

Low-cost trees offered to owners of large lots

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If you have a large property in northern Whitechurch-Stouffville, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority wants to talk to you.

The authority is encouraging residents with large chunks of land to take advantage of its low-cost tree planting program.

When Schomberg's Kathryn Clark heard about the program, she accepted the offer.

Living on sensitive wetlands, she wanted to preserve the health of the area, so she planted 10,250 tree seedlings on her property.

"I really think conservation is important," Ms Clark said. "It makes a big difference if you get their help. It's definitely an asset to work with them."

The best part of the program for Ms Clark is the authority representative comes in and sees what you need and guides you through the process, she said. The program is a part of a long-term strategy.

"We are always trying to plant as much new forest cover as possible in the watershed," authority watershed stewardship manager Phil Davies said.

Since the authority started in 1951, Mr. Davies estimated it has helped plant more than three million trees across the watershed.

Through the program, landowners in the watershed, with a minimum of two acres, are eligible for technical assistance from qualified forestry staff, who will help develop site-

specific reforestation plans.

Grants are available to support reforesting marginal farmlands, establishing windbreaks, stabilizing stream banks and restoring habitat for fish and wildlife. Interested landowners can order from a selection of species, including white pine, spruce, cedar, maple and oak.

The authority does a lot of planting along watercourses, Mr. Davies said, noting trees are picked based on the site conditions.

In Ms Clark's case, a creek runs through her property all the way up to Lake Simcoe, so she thought it was imperative to plant trees by the water. She planted elm and black cherry.

Reforestation plays an important role in fostering a healthy environment and private landowners are the key to providing space for large-scale reforestation projects. The long-term benefits of reforestation include protecting water supplies, reducing soil erosion and stabilizing wildlife habitat, Mr. Davies said.

Now all Ms Clark has to do is wait for her trees to mature.

Ms Clark's reforestation commitment earned her an authority award. Others to receive the award were: King's Barron family, who planted 5,200 tree seedlings on the family farm; East Gwillimbury's Tim Thompson, who planted 7,450 tree seedlings on his farm property; Martin Bonigut of Bradford West Gwillimbury, who planted 700 shrubs and 350 live stakes on his farm property; and Jim Craigmyle from Bradford West Gwillimbury, who performed a wetland cleanup and planted 235 native trees.

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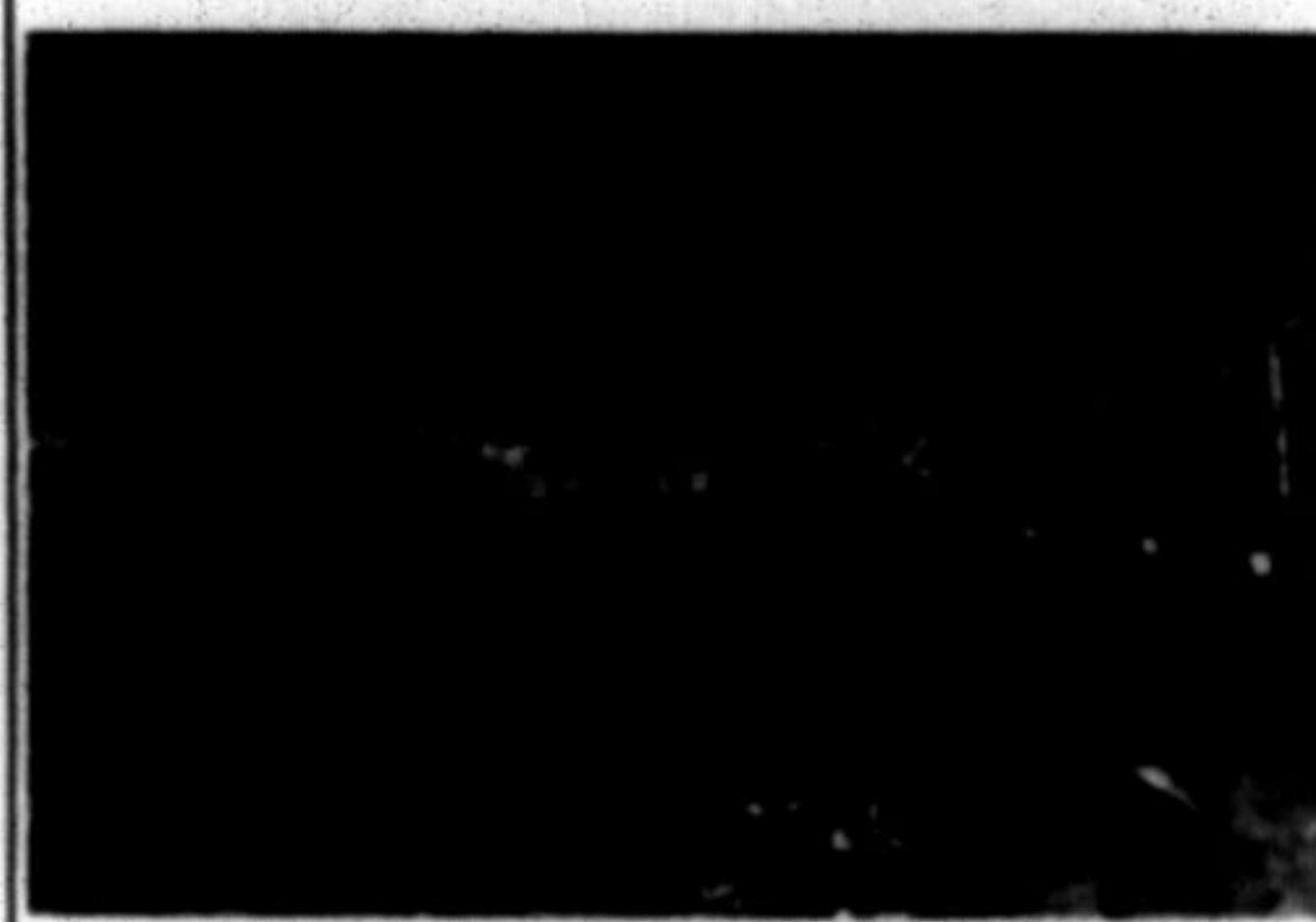
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