

Learn to do by doing: Conservation Authority teams up with 4-H'ers to plant trees in Tara

May 23, 2017

Tara, Ontario

On Tuesday May 23, 2017, Desboro and Tara 4-H leaders with members of the Desboro Potato and Beef Calf Club volunteered and planted 80 red maple trees with Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Stewardship Technician Rebecca Ferguson. The planting site was on the east side of the Sauble River near Mill Street in Tara. This planting is part of a stewardship initiative to improve the water quality in the upper Sauble River as it makes its way to Lake Huron.

Rebecca started off the evening with a demonstration on how to properly plant the trees and described why this species was selected. She also discussed how their actions would benefit the property and the River. She showed them how to identify red maples and told them about their ability to grow in areas too wet for other species. Rebecca had also planted cedar trees earlier in the day, they also grow well in damp and flooded areas. These trees will form a riparian buffer to contribute to the health of the River. 700 trees will be planted on this property and in total close to 5,000 trees on the upper Sauble by Grey Sauble Conservation Authority staff.

"It was really great to meet the 4-Hers and teach them about tree planting and explain how it can improve water quality in this River. The kids had so much energy and were able to plant more trees than expected," said Rebecca. Working with community members on stewardship projects is a vital part of what conservation authorities do across Ontario.

When the opportunity to plant trees was proposed the youth were keen to try tree planting and live out the 4-H motto of "Learn to do by Doing", Karen Gillan, Desboro 4-H Potato Club Leader.

The property owner, Crystal Gunson showed the group the flags she had inserted in field to mark how far from the river's edge the spring flood waters had reached earlier in the spring. "We feel extremely lucky to have been asked to participate in this project on our property. The conservation authority has been great to deal with," Crystal Gunson. Planting trees will help reduce the amount of spring flooding as these species grow and form a riparian buffer that will store rain, runoff, floodwaters and discharging groundwater and then release it to the surface slowly. Buffers can act as filters to prevent nutrients, sediments and other pollutants from reaching a watercourse.

This property is in the Wellhead Protection Area-E (WHPA-E) for the Tara municipal drinking water well #3 mapped by the Drinking Water Source Protection program. WHPA-E is associated with a GUDI (groundwater under the direct influence of surface water) well and is the area within which the surface water could reach the well within two hours. By creating this riparian buffer, this landowner is taking a positive step to protect the municipal water supply.

This project was coordinated by Rebecca Ferguson, Stewardship Technician at Grey Sauble Conservation Authority in conjunction with the Drinking Water Source Protection program. Funding for this project was made available through Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's Great Lakes Guardian Fund and Stewardship Grey Bruce.

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