



Forest Property Tax Reduction Workshops a Success

Strong turnout for workshops, which continue across Ontario until mid-November

(August 16, 2006) - Local residents of Bancroft, Haliburton and Bracebridge have recently gathered to learn how to reduce property taxes on their forested land by up to 75 per cent through Ontario's Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).

The Ontario Forestry Association, with the support of the Trees Ontario Foundation, hosted the workshops, which are being held across the province and continue until mid-November.

Attendance in Bancroft was 42, in Haliburton it was 21, and in Bracebridge it was 98. "We are very pleased that the message is getting out and that local landowners are showing such enthusiasm about the Program and woodlot management," said Rob Keen, Program Manager for the Trees Ontario Foundation and one of the professional foresters leading the workshops.

MFTIP is a voluntary program that provides significant property tax reductions for landowners who satisfy certain basic criteria, including having over 10 acres of forested land and a willingness to prepare and follow a forest management plan. Upon acceptance into the program, the forested portion of the property is re-assessed as managed forest and taxed at one-quarter of the residential tax rate in the following year.

Recent amendments by the McGuinty government in how privately held forested land is assessed has created renewed interest in the Program. These enhanced changes work toward fulfilling the MFTIP's goal of bringing greater fairness to the property tax system by valuing forested land according to its current use, while increasing landowner awareness about the importance of forest stewardship. The changes were announced last year as part of the Natural Spaces Program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. "We commend the government for implementing the recent changes to MFTIP. It shows real commitment in promoting good forest stewardship of private land forests," said Keen.

The workshops outline how landowners can apply for MFTIP, set objectives for their property, prepare a forest stewardship plan and identify local resources to assist them in achieving their management goals. Those who attend come away with the knowledge and tools to properly manage their forest, whether for recreation, conservation, wildlife or forest products.

Keen emphasized that the workshops are an important opportunity for landowners to save money and to learn how to protect and ensure the long-term health of their forests. "The Program represents a simple way to reduce your annual property tax, and helps ensure the proper stewardship of Ontario's forests," he said.

Information about the Program and other workshop dates and locations is available at www.oforest.on.ca or by calling the Ontario Forestry Association at 1-800-387-0790.

The next workshop will be held **Monday, September 25**, in **Owen Sound**, at the **Royal Canadian Legion, 1456 2nd Avenue West**.

For more information contact:

Rob Keen

Program Manager, Trees Ontario Foundation

416.493.4565 or toll free, 1.800.387.0790 or email info@oforest.on.ca

The Ontario Forestry Association is a non-profit, registered charity dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of Ontario's forests, and to developing stewardship of forest ecosystems. Visit www.oforest.on.ca.

The Trees Ontario Foundation (TOF) is a non-profit foundation established in 1994 as an independent arm of the Ontario Forestry Association. TOF promotes and supports tree planting initiatives in Ontario Visit www.treesontarioon.ca.