

7 Actions woodlot owners *can take for* climate change

According to the Muskoka Watershed Council report "**Planning for Climate Change in Muskoka**", Muskoka's climate at mid-century is likely going to be warmer and slightly wetter than at present, and that precipitation may

come in fewer but more pronounced storm events. These changes will impact our forests.

The following 7 actions will strengthen our forests to better deal with the coming changes.

1 Keep the forest you have and enhance it

MAINTAIN existing forests on the landscape and identify opportunities to increase forest cover. Take advantage of opportunities to restore and/or enhance connectivity between natural areas to allow trees and wildlife to migrate more easily as future conditions change.

2 Practice sustainable forestry

PRACTICE sustainable forest management to maximize forest health and the carbon storage potential of your woodlot. Always use a Registered Professional Forester and Certified Ontario Tree Marker when harvesting to ensure sound stewardship of forest resources.

3 Plant diverse tree species

PLAN for the regeneration and establishment of a diversity of native species before harvest activities by considering both current climate conditions and projected changes over the next 50 to 100 years. Monitor post-harvest growth and be prepared to adjust the cutting cycle according to how the stand responds rather than to a pre-set time interval.

4

Improve forest health

REMOVE unhealthy trees regularly and reduce overcrowding in your woodlot. Diversify age and structure through stand improvement, thinning, harvesting, and planting. Consider stand edges – keeping out drying winds, conserving snow cover for spring moisture, and reducing the vulnerability of interior stems to wind throw. These actions will increase stand resilience and maintain the health of the remaining trees.

5

Consider new species

CONSIDER adjusting species composition to match current and future site conditions. Establish and maintain more drought resistant species (e.g. oaks, hickories, and pines) when planting or harvesting in areas prone to drought. Additionally, species currently found at the southern edge of their range may persist better in cooler and moister microhabitats, for example on north-facing slopes or near water.

6

Manage pests and disease

UNDERSTAND which insects, diseases and invasive species might be expected in your woodlot and be on the lookout for them with regular monitoring to enable early intervention and easier management. Monitor deer populations and take steps to control browsing pressure if regeneration is inhibited by high populations.

7

Stay informed and exercise your civil responsibility

STAY informed and attuned to developments in science and research and incentive programs that may affect you and your woodlot. Exercise your civil responsibility and vote!

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