



Land Care Niagara
Non-profit organization



LAND CARE NIAGARA 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

*Annual Newsletter
December 2025*



2025 Highlights

 **24,000 Trees and Shrubs Planted**

 **22.4 Acres of Forest Habitat Created and Protected**

 **13 Workshops/Events Hosted**

 **1,150 Pollinator Plants Propagated at LCN's Re-Leaf Nursery**

 **916 Volunteers and Community Members Engaged**

A Note From The Executive Director



In an ever-changing landscape, Land Care Niagara (LCN) has remained true to its mission and committed to improving Niagara's natural environment. While circumstances around us continue to evolve, we have stayed focused on land stewardship, ecological resilience, and supporting the communities we serve. This consistency has allowed us to create lasting impact and remain a trusted presence across the region. As Executive Director, this dedication and the impact it creates make me very proud.

Over the past few years, LCN has grown in both reach and capacity. Our team continues to strengthen, our work on the land deepens, and our connections across the Niagara Peninsula continues to expand. We are building strong relationships with organizations eager to collaborate and new partners within our communities, all clear signs that LCN is recognized as a pillar in supporting ecosystem restoration throughout the region.

I extend my sincere thanks to the entire LCN team for their innovation, passion, and tireless efforts, as well as to our Board of Directors for their leadership, energy, and heart. Together, their passion makes it clear how deeply they care about Land Care Niagara and its mission. Thank you also to our volunteers, landowners, and partner organizations who supported us in 2025. We truly could not do this work without you. **Together, we are shaping a resilient, sustainable region where healthy ecosystems and vibrant communities coexist and flourish in harmony.**

Michelle Karam



The LCN Team

Current



Michelle Karam

Executive Director, 2021-Present

Contact: director@landcareniagara.com



Sarah Fuller

Senior Environmental Technician, 2023-Present

Contact: technician@landcareniagara.com



Helen Hermansen

Restoration Ecologist, 2025- present

Contact: ecologist@landcareniagara.com



Laura Hanes-Silverthorne

Laura Hanes-Silverthorne, 2025-Present

Contact: juniortechnician@landcareniagara.com



Farewell

Katja Odegaard

Stewardship Manager, 2023-2025



*Thank you for your support over
the last couple of years!*

Board of Directors



Adam Boudens
Chair, Director



Cedric Samaha
Vice Chair, Director



Duane Bender
Treasurer, Director



Alexa Root
Secretary, Director



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Director



Jason Henry
Director



John Goodier
Director



Jillian Booth
Director



Karley Cianchino
Director



Norm Ruttan
Director



Mariane Vocal Ferencevic
Director



As we wrap up another successful year, I want to thank everyone who's helped Land Care Niagara continue its mission of caring for our local environment. Every tree planted, habitat restored, and community partnership strengthened makes a difference. We're proud of what we've accomplished together, and even more excited for what's ahead.

Here's to another year of growing a greener Niagara!

*Best,
Adam, LCN Chair*

PROJECT AND PROGRAM UPDATES

RURAL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM



LCN staff tree planting in the Fall of 2025. Photo courtesy of Clark Sykes.



GREENBELT PROJECT

Niagara Treeplanting Guide

Through the support of the Greenbelt Foundation, Land Care Niagara is developing an evidence-based field guide of tree planting practices. This is to help connect and collaborate with treeplanting organizations across Niagara. The goal is to support treeplanting efforts and improve the growth and survival of trees.



TAKING ROOT

This year our Rural Tree Planting (RTP) Program received funding from Forests Canada, Greenbelt Foundation, ECCC Priority Place and Ontario Power Generation to plant 24,000 trees throughout Niagara! There were 8 new landowner properties, and 6 properties that received infill plantings. 17 species planted. Survival assessment surveys were conducted on 13 properties.

With over 30 years of experience, LCN is dedicated to planting bare-root trees to help re-connect fragmented habitats. Whether your goals are to improve soil health, erosion control, carbon sequestration, or habitat creation, we specifically select a diverse mix of native tree species tailored to your property. We are currently accepting landowners into our RTP program for 2026, so contact us today to help restore Niagara naturally.

PROJECT AND PROGRAM UPDATES

RELEAF COMMUNITY TREE NURSERY

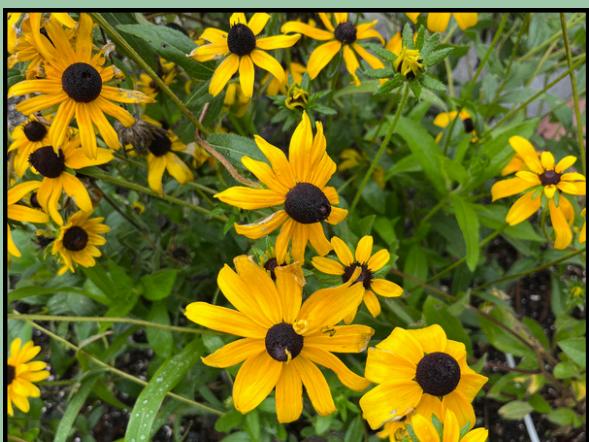
This year, our Re-Leaf Nursery was busy! LCN donated 33 native trees to various organizations, schools, and landowners. We also sold 56 native trees to different members of our community with Eastern redbud being our best seller!

Additionally, we hosted 8 workshops/volunteer events at our nursery focused on the pollinators and their importance, nursery care/maintenance, propagation techniques for native trees and pollinator plants, and tree identification. We are looking forward to continuing expanding and growing our Releaf nursery workshops in the new year.

A special thank you to Walkers Industries for donating mulch and compost to help support our nursery projects.



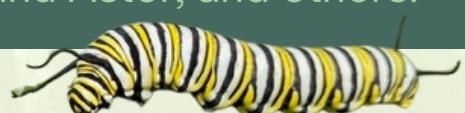
PROJECT POLLINATOR



This year, LCN propagated 150 native pollinator plants, many of which were sold, donated, or planted in our new pollinator garden.

“Project Pollinator” was created to showcase a thriving native garden right here at our nursery, giving visitors a place to enjoy, learn, and gather ideas for their own spaces. The garden also serves as a valuable seed source for future restoration and planting efforts.

It currently features 15 native pollinator species, with plans to expand even further in the coming year! Species include showy tick trefoil, swamp rose mallow, butterfly milkweed, New England Aster, and others!



PROJECT AND PROGRAM UPDATES

AMERICAN WATER-WILLOW

This year, Land Care Niagara completed the third year of a monitoring program for the aquatic species at risk plant American water-willow [AWW] in Niagara. The goal of this project is to mitigate harm to the species and its' habitat, while gaining knowledge on environmental factors effecting its survival and growth.

In 2023, we removed AWW from a site that was scheduled for construction. A portion of the AWW were transported to a nearby creek for safekeeping and another portion were brought to a nursery to be propagated.

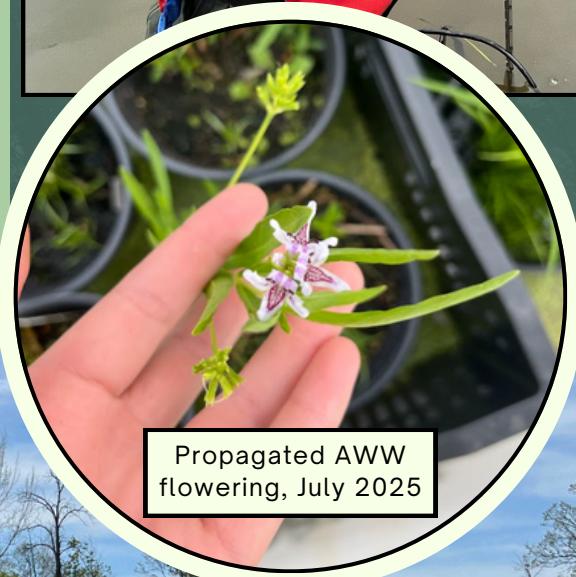
In 2024 and 2025, biweekly monitoring of the water quality, flow, and translocated AWW occurred between April to November. Additionally, LCN led 2 more translocations of propagated AWW stems to replenish and maintain both the original and newly established populations.

Additionally in 2025, LCN led the propagation portion of this project at our Releaf Nursery. In total, Approximately 1000 AWW individuals were successfully propagated. Some were used to maintain existing populations in 2025, while others will be overwintered for future translocations planned in 2026. This is the first translocation attempt in Ontario!

LCN staff measuring flow at monitoring site, June 2025



Propagated AWW flowering, July 2025



Volunteer measuring water quality at monitoring site, May 2025

PROJECT AND PROGRAM UPDATES

BROOK TROUT



Cheek swab for genetic sampling, May 2025



Brook trout caught in 12 Mile Creek, September 2025



LCN staff and Ian Smith electrofishing, September 2025



LCN staff and Ian Smith processing fish, September 2025

This year, Land Care Niagara (LCN), in partnership with the Town of Pelham, undertook a feasibility study to explore the restoration of Niagara's unique native brook trout population in the Upper 12 Mile Creek watershed. This 1-year project was funded by the Niagara Community Foundation and greatly supported by Ian Smith and the University of Toronto's Mandrak Lab.

12 Mile Creek is Niagara's last year-round coldwater stream and the only remaining habitat for a native population of brook trout in the region. In recent years, this population has declined due to climate change, increased development, erosion, and heightened competition from invasive brown trout.

In 2025, LCN and its partners began evaluating the feasibility of a large-scale restoration effort through the limited catch-and-release relocation of brook trout into a controlled section of the creek. From May to September, Ian Smith, LCN staff, volunteers, and U of T students conducted electrofishing surveys to document fish species throughout the creek.

Through ongoing observation/data analysis, the project is evaluating whether relocated brook trout can survive and support population recovery, helping shape future restoration efforts in Niagara.



Two common garter snakes emerging from brumation at one of our tree planting sites- March, 2025



LCN staff and Christian S gearing up for Fall tree planting in Fort Erie- October, 2025



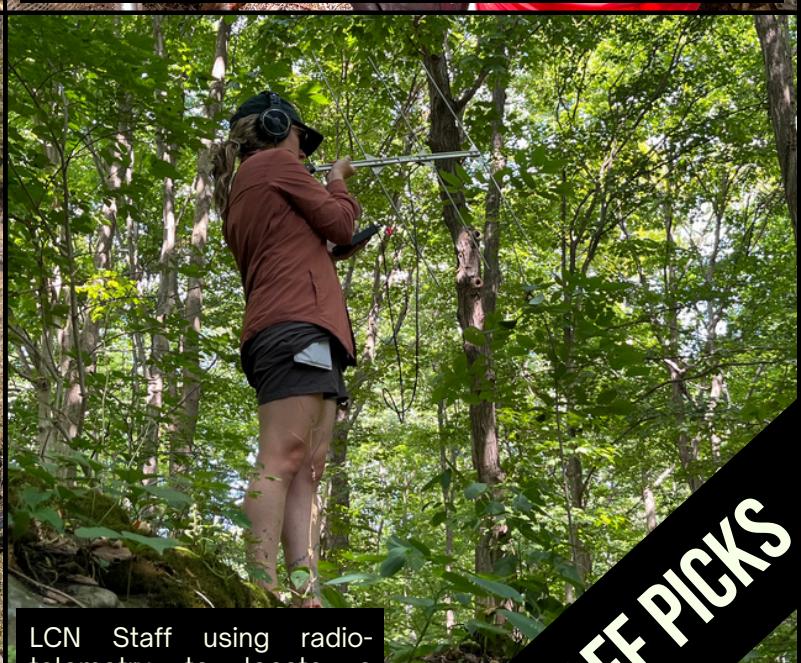
Female Monarch butterfly resting on some milkweed in our nursery- August, 2025



LCN staff holding an American eel caught during electrofishing in 12 Mile Creek- September, 2025



LCN staff making a furry friend while flagging a tree planting site- March, 2025



LCN Staff using radio-telemetry to locate a tagged big brown bat at Niagara Glen- August, 2025

STAFF PICKS

Walker Industries helping with nursery shut-down for the winter- November, 2025



Foreign Affair Winery staff weeding Re-leaf nursery trees- June, 2025



Volunteers helping set up a mist net at a LCN bat survey night at Heartland Forest- August, 2025



Volunteers & LCN staff planting trees for our Rural Tree Planting Program in the Spring- May, 2025



Volunteer Corps helping spread the last of the mulch in our nursery- November, 2025



Volunteers helping weed our Re-leaf nursery at one of our community nursery maintenance days- July, 2025





The Green Herons dropping off wildlife habitat boxes they built at our Re-leaf nursery- October 2025



A community bat night at Niagara Glen, with Myotistar, Niagara Parks & bat research students- August, 2025



LCN staff making pollinator seed balls with elementary students at the LGL Earth Day Event- April, 2025



A LCN BOD member and a volunteer planting a tree at a Tree Trust event in Port Dalhousie- June, 2025



LCN staff donating some of our potted stock for the Scouts Camp planting at Camp Wetaskiwin- May, 2025



The winner of the Kahoot quiz at one of our nursery workshops- November, 2025

WORKSHOPS, EVENTS &
PARTNERSHIPS

FEELING BATTY



Eastern red bat captured at Heartland Forest, August 2025

It was an exciting year for bats with Land Care Niagara! LCN hosted two community bat nights, one in partnership with Myostistar and Niagara Parks, and the other with Heartland Forest. In total, 31 big brown bats were captured using mist nets, banded, and then immediately released. We were also thrilled to capture one Eastern red bat (SAR) caught at Heartland Forest.

MOTUS TOWERS

This year, we installed three Motus towers in Niagara in partnership with Myostistar and Birds Canada. By creating great new relationships in the community, we found excellent hosts for the new towers. These towers help track birds, bats and even insects across the globe, giving insight into migration patterns, habitat use and population dynamics. The data collected will be uploaded to Motus database to help with the study and conservation of many species.

Check out the publicly available data here:

<https://motus.org/>



LCN staff and volunteers removing a bat from a mist net, August 2025



LCN staff installing a motus tower, July 2025



Niagara Glen community bat night, August 2025



Big brown bat captured at Heartland Forest, August 2025



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Together, Enhancing Niagara Naturally

Our success as a community environmental nonprofit is rooted in the amazing support of our volunteers. Each hour of their time and every bit of their effort has helped protect and restore Niagara's natural spaces and species. We're so thankful for their passion and dedication, and can't wait to keep the momentum going in 2026!

VOLUNTEER CORPS

Our Volunteer Corps is a group of dedicated volunteers who meet monthly and assist directly across all our programs. We pay it forward by providing members with professional development opportunities. Interested in joining? Visit our website's "About Us" page for more information.



Alicia



Lisa



Alisha



Sara



Caitlin



Delainey



Karine



Imraj



Laura



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walker

NATIVE WILDFLOWER SEEDS



Northern
Wildflowers

In 2025, Land Care Niagara became a proud retailer for Northern Wildflower, a Canadian company based in Northern Ontario. We are selling 50 different native seed species and 4 seed mix varieties, all from Northern Wildflowers.



Every purchase supports Land Care Niagara's conservation projects!

SEED STORE



CONTACT

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  Land Care Niagara

www.landcareniagara.com



DONATE

Support restoration and species at risk conservation in the Niagara Region by making a donation or purchasing merchandise from our store. Contribute to reforestation in Niagara by donating \$2 to plant 1 tree!



DONATE



APPAREL



RESTORE NIAGARA NATURALLY

See you in
2026!