

**THE GREEN LEGACY
PROGRAMME**

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

**COUNTY OF WELLINGTON
NOVEMBER, 2008**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wellington County's Green Legacy Programme has operated for five years and has had a high degree of success and public acceptance. Given the growth in the programme, the capital facilities that have been put in place to produce trees and the need to formalize the operation in the County structure, the time has come to set out a broad framework for the future. Clear principles underlying the programme need to be established and a reporting structure put in place. Future directions need to be anticipated and planned in advance to ensure continued success. The following strategy outlines an approach to dealing with these matters. Please note that detailed financial plans will be developed once strategic directions have been determined by Planning Committee.

2. THE GREEN LEGACY MISSION

“The mission of the Green Legacy Programme is to change our community’s view towards the value of trees and the environment. Through education and involvement in the Green Legacy, the people of Wellington will increase forest cover to a healthy level, creating a green infrastructure, which will ensure ongoing environmental benefits and help adapt to climate change.”

Some of the key objectives are:

- a) Educating the public about the value of trees and the natural environment.
- b) Actively involving the public in a community forest process - the gathering of seed, growing nursery stock, and planting and caring for young trees.
- c) Providing an ongoing supply of young trees to meet demand.

Aldo Leopold developed the concept of a “land ethic” in his Sand County Almanac published in 1949, just three years after Mr. Little's donation to the County. In simple terms, a land ethic recognizes that we rely on the environment to support us and that we have a responsibility to take care of it. A goal of the Green Legacy Program is to nurture a land ethic through broad participation by landowners, our youth and community organizations.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a. To educate and engage the Wellington community in the growing and planting of trees.
- b. To place a special focus on involving Wellington County schools, so that students learn the value of trees and the environment, by providing practical experience in the growing, planting and caring of trees.
- c. To empower local organizations to take on tree planting projects through the provision of information, partners and a source of Green Legacy trees.
- d. To assist and partner with local municipalities of Wellington County to engage the public and to carry out tree planting projects.
- e. To efficiently operate a community tree nursery, with an emphasis on creating volunteer and educational opportunities for schools, organizations and the general public.
- f. To provide a ready supply of Green Legacy trees from a nursery that is certified by the Forest Gene Conservation Association.
- g. To give schools and local organizations the first opportunity to receive Green Legacy trees. If there is a sufficient tree supply, to make them available to private landowners at a subsidized cost, or no cost.
- h. To develop new initiatives which encourage trees in the right places on the landscape (e.g. wind breaks, shelter belts, living snow fences, watercourse buffers, linking existing forests).
- i. To build partnerships with private nurseries, organizations and other levels of government in carrying out the Green Legacy mission.
- j. To build capacity to meet demand for trees and for volunteer and educational opportunities.
- k. To extend the "Green Legacy" banner to other County programmes and projects where appropriate (e.g. Rural Water Quality Program, Green Legacy Energy Task Force), acknowledging that they have their own guiding principles.

4. BACKGROUND

a) The Recent Past

The Green Legacy Programme began in 2004 as a “one time” celebration of the County of Wellington’s 150th anniversary. During that year the County purchased and distributed 150,000 trees to local municipalities, schools, community organizations and individual residents. The programme was a resounding success.

In 2005, Wellington County Council endorsed the continuation of the programme and expanded it to include growing our own trees in a nursery to be constructed at the Little Tract County Forest. This 200 acre property was donated to the County by John Little with the understanding that it would be reforested and managed as a "perpetual forest". In making the gift, Mr. Little asked specifically that the property become a game reserve and a tree nursery for reforestation (Guelph Mercury, April 12, 1946). It is the most environmentally significant of all our County Forests and is used extensively by the public.

The official ground breaking for the nursery took place in December 2005. Four greenhouses and a shade cloth area with 21,204 square feet of growing space were in place by spring 2006. The first tree crop was planted and produced 42,000 trees for the 2007 season.

In 2007 Wellington County Council approved plans for a storage cooler for trees and seeds, and the renovations of the existing house on the Little Tract site for office use. The storage cooler is designed to keep trees and seeds dormant before planting to ensure a high survival rate. It is 1,950 square feet and is underground except for one short wall for access. The building takes advantage of the natural cooling capacity of the ground and is Wellington County’s first “green building”. The renovated house makes use of the original Little Tract home which was constructed around 1867. The building is considered to have heritage values by the Puslinch Heritage Committee. Construction on both projects was completed in November 2007.

b) The Present

In 2008 the nursery is growing approximately 155,000 trees for the 2009 planting season. This will make the Green Legacy Programme self sustaining for tree production based on current tree planting targets. The volunteer component of the Programme has increased significantly over the last two years. In 2008 it is estimated that over 1,000 different volunteers have lodged over 3,500 hours in volunteer time.

c) The Near Future

Each year the total number of trees to be provided by the program is increased by 1,000 trees. In the spring of 2009, 155,000 trees are to be distributed. In total we will surpass one million trees in year 2010. Nursery staff is examining ways to increase the production of young nursery stock.

Two special projects are being supported by the County: Trees for Mapleton and Living Snow Fences (see Section 6). These represent a significant commitment for the Green Legacy Programme in terms of tree supply and administration.

Larger caliper trees are now being grown to be used for "living snow fences" along roadsides, in parks, for wind breaks and shelter belts and for special purposes. Our plan is to eventually produce 1,000 larger caliper trees each year. As it will take up to five years for the trees to reach this size, we anticipate they will start to come on stream in the year 2012 or 2013.

We are also working towards certifying the nursery with the Forest Gene Conservation Association. This means all stock coming out of the nursery will be certified; all trees will be traceable to the year and location that the seed was collected.

Volunteerism and education are increasingly important components of the Green Legacy. The involvement of students from the two school boards is rising dramatically and new ways to engage the public will expand.

5. **ONGOING GREEN LEGACY COMPONENTS**

a) County Spring Tree Distribution

To date 760,000 trees have been distributed over five years. Trees orders are taken from early fall throughout the winter. Larger orders are packaged at the nursery and picked up by clients. Initially, smaller orders were taken to County garages for distribution. Now, this occurs at local municipal trees days, usually the last Saturday in April and the first Saturday in May.

It should be noted that a great synergy has evolved between the Green Legacy Nursery and the Grand River Conservation Authority tree planting programs. The authority has been able to provide technical advice as well as access to program funds to assist with tree planting on private lands. In 2008 the GRCA helped landowners plant 76,306 trees in Wellington, 30,000 of which came from the Green Legacy Nursery. Similar services are being offered by the Credit Valley Conservation.

b) Local Municipal Tree Days

Since 2004 the Township of Puslinch has had a citizen's tree day on one of the above Saturday mornings. The event is advertised and people are asked to bring items for the local Food Bank in return for free trees. This approach was broadened to all of the local municipalities in the spring of 2007. The events were very successful, with all of the trees being given out in short order. The event provides a good opportunity for local politicians and staff to interact with the public. In 2008, the County's small orders were incorporated into the local municipal days.

c) School Program

Our school program has three components:

- Growing trees from seeds in the classroom
- Classes planting trees on private land
- Classes visiting the nursery to volunteer and go on an interpretive nature hike

County staff go to schools to introduce the Green Legacy Programme and help the students plant several thousand trees to be grown in the classroom and eventually transferred to the nursery. The County arranges planting partnerships between schools and private landowners. In the last few years, there have been about fifteen projects planting a total of 10,000 to 15,000 trees each year. Students are also encouraged to volunteer at the nursery. Since its inception the Green Legacy has paid for all busing required for students. There may be some potential for partnerships with bus companies and the corporate sector to sponsor busing.

d) Spring and Fall Tree Planting Workshops

The Wellington County Stewardship Council (WCSC) hosts technical tree planting workshops twice a year, with the assistance of the GRCA and County staff. The fall workshop focuses on site preparation and species selection. The spring workshop focuses on care of seedlings, tree planting and post-planting care. Over the last five years, 315 individuals have attended a total of 9 workshops.

e) Warden's Planting

For the last three years we have had Warden's plantings. Three years ago, 2,800 trees were planted at Wellington Terrace. Two years ago, 3,200 trees were planted at Guelph Lake. Last year another 3,000 trees were planted in Mapleton on a private farm, featuring a living snow fence, windbreaks and an area planting. Given its high visibility on a County road,

an information sign was erected. About 100 staff members, family and friends have been involved in each of these events.

f) Green Legacy Promotion

The County has developed a Green Legacy display panel. In the last few years, the display has appeared at Good Roads / ROMA, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Drayton Farm Show, several fall fairs, and other suitable events. The purpose of the promotion has been to educate local residents about the programme as well as to encourage other jurisdictions to adopt a similar tree planting programme. We continue to target appropriate venues to exhibit our panel.

Several Green Legacy articles have appeared in the Wellington Advertiser, including information on the County Page. Municipal World carried an article on the Green Legacy. Lambton Council has requested a presentation from us. Dufferin and Grey Counties have expressed an interest in our programme and want further details.

g) Community Involvement / Volunteerism

Community Involvement at the nursery, starting seeds in schools and planting trees has been on the rise. It is a significant part of the Green Legacy Programme. It provides an important source of labour for our tree production. More importantly it spreads the Green Legacy message, educates our youth and engages the community.

During 2008, over 1,000 volunteers contributed over 3,500 hours of labour at the tree nursery. Much of this activity occurs on weekends to allow people to participate at a convenient time. The level of community involvement is really quite extraordinary.

<u>VOLUNTEERS IN 2007 & 2008</u>		
<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>VOLUNTEERS</u>
500	1,000	Volunteer Numbers
1,500	3,500	Volunteer Hours
1,000	1,200	Students Planting on Private Land
1,000	1,000	Students Growing Trees in Class
100	100	Employees Warden's Tree Planting

h) Partnerships

Since the Green Legacy's inception, the Grand River Conservation Authority, Wellington County Stewardship Council and the Ministry of Natural Resources have been dedicated partners. The County's local municipalities are active both on our working committee and as hosts of local tree distribution days. Schools and local community organizations are special partners, helping to spread the word and get trees planted. New partnerships have been formed with other conservation authorities and various other groups across the County. Some are for special projects like Trees for Mapleton (e.g. Wellington Soil and Crop, Drayton Kinsmen, Trees Ontario, Eden Mills Carbon Neutral). Some are individuals, institutions or corporations volunteering at our nursery or planting trees (e.g. Canada World Youth, Vanier Centre, RWDI). We continue to seek new partners on an ongoing basis. For the Green Legacy to endure, it must be part of the community's consciousness.

6. **RECENT GREEN LEGACY INITIATIVES**

a) Trees for Mapleton

The Wellington County Stewardship Council initiated this project. The Stewardship Council and several other partners are working on an exciting project that would see the extensive planting of wind breaks, shelter belts, watercourse buffers and woodlot linkages across Mapleton Township. Mapleton has the lowest tree cover in the County, at about 9%, with some areas as low as 4%. The driving force is to help farmers increase crop yields and adapt to climate change.

A collaborative partnership has been formed among the County's Green Legacy Programme, Mapleton Township, Mapleton Kinsmen, Grand River Conservation Authority, Wellington County Stewardship Council and Wellington Soil and Crop Improvement Association. The aim is to have trees and their planting provided free of charge to local landowners and include an incentive payment. Farmers may also be encouraged by increasing evidence that properly maintained wind breaks can improve crop yields significantly.

The County will provide Green Legacy trees and some funding through the Rural Water Quality Program. Trees Ontario is providing funding to help pay for tree planting. The Trillium Foundation is providing \$250,000 for an extension person to work with landowners and organize the tree planting. This person started in summer 2008.

b) Living Snow Fences

The Green Legacy Programme is working with the County Engineering Services Department on using trees for living snow fences. Considerable use is made of trees in the mid-western United States. We have all seen the effect of the tree wind break at the University of Guelph Experimental Farm on Wellington Road 7 south of Elora. There is evidence of significant cost savings in winter road maintenance, increased road safety as well as the environmental benefits of trees.

Staff recently prepared a report outlining the financial aspects of living snow fences. County Council has approved the project. The trees will generally be provided by the Green Legacy Nursery and are planted at no charge to the landowner. Incentive payments will be made to encourage long term maintenance of the living snow fence. Living snow fences have already gone up in the following locations:

- Wellington Road No. 41 (Watson Rd.) Puslinch - 1.2 kilometres
- Wellington Road No. 8, Mapleton - 800 metres
- Wellington Road No. 123 Palmerston - 1 kilometre
- Wellington Road No. 109 Well. North - 1 kilometre
- More planned

c) Municipal Ornamental Plantings

The Little Tract Nursery is producing some larger stock trees, suitable for roadside plantings, urban tree replacement and park plantings by local municipalities as well as by the County itself. Almost 7,000 larger potted trees were given out in 2008.

d) Rural Water Quality Programme

Since 1999 the County together with the City of Guelph has funded a Rural Water Quality Programme, supporting environmental initiatives in the farm community. Over \$2.8 million has been provided to fund 930 projects over this period. Of this, 179 projects have been riparian plantings and windbreaks. Approximately 350 acres of marginal farm lands have been retired and reforested. Most of the other projects involve farm related improvements that prevent nutrients from reaching water sources.

The County will link the Rural Water Quality Programme under the Green Legacy banner to improve the profile of the Rural Water Quality initiative and to enhance the Green Legacy effort. Both initiatives are designed to improve the County's environment and increase public education about environmentally appropriate practices. The programmes would likely continue to be delivered in the same manner as today, as per their individual guiding principles.

e) School Recognition Program

We are looking at a School Recognition Program to:

- To recognize the contribution of school partners
- To encourage schools to increase their commitment level over time
- To help schools track their overall contribution over time
- To increase public awareness of the Green Legacy

Consideration is being given to framed certificates – Emerald, Gold, Silver, Bronze. Decals could be added for every 5,000 trees. A Green Legacy flag could also be awarded to schools.

f) Vanier Centre for Women (Correctional Services)

The Vanier Centre for Women started visits to the nursery in summer 2008. They are currently coming to the nursery twice a week and have lodged over 350 volunteer hours to date. They do not attend on any days when students are present. Vanier is interested in increasing their participation and considering building their own tree nursery which could be associated with the Green Legacy.

7. EMERGING ISSUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Like any new programme, the Green Legacy has had its growing pains. Most of the issues are positive ones in the sense that they result from substantial interest and involvement in the programme.

a) Reporting Structure

The Green Legacy was initiated in 2004 with a committee composed of county staff and members of outside organizations with an interest in trees. The enthusiasm of this committee has resulted in the early and ongoing success of the programme.

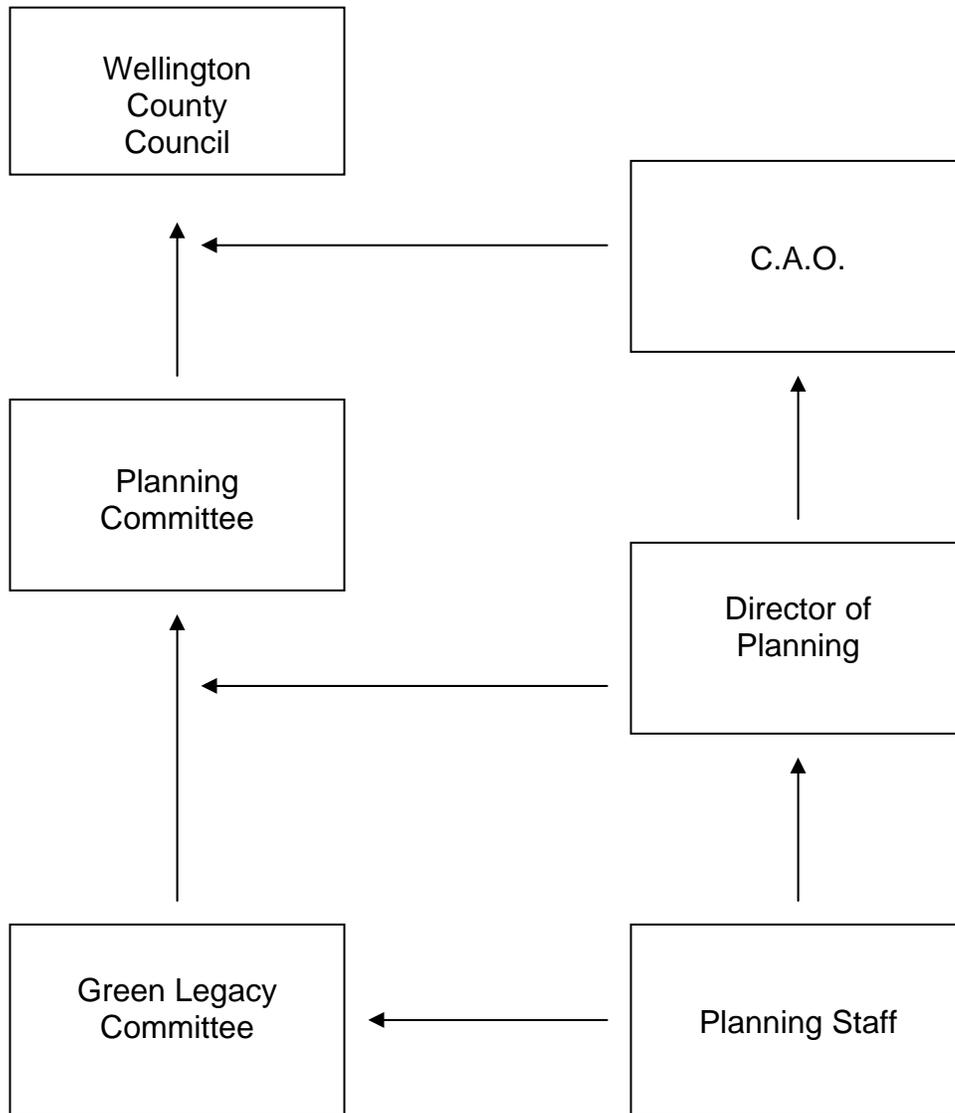
With the commitment to continue the programme and to add the tree nursery, it became necessary to integrate the programme into the County structure. The County's Planning Committee was assigned responsibility and reports to Council as needed. The roles and responsibilities of Council, Planning Committee, the Green Legacy Committee and County staff are set out below:

Green Legacy Relations - Council, Committees, Staff:

County Council:	Final responsibility for all operational, budgetary, and public engagement activities of the Green Legacy Programme.
Planning Committee:	Responsible for recommending to County Council the budget, staffing, direction and major operating procedures for the Green Legacy Programme.
Green Legacy Committee:	The working committee and was established by the CAO and Warden. It now reports to Planning Committee. Members come from County departments, local municipalities, agencies and organizations (see Appendix B). Responsible for providing technical advice to the Planning Committee and County staff related to the production, distribution and planting of trees, the day to day operations of the nursery and the public education and involvement efforts. Day to day operation of the programme and development of new initiatives. Chaired by a member of Planning Staff. Meeting minutes go to Planning Committee.
County Staff:	Normal County staff reporting relationships and responsibilities exist with Planning staff reporting to the Planning Director who reports to the C.A.O. Staff are to ensure the proper management of the programme consistent with directions established by County Council.

The reporting structure among for County Council, the Green Legacy Committee and the Planning Committee and staff is set out below. The County CAO and the Director of Planning are to coordinate with other Department Heads as needed.

Reporting Structure:



b) Tree Nursery Capacity

The tree nursery was established to support the County's desire to have 150,000 trees planted plus an additional 1,000 every year after 2004. By 2009 the nursery should be producing the required number of trees.

GREEN LEGACY TREE NURSERY PRODUCTION PAST AND NEAR FUTURE ANTICIPATED		
YEAR	NURSERY STOCK	POTTED TREES
2007	42,000	5,000
2008	90,000	8,000
2009	155,000	7,500

Based on the success of the programme, the demand for trees by public agencies, community organizations, schools and the public could exceed 155,000 trees. With new federal and provincial initiatives to encourage trees to combat climate change, demand for trees in Ontario is expected to outstrip supply for the next few years.

The County has had an annual objective of distributing 1,000 trees for every year the County has been in existence. The Committee needs to consider whether it wishes to continue this annual objective, or if it wishes to look for means of increasing production to meet demand.

Suggested Action:

- The County should initially focus its efforts on attaining the objective of producing 155,000 trees for the 2009 planting season.
- The County should monitor demand over the coming year.
- Provided costs are reasonable and expansion feasible, the County should expand capacity to meet public demand
- The Green Legacy Committee and County staff should further develop contingencies to produce additional nursery capacity for consideration by Planning Committee and Council.

c) Distribution Priorities

With the success of the Green Legacy and a finite capacity to grow trees, we need to set priorities on tree distribution should demand exceed supply.

Demand from the conservation authorities already outstrips supply. Current partnerships are mainly with the Grand and the Credit. While the Halton and Hamilton only occupy a small area in the south, the Saugeen and Maitland occupy much of the northern portion of the County. There is potential for authority demands to increase. One of the benefits of having the authorities involved with planting is the likelihood that survival rates will increase.

The Trees for Mapleton Project has the goal of planting large numbers of trees in strategic locations. These trees will mainly come from the Green Legacy Programme and their planting will be managed by GRCA. In the year 2009 and 2010, 45,000 trees are tentatively allocated for this project. The Credit Valley Conservation has a similar approach in its portion of Erin called "WeCARE", planting trees at a landowner cost of 10 to 15 cents each.

The following Table illustrates the 2008 distribution breakdown, along with anticipated future tree commitments for small nursery stock.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE TREE COMMITMENTS For Small Nursery Stock			
	2008 <u>Actual</u>	2009 <u>Anticipated</u>	2010 <u>Anticipated</u>
Local Municipalities	41,881	35,000	35,000
Grand R.Cons. Auth.	5,000	20,000*	20,000*
Credit V. Cons. Auth.	30,000	20,000	20,000
Halton V. Cons. Auth.	5,000	4,000	4,000
Other Cons. Auth.	0	3,000	4,000
Trees for Mapleton	25,000	25,000*	25,000*
Community Organizations	14,604	15,000	15,000
Schools	15,070	15,000	15,000
Private Owners	14,445	15,000	15,000
Warden's Planting	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>
TOTAL	154,000	155,000	156,000

* It is anticipated that all of the trees the GRCA receives will be going into the Trees for Mapleton project, for a project total of 45,000 trees per year.

Most of the partners will need about the same number of trees in the future as in 2008. However, the demand for Trees for Mapleton could well increase to 50,000 trees per year. Please note that the table does not include larger potted stock distribution, which goes mainly to local municipalities and for wind breaks

There is potential for tree demand to exceed the County's current production target increases of 1,000 trees per year. If this occurs, priorities for distribution need to be established based on the guiding principles set out for the programme.

Suggested Action:

The Green Legacy Committee and County staff should establish priorities for trees among various user groups. We are recommending consideration of the following order of decreasing priority:

- Wellington County and Local Municipal Projects
- Schools and school children
- Community groups (e.g. 4H, Naturalists, Kinsmen, Scouts)
- Private owners planting themselves
- Special targeted plantings (e.g. Trees for Mapleton)
- Conservation authorities not involved in any of above
- Other

There is often a variety of partnerships among the above groups in tree planting projects.

d) Subsidized Trees

When the Green Legacy Programme began trees were provided to community groups and schools at no cost and to individual landowners at a subsidized cost, roughly 25% of market price. The charge was to ensure that people obtaining trees placed some value on them.

As the programme has evolved the number of people qualifying for free trees has increased substantially. The 35,000 trees for municipal tree days are given free of charge to landowners; however, a donation to the local food bank or other charity is encouraged. In 2008, 65,000 trees were provided to Conservation Authorities, who in turn planted them without charge on private properties by accessing federal or provincial grants for tree planting.

The only people paying for trees now are those private landowners not ordering through a school, organization, local municipality or conservation authority. In 2008, the Green Legacy Programme only invoiced \$5,000 for about 20,000 small trees. That means the remaining 134,000 trees were received for no charge.

We question if there is any point in continuing to charge for seedlings:

- The revenues are low
- It adds considerable administration - invoicing and collection
- There is the likely probability that if donations were encouraged instead, revenues might exceed \$5,000.
- More importantly, there is an equity issue. While someone getting 400 trees has to drive to the nursery, pay for the trees, take them home and plant them, someone else can have the Conservation Authority do all this for free.

Suggestion:

Replace the current 25 % of cost with a request for donation to the Green Legacy Programme.

e) Green Legacy Nursery Staffing

As our programme grows more trees and involves more people, it will be necessary to ensure that staff resources are sufficient to ensure the programme is delivered efficiently. Given the degree of interaction with the community, it is very important that staff have the time and resources to deliver a high quality product in which the County can continue to take pride.

f) Tree Planting Survival Rates

There has been discussion about the need to evaluate tree planting survival rates. Are the trees we are growing, distributing and planting ... surviving?

We would recommend the following approach:

- Request that conservation authorities estimate survivorship for Green Legacy trees that they have received (65,000 in 2008). We would assume that trees would have a relatively high success rate.
- Most school plantings were overseen by County staff. Staff should revisit some of the sites over the last five years and evaluate.
- Staff review of Warden's planting sites.
- Staff review of random sample of trees going to private owners. Our data base has a list of owners, addresses, phone numbers and trees received.
- It is difficult to get at success rates for municipal tree distribution days as the recipients are anonymous.

APPENDIX A

GREEN LEGACY NURSERY PRODUCTION DESCRIPTION

One greenhouse is designated to first year softwood seedlings and can hold 200,000 first year seedlings. These trees are grown in 160 cavity styroblocks and their plugs are 90ml. They are then transplanted to 45 cavity styroblocks and grown for an additional year. These second year softwoods are grown in two greenhouses totaling just over 100,000 trees. Some second year softwoods will be grown in between greenhouse 1 and 2, and 2 and 3. This also depends on hardwood seed production. In years that hardwood trees produce large amounts of seed these alleyways will comprise of hardwood trees as well.

Softwood seeds are sown in the spring starting in March. They grow for the year in the 90ml plug (160 cavity trays). Transplanting then starts in early fall continuing through the winter into the spring. Softwood seed is currently purchased from the provincial seed plant in Angus, the seed that is selected is seed zone specific to the County.

Hardwood trees are grown in one greenhouse and in between greenhouses on heavy seeding years. Approximately 50,000 to 70,000 hardwood seedlings are grown per year. These seeds are sown in the spring and only need one year to get to seedling size. Hardwood tree seed is collected throughout the County by staff and volunteer seed collectors. Currently we have five seed collectors that are certified by the Forest Gene Conservation Association.

Trees are packaged starting in December throughout the winter and stored in the cooler. They are also put into the specific orders in the cooler and stored here until the orders go out in the spring. Orders are available for pickup in the last week of April and the first two weeks of May.

Some of the seedling trees are reserved to grow to larger sizes. These trees are transplanted to one gallon pots in late spring. Some one gallon pots are kept back and get potted up in the next appropriate size pot. The potting arrangement is one gallon to three gallon to seven gallon to fifteen gallon to twenty-five gallon. Some slower species or stunted trees may need additional sizes in between to maximize size and growth and to minimize area needed to grow.

APPENDIX B

GREEN LEGACY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Wellington County

Gary Cousins

Brad Hutchinson

Rob Johnson

Sheila Pease

Andrea Ravensdale

Linda Redmond

Walter Trachsel

Mark Van Patter (Chair)

Brad Whitcombe

Scott Wilson

Grand River Conservation Authority

Randy Machan (retired)

Tracy Ryan

Nathan Munn

Wellington County Stewardship Council

Larry Halyk

Ministry of Natural Resources

Terry Schwan

Local Council Representatives

Dave Anderson (Minto)

John Brennan (Erin)

John Scott (Guelph / Eramosa)

Walt Visser (Centre Wellington)

Citizen Representatives

Paul Day (Trees for Mapleton)

Libby Little (Eden Mills Carbon Neutral)

