



## 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. Unlike container tree stock, bare root trees retain their natural root structure, improving establishment and tree health as they mature.





## **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for this program, the subject property must 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 [LCN], 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. The landowner contribution can be decreased if the landowner is willing to take on additional project tasks, including site preparation. This eliminates the need to contract out the work, and thus reduce overall project costs. 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, LCN is eligible to apply for additional funding to further subsidize the project costs.

*\*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, mandatory reporting requirements, follow up survival assessments 2 and 5 years post planting.*



<b>Project Costs</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Trees	\$ 5,000.00
Planting contractor	\$ 5,420.00
Tree Delivery	\$ 100.00
Cold Storage	\$ 330.00
Herbicide (spring)	\$ 2,540.00
Project coordination and administrative costs	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$ 15,390.00</b>
<b>Available Funding</b>	
Forests Canada (formerly Forests Ontario)	\$ 5,760.00
Other Funding	\$ 7,380.00
<b>Landowner Contribution</b>	<b>\$ 2,250.00</b>

### **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 Canada database.

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

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

If LCN determines a property is eligible for the program, a site visit will be scheduled to complete a soil assessment and discuss the details of the project. The landowner must be present for the site visit to communicate their stewardship goals and address any questions or concerns with LCN staff. Following the site visit, LCN staff will prepare a project proposal which will provide a planting plan and cost breakdown, including landowner contribution. Following the review and approval of the landowner, LCN will provide a 15-year Stewardship Agreement to be reviewed and signed by the landowner. LCN will begin site planning and preparation once landowner contribution is received.

A field tour will be conducted with LCN staff, the Regional Forester, and the planting contractor to review all properties in person in the fall or early spring prior to planting. Landowners are encouraged to attend this site visit. LCN will coordinate the final planting prescription, order seedlings, secure contractors, acquire site plan approval from the Forester, etc. LCN will contact the landowners to schedule the final planting dates.



### **Post-Monitoring**

Landowners are responsible for tending to their trees following planting. Following the planting, landowners will be provided with a post-planting information guide 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, LCN staff 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.

### **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 Restoration Ecologist

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

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