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Apr 9, 2009 - 10:05 EST

## Ontario's First 50 Million Tree Weekend Launched

<< Major tree planting events to take place in Ontario on Mother's Day Weekend >> TORONTO (CNW) - Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources, kicked off the spring tree planting season and announced Ontario's first annual 50 Million Tree Weekend which will feature major community tree planting events during this year's Mother's Day weekend.

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A team of Girl Guides and the minister planted a healthy native white pine at Toronto's waterfront to kick-off Ontario's busy tree planting season.

Over the next six weeks, Trees Ontario is expected to plant approximately two million trees as part of the Ontario government's 50 Million Tree program, which will see 50 million trees planted in southern Ontario by 2020. This is the single largest commitment to the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign aimed at planting one billion trees worldwide each year.

With today's announcement, Mother's Day weekend becomes the focal point of community-based tree planting initiatives for the 50 Million Tree Program.

Last fall and winter, Trees Ontario and its tree planting partners hosted free tree planting workshops across the province.

"I'm overwhelmed by the attendance at those workshops, which helped us secure many tree planting commitments from Ontario landowners," said Cansfield. "The 50 Million Tree Weekend will make it easy for Ontarians to take part and show their enthusiasm for greening the province and helping to fight climate change."

This year's 50 Million Tree Weekend will feature community tree planting events across the province including Guelph, Alliston and Mississauga on May 8 and Whitchurch-Stouffville (near Newmarket) and Kingston on May 9. More details on these and other tree planting events can be found at [www.50milliontreeweekend.com](http://www.50milliontreeweekend.com).

"Now in its second year, the 50 Million Tree Program has already had close to 1.3 million trees planted across Ontario, with another two million to go into the ground in the next six weeks," said Michael Scott, President and CEO, Trees Ontario. "The more people that become involved, the more trees we can plant to meet our commitment to the United Nations and reach our goal for a greener Ontario."

Trees Ontario, working with its partners, is the largest, not-for-profit tree planting partnership in North America. It is committed to the re-greening of Ontario through a range of tree planting activities. Trees Ontario is also partnering with the Ministry of Natural Resources to help deliver the Ontario government's commitment to plant 50 million trees by 2020.

The goal of Trees Ontario is to restore the province's tree planting capacity, especially throughout southern Ontario on private lands, by providing funding and planning support for its tree planting partners. These include local Conservation Authorities, Ontario Stewardship Councils, municipal governments and community volunteer groups.

This spring, with its partners, Trees Ontario will plant close to 3 million trees. Visit the Trees Ontario website at [www.treesontario.ca](http://www.treesontario.ca).

50 Million Tree Program In August 2007, the Ontario government introduced a

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program to fund the planting of 50 million trees across the province by 2020, as part of its commitment to help fight climate change and green the province.

The 50 Million Tree Program is Ontario's commitment to the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign. The program is also the most ambitious program of its kind in North America and the largest goal of any jurisdiction, anywhere.

All kinds of good can come from setting this goal: like offsetting carbon; diversifying Ontario's landscape; moderating local climates by providing shade, moderating temperature extremes and reducing the effects of storms; creating more habitats for wildlife; improving soil and water conservation; and boosting local economic opportunities - to name just a few.

The 50 Million Tree Program can significantly cut landowners' costs of large-scale tree planting and boost the number of trees planted.

Working with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and its tree-planting partners, Trees Ontario will plant two million trees over the next year as part of this program.

<< Planting Locations for Ontario's First 50 Million Tree Weekend - May 8 & 9, 2009  
To sign up or for more information and maps, go to [www.50millionweekend.com](http://www.50millionweekend.com).

----- Participants Date and  
Time Event Location Partner to include: -----  
----- May 8 GUELPH/ERAMOSA: Grand River Local school group 10 a.m.-  
2 p.m. Guelph Rotary Forest Conservation from GRCA Nature Guelph Lake Authority  
Centre and public Conservation Area 7743 Conservation Dr., RR 4 -----  
----- May 8 NEAR ALLISTON: South Simcoe  
Local high school 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tosorontio Concession Streams group from St.

Road 3 (North of Network Thomas Aquinas 5th sideroad) Catholic Secondary Adjala-  
Tosorontio School and public -----  
----- May 8 MISSISSAUGA: Credit Valley CVC's Conservation 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Riverrun  
Park, Pine Conservation Youth Corps and Cliff Drive (Northwest public of Creditview/  
Britannia) -----

----- May 9 WHITCHURCH-  
STOUFFVILLE: York Region Minister 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Near Newmarket Cansfield, York  
Regional Forest community members, Graves and Bendor families and York Tract,  
Davis Drive Region staff (Between Kennedy and McCowan) -----

----- May 9 KINGSTON: Catarqui Friends of Lemoine  
9 a.m.- Lemoine Point Region Point 11:30 a.m. Conservation Area, Conservation  
volunteers and 1990 Front Road Authority public -----

>> -0- 04/09/2009 /For further information: Paul Tyler,  
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