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2011 GREENING STRATEGY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Environmental Services Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by Ian Buchanan, Manager, Natural Heritage and Forestry Services; and**
- 2. Adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated March 28, 2012, from the Commissioner of Environmental Services.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides Council with an update on the activities and achievements of the Greening Strategy in 2011.

3. BACKGROUND

The Greening Strategy was adopted by Council in 2001. The intent of the strategy is to achieve on-the-ground action consistent with the forward-thinking environmental policies in the Regional Official Plan. The Greening Strategy is consistent with a number of Regional initiatives including the corporate Strategic Plan, Draft Vision 2051, the Sustainability Strategy and Corporate Clean Air objectives. The strategy addresses habitat restoration and forest cover, securement of greenlands, environmental promotion and protection. Greening Strategy programs include allocation of funds for both environmental projects and land securement activities.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Region is committed to protecting, rehabilitating, and creating natural areas through the Greening Strategy. A complete list of Greening Strategy initiatives, summarizing actions and deliverables is appended as *Attachment 1*. Notable 2011 highlights follow in this report. Significant achievements in the areas of tree planting, land securement, environmental education and partnerships were realized in 2011.

Partnerships with local municipalities and communities resulted in planting 111,000 trees and shrubs, an increase of 59 per cent from 2010

The following are Greening Strategy programs aimed at increasing forest and tree cover, and rehabilitating or re-establishing natural areas:

- York Natural Planting Partnership – subsidized large scale private land reforestation in partnership with the Conservation Authorities.
- Adopt-a-Stream Crossing Program – tree planting at Regional Road stream crossings with school children.
- Naturalization of Regional properties including: reforestation at the Bales Drive Regional property and Stouffville Pumping Station Reservoir Property.
- Local Enhancement and Appreciation for Forests (LEAF) Backyard Tree Planting Program – urban residential tree planting partnership.
- Greening support for local community naturalization events – subsidized cost of trees for municipalities to support community tree planting events.

In 2011, these programs resulted in planting over 111,000 trees and shrubs, on more than 58 sites with over 2,000 volunteers.

The Local Enhancement and Appreciation for Forests (LEAF) Backyard Tree Planting program, first delivered as a pilot project in Markham in 2008, now offers the full service program in Aurora, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan and has continued with the do-it-yourself model in remaining municipalities. Through this program, urban residents within all nine local municipalities can obtain a subsidy for the purchase of a tree coupled with advice from a professional arborist to help select a species, then site and plant the tree. Newly introduced in 2011 were native garden kits which include trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Through this specific partnership, for every dollar York Region contributes, LEAF leverages \$2.50. LEAF is able to leverage funding through partnerships with local municipalities and corporations, including a grant from Ontario Power Generation.

Land securement success includes 37.5 hectares with a 12.5 hectare addition to the York Regional Forest

Five properties, distributed amongst the Town of Aurora, Township of King, Town of Richmond Hill, and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, totalling 37.5 hectares, were secured by the Region or through our partnerships in 2011. The most notable acquisition in 2011 was the 8 hectare donation of the Rooke Property in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville by the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust with the Region's support through our partnership agreement.

In partnership with the Town of Aurora, York Region contributed \$100,000 from its Greenlands Securement fund to assist the Town in the purchase of a 10 hectare forested

Natural Core area on the Oak Ridges Moraine located adjacent to the Town owned Case Woodlot.

A 12.5 hectare parcel of land designated as “Natural Feature Conservation Area” and therefore undevelopable was transferred to the Region as part of the development approval process for a plan of subdivision in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. These lands are adjacent to the existing Clarke Tract of the York Regional Forest and have increased the size of this Tract to 75.5 hectares.

Focus of the Greening Land Securement Program is primarily to empower and support partners already active in protecting conservation lands within the Region. Since adoption of the Strategy in 2001, properties totalling 973 hectares have been secured.

Table 1 shows the Greening land securement achievements for 2011, with the locations identified on *Attachment 2*.

Table 1
Properties Secured in 2011

Property	Securement Tool	Partner(s)	Size	York Region Contribution	Value of Securement
Rooke (Whitchurch-Stouffville)	Donation	ORMLT	8 ha	ORMLT agreement*	\$235,000
Case Woodlot (Aurora)	Purchase	Aurora	10 ha	\$100,000	\$700,000
Clarke (Whitchurch-Stouffville)	Legislation	None	12.5 ha	None (Development approval transfer)	N/A
Emery (Richmond Hill)	Conservation Easement	ORMLT	4 ha	ORMLT agreement*	\$634,320
Olejniczak (King)	Purchase	LSRCA	3 ha	\$644	\$27,555
TOTAL			37.5 ha	\$100,644	\$1,596,875

* The Region has a land securement agreement with Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust with an annual contribution of \$40,000 in accordance with Council approved three-year partnership agreement.

NOTE: The Region also has a land securement agreement with Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) with an annual contribution of \$100,000 in accordance with Council approved three-year partnership agreement. These funds advance a variety of projects over the three year term of the agreement.

Participation and community interest in environmental education programs continues to increase

Participation in the Region's forest environmental education program, *Nature's Classroom*, exceeded 2010 levels and continued the upward trend of previous years. Eleven monthly public forest events and two seasonal forest festivals were held in 2011, with a total of 1,191 people attending. Community and school group programming included delivery of 35 guided hikes to a total of 934 participants. This total participation level of 2,125 for *Nature's Classroom* is the highest since development of the program in 2001.

The *Adopt-a-Stream Crossing* program involves planting trees and shrubs with school and community groups around streams within Regional rights-of-way. Program delivery includes an in-classroom introduction to tree planting, a tree planting event, litter pick-up and monitoring of newly planted sites. Through program implementation, the Region encourages local schools and groups to adopt stream planting sites. In 2011, ten *Adopt-a-Stream Crossing* events were held across the Region with 325 volunteers, planting over 1,800 trees and shrubs.

Two-year pilot project with York District School Board initiated in 2011 on outdoor education

New in 2011, a two year pilot project in partnership with the York District School Board was initiated to assist with the Board's mandate to provide outdoor education classes for grades two, four and seven. York District School Board was in need of a more localized facility to present their outdoor education program. With over 2,200 hectares of York Regional Forest in 21 locations it was a logical step to initiate this pilot project as a first step to developing more synergies with the York District School Board and their environmental education program. In 2011, 280 students participated in curriculum based environmental education programming over eight days in the York Regional Forest and Forest buildings.

2012 program moving forward with replacement of the York Regional Forest Stewardship and Education building

As public interest in the Region's education and outreach program grows there is a need to continue to focus on core business. Environmental education including linkages to source water protection are key. The York Regional Forest buildings at the Hollidge Tract in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville are being replaced due to the significant maintenance and repair costs (e.g. roof, foundation etc.) and overall age of the structures.

The Hollidge Tract location is central to the majority of existing York Regional Forest properties, and is on the Oak Ridges Moraine at the headwaters of the Black River in the Lake Simcoe watershed. This central location is strategic for our delivery of

environmental educational programming. Positive feedback from our pilot project with the school board and other education programs supports the use of this location. Having the facility central to most of our forest properties helps to profile our sustainable forest management demonstration programs and also makes sense for forest operations support.

Capital funds were approved as \$50,000 in 2011 and \$350,000 in 2012 for preliminary site investigation, Feasibility Study and Natural Heritage and Hydrogeological investigations, and advancing architectural and engineering work. The proposed building replacement has been assessed for conformity with the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* and other relevant legislation and poses no significant challenges. Opportunities for partnerships are being investigated as this project moves forward. In 2012, an architectural consultant will be engaged and an updated capital request will be advanced for the 2013 budget cycle.

Greening Strategy delivery continues to make the most of partnerships

The Greening Strategy is delivered by the Natural Heritage and Forestry Services section of Environmental Services. It has always been a strategic and respected approach of the Region to make the most of our funding by using capacity already established within our partner organizations. This further allows the Region to leverage funding and achieve more on-the-ground results.

A table, which demonstrates the breadth and diversity of the 50 active Greening Strategy partners and the nature of the partnership, is included as *Attachment 3*.

As part of the 10 year anniversary of the Greening and Securement Strategies staff consulted with residents, partners and stakeholders

The Greening Strategy has been planting trees, securing lands, and educating residents for more than ten years. Some notable overall achievements include planting of more than 860,000 trees and shrubs and securement of 973 ha of conservation land by the Region or our partners with Regional support.

Greening achievements were highlighted to the public and stakeholders last fall and the Region sought public feedback on the successes, gaps and challenges of the program. Below are a few highlights of the feedback received and staff will report back to Council in June with a full report on what was heard as part of this process and options for refinement of the Greening Strategy.

Overall the feedback was positive, often re-affirming that we are on the right track with initiatives like tree planting and conservation land securement. Key areas of new focus included:

- reaching out to the agricultural community,

- better linkage to environment related public health benefits and closer alignment with Community and Health initiatives for active living and green infrastructure, and
- pursuit of non traditional partnerships e.g. First Nations or multicultural initiatives.

Regional Greening Strategy supports a vibrant and healthy urban forest

Recent Urban Forest studies supported in part through the Regional Greening Strategy have modeled how urban forests provide functions and services including carbon sequestration, energy savings, improved air quality, human health benefits and storm water management. For example, in the southern municipalities the existing urban forest sequesters an estimated 29,000 tonnes of carbon annually. The urban forest faces other challenges on many fronts. Invasive species including the Asian Longhorned beetle or more recently the Emerald Ash Borer will destroy thousands of trees in our urban areas and across the landscape. These impacts have significant environmental, social and economic consequences. It is therefore important to continue to refine and enhance the scope of the Greening Strategy in working towards protecting a healthy urban forest.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

The Greening Strategy is consistent with objectives and policies of the Regional Official Plan and draft Vision 2051 goal for a natural system that is connected, protected and enhanced through communities. The strategy protects and promotes a linked greenlands system, and provides for habitat creation and increased forest cover in the Region through partnerships and community engagement.

Programs and activities of the Greening Strategy strongly support the objectives of Regional plans including Natural Heritage Strategic Directions, Sustainability Strategy and the Corporate Air Quality Strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Annually, \$1.35 million is allocated to deliver the Greening Strategy, including land securement. Through partnerships, the Greening Strategy leverages funds for all projects in each program area. Land securement projects attempt to leverage funds at 3:1, however this is often exceeded through creative partnerships. Greening Strategy programs and funds are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with Regional objectives. Table 2 summarizes the status of the land securement reserve, including expenditures for 2011.

Table 2
Land Securement Reserve 2011

Reserve account activity	Funds (\$)
Balance at December 31, 2010	\$1,393,394
2011 contributions from Revenue	\$1,350,000
Interest income	\$88,364
Contributions to 2011 Greening projects ⁽¹⁾	\$(356,033)
Funding of 2011 capital projects ⁽²⁾	\$(361,269)
Balance at December 31, 2011	\$2,114,456

(1) including ORMLT agreement (\$40,000), tree planting, education and stewardship initiatives

(2) including Nature Conservancy agreement (\$100,000), land securement (\$100,644), and staffing support (\$160,625)

Council approved funding within the 2012 budget, of \$1.35 million , resulting in an available reserve balance of \$3.5 million (\$2.1 + \$1.35 million + interest) to fund Greening Strategy programs and initiatives. Staff are currently scoping a number of active securement initiatives with partners. There are no additional financial implications with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the Greening and Securement Strategies. They are consulted, or involved in, a number of implementation programs and projects including local municipal tree planting programs and land securement initiatives. Local municipal staff are members of the Land Securement Working Group and the Area Municipal Forestry Forum. These forums provide an opportunity for regular communications and engagement.

Through the draft Vision 2051, Planning for Tomorrow, the Regional Official Plan 2010, the Corporate Clean Air Task Force, Natural Heritage Strategic Directions and the State of the Environment Report, residents of York Region have reiterated the importance of the Region's natural heritage, and the Greening Strategy.

7. CONCLUSION

The Greening Strategy continues to demonstrate the Region's leadership and commitment to the natural environment and healthy communities. This proactive, high profile strategy exemplifies the Region's actions in environmental protection, rehabilitation and enhancement. Greening Strategy initiatives help realize the Region's

environmental policies and objectives as articulated in the Regional Official Plan and Vision 2051 (draft).

For more information on this report, please contact Laura McDowell, Director Environmental Promotion and Protection at 905-830-4444 Ext. 5077 or Ian D. Buchanan, Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry Services at Ext. 5204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)

Greening Strategy

INITIATIVES SUMMARY

2011



Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

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Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

Introduction

The need for the Greening Strategy was first identified when the Region was considering adopting a Tree By-law in the early 1990's. The need was further emphasized during the Regional Official Plan Report Card process in 1998, when the public said they "supported our environmental policies but felt we weren't doing enough to implement them." In response, Regional Council adopted the Greening Strategy in 2001. Since adoption, the Greening Strategy has continued to grow with the assistance of new partners and programs. This document contains a summary of some of the 2011 Greening Strategy initiatives and achievements.

1.0 Celebrating Ten Years of Success

2011 marks ten years of in the ground action working towards 25% forest cover in York Region. In that time we have achieved great things through the Regional Greening Strategy and Greenlands Securement Strategy. We have 50 partnerships that have allowed us to leverage funding to plant over 750,000 trees, maintained the Region's forest cover at 22.5 per cent, positively impact more than 21,000 residents and secure nearly 1000 ha of land. To celebrate our success we reached out to our residents and partners to highlight these achievements and obtain feedback on how we are doing and where we might go. We will report back to council in spring 2012 with a full report on what was heard and options for moving forward.

1.1 Research Survey Conducted by Environics

Last fall we commissioned Environics Research Group to conduct a survey of York Region residents to gauge their knowledge of the environment in general, and programs of the five business areas of the Natural Heritage and Forestry Section (including the Greening Strategy). The research consisted of two phases: a telephone survey and focus groups.

"When York Region residents are asked whether they think York Region plays specific roles in protecting the natural environment, of the five roles presented, there is unanimous belief (97 per cent) that the Region plays a role in protecting the environment that we have and an overwhelming majority think it plays a role in planting more trees in non-forested areas. "



Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

Public and Stakeholder Consultation 1.2



Several techniques were used to collect feedback including: 2 public information centres, an on-line survey (accessed through our website and promoted on the York Region Facebook page), a two part all day facilitated partner workshop, internal partner consultation, and presentations to other conservation oriented groups where we received written comments and feedback. In General, people are pleased with what we have done and our delivery mechanism but would like more of the same and better promotion.

Naturalization and Rehabilitation 2.0



The Region is committed to protecting, rehabilitating and creating natural areas through the Greening Strategy. In partnership with a variety of organizations, the Region continues to positively impact the quality of our environment. Naturalization and Rehabilitation initiatives hosted or supported by the Regional Greening Strategy resulted in over 111,000 trees and shrubs being planted on more than 58 sites with over 2,000 volunteers. These projects contribute towards increasing York Region's forest cover, which has a target of 25%. York Region's forest cover is now at 22.5%, so more planting needs to be done. Partners for York Region tree planting projects include: Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, York District School Board, York Catholic School Board, corporate volunteers, and local municipalities.

Adopt-A-Stream Crossing Program (AASCP) 2.1



Rehabilitation of stream crossings at Regional roads has been going on since 2001. Since 2008, the program has received grants from Environment Canada through the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund. Recently, the fund provided \$43,000 in 2010 and 2011 to hire a Project Co-ordinator part time, and students full time, to help ensure effective program delivery.

Key Deliverables: 1,800 trees and shrubs were planted in 2011 at **10 events** with **325 volunteers** from across York Region.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

2.2 Community Group Support of Weir Construction at Dufferin Marsh

The Dufferin Marsh Committee, a strong environmental steward, has partnered with the local municipality to study and restore the 5 hectare wetland complex known as the Dufferin Marsh. Funding for this project was directed to the weir construction and volunteer planting events in 2011.

Key Deliverables: Rehabilitation of **Five hectare** wetland complex.



2.3 York Natural Planting Partnership (YNPP)

This very successful program, delivered in partnership with local Conservation Authorities, provides financial assistance to eligible landowners for private property reforestation. Select opportunities to plant on public lands are also considered through this program.

Key Deliverables: In 2011, more than **59,231 trees and shrubs** were planted by **10 private landowners**.

2.4 Spring Forest Festival Community Tree Plant

As part of the Spring Forest Festival, a total of 475 trees were planted in the Eldred King Woodlands of the Regional Forest by 315 community volunteers.

Key Deliverables: **475 trees** planted on **one site** by **315 volunteers**.



2.5 Planting Trees with York Regional Staff Volunteers

In spring 2011, 50 Environmental Services staff volunteered to plant trees as part of Team Building activities. In total, 500 trees were planted at 100 Garfield Wright facility.

Key Deliverables: More than **500 trees** planted by **50 volunteers**.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

Bulk Seedling Order Program 2.6



In partnership with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and York Environmental Stewardship, residents are provided with an opportunity to buy bulk quantities of trees and shrubs at a reduced cost to naturalize their properties. Participants are responsible for planting the material themselves.

Key Deliverables: More than **4,870 trees and shrubs distributed to 22 Regional landowners.** The cost to deliver this program is covered by participants.

Regional Forest Operational Management Planting 2.7

In 2011, at the Bendor and Graves Forest Tract 31,575 seedlings were planted. Throughout our plantation forest tracts 2,395 seedlings were planted to maximize the diversity in the understory.

Key Deliverables: **33,605 new trees planted** in the York Regional Forest.

Naturalization of Regional Owned Lands 2.8

In 2011, 1,993 trees and shrubs were planted at 100 Garfield Wright Boulevard in East Gwillimbury, Stouffville Pumping Station and Schomberg Sewage Lagoon.

Key Deliverables: Reforestation involving the planting of **1,993 trees and shrubs.**

Corporate Tree Planting 2.9

On May 5, 2011 the Honourable Linda Jeffery, Minister of Natural Resources joined our corporate tree planting challenge event in partnership with Trees Ontario and CAA staff and families bringing 60 volunteers to plant 1,130 trees and shrubs.

Key Deliverables: **150 trees and shrubs** planted by 16 volunteers.



Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

2.10 Greening Support of Local Municipal Tree Planting Initiatives

Local municipalities have fostered very successful working relationships with local environmental stewards. They are very active with their communities in naturalizing the landscape. These local initiatives provide a great opportunity to advance Regional objectives to increase forest cover, provide education and improve the health of the urban forest. Funding is provided to cover the costs of plant material required for these community naturalization initiatives at the request of the local municipality.

Key Deliverables: In 2011, **six local municipal naturalization events** in East Gwillimbury, King and Richmond Hill were supported by the Greening Strategy. This Greening Strategy support resulted in **3,945 trees and shrubs** being planted by **1,146 volunteers**.



2.11 Tall Grass Ontario Prairie Restoration

In preparation for a 14.1 hectare prairie restoration project at the Bendor and Graves Forest Tract funding support was provided to Tall Grass Ontario for the collection and preparation of seed for rehabilitation of the site. Tallgrass prairies and savannas are some of the most endangered ecological communities in Canada, with approximately one per cent of their original extent remaining.

Key Deliverables: Collection and preparation of **57 pounds of grassland seed** and **17,000 oak seeds** for planting in 2012.



Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

Securement of Priority Greenlands 3.0

In addition to securing priority greenlands through education and stewardship, there are many property acquisition tools which are relevant to the Greening and Greenlands Property Securement Strategies. These tools include donations, conservation easements, purchases and management planning to help secure priority greenlands.



OAK RIDGES MORaine
LAND TRUST

Securement Partnership agreements 3.1

Since 2001, York Region has fostered successful conservation partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust. The Nature Conservancy of Canada receives \$100,000 from the Region to focus on local efforts. The agreement with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust provides them with \$40,000 from the Region to assist with the legal, professional and administrative costs of securing property within York Region.

Key Deliverables: In 2011, **five properties** totalling **38 hectares** were secured through partnerships.

Case Woodlot Expansion 3.2

In partnership with the Town of Aurora, York Region contributed \$100,000 from its Greenlands Securement fund to assist the Town in the purchase of a 10 hectare forested property adjacent to the Town owned Case Woodlot.

Key Deliverables: **10 hectare** parcel of land purchased by the Town of Aurora to be managed for wildlife and residents of York Region.



Clarke Forest Tract Expansion 3.3

York Region Forest expanded through the donation of 12.5 hectares adjacent to the Clarke Tract in Stouffville. These lands were acquired through the use of legislative tools for land securement during the development review process.

Key Deliverables: **12.5 hectare** expansion of the Clark forest tract.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

4.0 Community Education and Promotion Campaign

Public awareness of our natural environment is an essential factor in preserving a healthy natural heritage system for future generations. The Region has a number of promotional and educational initiatives underway to raise public awareness of our natural environment and the Region's diverse environmental programs.

4.1 Forest Festivals and Events

Monthly forest festivals and events are hosted in the York Regional Forest. These events help to educate the public about forest ecosystems and to increase awareness of the natural and social heritage of the York Regional Forest.



Key Deliverables: 1,191 residents learned about the York Regional Forest and the Region's environmental initiatives and partnerships by attending forest festivals or events.

4.2 Nature's Classroom

Nature's Classroom is a Regional environmental education program which presents a unique learning opportunity for a variety of groups to experience the natural environment in a forest setting. Since 2001, annual participation in the program has increased and costs to deliver the program have decreased.



Key Deliverables: In 2011, 934 residents were educated about the York Regional Forest and the Region's environmental initiatives by participating in the Nature's Classroom program.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES



Corporate Environmental Education Events 4.3

York Region hosts a number of environmental education events annually, including the York Children's Water Festival celebrations which promote our Greening Strategy. In 2011, 5,000 Grade 4 students attended the Water Festival from across York Region.

Key Deliverables: In 2011, **2,540 students** were educated through the Children's Water Festival celebrations. Greening Strategy funding provided **440 trees and shrubs** for planting at the festival.

Regional Operations 5.0

The Region explores opportunities to improve the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, while providing necessary infrastructure and services to our residents.

Greenlands Trails Concept Study 5.1



The development of a York Region Greenlands Trails System is key to ensuring that the Region builds on its award winning image as a healthy and sustainable place to live and work. The Greenlands Trails System Concept Study recommended that the development and implementation of a Greenlands Trails System take place as a complimentary component of the Region's award-winning Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP). As a result, in 2012, a Terms of Reference will be prepared, in consultation with local municipalities, conservation authorities and trails stakeholders, to move forward with a Greenlands Trails System Strategy.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

6.0 Urban Forest

The urban forest plays a significant role in enhancing the natural environment. Trees provide many environmental benefits such as oxygen production, improved aesthetics, temperature moderation and quality of life enhancement in York Region.

6.1 Backyard Naturalization Program

Programs that encourage landowners to plant trees at subsidized rates contribute to improving the health of our urban forest. In 2007, Natural Heritage and Forestry Services entered into a partnership with LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) to undertake a feasibility study for a private urban landowner tree planting program for York Region. This program has expanded to offer the full service program in Aurora, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan and has continued with the do-it-yourself model in the remaining municipalities. Newly introduced in 2011 were native garden kits which include trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

Key Deliverables: 474 trees and shrubs planted in 131 private yards.

6.2 York Region Urban Forest Study

Urban forests are defined as all treed vegetation in urban settings (street trees, city parks, backyard trees and natural areas). Studies were undertaken to determine the state of the urban forest and its role in providing ecosystem services to communities, especially its positive effect on health care, climate change and urban heat island effect, and energy use. To date Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill participated in the study and it is anticipated that other municipalities will come on board in response to policy of the Official Plan which requires that local municipalities develop an Urban Forest Management Plan.

Key Deliverable: In 2011 studies were finalized and wrapped up into a draft report for York Region.



Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

Green Partnerships 7.0

The Greening Strategy is successfully administered with the assistance of numerous partners from local municipalities, other levels of government, academic agencies and private and public stakeholders.

Strategic Partnerships 7.1



York Region continues to demonstrate leadership through Green Partnerships. These partnerships enable the Region to obtain additional funds, services and support and use the experience of other groups and individuals. Some key partnerships in 2011 included:

- The Nature Conservancy of Canada
- York Environmental Stewardship
- The Conservation Authorities
- LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests)
- The Ministry of Natural Resources
- The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust
- The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
- Trees Ontario
- Environment Canada (through the Clean Up Lake Simcoe Fund and the Natural Areas Conservation Program)
- Maple Leaves Forever
- Tall Grass Ontario
- York District School Board

Providing a Forum for Municipal Interests across the Region 7.2

York Region Natural Heritage and Forestry is a leader in facilitating forums for municipal groups across the Region. In 2011, bi-annual meetings with the municipal forestry/tree representatives and the Land Securement Working Group were held. Two Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) forums for all York Region EACs were held in 2011. All participants surveyed recognize the value in York Regional staff facilitating these meetings to provide greater understanding, improved partnerships and increased productivity across the Region.

Key Deliverable: Facilitation of **three forums** for municipal staff and committee members to increase understanding and productivity.

Greening Strategy INITIATIVES

8.0 Monitoring and Reporting

With the realignment of the Natural Heritage & Forestry Section, Environmental Services will now report annually on the progress and achievements of the Greening Strategy including securement activities. Residents continue to be well informed of York Region's Greening initiatives through presentations, displays and promotional material.

8.1 Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable York Region

Through Vision 2026: Towards a Sustainable York Region, the Region provides an update on the progress of the Greening Strategy as we accommodate new growth, protect our sustainable natural environment, and help ensure healthy communities and economic vitality (the triple bottom line).



Partner	Partnership Details
1 - Nature Conservancy of Canada	Council approved Land Securement Partnership Agreement Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member Partner project delivery (Land Securement, education, management planning etc.)
2 - Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust	Council approved Land Securement Partnership Agreement Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member Partner project delivery (Land Securement, education, management planning etc.)
3 - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Council approved York Natural Planting Partnership (YNPP) Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member Partner project delivery (Land Securement, urban forest studies, naturalization, management planning etc.)
4 - Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority	Council approved York Natural Planting Partnership (YNPP) Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member Partner project delivery (Land Securement, urban forest studies, naturalization, management planning etc.)
5 - LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests)	Backyard Tree Planting Program (BYTP) delivery
6 - Rouge Park	York Region is a member of the Rouge Park Alliance IB Chair – RP Natural Heritage Committee Partner project delivery (naturalization, education, etc.)
7 - Local Municipalities (9)	Community Tree Planting programs Naturalization Program Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member EAC Forum participants
8 - Windfall Ecology Centre	Partner project delivery (Earth Week, Ecology Festival)
9 - US Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division	Partner project delivery (Urban Forest Studies)
10 - Ministry of Natural Resources	Partner project delivery (natural heritage information management and data collection), Ontario Stewardship Rangers program, RFAT member
11 - York Environmental Stewardship	Partner project delivery (Adopt-a-Stream-Crossing program, Bulk Seedling Distribution, Forest Festivals)
12 - Ontario Forestry Association	Partner project delivery (education, reforestation)
13 - Ducks Unlimited	Partner project delivery (wetland protection and creation)
14 - Ontario Streams	Partner project delivery (wetland creation)
15 - Maple Leaves Forever	Subsidized trees
16 - Tree Canada	Provide grants for tree planting
17 - Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation	Provide grant money (Securement, naturalization) Partner project delivery (Conservation priority areas)
18 - Environment Canada	Provide project funding through Lake Simcoe Clean up fund, natural areas conservation program

Partner	Partnership Details
	and the Ecological Gifts program
19 - Trees Ontario	Partner project delivery (reforestation)
20 - Ontario Heritage Trust	Land Securement Working Group (LSWG) member
21 - Oak Ridges Trail Association	York Regional Forest Trail partner RFAT member
22 - York Region District School Board	Adopt a Stream Crossing Program participant Nature's Classroom participant RFAT member
23 - York Catholic School Board	Nature's Classroom participant
24 - Canadian Food Inspection Agency	Partner project delivery (forest pest management, Forest Festivals and Events)
25 - Ontario Nature	Partner project delivery (land Securement, naturalization)
26 - Huronia Loggers Association	RFAT member
27 - Toronto Zoo	Partner project delivery (Nature's Classroom, Festivals and Events)
28 - Scouts Canada	Nature's Classroom participant, Tree planting
29 - Girl Guides of Canada	Nature's Classroom participant
30 - Ontario Trail Riders Association	RFAT member
31 - Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters	RFAT member
32 - Newmarket Community Living	Nature's Classroom participant
33 - Canadian Federation of University Women	Nature's Classroom participant
34 - Bogart Creek Restoration Committee	Partner project delivery (naturalization, AASC)
35 - Nordic Pole Walkers	Nature's Classroom participant
36 - McConaghy Seniors Centre	Nature's Classroom participant
37 - Beta Sigma Phi	Nature's Classroom participant
38 - Chung Chi Alumni	Nature's Classroom participant
39 - Canadian Association for Mental Health	Nature's Classroom participant
40 - Centennial College	Nature's Classroom participant
41 - University of Toronto	Education
42 - Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum	Doors Open
43 - Tall Grass Ontario	Prairie Restoration on Regional Property (Seed Collection and implementation)
44 - Durham Mountain Bike Association	Trail Maintenance events
45 - Private Landowners	Stewardship and naturalization
1 - Planning and Development Services Department	Council recognized partner in Greening Strategy
2 - Environmental Services Department	Partner project delivery (Earth Week, Children's Water Festival, Lagoon Decommissioning etc.)
3 - Community and Health Services Department	Partner project delivery (Earth Week, clean air, pesticide reduction etc.)
4 - Corporate Services	Partner project delivery (Earth Week, Securement IET, communications etc.)
5 - York Regional Police	Take a Walk Event guest (K-9s in Action)