

80 Native Shrubs Planted At Scott Park

By Yvonne Zyma (The Wilmot Post – June 30, 2021 edition)



MP Tim Louis and his daughter Brooklyn demonstrate the optimal way to mulch a tree (like a doughnut, not a volcano).

There's a little forest on the floodplain in the middle of New Hamburg and it is flourishing. Less than a year ago, this small pocket of native trees and shrubs was mowed on the periphery of the soccer fields in Scott Park. Viewed from a distance approaching the popular Nith River boat launch, the small trees appear as puffs of green above the sweet smelling bedstraw, which has become the meadow's interim ground cover. The area is returning to nature and toads, tiny frogs and buzzing insects abound.

In October 2020, Let's Tree Wilmot organized their first tree planting, and with the support and blessing of the Township of Wilmot, 100 native trees were planted at Scott Park. The day's success surprised everyone, given that the group had its first meeting in March, mere days pre COVID-19 lockdown, and the months that followed put plans into question. On Saturday, June 19, physically distanced and masked volunteers returned to the site to plant once again. Surprisingly, only a few trees were lost since the fall; some were washed away by the predictable flooding of the area, when the Nith River runs high enough to engulf the area, and it becomes part of the torrent. Trees were protected with wrapping and encircled with chicken wire, outsmarting beaver and other local rodents.

On this day, volunteers spent the morning on the next phase of the project, planting 80 native shrubs among the trees, in preselected locations. A grant from Foresters Financial provided the funds, and volunteers joined in from the company, working with Wilmot Horticulture, Let's Tree Wilmot's parent, as well as Nith Valley EcoBoosters and willing community members. The youngest volunteer, who brought his own shovel, was four-years-old; not only did he help

plant, but he proved to have a keen eye for gypsy moth caterpillars, saving the newly planted trees from certain destruction.

The afternoon saw more volunteers with wheelbarrows and buckets applying the large delivery of mulch that will help retain precious moisture and give the plantings space. The “bucket brigade” followed, with a generator used to pump water from the Nith River, then carried by hand to all the plantings.

There are plans for multiple plantings in local parks this fall, with Petersburg, Mannheim and New Dundee having 100 native trees planted, supplied by the Township of Wilmot. Baden will also see native trees planted in select locations. Residents and community groups will welcome volunteers.

Let’s Tree Wilmot encourages residents to plant trees to increase the township’s tree canopy. There are many advantages to increasing the number of trees around us. Shade on a hot summer day is only one, and carbon sequestration to help us reach the goal of the 50 x 30 Initiative is another. This campaign, with the goal of reducing emissions in Waterloo Region by 50% by 2030, was endorsed by Wilmot council at the June 14 council meeting, in line with the TransformWR Climate Action Strategy: <https://www.engagewr.ca/waterloo-regions-climate-action-strategy>

Wilmot residents have the opportunity to improve their township in ways not seen before. Be part of the transformation. Upcoming events will be published on social media and on the LTW website. Contact letstreewilmot@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list or to volunteer.