



Members of Bruce County Council took a tour of the Brant Tract, which is now under county management, Thursday afternoon last week. The tract is now being selectively harvested under a tender awarded to a logging company.

(Patrick Raftis photo)

Area forests should flourish under local management

By Patrick Raftis
Herald-Times staff

Bruce County officials are feeling better about the future of local forests now that they're back under local management.

After four-years of pressure from county council, the provincial government agreed last spring to forgive and forget about \$175,000 it charged the municipality for forest management fees over that period.

Under the province's control, the forests battled foliage-damaging infestation and other problems due to lack

of management.

"After they cut the staff (at the Ministry of Natural Resources) they really didn't have any people to do it," said Malcolm McIntosh, director of planning and economic development for the county.

By taking over management of the county's 1,200 acres of forest themselves and saving the provincial fees, the county has been able to develop a forestry management plan and hired Forest Technician Ken Goldsmith to help implement it.

"We want to promote good forestry management practices," said McIntosh.

Part of those practices involved tending for a company to log the Brant Tract on a "selective harvesting," basis, said McIntosh. The 780-acre tract will be logged with eye to sustainability, he explained.

Brockton Mayor Dave Thomson, the municipality's county council representative is pleased to see the forests under local control. He's been actively lobbying for the move for the past four years.

"I've said for years we should be managing the forests," said Thomson. "Forestry, to me, is one of the foundations of this nation," he added.