



Our Forest, Our Future:
Dufferin County Forest Operating Plan
2021-2026
Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dufferin County Forest is a 1,066 hectare (2,636 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.

Our Forest, Our Future: Dufferin County Forest Management Plan 2016-2036 was approved by County Council on March 10, 2016. The recreational use policy for the County Forest was approved on May 11, 2017. This five year operating plan (2021-2026) outlines how environmental, economic, and social sustainability will be achieved for the Dufferin County Forest over the next five years, building on the County's strategies as outlined in the twenty-year management plan (2016-2036).

The goal of the twenty-year management plan is: *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 during the period of this operating plan:

Environmental Sustainability

- ❖ provide proper environmental conditions for wild life;
- ❖ protect against floods and erosion;
- ❖ maintain natural forest characteristics as much as possible and;
- ❖ protect the Forest from the threats of invasive species and climate change by improving overall forest health and by maintaining, and, where possible, increasing, biodiversity.

Economic Sustainability

- ❖ maintain sustainable levels of timber harvesting throughout the planning period;
- ❖ seek forest certification to increase the demand for timber products from the County Forest and;
- ❖ continue to develop alternative revenue streams that will not compromise environmental sustainability.

Social Sustainability

- ❖ continue to work with the Friends of the Dufferin County Forest on the implementation of on-the-ground activities in the Forest;
- ❖ continue to gain input into management of the Forest from the Dufferin County Forest Advisory Team;
- ❖ maintain an active relationship with users and other stakeholders;
- ❖ promote the benefits of forest protection/conservation;
- ❖ continue to inform residents of Dufferin County, in particular, youth, about the County Forest and;
- ❖ continue to update and implement the recreational use policy that was approved on May 11, 2017.