

# Trees Beyond Goderich

Rural Disaster Relief through Reforestation



Huron Stewardship Council  
County of Huron



## Background

The incredible loss of trees and buildings in the Town of Goderich has been well publicized since the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 tornado. Less known is the fact that tens of thousands of trees in woodlots, fencerows and farmsteads were also destroyed in a twenty-kilometer rural corridor stretching from Goderich to Highway #4 north of Clinton. At least two hundred (200) acres of woodlands have been severely affected and at least 60 landowners have sustained significant loss of tree cover and damage to woodlands.

The community spirit that has been evoked by this natural disaster has been inspiring, and there is an excellent opportunity now to apply this spirit to the restoration and enhancement of tree cover on the tornado's path. This effort will complement the natural regeneration of trees in woodlots and has the potential to increase the future biodiversity and resilience of the tree cover in the area.

*This community's ambition may also lead to renewed tree planting efforts in the areas of rural Huron County adjacent to the tornado's path and ultimately lead to an increase in overall forest cover.*



**The path of the tornado as it crossed the Maitland River, just east of Benmiller, is clearly marked by extensive damage to woodlots.**

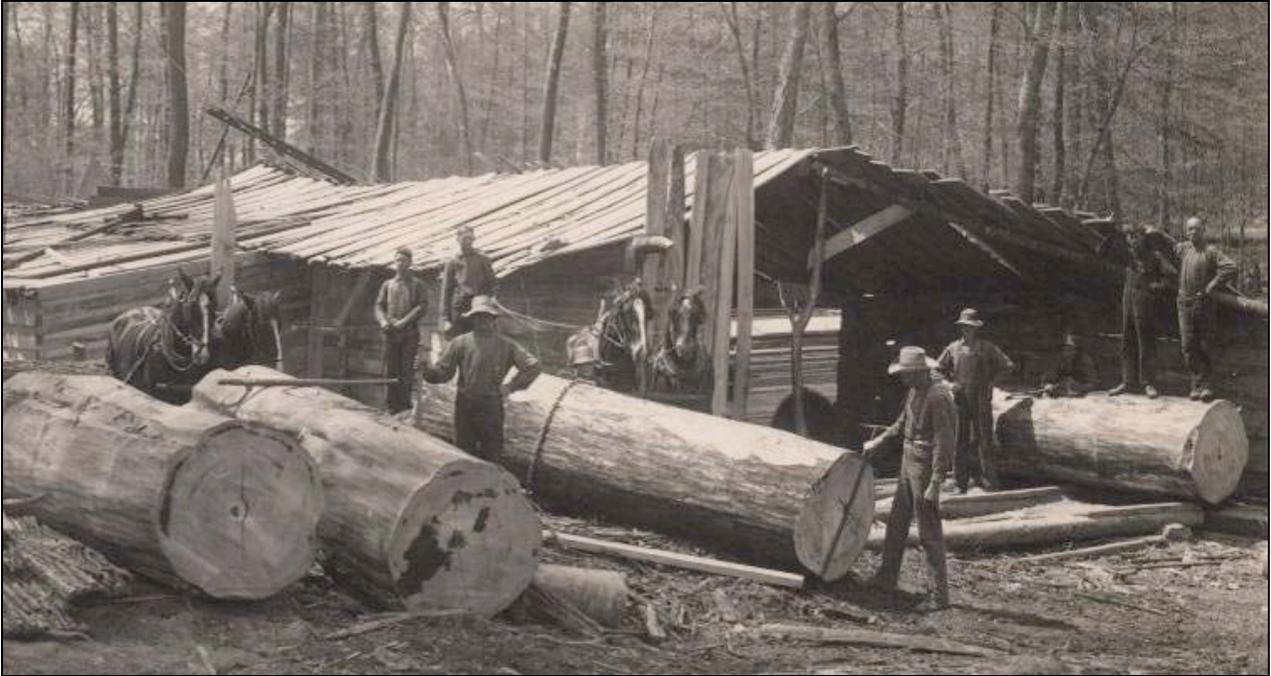
## Objectives

- To replace trees damaged and destroyed in the 2011 tornado.
- To conserve and rejuvenate severely damaged woodland areas for future generations by complementing natural regeneration with planted stock.
- To increase biodiversity and resilience in severely damaged woodlands, fencerows and farmsteads through the introduction of shade intolerant native species that can thrive in areas that now have partial or full sunlight conditions.
- To create demonstration sites that will inspire the replanting of woodlands and fencerows throughout the tornado-damaged area and renew interest in tree planting in the surrounding rural community.

### “Trees Beyond Goderich” Pilot Project: The Treblehill Woodlot



**The Treblehill farm on Londesboro Road east of Benmiller was home to one of the county’s most productive and historic woodlots. This woodlot was directly in the path of the tornado, and upwards of 90% of the trees were destroyed.**



**The Hugh Hill Sawmill ca. 1910. Photo by Reuben Sallows “From the Collection of the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol” (site of the Treblehill woodlot).**

### **Treblehill Woodlot Pilot Project Background**

The damaged and destroyed trees in this woodlot were salvaged late in 2011 and most of the treetops were removed to make room for natural regeneration and for potential replanting.

Although this has been a profitable woodlot over the years, a major economic loss for the Treblehill Farm has occurred over the next few decades as the woodlot recovers from this devastating natural occurrence.

While parts of the woodlot no longer qualified for protection under the Huron Forest Conservation Bylaw, the family decided to retain a large part of the woodlot and to participate in an inspiring project to diversify and protect the area.

The Treblehill woodlot is surrounded by seasonal cattle pastures, and another large part of the loss to the family was the destruction of the fencing around the perimeter of the woodlot, which is critical for the protection of woodland trees and plants. This area will be re-fenced to protect the natural regeneration and planted tree stock from browsing by cattle and deer.

## **Treblehill Farm Planting Event May 11/12, 2012**

On the mornings of May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, students from three different local schools and community volunteers converged on the site of the woodlot. About of 100 volunteers planted over 1200 trees and woodland shrubs ranging in size from seedlings to large potted stock.

Technical oversight for this operation was provided by a local professional landscaping company, the Huron forest conservation officer, and a locally-based professional forester who volunteered time to the project.

Tree species planted in and around the woodland included bur and red oak, black cherry, tulip tree, shagbark hickory, white pine, larch, hemlock and several others. Native shrub species such as elderberry, serviceberry and chokecherry and larger conifer trees were utilized around the perimeter of the woodlot to provide wildlife benefits and protection for the interior of the woodlot.

**Huron- Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson and Huron County Warden Bernie MacLellan plant a tree at the Treblehill woodlot.**





Children gathered on the Treblehill farm on May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to help re-plant the woodlot.

### **“Trees Beyond Goderich” 2012-2015 Plan of Action**

Using the Spring 2012 Treblehill woodlot event as a fundraising launch, Trees Beyond Goderich hopes to provide tree stock and planting assistance to the many property owners on the path of the tornado between Goderich and Highway #4. This three-year effort has the potential to bring many positive benefits to the area, including seasonal employment, biodiversity, and quality/quantity of tree cover. In the wake of 2011’s major tornado damage, this effort also has the potential to bolster the spirit and determination of the local community.

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>May 3/4, 2012</b>   | Invitations to potential funding partners to participate in “Trees Beyond Goderich” project   |
| <b>May 11/12, 2012</b> | Planting event at Treblehill farm woodlot   |
| <b>May 2012</b>        | Development of a questionnaire for affected landowners and further contact with potential funding partners  |
| <b>Summer 2012</b>     | Site visits to affected landowners on the tornado’s path to determine future planting needs, projects and budgets; partner with local conservation organizations. |
| <b>Fall 2012</b>       | Planting/fundraising event in Benmiller area  |
| <b>2013 – 2015</b>     | Future planting projects/events in the affected area and visioning with partners of future tree planting projects and programs in Huron County                    |

## **“Trees Beyond Goderich” Confirmed Funding Partners to Date**

### **Huron Stewardship Council**

*\$1500 initial funding via MNR Can-Ont Agreement and commitment to provide a leadership role in the project.*

### **The Edge Renewal Fund**

*\$4500 initial funding and a commitment to match the next \$10,000; committed to the project by other organizations and individuals.*

### **Huron Clean Water Project/County of Huron**

*\$3000 Special Project Funding for 2012.*

### **Huron-Perth Woodlot Owners Association**

*\$1000 contribution to be matched by the Edge Renewal Fund.*

### **Farm Credit Canada**

*\$1000 contribution to be matched by the Edge Renewal Fund.*

