



FOREST OPERATION REVIEW COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Wednesday, November 11, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
55 Zina Street, Orangeville – Sutton Room (2nd Floor)**

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. **FOREST OPERATION REVIEW COMMITTEE – November 11, 2015 – ITEM #1**
Draft Forest Management Plan - Review
 1. Review of the draft Forest Management Plan with suggested changes.
 2. Next steps.

Next Meeting: To be determined
55 Zina Street, Orangeville – Sutton Room



Our Forest, Our Future:
Dufferin County Forest Management Plan
2016-2036



DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dufferin County Forest is a 1,054 hectare (2,606 acre) multi-tract forested area owned and managed by the County of Dufferin. The Forest serves important functions in terms of erosion and water control, natural heritage protection, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and support of the rural economy through timber production and employment opportunities.

This twenty-year management plan for the period 2016-2036 outlines how social, environmental, and economic sustainability will be achieved for the Dufferin County Forest. It builds on the County's strategies as outlined in the previous management plan for 1995-2015.

The goal of the management plan has not changed: *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.*

In order to achieve this goal, the following key actions will be taken in each of the three areas of sustainability:

Social Sustainability

- ❖ developing a separate detailed recreation policy to manage increasing recreational use, in particular in the Main Tract;
- ❖ maintaining an active relationship with users and other stakeholders and;
- ❖ continuing to inform residents of Dufferin County about the County Forest.

Environmental Sustainability

- ❖ maintaining sustainable levels of timber harvesting throughout the planning period;
- ❖ maintaining natural forest characteristics as much as possible and;
- ❖ seeking to protect the Forest from threats of invasive species and climate change by maintaining, and, where possible, increasing, biodiversity.

Economic Sustainability

- ❖ seeking forest certification to increase the demand for timber products from the County Forest and;
- ❖ continuing to develop alternative revenue streams that will not compromise environmental sustainability.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	9
2.0 PHYSICAL FEATURES OF DUFFERIN COUNTY	9
2.1 Topography, Geology, and Soils	9
2.2 Hydrology	11
2.3 Climate	11
3.0 DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMY OF DUFFERIN COUNTY.....	12
4.0 HISTORY OF THE DUFFERIN COUNTY FOREST	13
5.0 CURRENT RESOURCES OF THE DUFFERIN COUNTY FOREST	16
5.1 Recreation	20
5.2 Public Relations and Education	21
5.3 Research.....	22
5.4 Forest Inventory.....	23
Overstorey Tree Vegetation	23
Regeneration.....	24
Understorey Vegetation	25
5.5 Wildlife	25
5.6 High Conservation Value Forests	25
Laurel Wetland Complex (provincially significant)	26
Terra Nova Complex (provincially significant)	26
Melancthon 1 (provincially significant)	26
Orangeville Wetland Complex (provincially significant)	27
Melancthon 2 (locally significant)	27
Walker's Creek Wetland (locally significant)	27
Leening and Levitt Tracts.....	27
Little Tract.....	27
Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs).....	28
Species at Risk.....	28
Critical Fish Habitat	28

5.7 Ecosystem Services	28
5.8 Forest Health	29
5.9 Aggregates.....	30
6.0 OUR FOREST, OUR FUTURE: DUFFERIN COUNTY FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016-2036	30
6.1 Goal	31
6.2 Social Sustainability.....	31
Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy.....	31
Access Restriction.....	31
Human Health.....	31
Signs.....	31
Information Products.....	32
Presentations, Schools, Walks, and Tours.....	32
Interpretive Trails	32
Cultural Heritage Resources.....	32
Researchers	32
6.3 Environmental Sustainability.....	32
Land Use.....	33
Sustainable Timber Harvesting	33
Pre-Harvest Silvicultural Prescriptions.....	34
Silvicultural Practices for Working Groups	35
White-Tailed Deer Winter Concentration Areas.....	37
High Conservation Value Forests.....	37
Evaluation of Insect and Disease Populations.....	37
Wildfires and Prescribed Burns	38
Alien Invasive Plants	38
Climate Change	39
Soil Erosion.....	39
6.4 Economic Sustainability	40
Forest Certification.....	40
Financial Stability	40
Property Assessment, Acquisition and Disposition.....	40
7.0 MONITORING	43
7.1 Social Sustainability.....	43

7.2 Environmental Sustainability	43
Cut Inspections.....	43
Forest Inventory.....	44
7.3 Economic Sustainability	44
8.0 REPORTING	45
9.0 THE FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS	45
APPENDICES	46
A: Glossary	46
B: Acronyms	51
C: Species Abbreviations	51
D: Conversion Factors	52
E: Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy Summary	52
F: Related Municipal Policies and By-Laws	52
G: Related Provincial Policies and Legislation	52
H: References	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest 17
Table 2: Summary of Estimated Production Forest¹ Area and Volume, Dufferin County Forest..... 23
Table 3: Annual Harvest Area and Volume 1995-2013..... 24
Table 4: High Conservation Value Forests in the Dufferin County Forest..... 26
Table 5: Ecosystem Service Values for Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest..... 28
Table 6: Aggregate Resources in the Dufferin County Forest..... 30
Table 7: Sustainable Timber Management Area Projections by Planning Period for all Forest Types
2014-2053..... 33
Table 8: Proposed Selection Harvesting 2016-2036 33
Table 9: Natural Heritage and Socio-Economic Assessment of Dufferin County Forest Properties... 42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Population of Dufferin County 12
Figure 2: Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest..... 16
Figure 3: Forest Use Permits (Hunting) Issued for the Dufferin County Forest 1997-2013..... 21

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This plan applies to the Dufferin County Forest, a 1,054 ha (2,606 acre) multi-tract forested area owned and managed by the County of Dufferin. The Forest serves important functions in terms of erosion and water control, natural heritage protection, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and support of the rural economy through timber production and employment opportunities.

This forest management plan, *Our Forest, Our Future*, emphasizes user and community participation and a sustainability-based approach to forest management.

In order to maintain this emphasis throughout the planning process, the County of Dufferin has:

1. made the protection of the quality and integrity of the natural environment the primary goal of the plan;
2. surveyed the public, both groups and individuals, through surveys and open houses and;
3. established a Forest Plan Advisory Team, representing the main user groups and the general public, to advise the County throughout the planning process.

The *Dufferin County Forest Management Plan* outlines the goal and actions that will guide the sustainability of the 1,054 ha (2,606 acre) Dufferin County Forest over the next twenty years.

This forest management plan was developed around the same time as the first Official Plan for Dufferin County. The Official Plan proposes the preparation of a Natural Heritage System Strategy and includes a Natural Heritage System map. The County Forest is included as part of the Natural Heritage System. The goal, objectives, and actions outlined in this document align with the objectives for natural heritage and water resources in the Official Plan.

2.0 PHYSICAL FEATURES OF DUFFERIN COUNTY

2.1 Topography, Geology, and Soils

Dufferin County, along with its neighbours, Grey, Wellington and Simcoe Counties, is located on a high, undulating plain which forms the "Roof of Ontario". The elevation of the "roof" ranges from 467 to 583 metres above sea level (1,541-1,924 feet). The location of the roof's peak is under much debate, but the *Physiography of Southern Ontario* puts it near the village of Singhampton, just north of Dufferin County. There, the elevation reaches 583 m (1,924 feet). Although the peak of the roof is not within Dufferin County, Dufferin does have the highest seat of government in southern Ontario. Orangeville is located at an elevation of 450 m (1,485 feet).

The elevation in the northeast corner of the county is 260 m (858 feet) above sea level, rising to 380 m (1,254 feet) above sea level in the southeast corner. West of the Niagara Escarpment, the land slopes to the north, from 470 m (1,551 feet) above sea level in the southwest to 530 m (1,749 feet) above sea level in the northwest.

Dufferin County rests on Precambrian rock, estimated to be between 800 and 1100 million years old. In the period between 500 and 300 million years ago, this area was covered by a vast sea. On the floor of this sea settled sand, ooze, mud, shells, tiny sea animals, and all manner of marine

debris. Time and pressure eventually turned this layer into rocks of various types and hardness. About 250 million years ago, the sea retreated, leaving a flat, unbroken plain. Rivers flowed over the old seabed, eroding the rocks. The softer rocks, such as the shales, eroded quickly, whereas the harder dolomites and limestones resisted the eroding power of the rivers.

Over several hundred million years, this continued erosion produced the Niagara Escarpment. In Dufferin County, the Escarpment runs through the local municipalities of Mono and Mulmur in a roughly north-south direction.

Dufferin County has been subjected to repeated glaciations and the bedrock is covered by glacial drift varying in thickness from several centimetres to 170 m (561 feet). The soils of Dufferin County have developed directly from this drift. Dufferin County is underlain by sedimentary strata of the Ordovician and Silurian ages. The Ordovician lie to the east and the Silurian to the west of the Niagara Escarpment. The uppermost strata of the Silurian rocks consist of dolomite, shale and sandstone. These rocks are underlain by grey and buff dolomites.

The upper formations of the Ordovician age are the only ones which occur in Dufferin County. Uppermost and adjacent to the Niagara Escarpment are the reddish shales of the Queenston formation. These are underlain by greyish shales.

Dufferin County is characterized by gently undulating ground moraine. Steep slopes, associated with the kame moraines, occur in Mulmur, Mono, and the south part of East Garafraxa. The glaciers also left behind spillways, which today are important sources of gravel. Gravel can be found in many pockets around the County, but the most important deposits are north of Orangeville and in the Grand River Valley.

The glaciers also created the Dundalk till plain which covers the municipalities of Melancthon, Amaranth, East Garafraxa and Grand Valley. The plain is high and flat, supporting the County's agriculture, but is also poorly drained and contains many areas of wetland.

The surface deposits in Dufferin County are of glacial origin. They form the parent material from which the soils have developed. The surface deposits are classified as till, outwash, kame, esker, deltaic, and lacustrine. These classifications indicate the mode of deposition and the texture of the deposit. Glacial till, which covers a large portion of Dufferin County, is a non-sorted mixture of rock fragments and soil particles ranging in size from sand to clay.

Gently undulating till plains cover most of the municipalities of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Grand Valley, and Melancthon. Most of this area has a superficial deposit of silt. The silt is thinnest near the west side of the county and is thickest in the area between Shelburne and Honeywood.

A part of the Port Huron morainic system forms the core of the region in most of Mulmur and Mono. The kame moraines are very hilly and stony and consist of a mixture of sand and gravel materials, but with clay till, coarse, stony, sandy loam till, and loam till, covered with up to one metre of silt or fine sandy loam.

Dufferin County's glacial heritage did not leave behind many rich mineral deposits. There were deposits of oil discovered in the early settlement days, but none were large enough to support a petroleum industry. In the early years of settlement, there were also rumours of gold and silver deposits, but none were ever found.

Organic deposits exist throughout Dufferin County, the largest of them is Luther Marsh.

Generally speaking, the Dufferin County Forest tracts located in the eastern half of Dufferin County are on drier, upland sites whereas those in the western half are on wetter, lowland sites.

2.2 Hydrology

Dufferin County has no large lakes, but it has many rivers. The Grand, Nottawasaga, Credit, Humber, and Saugeen rivers all have their headwaters in or near Dufferin County.

The Grand River drains the western half of Dufferin County, an area of 6,734 km² (2,626 square miles) and occupies the largest catchment basin in southwestern Ontario. Its main tributaries are the Conestogo, Nith, and Speed. In the upper reaches of the Grand River, valley cutting has been restricted by bedrock. North of the village of Grand Valley the drainage is poor, making wetlands prevalent in Melancthon Township. The depth of the river valley increases between Grand Valley and Elora, going from 18 m to 30 m (59 to 99 feet). The Grand River flows south for a distance of about 265 km (164 miles), ending up in Lake Erie just south of Dunnville.

The Nottawasaga River drains the eastern half of Dufferin County. Two of its tributaries, the Pine River and the Boyne River, rise west of the Niagara Escarpment and flow in an easterly direction. The main branch of the Nottawasaga system rises south of Shelburne and flows through the Hockley Valley. The valleys of this system are deeper than those of the Grand River system, often having gradients of more than 20 metres per kilometre (four feet per mile). The Nottawasaga flows into Georgian Bay where its mouth forms the delta of Wasaga Beach, the longest freshwater beach in the world. The Pine River runs through the south end of the Main Tract of the Dufferin County Forest.

The Credit River collects some of its tributaries from the area around Orangeville before flowing south and east to finally empty itself into Lake Ontario just west of Highway 10.

The Humber River begins its journey in the southeast corner of Mono before continuing southward through Metropolitan Toronto and into Lake Ontario at the boundary between the former cities of Etobicoke and York.

The Saugeen has its headwaters just outside the northwest border of Dufferin County, but it does collect some tributaries from within the County before continuing its flow into Lake Huron.

2.3 Climate

Canadian Climate Normals Station Data from Environment Canada (1981-2010) reports the following for Orangeville:

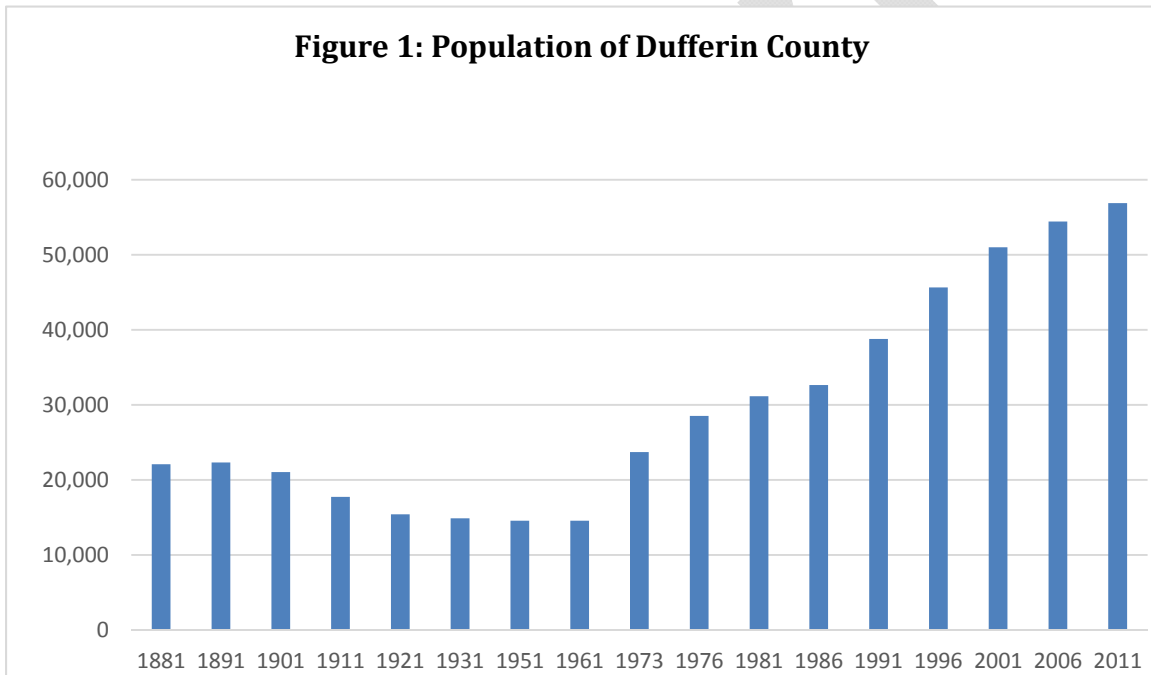
Mean winter temperature: -6°C (21°F)
Mean summer temperature: 18°C (64°F)
Mean frost-free period: 132 days
Annual mean precipitation: 90 cm (3 feet)
Annual mean snowfall: 152 cm (5 feet)

Both precipitation and snowfall are greatest on the western side of Dufferin County, where there is

also poor drainage resulting in prolonged wet soil conditions.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMY OF DUFFERIN COUNTY

Dufferin County was one of the last areas of southern Ontario to be settled. Its rough terrain and lack of large water bodies were the two main factors that resulted in the delay in settlement. When settlement did begin in earnest in the mid-1800s, it was mostly Protestant Irish families that emigrated to Dufferin County to escape the potato famine. By 1871, the population of Dufferin County had reached 16,689. As the number of settlers increased, so did the amount of land clearing. Trees were seen not only as a valuable product for overseas markets, but also as an obstacle to the planting of wheat, corn, and other crops. Figure 1 shows the population of Dufferin County from 1881-2011.



The majority of the settlers of Dufferin County came from the British Isles, particularly Northern Ireland. This heritage is reflected in the current population of Dufferin County; in the 2011 census 91% of the people in the County said that their first language was English. Other ethnic backgrounds represented in significant numbers include Dutch, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

In 2011, 67% of the population of Dufferin lived in the three urban centres of Orangeville, Shelburne, and Grand Valley.

In the past, the economy of Dufferin County was based on agriculture. Livestock raising and mixed farming were the main enterprises, with dairy farms prevailing close to large centres of population. The most common crops included hay, mixed grains, oats, wheat, and potatoes. Beef, poultry, dairy, and market gardening operations were also important. In 2011, there were 795 farms in Dufferin County covering an area of 69,745 hectares (172,344 acres). This was down from 1986 when there were 1,079 farms covering an area of 85,360 hectares (210,929 acres). Although a portion of Dufferin's economy still depends on agriculture, it is diversifying.

According to the 2006 census¹, the population of Dufferin County aged 15 years or older was employed in the following industries:

24%	sales and service occupations
19%	trades, transport, and equipment operators and related occupations
16%	business, finance and administration occupations
11%	management occupations
9%	occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities
7%	occupations in social science, education, government service, and religion
4%	natural and applied sciences and related occupations
4%	health occupations
4%	occupations unique to primary industry
2%	occupations in art, culture, recreation, and sport

The commercial retail and service sector is centred in Orangeville and Shelburne and is growing rapidly. With recent influxes of population, industries related to residential and commercial construction (building, supplies, real estate) have also grown. Manufacturing is also an important sector of Dufferin's economy. Tourism is becoming more significant, as local tourism associations take a more proactive role in attracting visitors to the area.

In *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006; Office Consolidation, June 2013* the population of Dufferin County is forecasted to rise from the 56,881 reported in the 2011 census to 80,000 in 2031 and 85,000 in 2041. This increase in population is expected to increase the recreational pressure on the Dufferin County Forest.

4.0 HISTORY OF THE DUFFERIN COUNTY FOREST

By 1900, much of Dufferin County had been cleared of trees to facilitate farming. As there had been no reforestation, the trees disappeared, and so did the lumber companies. Many farmers who had supplemented their income with logging fell on hard times. The removal of the tree cover had far-reaching effects: without stabilization, the thin, sandy soils were eroded by wind and water. This made farming impossible. However, Dufferin was not alone in this predicament. Similar settlement patterns in other parts of southern Ontario had created similar problems. As early as 1908, the Ontario Department of Agriculture had published a *Report on the Reforestation of Waste Lands in Southern Ontario*. This report outlined the development of blowsands that had resulted from large-scale land clearing. It also described the economic and environmental benefits of reforestation:

"The policy of putting these lands under forest management has many arguments in its favour. It will pay as a financial investment; assist in insuring a wood supply; protect the headwaters of streams; provide breeding ground for wild game, provide object lessons in forestry, and prevent citizens from developing under conditions which can end only in failure."

In Dufferin County, land reclamation through planting began in 1905. Gradually, tree planting gained momentum, as people realized that trees were not primarily a nuisance in land-clearing, but were important for stabilization of soils, maintenance of water supplies, and ongoing timber production. This change in opinion could not have come about without the leadership provided by local municipalities. In 1914, Orangeville planted 4,000 trees; further plantings occurred in 1916,

¹ Employment data is not available as part of the 2011 census information provided by Statistics Canada.

1924, 1925, 1926, and 1932. Mulmur planted 16,000 trees in 1924. This was followed by more plantings in 1925, 1927, and 1928. Mono began planting in 1925, and by 1952 there were 228,300 trees planted on lands in Mono that were formerly barren.

From aerial photography taken of Dufferin County in 1953, it was estimated that there were approximately 19,600 ha (49,000 acres) of grass and meadow (poor pasture) and wooded pasture (grazed woodlands) that were suitable for reforestation and woodland management. Reclaiming the majority of these areas would require planting of about one million trees per year for thirty years. By March 31, 1974 over 17 million trees had been planted in Dufferin County.

In 1953, the Grand River Valley Conservation Authority initiated a forest management agreement with the Department of Lands and Forests (now the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) with the purchase of 190 ha (475 acres) in the municipality of Grand Valley. Many of the lands owned by the Conservation Authority are important water source and water-holding areas. However, they also have value in terms of wildlife, recreation, and timber production.

In 1967, Woodlands Improvement Act (WIA) Agreements began to take hold in Dufferin County. These agreements provided private landowners with assistance from the Department of Lands and Forests in the planting and management of their woodlands. In 1982, the 9000th Woodlands Improvement Act Agreement in Ontario was signed in Dufferin County. The WIA Agreement program was terminated by the provincial government in the mid-1990s.

In 1930, the County of Dufferin, following the lead taken by the County of Simcoe in 1922, signed a forest management agreement with the Department of Lands and Forests under the auspices of the *Counties Reforestation Act*, marking a significant step in the reclamation of barren lands in Dufferin County.

The Dufferin County Forest began its existence on July 3, 1930 when a motion was introduced at the Dufferin County Council meeting requesting the Ontario Forestry Branch to secure options on lands in Mulmur Township for reforestation purposes. This motion was instigated by County Treasurer James Henderson. The first purchase of land for what would become the Dufferin County Forest was made on November 7, 1930. It consisted of 305 ha (753 acres) on Concession VIII in Mulmur Township. Over the next 80-plus years numerous properties were added, bringing the current area of the Dufferin County Forest up to 1,054 ha (2,606 acres).

Although the Dufferin County Forest is, and always was, owned by the County of Dufferin, until 1995 it was managed by the provincial government on the County's behalf. On November 26, 1930, the County of Dufferin signed its first Forest Management Agreement with the Department of Lands and Forests. The agreement was made under the *Counties Reforestation Act*; later coming under the jurisdiction of the *Forestry Act* R.S.O. 1950.

In 1959, the *Forestry Amendment Act* was passed which allowed the Minister of Lands and Forests to make interest-free loans to any Conservation Authority or municipality to assist in the buying of land for forestry purposes, provided that the land was reforested and managed under an agreement with the Department. This was significant at a time when interest rates were high, and land prices in southern Ontario were rising rapidly. To date, the County of Dufferin has received \$28,297.20 in grants under this provision. The current *Forestry Act* R.S.O. 1990 stipulates that lands bought with a grant cannot be sold or used for purposes inconsistent with forestry purposes without the approval of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The second agreement between the County of Dufferin and the Department of Lands and Forests was signed in November, 1960 for a twenty year period commencing April 1, 1960. Amendments to the *Forestry Act* now made it possible for the County to receive a grant from the Minister of Lands and Forests for the purchase of lands to be used for forestry purposes. The grant could be up to the amount of 50% of the cost of the land plus 50% of the reasonable solicitor's fees and costs involved in securing title to the land plus an amount equal to the value of the timber on the land. The term "forestry purposes" was also changed, to include not only timber production and reclamation of waste land, but also improving wildlife environment, recreation, flood control, and water conservation.

The *Forestry Amendment Act, 1967* re-defined forestry purposes to the extent that the Department of Lands and Forests and the County of Dufferin felt that it would be expedient to terminate the existing agreement and prepare a new one. Under the new definition the term forestry purposes included "the production of wood and wood products, provision of proper environmental conditions for wild life, protection against floods and erosion, recreation, and protection and production of water supplies". This agreement was signed on September 14, 1971 to cover the twenty year period commencing April 1, 1971.

When this agreement expired (April 1, 1991), the County of Dufferin decided that increased demands on the forest properties, as well as changes to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's agreement forest program, meant it could not simply sign a new agreement. The County decided that a comprehensive management plan would have to be prepared for the Dufferin County Forest before a new agreement was signed. Dufferin was the first County in Ontario to take the lead in developing a management plan for its forest properties.

In the spring of 1992, the County of Dufferin approached the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Toronto to have the fourth year forestry class prepare plans for the Dufferin County Forest as part of their thesis work. These plans were presented to the County of Dufferin and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in April, 1993.

In December, 1993 the County of Dufferin and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) approved the Terms of Reference for a new management plan. Subsequently, the County of Dufferin, in partnership with the MNR, hired a management plan author to develop a forest management plan for the period 1995-2015.

On June 8, 1995, Dufferin County Council approved *Our Forest, Our Future: Dufferin County Forest Management Plan 1995-2015*. Throughout the process, there was participation from the MNR, a Forest Advisory Team, and the general public, all of whom provided valuable input and comments.

In 1995, the County took over the control and co-ordination of all activities having to do with the Dufferin County Forest. In order to fulfil this new role, Dufferin hired a County Forest Manager, the first County in Ontario to do so.

On March 13, 1997, the County signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR). This Memorandum, which expired in 2002, outlined the County's and the Ministry's responsibilities in the management of the Dufferin County Forest. Since the expiration of that agreement, the County has been wholly responsible for all aspects of the management of the Dufferin County Forest.

Table 1 describes the significant characteristics of the Dufferin County Forest on a tract-by-tract basis.

Table 1: Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest

Tract	Amaranth North/South	Gara Gore	Hockley	Leening
Municipality	Amaranth	East Garafraxa	Mono	Mulmur
Area (ha/acres)	24/59	15/37	20/51	8/20
Year Acquired	1940	1934	1976 ¹	1976 ¹
Zoning	environmental protection	environmental protection	environmental protection	Niagara Escarpment Rural Area
Parent Material	---/ loess or alluvium over loam till	loam and silt loam till	loess or alluvium over loam till	glacial till
Topography	smooth basin/ smooth very gently sloping	smooth gently sloping	smooth moderately sloping	irregular steeply sloping
Soil Type	---/fine sandy loam	loam	silt loam	loamy
Drainage	---/imperfect	good	good	good
Primary Overstorey Covertypes	Laurel Wetland Complex/ tolerant hardwoods	white spruce	Orangeville Wetland Complex	white spruce
Secondary Overstorey Covertypes	---/white spruce	---	---	white pine
Invasive Plant Species	---	---	European buckthorn	---
Known Wildlife Species	snapping turtle, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, white-tailed deer, colonial waterbirds, pied-billed grebe, northern harrier, mink frog/---	---	muskrat, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, raccoon, waterfowl, various amphibians and reptiles	---
Cistern(s)/ Fire Pond(s)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Aggregate	other	other	secondary significance	other
Recreation	few trails/few trails	few trails	one interpretive trail	few trails
Special Features	wetland/---	---	significant woodland, wetland	activities restricted as stipulated by donor

¹Did not become part of the County Forest until 1995.

--- indicates insufficient data

Table 1: Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest (continued)

Tract	Levitt	Little	Main	Melancthon
Municipality	Mono	Mulmur	Mulmur	Melancthon
Area (ha/acres)	4/10	44/109	607/1,501	59/146
Year Acquired	2010	1972-1973	1930-1963	1945
Zoning	Niagara Escarpment Natural Area	open space	open space	open space conservation/general agricultural
Parent Material	esker and kame gravel	outwash sand	outwash sand-sandy loam till	esker and kame gravel
Topography	irregular moderately sloping	smooth very gently sloping	irregular very steeply sloping	smooth basin/irregular steeply sloping
Soil Type	sandy loam	loam sand	loam sand-sandy loam	sandy loam
Drainage	good	good	good	good
Primary Overstorey Covertypes	white cedar	mixedwood	red pine	Melancthon 1 Wetland Complex
Secondary Overstorey Covertypes	hard maple	---	red oak	white spruce
Invasive Plant Species	---	---	garlic mustard, European buckthorn	---
Known Wildlife Species	---	white-tailed deer, wild turkey, small mammals	white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, fox, porcupine, raccoon, small mammals	bullfrogs, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, white-tailed deer, colonial waterbirds
Cistern(s)/ Fire Pond(s)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1
Aggregate	tertiary significance	tertiary significance	tertiary significance	primary significance
Recreation	few trails	one interpretive trail	extensive trail system	two trails
Special Features	activities restricted as stipulated by donor, SAR, deer winter concentration area	significant woodland, creek	significant woodland, ANSI, Pine River floodplain, deer winter concentration area, SAR, linkage	significant woodland, wetland, deer winter concentration area

--- indicates insufficient data

Table 1: Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest (continued)

Tract	Mono	Randwick	River Road	Riverview	Simmons
Municipality	Mono	Mulmur	Grand Valley	Melancthon	Mulmur
Area (ha/acres)	71/175	117/289	5/12	40/99	40/99
Year Acquired	1942, 1963	1940-1944	1963	1949	1967-1968
Zoning	open space	open space	environmental protection	open space conservation/general agricultural	open space
Parent Material	outwash fine sand	outwash sand	fine sandy loam material over outwash gravel	loam till	outwash sand
Topography	irregular moderately sloping	smooth very gently sloping	smooth very gently sloping	smooth level/smooth gently sloping	smooth very gently sloping
Soil Type	sandy loam	loam sand	fine sandy loam	loam	loam sand
Drainage	good	good	good	poor/good	good
Primary Overstorey Covertypes	red pine	red pine	red pine	Melancthon 2 Wetland Complex	red pine
Secondary Overstorey Covertypes	tolerant hardwoods	tolerant hardwoods	---	white pine	white pine
Invasive Plant Species	garlic mustard, dog-strangling vine	garlic mustard	---	---	---
Known Wildlife Species	white-tailed deer, wild turkey, small mammals	white-tailed deer, wild turkey, small mammals	---	bullfrogs, muskrat, racoon, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, small game	white-tailed deer, wild turkey, small mammals
Cistern(s)/ Fire Pond(s)	0/0	0/2	0/0	0/1	0/0
Aggregate	tertiary significance	tertiary significance	other	tertiary significance	tertiary significance
Recreation	extensive trail system	extensive trail system	no trails	two trails	extensive trail system
Special Features	significant woodland, linkage	SAR, significant woodland, wetland, shoreline	---	significant woodland, wetland	significant woodland

--- indicates insufficient data

5.1 Recreation

Most of the tracts have a trail system that is used for a variety of recreational activities including hiking, wildlife viewing, nature appreciation, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Little Tract has a parking area, a sign showing the trail system, a supply of interpretive trail brochures, and individual signposts at the stops on the interpretive trail.

The Hockley Tract has a parking area, fully accessible trail, and interpretive signs.

The Main Tract has a parking area and an unforested area used for large, organized recreational events.

All of the entrances to the County Forest tracts have rural address numbers posted for wayfinding and emergencies.

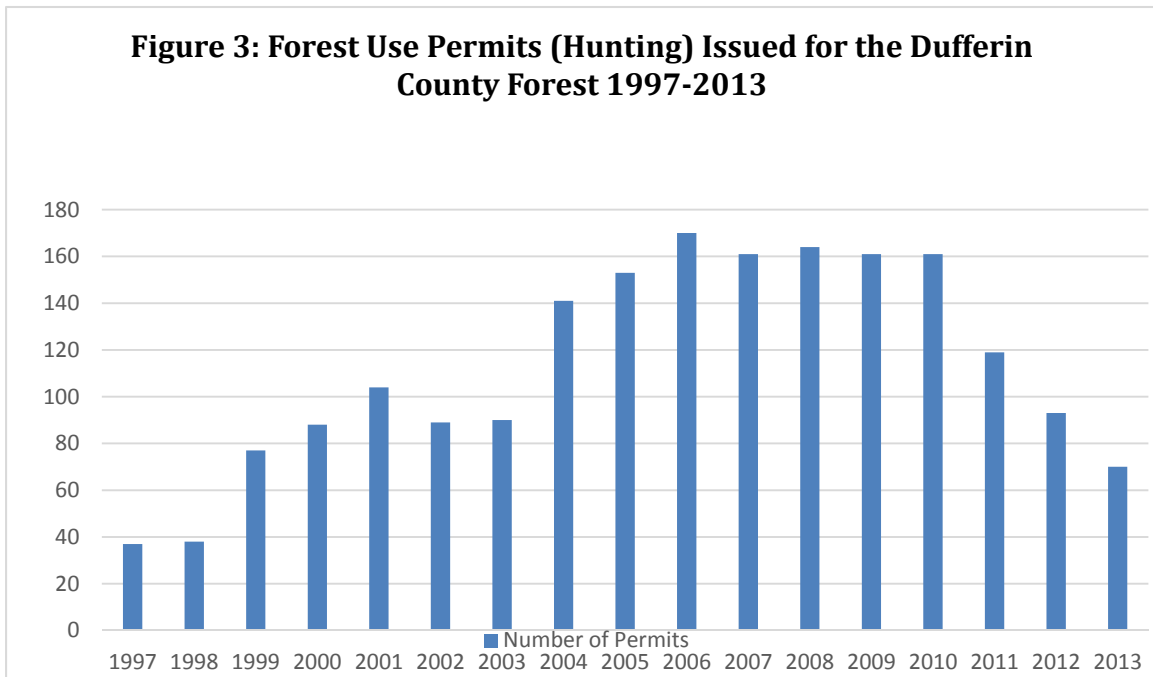
The Mansfield Outdoor Centre, a private recreational complex, leases the southern part of the Main Tract for the winter months for cross-country skiing, generating revenue anywhere between \$500 and \$1,000 annually for the County, based on the number of skiers in the prior season.

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) trails run through the Main Tract, Randwick Tract, Riverview Tract, Mono Tract, and beside the Simmons Tract.

The process for organized recreational events has been modified several times since the passing of the last management plan. Currently, it appears to be working well for both the County and the user groups. Events have increased from two groups having four or five events annually to eight groups with 14 events annually in the last couple of years.

Hunting in the Dufferin County Forest focuses on white-tailed deer and wild turkey. The shotgun portion of the controlled white-tailed deer hunt takes place annually for five days in November and five days in December. The controlled wild turkey hunt takes place in May of each year for a period of approximately five weeks, and in October for a period of just under two weeks. The seasons for small game vary, but usually take place over the fall and winter. The hunting seasons and numbers of tags are determined each year by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) on a Wildlife Management Unit basis. This ensures that wildlife populations in any given area are not exposed to undue hunting pressure. In the case of game animals, such as white-tailed deer, the number of tags in a given Wildlife Management Unit is determined on the basis of hunter success during the previous season and weather conditions over the past year. For example, a particularly hard winter will probably mean that fewer animals survived and a lower number of tags will be issued. Every year, the MNR publishes a guide for hunters explaining the current year's regulations and seasons. These guides are available from MNR offices across the province, at locations where hunting licences are sold, and at www.ontario.ca/hunting.

Starting in 1997, the County adopted a permit system for hunters in order to pay for advertisements and signs informing non-hunters about the main hunting seasons (wild turkey and white-tailed deer). This was done to increase safety for all users of the Dufferin County Forest. Figure 3 shows the number of permits sold annually since 1997.



A user survey was conducted online from April, 2013 to March, 2014. This was supplemented by onsite surveys at some of the tracts during the summer of 2013. The results of this survey showed that the majority (66%) of respondents visit the County Forest on weekends. The most frequented tracts are: Main (54%), Hockley (21%), and Mono (6%). Surprisingly, 16% of respondents were not sure which tract of the County Forest they had visited. Highly ranked activities included mountain biking (54%), horseback riding (27%), and hiking/walking (13%). Most people make between one and five visits to the County Forest each season, with visits in spring, summer, and fall being almost equal. The users are split almost equally between men (58%) and women (42%). The distribution of users' age follows a bell curve, with the maximum in the 50-54 year age class. When asked how they learned about the County Forest, 41% of respondents said that they have used it for many years and 36% found out by word of mouth.

When asked what one change they would make to the Dufferin County Forest, most of the responses fell into the following categories:

1. further physical separation of recreational uses, in particular mountain bikers and horseback riders;
2. improved maps and signs;
3. improved facilities such as washrooms, garbage cans, parking and;
4. allowing/disallowing various uses such as motorized vehicles, hunting, and logging

5.2 Public Relations and Education

During the last planning period (1995-2015), the County made a significant effort to increase the public knowledge about the County Forest.

The primary activities conducted on an ongoing basis were:

1. placement and replacement of signs identifying all of the tracts and outlining the main stipulations of the County Forest by-law (2003-50);
2. tree and plant identification walks;

3. establishment and maintenance of a County Forest website;
4. attendance at various local events, including the spring and fall home shows in Orangeville;
5. production and periodic updating of a County Forest brochure and;
6. production and periodic updating of a brochure describing the Little Tract interpretive trail.

In order to capture attitudes about the County Forest from non-users, a notice asking people to complete an online survey (or phone in for a paper copy) was distributed to 2,800 randomly chosen property owners distributed over all eight municipalities in numbers relative to total population.

Those respondents who use the County Forest were directed to complete the same information as in the user survey. Those who do not use the County Forest were asked why not and whether or not they thought it important that the County continue to manage the Forest. (It was assumed that those who use the Forest think it is important for the County to continue managing it.)

The respondents in this survey were almost evenly split between those who use the Forest (51%) and those that don't (49%). The results of those who use the Forest correlated with the user survey results with the following exceptions:

1. a greater number of respondents use the Mono Tract (37%), 33% use Main Tract, and 14% use Hockley Tract;
2. hiking/walking (49%) was the primary activity and;
3. they learned about the Forest mostly by living close by (47%) or they've used it for many years (39%).

Of those that didn't use the Forest, most didn't know that the public could use it (57%) and a large number didn't know that it existed (38%). An overwhelming majority (98%) agreed that it was important for the County to continue managing the Forest. Reasons given centred mostly around conservation/protection of natural areas, whether for the benefit of humans, the benefit of wildlife, their intrinsic value, or a combination of these reasons.

Currently, the only cultural heritage resource in the Dufferin County Forest is the remains of a hand pump at the Little Tract.

5.3 Research

A procedure for researchers to have access to the Dufferin County Forest has been developed. In the last planning period, all requests for access for research purposes were granted. The three primary research projects were:

1. a study to examine natural and assisted regeneration and understorey development in red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) plantations (Paul Richardson, Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation/University of Waterloo);
2. a study to determine the cause(s) of widespread red pine decline in southern Ontario (John McLaughlin, Ontario Forest Research Institute) and;
3. a study to determine the impact of prescribed burning and overstorey removal on regeneration of red oak (*Quercus rubra*) (Dan Dey, Ontario Forest Research Institute).

5.4 Forest Inventory

The inventory of the Dufferin County Forest was conducted in 2013. A summary of the estimated production forest area and volume is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Estimated Production Forest¹ Area and Volume, Dufferin County Forest

Working Group	Area (ha)	% of Total Area	Volume (m ³)	% of Total Volume
Red Pine	328	37	73,202	48
Red Oak	218	25	24,951	16
Mixedwood	110	13	19,242	13
White Pine	88	10	15,708	10
Hard Maple	77	9	7,843	5
White Spruce	47	5	9,872	6
Bottomland	7	0.8	1,196	0.9
Total	875	99.8²	152,014	98.9²

¹Production forest: all productive forest land managed primarily for human benefit, unless otherwise reassigned.

²Totals are not equal to 100 due to rounding.

Overstorey Tree Vegetation

The **red pine** (*Pinus resinosa*) working group makes up about 328 ha (37%) of the production forest. All of the red pine stands were planted in order to stabilize the light, sandy soils. Only 21 ha are less than 60 years old. Past selection system regimes have resulted in the red pine plantations developing an understorey of white pine and tolerant hardwoods.

Red oak (*Quercus rubra*) makes up the next largest working group in the production forest - about 218 ha (25%). There are 14 hectares (5%) in the 31-40 age class, the other stands are all 70 years or older. The red oak stands are all of natural origin.

The **mixedwood group** makes up 110 ha (13%) of the area of the Dufferin County Forest. The stands are either mixed hardwood with a significant component of red pine and/or white pine (*Pinus strobus*), or balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) or eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) associated with various hardwoods.

The **white pine** working group makes up about 88 ha (10%) of the production forest. White pine grows in association with red pine, white spruce (*Picea glauca*), red oak, poplar (*Populus spp.*) and ash (*Fraxinus spp.*). The stands of white pine are a mix of planted and natural. Thirty-nine hectares (44%) of the white pine is less than 30 years old, the remainder is 50 years or older.

The **hard maple** (*Acer saccharum*) working group makes up about 77 ha (9%) of the production forest. The stands are of natural origin and are located in the Mono and Main tracts. The dominant trees in the hard maple stands are all 65 years or over.

The **white spruce** working group makes up about 47 ha (5%) of the production forest. All of it is planted on lowland sites in Mono, Amaranth, Melancthon, Riverview, and Gara-Gore tracts. The white spruce is all between the ages of 56 and 66 years.

The **bottomland** stands are associated with lowland areas, but are not quite wetlands. There are

only two of these in the production forest area, one dominated by ash, the other by cedar.

Due to the overall relatively low volume of wood that is removed from the Dufferin County Forest annually, there are no mills that depend on it for a significant portion of their supply. The thinning of red pine plantations produces pulpwood, sawlogs, and poles. Hardwood sawlogs and fuelwood are supplied through improvement harvests in the hardwood stands. The standing trees are sold on a tender basis. Buyers of standing timber from the Dufferin County Forest have come from all over Ontario. Table 3 shows the annual harvest area and volume 1995-2013.

Table 3: Annual Harvest Area and Volume 1995-2013

Year	Area Harvested (ha)	Volume Harvested (m³)
1995	26.8	2,427
1996	26.7	2,210
1997	29.7	2,153
1998	35.6	2,049
1999	29.0	2,012
2000	28.8	1,094
2001	43.3	2,010
2002	30.0	1,540
2003	34.0	1,469
2004	31.0	1,744
2005	28.0	1,409
2006	35.0	972
2007	47.0	1,911
2008	60.0	2,235
2009	58.0	2,436
2010	36.0	1,308
2011	20.0	1,237
2012	33.0	1,322
2013	32.0	3,170
Average	34.9	1,827

Regeneration

Regeneration is the term used to describe young trees with a DBH (diameter at breast height) of 6-8 cm. Trees taller than breast height (1.3 m) are classed as advanced regeneration, trees less than breast height are classed as early regeneration. The quantity and species of regeneration depends mainly on the shade tolerance of the species forming the overstorey. Species which are shade intolerant (e.g. red pine, poplar) regenerate with great difficulty under their own canopy. The understorey in these stands will be limited or will be formed by more shade tolerant species such as maple or ash. Shade tolerant species will usually regenerate under their own canopy.

In the Dufferin County Forest, most regeneration is hard (sugar) maple, white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), white pine, ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). Early red oak regeneration occurs in some areas where there is red oak in the overstorey.

Only 8% of the forest has no advanced regeneration and only 2% has neither advanced nor early

regeneration. The lack of regeneration may be caused by high overstorey density, lack of a seed source for species that would normally grow in the understorey, or inhospitable site conditions for regeneration.

Understorey Vegetation

Besides regeneration, most forest stands have some shrubs, plants, mosses, and grasses and sedges in the understorey. The species and amount of these varies with the site type, stand history, and current stand structure.

In the Dufferin County Forest, the most common plants in the understorey are: maple-leaved viburnum, red osier dogwood, raspberry, bracken fern, Canada mayflower, sarsaparilla, mosses, and grasses.

5.5 Wildlife

Animals which are present in the Dufferin County Forest include: white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, woodcock, Canada geese, mallards, wood ducks, pheasants, snapping turtle, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, mink, coyote, fox, porcupine, cottontail rabbits and other small mammals. Not all of these species exist on all of the tracts, as some are associated with wetland habitat types (e.g. snapping turtle), while others are associated with upland types. The main wildlife species known to be associated with each tract can be found in Table 1.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food lists a number of shrubs in its *Farm Forestry and Habitat Management* guide that are important for many different wildlife species. These species are highbush cranberry, red osier dogwood, alternate-leaved dogwood, nannyberry, elderberry, staghorn sumac, serviceberry, ninebark, bittersweet, virginia creeper, wild apple, wild grape, and American hazelnut. Of these, red osier dogwood, alternate-leaved dogwood, elderberry, sumac, and wild apple are known to exist in the Dufferin County Forest.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, which is responsible for wildlife management in Ontario, does not collect census data for the wildlife species in the Dufferin County Forest. Wildlife management is based on a habitat management approach, i.e. the forest is managed for different habitat types rather than being directly managed for different wildlife species. The Dufferin County Forest currently includes the following habitat types: non-treed wetlands, treed wetlands/bottomland conifers, bottomland hardwoods, creeks, ponds, mixedwoods, upland tolerant hardwoods, upland oak, and conifer plantations.

Deer winter concentration areas are important for the survival of white-tailed deer over the winter. Generally speaking, these areas provide conifer cover which intercepts snow, allowing deer to move around with lower energy losses. The Levitt, Main, and Melancthon Tracts are part of identified deer winter concentration areas. The Hockley, Leening, and Mono Tracts are adjacent to identified deer winter concentration areas.

Habitat types other than those listed above which are adjacent to the Dufferin County Forest include cultivated fields, meadows, river valleys, stream corridors, and small woodlands.

5.6 High Conservation Value Forests

In the Dufferin County Forest, there are a number of high conservation value forests that require special attention in the planning process. These can be grouped as follows: evaluated wetlands; old

growth forest; Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs); species at risk habitat; and critical fish habitat. The County has determined that the Little Tract is an area of developing old growth forest. The wetland and ANSI designations have been determined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The Leening and Levitt Tracts, which have restrictions on their use through the terms of donation, are also within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. A summary of the high conservation value forests is shown in Table 4; the values are described in more detail in the sections following.

Table 4: High Conservation Value Forests in the Dufferin County Forest

Tract (Compartments)	Working Group	Area (ha)	Conservation Value
Amaranth (42a), Laurel Wetland Complex	Mr	12	provincially significant wetland
Hockley, Orangeville Wetland Complex	Ce, Po	20	provincially significant wetland
Leening	Po, Pw, Sw	8	donor restrictions
Levitt	Ce	4	donor restrictions
Little	mixedwood	44	developing old growth
Main (20, 21c, 24a, 25a, 26-31), Oak Ridges South Slope Forest	Or	241	life science ANSI
Main (30d, 31c)	Po	24	locally significant wetland
Melancthon (32c), Melancthon 1	Po	5	provincially significant wetland
Melancthon (33c, 34a, 35a), Melancthon 1	Ce	38	provincially significant wetland
Randwick (4d), Walker's Creek Wetland	Ce	2	locally significant wetland
Riverview (38c), Melancthon 2	Po	4	locally significant wetland
Total		400	

Laurel Wetland Complex (provincially significant)

The Laurel Wetland Complex is located on Cons. I-IV in Amaranth Township. The Amaranth Tract (Con. III, Lot 8) is part of this complex, which is 95% swamp and 5% marsh. The area provides habitat for a number of wildlife species including snapping turtles, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, white-tailed deer, and colonial waterbirds.

Terra Nova Complex (provincially significant)

The Terra Nova Complex is adjacent to the Main Tract of the Dufferin County Forest, in Mulmur Township. The complex is 94% swamp and 6% marsh. The area provides habitat for bullfrogs, snapping turtles, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, white-tailed deer, and colonial waterbirds. The Terra Nova Complex is regionally significant as a white-tailed deer winter concentration area and as a spawning and rearing area for brook trout and rainbow trout. It is locally significant as an area of waterfowl production.

Melancthon 1 (provincially significant)

Most of the Melancthon Tract is part of this wetland complex, which is 90.4% swamp and 9.6% bog. This area provides habitat for bullfrogs, muskrat, racoon, beaver, white-tailed deer, and colonial waterbirds.

Orangeville Wetland Complex (provincially significant)

The Hockley Tract is part of the Orangeville Wetland Complex, which includes much of the area in the vicinity of the Island Lake Conservation Area at the headwaters of the Credit (flowing south into Lake Ontario) and Nottawasaga (flowing north into Georgian Bay) Rivers. The wetland complex is 58.6% marsh, 41.2% swamp, and 0.2% bog. This area provides habitat for muskrat, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, raccoon, waterfowl, and various amphibian and reptile species. The Island Lake Conservation Area also has numerous recreational opportunities, including nature appreciation, hiking, summer and winter fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and outdoor education.

Melancthon 2 (locally significant)

The wetland known as Melancthon 2 is located on Cons. IX and X in Melancthon Township. Part of it is within the Riverview Tract of the Dufferin County Forest. The wetland is 86% carr, 9% swamp, and 5% marsh. This area provides habitat for bullfrogs, muskrat, and raccoon. The Melancthon 2 wetland provides good winter cover for ruffed grouse and small game. It also has local significance as an area of waterfowl production.

Walker's Creek Wetland (locally significant)

The Walker's Creek Swamp is located on Cons. VI-VIII in Mulmur Township and in Tosorontio Township (Simcoe County). The creek runs through the northwest corner of the Randwick Tract (Con. VI, Lot 26). The wetland is 82% swamp and 18% marsh. It provides habitat for snapping turtles, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, white-tailed deer, and colonial waterbirds.

Leening and Levitt Tracts

The Leening and Levitt Tracts are both within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. The Leening Tract is designated as Rural Area, the Levitt Tract as Natural Area. These designations, in and of themselves, do not restrict forestry operations on the properties. However, the donor of the Leening Tract placed a condition that does have an impact: *"...so long as the said lands shall be used for Conservation purposes which purpose shall be deemed to be complied with so long as the natural topography of the lands is not altered, buildings are not erected, no part of the said lands is excavated, the existing flora is not disturbed, and the existing fauna is not interfered with, provided that additional trees may be planted from time to time."* The interpretation of this has been that the Tract is to be preserved, with no forestry operations taking place. The Levitt Tract can be managed, provided that the management is, *"...in accordance with good and proper forestry management practices."* The County has decided that since they are part of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, these Tracts qualify for designation as High Conservation Value Forests, meaning that any management that occurs will be carefully considered in the context of both the donor restrictions and its potential impacts on existing values.

Little Tract

When the County took over management of the Dufferin County Forest from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Little Tract was one of few areas of upland forest left relatively unmanaged (there was one small improvement harvest, in 1991-92, since the County purchased the property in 1971). In addition to this, the Tract had a significant component of large white pine trees that appeared to date from around the time of European settlement. These factors prompted the County to restrict recreational activities and forest management in the Tract, allowing the area to develop into old growth forest.

Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs)

In the Dufferin County Forest, there is one ANSI, the Life Science Oak Ridges South Slope Forest. It is located at the southern end of the Main Tract. This ANSI is associated with the Oak Ridges Moraine and represents warmer-than-normal forest associations on sand in Site Region 6. The cover is currently a sugar maple-red oak forest with some red and white pine. In the Pine River floodplain area the species include white ash, yellow and white birch, basswood, cedar, hemlock, balsam fir, and some elm.

Species at Risk

Butternut trees have been located at three of the tracts. No other species at risk have been recorded on the Dufferin County Forest properties (S. Robinson, pers. comm., April, 2014).

Critical Fish Habitat

There are no areas of critical fish habitat in the Dufferin County Forest.

5.7 Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services are benefits that flow to society from nature. These benefits include such things as: decomposition of and detoxification of human wastes, carbon sequestration, erosion prevention, water holding capacity, pollution absorption, and the improvement of physical and mental health.

Ecosystem services are now being given monetary value so that more of the benefits and values of natural areas are explicitly taken into account when making decisions that impact those natural areas. To date, these mostly include decisions about future development and compensating landowners who voluntarily conserve and/or enhance ecosystem services on their properties. Measuring more of the ecosystem services explicitly allows us to better assess the potential impact of our decisions on ecosystem health.

In 2009, the MNRF commissioned a report titled *Estimation of Ecosystem Service Values for Southern Ontario*. The study took into consideration a number of ecosystem values, including recreation, aesthetic/amenity, other cultural services, pollination and seed dispersal, habitat refuge and biodiversity, atmospheric regulation, soil retention and erosion control, water quality maintenance and nutrient/waste regulation, water supply and regulation, and disturbance avoidance².

As the MNRF was willing to provide the County with the dataset used to produce the report, ecosystem service values for the tracts of the Dufferin County Forest were determined. The tracts with wetlands were rated the highest, namely Amaranth and Hockley. Relative ecosystem service values for all of the tracts are shown in Table 5. Ecosystem services values were taken into consideration when designating the High Conservation Value Forests.

Table 5: Ecosystem Service Values for Tracts of the Dufferin County Forest

Tract	Natural Heritage	Ecosystem Service Value
Amaranth	provincially significant wetland	4
Gara-Gore	n/a	3
Hockley	significant woodland, provincially significant wetland	4
Leening	Niagara Escarpment Rural Area	2.5

² Disturbance avoidance is the ability of natural environments to shield humans and their infrastructure from extreme weather events such as high winds and floods.

Tract	Natural Heritage	Ecosystem Service Value
Levitt	SAR, Niagara Escarpment Natural Area, deer winter concentration area	3
Little	significant woodland, creek	2
Main	significant woodland, ANSI, Pine River floodplain, deer winter concentration area, SAR, linkage	2
Melancthon	significant woodland, provincially significant wetland, deer winter concentration area	3
Mono	significant woodland, linkage	2
Randwick	SAR, significant woodland, wetland, creek	2
River Road	n/a	2
Riverview	significant woodland, locally significant wetland	2.5
Simmons	significant woodland	2

Ecosystem Service Value Flow (\$/year/hectare)

\$44-\$440: 1; \$2,200-\$4,400: 2; \$8,800-\$22,000: 3; \$88,000-\$237,600: 4

5.8 Forest Health

The health of the forest is impacted by numerous factors, many of which are a natural part of the forest ecosystem. Overall, the Dufferin County Forest is in good health. Increasing forest diversity and promoting vigorous growth should maintain the healthy condition in the face of some notable threats, both biotic and abiotic.

Insects and diseases are monitored by MNRF’s Forest Health Technicians, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and County Forest staff. Specifically, emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle, Sirex woodwasp, gypsy moth, beech bark disease, butternut canker, and red pine decline are of primary concern. Red pine decline is a complex of issues (further detailed in section 6.3), the remaining are alien invasive species and therefore have the potential to cause a great deal of harm due to lack of native parasites and predators and the ability to take over ecological niches occupied by native species. Other than Asian long-horned beetle, emerald ash borer, and Sirex woodwasp these are all known to be in the Dufferin County Forest. Emerald ash borer has been detected in Dufferin County, but is not confirmed to be present in the County Forest.

Alien invasive plants have great potential to alter the ecology of the terrestrial habitats of the Dufferin County Forest. Since the Dufferin County Forest does not contain a significant number of watercourses, aquatic invasive species are of lesser concern. The invasive species recorded in the 2013 forest inventory were Manitoba maple, European buckthorn, and garlic mustard; none in extensive amounts. **During the summer of 2015, the trails in the most-visited tracts – Hockley, Little, Main, Mono, and Randwick - were surveyed for dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum* and *V. nigrum*). One small patch was found, in the Mono Tract.** From general observation, there is Scots pine growing on the boundaries of a number of the properties. There are mature ornamental Norway maple at the former site of Camp Dufferin at the Main Tract.

Abiotic factors (fire, extreme weather) can also have a significant impact on forest health, and this can be expected to increase with the predicted effects of climate change (further detailed in section 6.3).

In order to reduce the potential for wildfires, the County has maintained the fire ponds in Melancthon, Riverview, and Randwick (two) tracts that were established by MNRF; equipped all tracts with

signs indicating the rural address (emergency number) and “In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.”; and made it illegal through the County Forest by-law (2003-50) to have campfires in the Forest.

The main entrances at all of the tracts have been gated to reduce vehicular access and garbage dumping.

5.9 Aggregates

Aggregate extraction will not occur in the current management period (2016-2036). It conflicts with the other environmental and resource management objectives of this plan, as it would necessitate removal of the forest cover and alteration of the landscape. However, the County will assess the aggregate resources on all newly acquired forest properties in order to maintain a current database of all resources associated with the Dufferin County Forest. Table 6 summarizes the aggregate resources present in the Dufferin County Forest, compiled from the *Aggregate Resources Inventory of Dufferin County Southern Ontario*.

Table 6: Aggregate Resources in the Dufferin County Forest

Tract	Municipality	Description of Aggregate Resource
Amaranth	Amaranth	other surficial deposits or exposed bedrock
Gara-Gore	East Garafraxa	other surficial deposits or exposed bedrock
Hockley	Mulmur	selected sand and gravel resource area, secondary significance
Leening	Mulmur	other surficial deposits or exposed bedrock
Levitt	Mono	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
Little	Mulmur	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
Main	Mulmur	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
Melancthon	Melancthon	selected sand and gravel resource area, primary significance; unlicensed pit
Mono	Mono	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
Randwick	Mulmur	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
River Road	Grand Valley	other surficial deposits or exposed bedrock
Riverview	Melancthon	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance
Simmons	Mulmur	sand and gravel deposit, tertiary significance

6.0 OUR FOREST, OUR FUTURE: DUFFERIN COUNTY FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016-2036

In preparing this forest management plan, a strategic planning approach was used. First, an overall goal was developed for the management of the forest properties. Within the scope of the goal, there are three objectives: social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability. Each of these objectives will be achieved through a number of actions. Where specified, the actions will occur during the period of the embedded operating plan (2016-2021), otherwise they will continue over the entire period of the management plan (2016-2036).

In the following sections, the three objectives of social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability, are presented as having equal importance. However, in situations where they may come into conflict, environmental sustainability will take precedence over the others.

6.1 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.

6.2 Social Sustainability

Action 1: Develop a recreation policy for the Dufferin County Forest.

Action 2: Increase public awareness within Dufferin County and the surrounding area of the Dufferin County Forest and the opportunities and values it provides.

Action 3: Work in conjunction with the Dufferin County Museum & Archives to identify, protect and, where appropriate, promote cultural heritage resources.

Action 4: Cooperate with researchers and research agencies.

Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy

In order to address increasing recreational pressures on the Dufferin County Forest, during the 2016-2021 planning period the County will complete a recreation policy for the Dufferin County Forest. This policy will generally include:

1. access procedures for events;
2. responsibilities of user groups that have access to the County Forest;
3. responsibilities of the County;
4. designated uses for trails in the Main Tract (and other tracts as deemed necessary) and;
5. permitted and not permitted recreational uses.

The Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy will be supported by an updated County Forest by-law to enable enforcement of various provisions.

Access Restriction

The County will continue to maintain gates and other methods of access restriction to the forest tracts in order that dumping, illegal removal of wood, and partying can be curtailed.

Human Health

The County Forest plays an important role in the health and well-being of the community. It is a low cost outdoor venue for physical activity for those living in or visiting the region. Many people find the forest environment enjoyable simply because of its peace and tranquility compared with the rest of their daily lives. As well, trees absorb carbon dioxide and pollutants from the air and release oxygen, providing very real air quality (and consequently, health) benefits.

However, the Forest also has the potential to have a negative impact on human health. The County will post information on the County Forest website regarding forest-related human health issues such as west nile virus, lyme disease, and poison ivy. Printed information regarding these issues will be available through the Dufferin County Museum & Archives and at public events where there is a County Forest presence. The primary information source regarding these topics will be the local health unit. Other human health issues will be added as appropriate.

Signs

During the 2016-2021 planning period, the County will post yellow dots on the perimeter of all

forest properties as described in the *Trespass to Property Act*. Signs that are currently posted in the Forest will be replaced as needed.

Information Products

The County of Dufferin will continue to produce and update information products such as brochures, maps, and hunting information packages. These will be distributed through County offices, by postal mail, and on the website. The County of Dufferin will handle requests for information, comments, and complaints about the Dufferin County Forest in a timely and appropriate fashion. In order to help maintain the balance between recreational use and environmental sustainability, the County Forest will not be actively promoted outside of Dufferin and its surrounding area.

Presentations, Schools, Walks, and Tours

The County of Dufferin will ensure that knowledgeable guides are available to give tours of the Dufferin County Forest at the public's request, as well as organizing at least one event in the forest annually for the general public. These may be held in conjunction with National Wildlife Week, National Forest Week, Arbor Day, or Earth Day. Presentations for schools and other groups will be dealt with on an as-requested basis. School group activities may include a practical project in the forest such as invasive species removal or species inventory. The County Forest will be promoted at appropriate local events.

Interpretive Trails

During the 2016-2021 planning period, an interpretive trail at the Main Tract, describing different forest management regimes, will be developed. The interpretive trails at the Little Tract and Hockley Tract will be maintained.

Cultural Heritage Resources

In cooperation with the Dufferin County Museum & Archives, the County will, as appropriate, identify, protect, and promote any cultural heritage resources within the Dufferin County Forest.

Researchers

Researchers wishing to use the Dufferin County Forest will be encouraged to do so, as long as their project does not unduly interfere with other objectives for the Forest. The County will work to promote the County Forest as a research location in order to increase the detail of its flora and fauna inventory.

6.3 Environmental Sustainability

Action 1: Do not develop the County Forest properties.

Action 2: Harvest timber on a sustainable basis.

Action 3: Strive to improve stand quality.

Action 4: Emulate natural disturbances during all forest management operations to the extent possible.

Action 5: Promote the characteristics of a natural forest such as snags, cavity trees, downed trees, and mast trees.

Action 6: Promote natural regeneration.

Action 7: Maintain an up-to-date list of relevant species at risk and ensure that forest management operations are in accordance with their habitat requirements.

Action 8: Manage disturbances (invasive plants, wildfire, insects and disease, extreme weather events) for the overall health of the forest, while ensuring that human life and private property are protected from such disturbances.

Action 9: Minimize the impacts of climate change.

Action 10: Minimize the impacts of recreational activities.

Land Use

There will be no development or site alteration, as defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*, in the Dufferin County Forest. Further, there will be no development in the Leening and Levitt Tracts, as defined in the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*.

Sustainable Timber Harvesting

The report *Sustainable Timber Management of the Dufferin County Forest*, produced in conjunction with the 2013 forest inventory, shows that selection harvesting of an average of 30 ha per year is sustainable over the long-term (Table 7).

Table 7: Sustainable Timber Management Area Projections by Planning Period for all Forest Types 2014-2053

Period	Total Area (ha)	Average Annual Area (ha)
2014-2023	424	42.4
2024-2033	440	43.9
2034-2043	374	37.1
2044-2053	318	31.7
Average	389	38.78

This figure is only slightly less than the average annual harvest from 1995-2013 which was 34.9 ha (Table 3). The County will target an average of 30 ha/year for selection harvesting. It is expected that areas harvested on an annual basis will fluctuate, and may change from those proposed in Table 8, depending on size of individual stands, silvicultural priorities, market conditions, and unpredictable natural events such as severe storms or insect or disease infestation.

Table 8: Proposed Selection Harvesting 2016-2036

Tract (Compartments)	Working Group	Area (ha)
2016-2021		
Randwick (3a, 3d, 4b, 6b)	red pine	27
Main (12b, 13d)	mixedwood	15
Main (13c, 22b)	mixedwood	21
Main (14c, 14d)	red pine	6
Main (18b, 19c)	red pine	7
Main (25a)	hardwoods	28
Melancthon (32a, 32b, 33a, 33b, 33d)	conifers	15
Riverview (36a, 36c, 36d, 37c, 37f, 38e)	conifers	10
Gara-Gore (44a)	spruce	15
Total		144
2021-2026		
Randwick (3c, 4e)	white pine	7
Randwick (5a, 6a)	white pine	12
Main (8a, 9a, 10a, 11d)	red pine	23

Our Forest, Our Future: Dufferin County Forest Management Plan 2016-2036

Tract (Compartments)	Working Group	Area (ha)
Main (9c, 10c, 11c)	white pine	11
Main (11a, 11b)	mixedwood	16
Main (14a, 15a, 16b)	red pine	14
Main (15c)	mixedwood	15
Main (19a)	mixedwood	22
Main (21a)	red pine	4
Main (23c, 24c)	red pine	7
Main (24a)	hardwoods	6
Main (26a)	red pine	8
Simmons (47c)	mixedwood	6
Total		151
2026-2031		
Randwick (2b, 3b)	hardwoods	10
Randwick (2c, 4a, 4c, 6c)	red pine and white pine	16
Randwick (5b)	red pine	14
Main (7a, 7b, 8d)	red pine	19
Main (8b, 8c, 9b, 10b)	white pine	18
Main (13a, 13b)	red pine	10
Main (16c)	hardwoods	14
Main (17b)	hardwoods	14
Main (19b)	red pine	17
Main (28b)	mixedwood	6
Mono (40b)	red pine	12
Simmons (47b)	white pine	12
Total		150
2031-2036		
Randwick (2a)	red pine	11
Main (14b)	mixedwood	10
Main (18c)	hardwoods	10
Main (20a)	hardwoods	25
Main (21c)	hardwoods	20
Main (22a, 28c)	red pine	17
Main (29a)	hardwoods	26
Mono (39a)	red pine	14
Mono (40a, 46a)	hardwoods	15
Mono (41a)	spruce	10
Total		148

Pre-Harvest Silvicultural Prescriptions

A number of the environmental sustainability actions will be fulfilled partially through pre-harvest silvicultural prescriptions. The purpose of the pre-harvest silvicultural prescription is to provide a framework for collecting information and making decisions regarding how to best use the natural productivity and potential of a site to serve specified management goals. The prescriptions must take into account not only the physical characteristics of the stand (including soils, hydrology, existing vegetation, and wildlife), but also the landowner's objectives for that stand. All silvicultural

prescriptions for the stands in the Dufferin County Forest must conform to the objectives for the forest as stated in this management plan.

Generally speaking, the prescriptions will:

1. follow *A Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests* (MNR, 2000);
2. outline how advance regeneration will be protected during harvesting;
3. provide the appropriate conditions for further regeneration;
4. protect specialized wildlife habitats (e.g. stick nests, cavity trees, mast trees) as outlined in *A Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests* (MNR, 2000);
5. be in accordance with *The Niagara Escarpment Plan* and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* and associated regulations, where applicable and;
6. maintain the characteristics of known white-tailed deer winter concentration areas.

Silvicultural Practices for Working Groups

Forest management activities in the Dufferin County Forest will be conducted with the following silvicultural practices in mind for individual working groups:

1. **Red pine:** The red pine plantations in the Dufferin County Forest will be harvested using the selection system. The harvests will remove approximately 30% of the basal area on a ten year cutting cycle, on a worst-first basis. Where there is significant tolerant hardwood (primarily sugar maple and white ash) regeneration, the stands will be managed so that they succeed to the naturally-occurring tolerant hardwoods. Where there is significant white pine regeneration, the stands will be managed so that this species is retained. Where natural regeneration is not successful, native tree species (depending on the site) will be planted in order to maintain tree cover.

In recent years, the red pine plantations have started to suffer from red pine decline. This phenomenon is manifesting itself as the relatively rapid (sometimes in a matter of months) decline and death of red pine trees older than about sixty years. In the 2013 forest inventory, 50 ha (15%) of the red pine stands were identified as suffering from red pine decline. The County of Dufferin has participated in a southern Ontario-wide research project to attempt to determine the cause of this decline. The results of the research suggest that a combination of factors is involved, including two types of root rot (*Armillaria ostoyae* and *Heterobasidium annosum*), several years of drought, and alkaline soil. When the trees are growing in soil that has an alkaline base their rooting depth can be significantly reduced. In long periods of dry weather, this reduced rooting depth puts the trees under moisture stress and makes them more susceptible to root rots and other insect and disease attacks. As a result of the research project, some management strategies have been formulated, as described in *Modified Management Recommendations for the Establishment and Management of Red Pine Plantations*. These management recommendations will be used to guide red pine plantation management in the Dufferin County Forest. In general, older red pine stands that are declining will be managed in such a way as to speed succession toward tolerant hardwoods while maximizing timber values.

The extent of red pine plantations in the County Forest is currently around its peak, as a few of them have already had their final removal of red pine overstorey, leaving some supercanopy trees for structure and biodiversity. It is clear that the red pine plantations have served their ecological function in terms of landscape restoration, but are not a natural condition, hence their transition over time to tolerant hardwood or mixedwood stands. Since there are no red pine plantations younger than 40 years in the County Forest, and the nature of red pine is such that it will not

regenerate under selection system conditions, the supply of red pine from the County Forest will decline over time. Red pine's nature, in combination with the issue of decline described above, means that there are no plans to plant red pine even in areas where planting might be required in order to augment natural regeneration. Fortunately, the volume of wood from the Dufferin County Forest is relatively low so that local industry is not dependent on it for survival. In addition, there are numerous plantations locally on private land that are in the 40 years and younger age class.

2. **Red oak:** It is desirable that red oak be retained as a component of the Dufferin County Forest for reasons of wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and timber production. However, red oak is difficult to maintain using the selection system due to its mid-successional nature. Red oak will regenerate through stump sprouts and seedlings. However, in the absence of a disturbance such as fire or harvesting that will remove a significant portion of the overstorey, as well as competing understorey species, the regeneration will not grow significantly and will eventually die.

In stands where it is desirable to maintain the red oak component management activities must ensure that there is sufficient red oak regeneration. Red oak regeneration can be maintained by releasing existing regeneration and promoting new generation through prescribed burns and/or partial removal of the tolerant hardwoods in the overstorey. Partial removal of the tolerant hardwood overstorey will provide light for the shade intolerant red oaks, remove the competing tolerant regeneration, and remove the seed source for the tolerant hardwoods.

3. **Mixedwood:** The mixedwood stands are characterized by a mix of hardwood and conifer species. In general, these stands will be managed on a selection basis to maintain high-quality timber and wildlife habitat. Wherever possible, conifers will be retained as a component of the stand to promote diversity and as a seed source (in the case of mid-tolerant and tolerant species) for regeneration.

4. **White pine:** The white pine plantations in the Dufferin County Forest will be harvested using the selection system. The harvests will remove approximately 30% of the basal area on a ten year cutting cycle. Since white pine exhibits intermediate shade tolerance, the conditions after partial overstorey removal will promote white pine regeneration. In some stands, there will also be a component of tolerant hardwoods in the understorey. Therefore, the white pine plantations should develop into natural mixedwood stands.

5. **Hard Maple:** The tolerant hardwood stands (dominated by hard (sugar) maple) will be managed on a selection basis to maintain high-quality timber and wildlife habitat. Prior to coming under the ownership of the County of Dufferin and management by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, many of these stands were high-graded, that is all of the largest (most merchantable) trees were removed with little or no control measures. Under MNR management, this practice was discontinued, thereby increasing the value and vigour of the natural stands. The primary harvesting technique will be improvement cuts, with the condition that some snags, cavity trees, downed trees, and mast trees must be retained to further wildlife objectives as described in *A Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests* (MNR, 2000).

6. **White Spruce:** The white spruce plantations will be managed by removal of approximately 30% of the basal area on a ten year cutting cycle. These plantations have a significant component of spruce and hardwood natural regeneration so will likely develop into mixedwood stands as the overstorey spruce is removed.

7. *Bottomland:* The bottomland plantations will be managed using the selection system of removing approximately 30% of the basal area on a ten year cutting cycle. In addition, in order to protect these sites that have a high water table, harvesting will only be done during frozen ground conditions.

White-Tailed Deer Winter Concentration Areas

Areas of the Dufferin County Forest that are identified white-tailed deer winter concentration areas will be managed so that critical characteristics of the core areas and yarding areas are maintained.

High Conservation Value Forests

High conservation value forests (HCVFs) have particular values that require special attention during planning and management. In general, the HCVFs that are part of the Dufferin County Forest (Table 4) will undergo carefully considered, limited management aimed at maintaining or enhancing the feature(s) for which they are valued. In addition, recreational use in these areas will, in most cases, be restricted in order to support the maintenance/enhancement of values.

The County of Dufferin will ensure that the only management activities conducted in evaluated wetlands are those necessary to maintain or rehabilitate the wetland.

Areas of the Dufferin County Forest that are identified as habitat of species at risk will be managed so that the habitat requirements of these species are maintained.

Management activities in the Oak Ridges South Slope Forest ANSI will seek to maintain or enhance characteristics that the ANSI is being protected for.

Evaluation of Insect and Disease Populations

The County of Dufferin will assess insect and disease populations based on information provided by the MNR's Forest Health Technicians, County Forest staff, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle, Sirex woodwasp, gypsy moth, beech bark disease, butternut canker, and red pine decline are of primary concern. Other than Asian long-horned beetle, emerald ash borer, and Sirex woodwasp these are all known to be in the Dufferin County Forest. Emerald ash borer has been found in the south end of Dufferin County but has not yet been confirmed in the County Forest. Monitoring of these key insects and diseases will continue and management plans will be developed as necessary.

A management plan for emerald ash borer was developed in early 2012 in anticipation of its arrival in Dufferin County. Since the number of ash in the County Forest is relatively low, the impact of emerald ash borer is expected to be small. Dead or dying ash that are considered to be hazard trees due to their proximity to trails will be removed as soon as possible after they are identified. Stands with an ash component will be managed in accordance with the strategies outlined in *Managing Ash in Farm Woodlots; Some Suggested Prescriptions* (Williams & Schwan, 2011).

Generally, forest management activities will tend to increase the diversity of the Forest and promote more vigorous growth, thereby reducing the potential impacts of insects and diseases. To further reduce the Forest's susceptibility, the following will apply to all forest management activities:

1. careful matching of species to site for reforestation;
2. promotion of a diversity of native species;
3. management of insects and diseases using an Integrated Pest Management approach and;
4. protection of the site, residual stems, and regeneration during all activities, including

recreation.

Wildfires and Prescribed Burns

The fighting of wildfires on the County Forest properties will be conducted as described in individual municipal Emergency Plans. Roads in the Forest will be maintained and will act as firebreaks. In order to minimize the occurrence of wildfires, campfires will not be allowed. Signs may be posted at key locations in the County Forest reminding users that there are no campfires permitted, to carefully extinguish their cigarettes etc.

While wildfires have the potential to do great damage to the forest, prescribed burning (the knowledgeable application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish predetermined forest management or other land-use objectives) is an important forest management tool. This is especially true for the maintenance of mid-successional communities such as the red oak stands in the Dufferin County Forest. Therefore, although every effort will be made to control and suppress wildfires, prescribed burning will remain a part of the management strategy for the Dufferin County Forest.

Alien Invasive Plants

Alien invasive plants have great potential to alter the ecology of the terrestrial habitats of the Dufferin County Forest. Since the Forest does not contain a significant number of watercourses, aquatic invasive species are of lesser concern. Of those invasive species noted as present in the forest, garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*), European buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum* and *V. nigrum*) and Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) are rated as high risk in the *A Guide to the Identification and Control of Exotic Invasive Species in Ontario's Hardwood Forests* (Derickx and Antunes, 2013) based on their potential environmental, economic, and social impacts.

While garlic mustard, dog-strangling vine, and European buckthorn are still not widespread in the Dufferin County Forest, it is anticipated that their presence will increase over time, due to their invasive nature and their spread being magnified by increased recreational use. (Seeds of these species can be transported from one area to another on bicycle tires, horses' hooves, and peoples' footwear.) The presence of invasive species will be monitored, particularly: in High Conservation Value Forests, before and after forest management operations, and along recreational trails. Where deemed necessary, appropriate control measures will be implemented in order to minimize the spread and invasion of these species in the County Forest.

The mature ornamental Norway maple at the former site of Camp Dufferin at the Main Tract will be removed. There are no other known areas in the County Forest where Norway maple have been planted.

Although Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) is not rated as a high risk species, it is a persistent invader of old field sites. Other than at the Little Tract, there are no significant areas of Scots pine in the County Forest. These are being removed on an ongoing basis. Scots pine invading the roadsides at the County Forest tracts are also being removed as time permits. The County has supported the Town of Mono's Scots pine eradication program by actively removing Scots pine from its own properties in the Town of Mono.

Other species that are rated as high risk that the County will be monitoring include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and periwinkle (*Vinca minor*).

Where feasible, signs and the website will be used to inform forest users about invasive species and give tips on how to reduce and prevent their spread.

The County will keep abreast of developments with regard to the spread and control of invasive species through the Ontario Invasive Plant Council.

Climate Change

Since trees are unable to move other than through natural seed dispersal, and have long life spans, their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing climate on an individual basis is limited. However, there are some actions that will be taken to make the Forest as a whole more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The key strategy will be to maintain, and where possible, increase, the diversity of species in the County Forest. In this way, if some species are affected by climate change more than others, the forest as a whole will be more able to absorb the effects. Therefore, the County will continue its management strategy of maintaining diverse tolerant hardwood stands and converting single species conifer plantations to tolerant hardwood or mixedwood stands. Increasing the diversity of the Forest has the added benefit of maintaining its carbon storage capacity over a longer period of time and enhancing biodiversity.

Through the ongoing active management of the majority of the County Forest properties, stands will be maintained in a vigorously growing, healthy state, thereby better to resist the impacts of climate change.

A potential issue related to climate change is that virtually all of the regeneration in the Dufferin County Forest currently happens naturally and, as such, is adapted to the current environmental conditions. This means that the young trees are adapted to the current growing conditions in the area, but not necessarily to future growing conditions. At the same time, it is illogical to destroy naturally-established trees to replace them, at significant expense, with trees that may not be adapted to future growing conditions either.

There is a possibility of establishing trees that are genetically better adapted to warmer regions of Ontario in the Dufferin County Forest. However, it is unclear how effective this would be as current climate change predictions include not just warming, but also changes in precipitation patterns and increasing frequency and severity of storm events. Therefore, there are no current plans to establish individual trees (or entire tree species) in the Dufferin County Forest that are adapted to warmer regions.

Soil Erosion

In areas where there are currently erosion problems, the County will take reasonable measures to establish ground cover and stabilize the area.

The County of Dufferin will conduct periodic inspections of areas that have had erosion problems in the past and areas that are prone to erosion. If it is deemed necessary, these areas will have restricted recreational use until such time as the area is stabilized. If the County determines that the erosion problem will continue, recreational use may be restricted permanently.

6.4 Economic Sustainability

Action 1: Pursue third party forest certification.

Action 2: Generate revenue from the Dufferin County Forest without compromising its environmental sustainability.

Action 3: Assess the natural heritage and socio-economic significance of the Dufferin County Forest in order to facilitate the acquisition and disposition of properties.

Forest Certification

During the 2016-2021 planning period, 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 utilization practices to assess compliance with a set of ecological, economic and social standards for sustainable forestry*. There are two primary reasons for pursuing forest certification. First, since it is an independent assessment of forest management it serves to increase the confidence of the public in the management of the County Forest. Second, the demand for wood products from certified forests is increasing, giving such products increased market access and, in some cases, premium prices.

Financial Stability

One of the County's objectives for the Dufferin County Forest is that it generate revenue to support operations. At the same time, it is important to remember the non-monetary contributions of the Dufferin County Forest:

1. the Main Tract is one of few, large, publicly-accessible natural areas in Dufferin County;
2. the Forest contributes significant ecosystem services (for details see section 5.7);
3. the Forest, and in particular the Main Tract, is important for outdoor recreation and;
4. the Dufferin County Forest properties add to the value of the areas in which they are located both in aesthetic and monetary terms.

In order to make revenues more predictable, attempts will be made to level out the value of the wood products removed from the forest, while ensuring that the environmental sustainability of the forest is not compromised.

The County will investigate possible sources of revenue and implement those that it deems feasible as long as they do not conflict with the other objectives of this plan.

Property Assessment, Acquisition and Disposition

In the past, the properties that make up the Dufferin County Forest were acquired by the County in a somewhat haphazard way. Since then, natural heritage and socio-economic assessments were done (Table 9) so that future acquisitions and dispositions of property would be subject to a more objective assessment. The underlying rationale is to increase the overall natural heritage and socio-economic value of the Dufferin County Forest within existing budget constraints.

The following will be considered as the priorities for acquisition:

1. properties adjacent to the Main Tract (large area of contiguous forest);
2. evaluated wetlands, especially those designated as provincially significant and;
3. significant natural areas as defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*, in particular those that are adjacent to existing tracts of the Dufferin County Forest.

All forest properties that are being considered for acquisition will be assessed in terms of the criteria described in Table 9. Consideration will also be given to the following:

1. the cost of the property (e.g. if the property is donated there are minimal costs);
2. future maintenance costs over and above those that exist for all County Forest tracts (e.g. if the property has buildings) and;
3. any restrictions that the owner wishes to place on present and future uses of the property, including (but not limited to) those related to: use of the land, property, onsite buildings and/or facilities; special agreements and covenants; and financial and legal liabilities.

Any property disposition will be conducted in accordance with current County policy, as well as requiring the purchaser to comply with key aspects of this management plan as a condition of sale.

Despite the foregoing, active property acquisition or disposition is not contemplated within the period of this management plan.

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Table 9: Natural Heritage and Socio-Economic Assessment of Dufferin County Forest Properties

Tract	Natural Heritage	Ecosystem Service Value	Size	Species Variety	Site	Distance From Population Centre	Recreation Potential	Land Value (2012)	Total	Rank
Amaranth	provincially significant wetland	4	2	2	3	5	1	2	19	4
Gara-Gore	n/a	3	2	1	5	5	0	1	17	5
Hockley	significant woodland, provincially significant wetland	4	2	1	3	5	2	2	19	4
Leening	Niagara Escarpment Rural Area	2.5	1	2	5	3	0	1	14.5	8
Levitt	SAR, Niagara Escarpment Natural Area, deer winter concentration area	3	1	1	3	5	1	1	15	7
Little	significant woodland, creek	2	3	1	5	2	2	1	16	6
Main	significant woodland, ANSI, Pine River floodplain, deer winter concentration area, SAR, linkage	2	5	5	5	3	2	5	27	1
Melancthon	significant woodland, provincially significant wetland, deer winter concentration area	3	4	2	3	1	1	1	15	7
Mono	significant woodland, linkage	2	4	3	5	5	2	4	25	2
Randwick	SAR, significant woodland, wetland, creek	2	5	3	5	2	2	5	24	3
River Road	n/a	2	1	1	5	4	0	1	14	9
Riverview	significant woodland, locally significant wetland	2.5	3	2	3	1	1	1	13.5	10
Simmons	significant woodland	2	3	3	5	2	1	3	19	4

Criteria Used in Assessing Properties

1. Natural Heritage

as defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*

2. Ecosystem Service Value Flow (\$/year/hectare) (refer to section 5.7 for details)

\$44-\$440: 1; \$2,200-\$4,400: 2; \$8,800-\$22,000: 3; \$88,000-\$237,600: 4

3. Size

under 10 hectares: 1; 10-30 hectares: 2; 31-50 hectares: 3; 51-75 hectares: 4; over 75 hectares: 5

4. Species Variety (number of overstorey working groups)

one working group: 1; two working groups: 2; three working groups: 3; four working groups: 4; more than four working groups: 5

5. Site (average site class from Plonski's yield tables)

site class three: 3; site class two: 4; site class one or better: 5

6. Distance From Population Centre (Orangeville)

over 50 kilometres: 1; 41-50 kilometres: 2; 31-40 kilometres: 3; 20-30 kilometres: 4; under 20 kilometres: 5

7. Recreation Potential

one point for each of: i. good trail system; ii. important or unique natural heritage feature(s)

8. Land Value (2012)

under \$300,000: 1; \$300,001-\$600,000: 2; \$600,001-\$900,000: 3; \$900,001-\$1,200,000: 4; over \$1,200,000: 5

7.0 MONITORING

In order to ensure that all activities related to the Dufferin County Forest are achieving the objectives described in this management plan, a number of monitoring activities will be undertaken. In cases where monitoring shows that objectives are not being achieved, management actions will be adapted in an effort to achieve the stated objectives.

Input from Forest users, especially in regard to enhancing inventory information, will be welcomed. Where necessary, information will be verified prior to being added to the inventory database.

7.1 Social Sustainability

The recreation policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its purpose is being met.

In addition, to ensure that the social sustainability objectives are being met, the County of Dufferin will do the following:

1. Maintain a high level of involvement with user groups and other stakeholders.
2. Conduct informal oral (as opportunities arise) and formal written (every ten years or, if needed, more frequently) surveys of users and non-using ratepayers to determine if:
 1. they have gained knowledge about the Dufferin County Forest;
 2. there still exist knowledge gaps that the County of Dufferin can fill and;
 3. they have any safety or access concerns.
4. Assimilate and act on comments/concerns from users on an ongoing basis.
5. Maintain a dialogue with researchers and research agencies working in the Dufferin

County Forest.

7.2 Environmental Sustainability

There are two methods for assessing if forest management operations and silvicultural activities are meeting stated environmental objectives: cut inspections and forest inventory.

Cut Inspections

Cut inspections in the Dufferin County Forest will be conducted according to the following

guidelines:

1. Inspections will be conducted at least weekly in areas where forest management operations are ongoing.
2. An inspection will be conducted within one week of the end of forest management operations.
3. Every inspection will ensure compliance with the applicable timber sale terms and conditions.

Forest Inventory

Forest inventory in the production forest area of the Dufferin County Forest will be conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. A forest inventory will be conducted for newly acquired properties within five years of their acquisition.
2. A forest inventory will be conducted in individual stands prior to the development of a prescription for forest management and within 12 months of the conclusion of a forest management operation. If a stand has not been subject to a forest management operation for a period of 15 years, a forest inventory will be conducted.
3. The forest inventory will include (at minimum):
 - i. a quantitative inventory of overstorey tree vegetation (variable-radius plot sampling);
 - ii. a quantitative inventory of regeneration (fixed-radius plot sampling);
 - iii. a quantitative inventory of understorey non-tree vegetation (fixed-radius plot sampling)
 - iv. a quantitative inventory of invasive plant species (fixed-radius plot sampling) and;
 - v. a qualitative inventory of wildlife, water resources, topography, aesthetics, and special features.

In addition to cut inspections and forest inventory, the County of Dufferin will do the following to ensure that environmental sustainability is being achieved:

1. Annual inspections will be conducted in areas that are prone to erosion. Areas where erosion is reported by users will be inspected within three months of being reported.
2. The potential for insect and disease outbreak will be assessed as information is collected or reported.
3. Key invasive plant species will be monitored along recreational trails on an ongoing basis to allow for early detection and rapid response to reduce invasion potential.
4. Annually, the area of timber sold from the Dufferin County Forest will be monitored.
5. An identification and assessment of aggregate deposits will be conducted for newly acquired properties within five years of their acquisition.
6. Forest management operations that are conducted by contractors, such as non-commercial thinning, cleaning, or marking, will be audited by the County, the specific procedures will depend on the operation.

7.3 Economic Sustainability

In order to ensure that the forest is economically sustainable, the County of Dufferin will do the following:

1. A budget for the Dufferin County Forest, including projected revenues and expenses and a capital budget, will be presented annually to Dufferin County Council.
2. The natural heritage and socio-economic value of the forest properties will be re-evaluated

every ten years, in conjunction with operating plan development.

3. The criteria used for assessing the significance of the properties will be revisited every ten years, in conjunction with operating plan development, to ensure that they are still facilitating the achievement of the County of Dufferin's objectives for the Forest.

8.0 REPORTING

All activities pertaining to the Dufferin County Forest will be reported as follows:

1. reports on specific subjects, as required, to Dufferin County Council.
2. an annual report to Dufferin County Council and the ratepayers of Dufferin County.
3. a budget for the upcoming year and a financial report for the past year, presented to

Dufferin County Council as part of the established budgetary process.

9.0 THE FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

A Recreational Use of the County Forest policy will be developed, as described in section 6.2, as soon as possible following the approval of this forest management plan.

Some of the activities described in the management plan are specific to the period of the embedded operating plan (2016-2021), most will continue over the entire period of the management plan (2016-2036). Three additional five year operating plans will be written to fulfill the management plan; for the periods 2021-2026, 2026-2031, and 2031-2036. The operating plans will be supported by Annual Reports and Annual Work Schedules.

Toward the end of the twenty year management plan, a new twenty year plan will be written for the period 2036-2056. This plan will include a five year operating plan for the period 2036-2041.

APPENDICES

A: Glossary

alien: plants, animals and micro-organisms that have been accidentally or deliberately introduced into areas beyond their native range. Synonyms may include introduced, non-native, and exotic.

ANSI: Area of Natural and Scientific Interest. ANSIs are areas of land and water that represent significant geological (earth science) and biological (life science) features. Earth science ANSIs include areas that contain examples of rock, fossil and landform features in Ontario. These features are the result of billions of years of geological processes and landscape evolution. Life science ANSIs are areas that contain examples of the many natural landscapes, communities, plants and animals found in the 14 natural regions of the province. The *Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry* identifies ANSIs that are “provincially significant” by surveying regions and evaluating sites to decide which have the highest value for conservation, scientific study and education.

barren and scattered: productive forest land which, because of natural or artificial disturbance, contains only scattered trees (*stocking* below 0.25) or no trees at all with either shrub cover or bare soil, but no significant regeneration.

basal area: the cross sectional area of a stem at breast height (1.3m), most commonly accumulated as square metres per hectare. Also see *normal basal area*.

biodiversity: the variety and variability (in time and space) among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which they occur. Biodiversity can be measured at the genetic, species and landscape levels.

bog: see *wetland*

breast height: 1.3m above the ground

carr: see *wetland*

conifer (softwood): needle-bearing tree that produces seeds in cones.

Department of Lands and Forests: see *Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)*

development means the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures requiring approval under the *Planning Act*, but does not include:

- a) activities that create or maintain *infrastructure* authorized under an environmental assessment process;
- b) works subject to the *Drainage Act*; or
- c) for the purposes of policy 2.1.4(a), underground or surface mining of *minerals* or advanced exploration on mining lands in *significant areas of mineral potential* in

Ecoregion 5E, where advanced exploration has the same meaning as under the *Mining Act*. Instead, those matters shall be subject to policy 2.1.5(a). (*Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*)

development: includes a change in the use of any land, building or structure. (*Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*)

diameter at breast height (DBH): the diameter of a tree taken at a height of 1.3m above the ground

ecosystem services: the benefits that people obtain, either directly or indirectly, from ecological systems. These services can be understood in ecological terms and they can also be translated into economic terms through valuation studies. These services are the foundation of human well-being and they also represent a significant part of the total economic value of our landscape and economy. And yet their value is most often uncounted, assumed to be 'zero'. It is therefore important to be able to estimate the economic value of ecosystem services. Increasingly valuation is recognized as another useful tool in environmental decision making to weigh tradeoffs between conservation and land development.

endangered: a species that lives in the wild in Ontario but is facing imminent *extinction* or *extirpation*

even-aged: condition of a *stand* in which relatively small age differences exist between individual trees. The maximum difference in age is usually twenty years. Also see *uneven-aged*.

extinct: a species that no longer lives anywhere in the world

extirpated: a species that lives somewhere in the world, and at one time lived in the wild in Ontario, but no longer lives in the wild in Ontario

fen: see *wetland*

forest inventory: sample survey of a forest area to provide an estimate of timber by volume, species, products, size, and other characteristics. Also assesses understorey and ground vegetation, wildlife, water resources, aesthetics and special characteristics of the forest. Also see *timber inventory*.

forestry purposes: includes the production of wood and wood products, provision of proper environmental conditions for wild life, protection against floods and erosion, recreation, and protection and production of water supplies; (*Forestry Act, R.S.O. 1990*)

hardwood: leaf-bearing trees whose seeds are not produced in cones.

high conservation value forest: forest land managed primarily to exert beneficial influence on soil, water, landscape, or for any other purpose when production of merchantable timber, if any, is incidental

high-grading (selective cutting): the cutting of the largest and most merchantable trees in a stand. There are relatively few or no control measures.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): refers to the practice of preventing or reducing damage caused by pests by using the best available information, along with a variety of ecologically and economically sustainable approaches and control methods.

intolerant: used to describe trees which do not tolerate shade (e.g. red pine, poplar). Also see *tolerant*.

invasive: *alien* species whose introduction or spread negatively impact native biodiversity, the economy and/or society, including human health.

marsh: see *wetland*

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR): the provincial ministry responsible for natural resources, including forests, wetlands, waters, and fish and wildlife. The MNR was formerly known as the Department of Lands and Forests and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

mixedwood: a *stand* in which both the *conifer* and *hardwood* components are greater than 30%

native: usually, a species known to have existed on a site prior to the influence of humans.

normal basal area: the basal area for a given *working group* on a particular *site class* at a particular age, as given by Plonski's Normal Yield tables.

prescribed burning: the knowledgeable application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish predetermined forest management or other land-use objectives

private land: land not vested in Her Majesty in right of Ontario, but includes unpatented land that is located or sold under the *Public Lands Act*. Also see *public lands*.

productive forest land: all forest areas capable of growing commercial trees and not withdrawn from such use

production forest: all productive forest land managed primarily for human benefit, unless otherwise reassigned

public lands: the lands vested in Her Majesty in right of Ontario and under the management of the Minister [of Natural Resources], and includes the lands in respect of which a lease, licence of occupation or permit has been granted or issued under the *Mining Act*, the *Provincial Parks Act* or the *Public Lands Act*. Also see *private land*.

regeneration: the renewal of a tree crop whether by natural (self-sown seed or by vegetative means) or artificial means (sowing and planting). This term may also be used to describe the young crop itself.

selective cutting: see *high-grading*

selection system: a periodic partial cutting, controlled by basal area, using vigour and risk

characteristics to determine individual tree selection

shelterwood system: an *even-aged silvicultural system* where in order to provide a source of seed and/or protection for regeneration, the old crop is removed in two or more successive cuttings

significant means:

a) in regard to *wetlands, coastal wetlands* and *areas of natural and scientific interest*, an area identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time;

b) in regard to *woodlands*, an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. These are to be identified using criteria established by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources;

c) in regard to other features and areas in policy 2.1, ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or *natural heritage system*;

d) in regard to *mineral* potential, an area identified as provincially significant through evaluation procedures developed by the Province, as amended from time to time, such as the Provincially Significant Mineral Potential Index; and

e) in regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.

Criteria for determining significance for the resources identified in sections (c)-(e) are recommended by the Province, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used. While some significant resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation. (*Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*)

silviculture: the science and art of cultivating forest crops. More particularly, the theory and practice of controlling the establishment, composition, constitution and growth of forests. Silviculture is a combination of three forestry activities: 1) timber harvest; 2) forest renewal; 3) subsequent maintenance of the new forest.

silvicultural system: a process, following accepted silvicultural principles, in which crops constituting forests are tended, harvested, and regenerated, resulting in the production of crops of distinctive form. Systems are conveniently classified according to the method of harvesting the mature stands with a view to regeneration and according to the type of crop produced.

site alteration means activities, such as grading, excavation and the placement of fill that would change the landform and natural vegetative characteristics of a site. For the purposes of policy 2.1.4(a), *site alteration* does not include underground or surface mining of *minerals* or advanced exploration on mining lands in *significant areas of mineral potential* in Ecoregion 5E, where advanced exploration has the same meaning as in the *Mining Act*. Instead, those matters shall be subject to policy 2.1.5(a). (*Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*)

site class: a measure of the relative productivity of a site. Site classes 1a and X are the most productive; site class 3 is the least productive. Site class is determined using Plonski's Normal Yield Tables.

special concern: a species that lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered or threatened, but may become threatened or endangered due to a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats

species at risk (SAR): species that are determined to need special care by an independent committee of experts, the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO), which consists of people with expertise in scientific disciplines or Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. Species at risk fall into one of five categories, depending on the degree of risk: *extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, or special concern.*

stand: a community of trees possessing sufficient uniformity in composition, constitution, age, arrangement or condition to be distinguishable from adjacent communities.

stocking: the actual *basal area* as a fraction of the *normal basal area*. Stocking can be more than 1.

supercanopy tree: a living tree that sticks up well above the main canopy of a forest stand.

swamp: see *wetland*

threatened: a species that lives in the wild in Ontario, is not *endangered*, but is likely to become *endangered* if steps are not taken to address factors threatening it

timber inventory: sample survey of a forest area to provide an estimate of timber by volume, species, products, size and other characteristics. Also see *forest inventory*.

tolerant: used to describe trees that can regenerate under a canopy (e.g. maple, hemlock). Also see *intolerant*.

uneven-aged: the condition of a stand in which trees markedly differ in age. Also see *even-aged*.

wetland: land that is seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils (characterized by an abundance of moisture) and has favoured the dominance of water-tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are **swamps, marshes, bogs** and **fens**. A **carr** is a waterlogged, wooded community, characterized by alders and willows. Wetlands in Ontario are evaluated based on their biological, hydrological, socio-economic and special features and designated as either provincially or locally significant.

	Vegetation	Water	Soil	General Location
bog	sphagnum moss	water from runoff and precipitation only	thick layer of peat (decomposed sphagnum moss), which is highly acidic, extends beneath bog	common to northern Ontario, but some in the south

Vegetation		Water	Soil	General Location
fen	grasses, sedges	some flow-through	neutral and alkaline	rare in Ontario
marsh	cattails, sedges, rushes	very efficient at supplying water and nutrients to vegetation; occasional flooding; maintain some open water (less than 2 m in depth); will dry out during extended droughts	mineral; high organic matter content near surface	southern Ontario
swamp	shrubs and trees (e.g. soft maple and cedar)	occasional flooding	organically rich mineral soils	most common wetland in southern Ontario

working group: an inventory aggregation for management purposes. An aggregate of *stands*, including potential forest areas assigned to this category, having the same predominant species, and management under the same rotation and broad silvicultural system.

B: Acronyms

ANSI	Area of Natural and Scientific Interest
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CO	Conservation Officer
DCMA	Dufferin County Museum & Archives
DCF	Dufferin County Forest
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MNRF	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
MOC	Mansfield Outdoor Centre
NEC	Niagara Escarpment Commission
OFRI	Ontario Forest Research Institute
OFSC	Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIA	Woodlands Improvement Act

C: Species Abbreviations

Ab	black ash
Aw	white ash
Bd	basswood
Be	American beech
Bn	butternut
Bw	white birch
Ch	cherry

C	other conifers
Ce	eastern white cedar
Elm	American elm
H	other hardwoods
He	eastern hemlock
I	ironwood
La	tamarack/larch
Mh	hard/sugar maple
Mr	red maple
Or	red oak
Pj	jack pine
Po	poplar/aspen
Pw	white pine
Sb	black spruce
Sw	white spruce
Wn	black walnut

D: Conversion Factors

1 hectare (ha) = 10,000 m² = 2.47 acres

1 metre (m) = 3.26 feet = 1.09 yards

1 cubic metre (m³) = 35.7 cubic feet = 0.42 cords = 227 f.b.m.

E: Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy Summary

[to be completed]

F: Related Municipal Policies and By-Laws

County Forest By-Law 2003-50

Dufferin County Official Plan

Dufferin Local Municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws

Fees By-Law (including County Forest) 2012-08

Recreational Use of the County Forest Policy

Reserve Funds By-Law (including County Forest) 2002-45

G: Related Provincial Policies and Legislation

Endangered Species Act

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act

Forestry Act

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (Leening and Levitt Tracts)

Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (Leening and Levitt Tracts)

Planning Act

Professional Foresters Act

A Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests

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