

ENVIRONMENT: York Region forest's sixth thinning

Timber! Forest logging aids younger trees

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Various tracts within Whitchurch-Stouffville's section of the York Region forest may look a little thinner these days and that is because it is undergoing a "sustainable forest harvest," according to James Lane, forestry program manager for York Region.

Trees that are about 50 years of age and older are being cut to the stumps to enable growth of younger saplings north of Ballantrae.

LAND CLEARED

This is about the sixth thinning for these tracts, according to Mr. Lane, which include Clarke, Hall, Mitchell, Porritt and Scout.

Foresters try not to return to the same areas every year because "it's clearly disruptive to recreation," Mr. Lane said.

In the early 1800s, Europeans settled in what is now York Region. Extensive areas of land were cleared for farming, however, the soil could not support intensive

agriculture or grazing, according to the region's website.

The soil was being eroded by wind and water, streams and wells were going dry, wildlife moved away and wood products were in short supply.

In an effort to rectify these problems, the Ontario government initiated a number of reforestation programs, one of which was the Agreement Forest plan.

The York Region forest was established in 1924 through this program.

In 1998, the program ended and the region assumed full management of the forest. Through its greening and land securement strategies, more than 617 acres of land have been added to the York Region forest between 2004 and 2010, according to the region's website.

Much of the regional forest, which spans about 5,436 acres was replanted with softwoods starting in 1924 and continued to the 1960s, according to Mr. Lane.

Red, jack and scotch pines can survive in dry areas. Their plant-

ing helped stabilize the sand and started to create an environment that could aid in the regeneration of a hardwood forest.

Less than one-quarter of the trees on the various tracts are being removed, but in some areas, it may be up to half, according to Mr. Lane.

Last year, the emerald ash borer was first detected in Whitchurch-Stouffville's Hwy. 48 and Aurora Road area.

ASH BORER

It takes about three to four years for the disease to take effect, so far "we haven't observed any significant tree decline yet," Mr. Lane said, noting ash makes up about 30 per cent of the trees in some sections of the regional forest.

The trees being removed from the forest get de limbed, cut into lengths and sold to a mill.

"The purpose of it is not to make money," Mr. Lane emphasized, noting the money, which goes right back into the forest, is a by-product of its maintenance.



PHOTO/TOM RITCHUK

Dogs check out work being done in the regional forest near Ballantrae.

High-tech scavenger hunt invades forest

Search for hidden treasures in the York Regional Forest with a geocach adventure Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Eldred King tract, 16232 Hwy. 48.

Guided walks start every hour on the hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. or you can search for the hidden items on your own.

In order to participate, you will need a GPS device and York Region Forest geocaching passport, which can be downloaded here [http://www.york.ca/Services/Environmental+Services/Forestry/ Take+a+Walk+in+the+Forest.htm](http://www.york.ca/Services/Environmental+Services/Forestry/Take+a+Walk+in+the+Forest.htm) or picked up at the Eldred King tract before you set out on your hike.

Find the hidden geocaches and enter the code word(s) into the passport for a chance to win a prize. Obtain all eight code words to solve the secret puzzle.

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All players trying out (with the exception of non-resident players for Midget AA) must be registered and paid with the WSMHA or they will not be allowed on the ice.

Go to www.wsmha.com to register

TEAM	COACH	DATE	TIME	ARENA
TYKE A Born 2006	Miguel Torres 647-273-0442 mugstorres@rogers.com	Aug-27	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
		Aug-29	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
		Sep-03	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
TYKE B Born 2006	TBA	Aug-27	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
		Aug-29	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
		Sep-03	6:00-7:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
MIDGET AA Born 1996, 1997	Greg Smith (AA) 416-434-2113 smith.ge@rogers.com	Aug-26	8:30-10:00pm	Stouffville Arena - Pad A
		Aug-28	8:45-10:15pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 2
		Aug-29	8:45-10:15pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 2
MIDGET A Born 1996, 1997	Brian Mackenzie (A) 416-970-5828 brian9@rogers.blackberry.net	Aug-26	8:30-10:00pm	Stouffville Arena - Pad A
		Aug-28	8:45-10:15pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 2
		Aug-29	8:45-10:15pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 2
		Sep-03	9:15-10:15pm	Stouffville Arena - Pad B
		Sep-05	8:30-10:00pm	Clippers Complex - Acton 1
JUVENILE Born 1993, 94, 95	Ange Varsamis 416-529-2643 jauid@strategicpr.ca	Sep-06	9:00-10:30pm	Stouffville Arena - Pad A
		Sep-07	6:45-8:15pm	Stouffville Arena - Pad B

Additional tryouts may be scheduled

Tryouts for the following rostered select teams will take place during the first 2 weeks of September. Visit www.wsmha.com for more details or contact the hockey office at 905-642-2835 or email info@wsmha.com
Tyke C; Novice; Minor Atom; Atom; Minor Pee wee; Pee wee; Minor Bantam; Bantam; Minor Midget; Midget



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