted with LCN staff, the Regional Forester, and the planting contractor to review all properties in person. Landowners are encouraged to attend this site visit. Moving forward, LCN will coordinate the final planting prescription, order seedlings, secure contractors, acquire site plan approval from the Forester, etc. LCN will contact the landowners at the beginning of the planting year, closer to Spring, to schedule the final planting dates.

### **Post-Monitoring**

Following the planting, landowners will be provided with a post-planting information brochure outlining the proper care and maintenance guidelines for their tree planting to ensure long-term success. If you have any concerns with your tree planting, LCN requests that you inform staff within two weeks following project completion, to ensure any issues are resolved as soon as possible.

### **Survival Assessments**

As part of the Stewardship Agreement, Land Care Niagara will revisit the property to complete a 2-year and 5-year post-planting survival assessment. This involves a survey of the planted area to determine the overall survival percentage. If survival is less than 60%, the site may be eligible for a refill of trees depending on the level of mortality and the reasons for low survival. There may be a small financial contribution required by the landowner to help cover the cost of infilling. To ensure your property has a good survival rate, it is important to manage and maintain the planted area up to 5 years post-planting to ensure successful establishment. LCN will provide landowners with an information package related to best management practices.

### **Community Involvement Opportunities**

Tree planting is a great opportunity to engage the community in environmental conservation and restoration initiatives. For students, in particular, it can provide hands-on learning opportunities to enhance student understanding of the ecological importance of forest cover, wildlife habitat, species diversity, water quality, and plant management. Where possible and with permission from landowners, LCN would like to invite a few volunteers to assist on sites that require hand-planting in an effort to encourage responsible land stewardship within the community.

If you have any questions, please contact our Stewardship Manager

[coordinator@landcareniagara.com](mailto:coordinator@landcareniagara.com)

905 - 348 - 5263

