



A growing partnership

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By Tim Miller, The Intelligencer



1st Stirling Cub members Tristan Himberg-Larsen (far left) and Michael Beinschroth are joined by Linnea Himberg-Larsen around one of the trees the group helped plant at the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area on Saturday October 21, 2017 in Trenton, Ont. Close to 50 volunteers planted 370 trees and shrubs as well as 240 wildflowers throughout the morning. Tim Miller/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network

QUINTE WEST - The Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area is getting a whole lot greener.

On Saturday members of the Lower Trent Conservation and the Rotary Club of Trenton were joined by volunteers through the Highway of Heroes Living Tribute for the 'Greening the Greenbelt' Shoreline Habitat Project to plant 370 trees as well as 240 wildflowers along the shoreline of the Trent River.

The funds for the project were provided to Lower Trent Conservation in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Trenton from a provincial grant under the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund.

The amount received for the shoreline habitat enhancement was \$17,053.

Close to 50 volunteers pulled on their gardening gloves and broke out the shovels and spent the morning putting down roots.

“This location is a really tough location,” said Marilyn Bucholtz, communications and outreach coordinator with Lower Trent Conservation. “The soil is really compacted.”

Lower Trent has partnered up with Highway of Heroes Living Tribute and, through them, have been working with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre for soil testing and remediation work.

It’s work Scott Bryk, Highway of Heroes Living Tribute executive director, is more than familiar with.

The Highway of Heroes Living Tribute goal is to plant 117,000 trees — one for every one of Canada’s war dead since confederation — along the highway from CFB Trenton to the coroner’s office in Toronto.

“The most significant challenge is that the soil next to the highway is no longer a native environment, because the highway and adjacent to the highway has all been engineered by building the 401,” explained Bryk.

Soil along Highway 401 is compacted to the point tree roots can only go down a short ways before being forced to grow parallel to the surface.

“That means when it’s a dry summer they dry out and they die from lack of water, because water can’t penetrate the soil because it’s all compacted,” said Bryk. “Trees can’t grow on concrete.”

A second factor is a lack of organic matter in the soil which is necessary for plants to grow properly.

Bryk said Vineland has developed new techniques and protocols on how to remediate and restore the soil next to highways so that trees can survive.

“This particular site is a great example of where the Highway of Heroes can partner with community groups like the Rotary Club of Trenton, the local conservation authority and volunteers from the community to do, here in the community, the exact same remediation and protocols and process that we use along the highway.”

While the trees planted Saturday won’t count towards the group’s 117,000 goal (as the area isn’t directly beside the 401) they will eventually count towards its Phase 2

project — which is the ambitious goal of planting two million trees in communities across Canada to represent every Canadian that has ever served in times of war.

Bucholtz stressed how important projects like Greening the Greenbelt are for waterways like the Trent River and the Bay of Quinte.

“There’s a lot of work that needs to be done in the Greenbelt and our ecologist will start to look at what more we can do,” said Bucholtz.

“There’s obviously some monitoring and maintenance we’ll have to do at these sites to help them along. But we’re hoping this will be the start of a larger natural area in the heart of Trenton where there isn’t a lot of natural spaces.”

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