# Together We Grow

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024







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#### **About Tree Canada**

Every year, Tree Canada strives to be better, do better and grow more. We want to grow alongside the trees we've planted – and will continue to plant – for years to come. We can always do more to better ourselves, our communities, our partnerships and our forests, and we take that work seriously. Last year was no exception: we accomplished so much through our entire team's determination to achieve the organization's strategic goals.

Since 1992, Tree Canada has worked relentlessly to grow Canada's tree canopy through our greening programs, research, and engagement efforts. We are the only national non-profit organization dedicated to planting and nurturing trees in rural and urban environments. Our track record of collaborating with all levels of government, the urban forestry sector, business partners, and community groups uniquely positions us to engage Canadians in the fight against climate change. Together with our partners and supporters, we plant millions of trees each year, helping to grow resilient ecosystems and healthier, greener communities across Canada.

#### **Our Values**

#### **Passionate**

We are committed to a greener, greater Canada.

#### **Collaborative**

We work hand-in-hand with partners, governments and agencies.

#### Integrity

We conduct business with the highest level of professional integrity.

#### Quality

We are committed to delivering quality educational programs and services.

#### **Results-oriented**

We focus on achieving tangible results.

#### **Land Acknowledgement**

Canada's head office is located in Ottawa on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Peoples, whose presence reaches back thousands of years. We also acknowledge that Tree Canada's work reaches across the traditional territories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.







#### Dear Tree Canada Community,

As Canadians continue to look for tangible ways to make a positive impact on the environment, we are encouraged by the passion and ongoing commitment of our partners, sponsors, donors and supporters. It is with immense pride and gratitude that we share our collective achievements from another successful year.

Tree Canada's collaborative approach is central to our success, allowing us to efficiently and effectively deliver nature-based solutions in Canada's forests and in communities from coast to coast.

In 2023, we planted 2,297,359 trees, greened 132 communities, and experienced a 24% growth in gross revenue over the previous year, which enabled us to scale our impact and our reach. We also joined forces with over 350 planting partners to deliver our programs across the country.

Tree Canada is fortunate to work with a community of partners and supporters that is steadfast in supporting our work to reforest areas most in need, helping to green school grounds, and volunteering with family and colleagues at planting events. Their commitment reminds us of how important it is to focus on the wellbeing of the environment and of our neighbours.

Together, we will continue to increase Canada's ability to address ongoing environmental challenges by growing resilient ecosystems, building healthier, greener communities and engaging Canadians for years to come.

#### Sincerely,



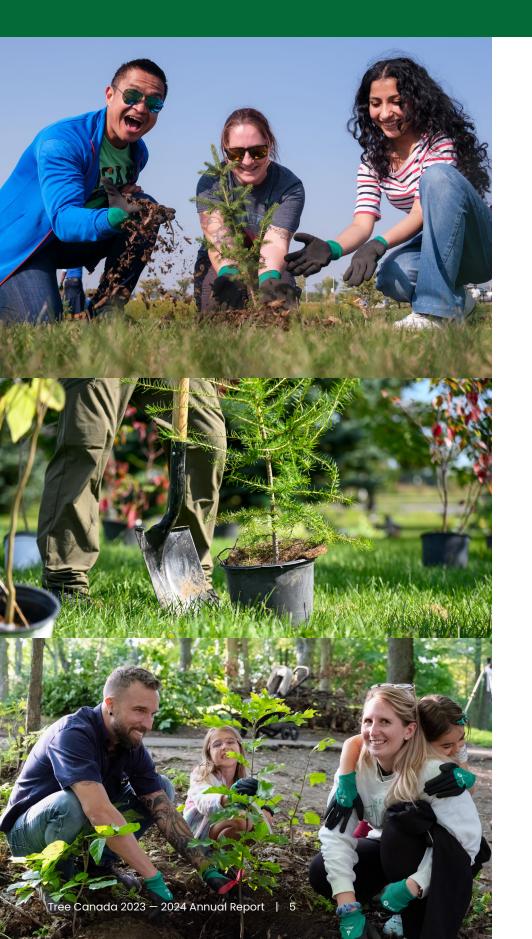
Scott D'Cunha, Chair (Board of Directors)



Nicole Hurtubise, CEO



## Key Achievements in 2023-2024



**2,297,359** trees

132 communities

9,000 + volunteer participants

**24%** growth in gross revenue

1,423 rural hectares

### **National Greening Program**



"We plant the most trees through our National Greening Program, which targets areas in need of reforestation, afforestation or ecosystem restoration. Our team provides landowners with expert advice, project management and funding to meet their planting goals.

We plant in all regions across the country, working closely with planting contractors to complete these mass seedling projects successfully. The Program's impact is huge and I'm particularly proud of the survival assessments we complete for each project.

It's one thing for us to plant millions of trees, but it's another to ensure their survival. If the survival rate is low, we will restock and infill as needed to offer the best outcome for the local environment."



- Randall Van Wagner, Head, **National Greening Program**  2023 Impact

2,245,110

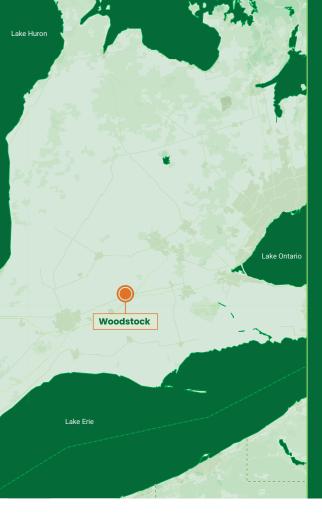
trees

50 tree species

**22** shrub species

34 projects

Indigenous partners



#### **Project Spotlight**

## Woodstock, ON

In 2023, Dairy Farmers of Canada sponsored a project that will support the planting of 450 eastern white cedar seedlings on the Vanderspek dairy farm. With the help of local partner Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the project aims to plant a row of cedars along the edge of the farm field to help mitigate the effects of wind erosion and improve soil health.

"These projects with dairy farms within the Upper Thames River are expected to benefit the local watersheds' water quality through reduced soil erosion. Local wildlife will benefit from the addition of linkages between existing natural features, and the creation of habitat."

- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

## Our Partnership with the 2 Billion Trees Program

The National Greening Program's growing impact in 2023 was possible in part thanks to our partnership with the 2 Billion Trees program. Through our funding agreement with the federal government, donations from individuals and Tree Canada's sponsors are matched, allowing us to plant significantly more trees in areas of need across the country.





1,763,324

trees

1,143

hectares

24

tree species **20** 

shrub species



2023 Impact

13,040 trees

\$507,700 granted

**72** projects

**71** grant recipients

**62** communities

### **Community Tree Grants**

"Every year, we offer grants of up to \$10,000 to schools, community groups, Indigenous communities and municipalities who want to plan trees and shrubs.

With each grant type – Greening Canada's School Grounds, Edible Trees and Treemendous Communities – Tree Canada experts provide technical support to help start, upgrade, or achieve planting projects, and to develop and implement proven urban forest management practices.

I've heard from many grant recipients that their greening projects inspired other members of their community to undertake similar projects. It's a great reminder of the impact we can have beyond the tree count – we also encourage others to take action!"



Rebecca Seltzer, Lead Manager,
 Urban Programs







## **Partners in Planting**

"Our Partners in Planting program is a great way to engage businesses that value community engagement, good corporate citizenship and environmental stewardship.

We work with all types of organizations to coordinate tree planting events for their staff to make a positive impact locally. In many cases, it may be someone's first time planting a tree and they are eager to learn how it's done from our Forestry Specialists. We've also heard stories of people returning to the planting site, weeks, months and even years later to see how "their" trees have grown.

We're very proud to offer a program that helps organizations and individuals connect with trees and nature where they live and work."



Caitlin Dixon, Manager, **Urban Programs** 

2023 Impact

26,001 trees

**62** sponsor organizations

143 projects

**57** communities

## **Aviva Climate Day**

In June 2023, Tree Canada and Aviva Canada hosted volunteer events across the country, engaging Aviva Canada employees to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss in their communities. Employee volunteers planted native trees and shrubs and pulled invasive species.



2023 Impact

**4,235** trees

1,243
Aviva volunteers

17 communities greened

## **Project Spotlight**

## **Edmonton, AB**

The Aviva team supported a habitat creation and enhancement project by planting around a stormwater retention pond to mitigate flood damage and increase the naturalization program in the city. The area is surrounded by a housing development and the trees and shrubs serve to enhance a natural site.





## **Urban Partnership Projects**

"In addition to Tree Canada's core urban programs, we're also fortunate to partner with several companies and organizations to help grow Canada's urban canopy through targeted programs.

In 2023, our partnerships with Home Hardware, CN Montreal Urban Canopy, Winnipeg Million Tree Challenge, U-Haul, and FedEx helped us create further impact in our communities."



 Meryl Abrahams, Manager, **Urban Programs**  2023 Impact

12,633 trees

55 projects

47 organizations

communities

## **Operation ReLeaf**

"The Operation ReLeaf program helps municipalities, Indigenous communities and environmental groups to restore urban forests affected by natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and infestations by pests. With the increasing effects of climate change, we must be strategic in our planting methods. We want to build more resilient forests that will stand strong for generations to come.

Through this program, we've seen firsthand the emotional impact that substantial tree loss can have on a community, so the societal value of these projects is always a key consideration.

Each Operation ReLeaf project helps people invest in their communities and come out the other side stronger, with a deep desire to continue investing in their local greenspaces."



Michael Petryk, Director,
 Urban Programs



## 2023 Impact

**575** trees

**6** projects

5 communities



#### **Project Spotlight**

## Summerside, PE

#### Slemon Park

In the wake of Hurricane Fiona, which wreaked havoc across Prince Edward Island in September 2022, 80% of Slemon Park's old-growth trees were felled, severely altering the landscape of this small community. "After Fiona it was sad," said Tracy Brown, Executive Director of Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association (BBEMA).

"What used to be a really good community, that had really nice shade, basically became an open green space. We would [usually] have birds and [other wildlife] building their nests, and this spring there weren't any. And so, we really wanted to make sure that we put some trees back."

In October 2023, staff from BBEMA, Slemon Park Corporation and a local grade 7 class embarked on a mission to restore tree canopy in this area. Together they planted 560 trees of different sizes along a nature trail, 165 of which were funded by Tree Canada.

Read more about the project here.



## 2023 Impact

3,955

tons of greenhouse gases (tC02e) offset



Photo courtesy of Coastal First Nations.

#### **Grow Clean Air**

"At Tree Canada, our focus is often on the benefits of planting trees. However, it's just as important to protect existing forests. Thankfully, there are so many organizations that do this so well.

To that end, we're grateful for our partnership with the Great Bear Carbon Credit Limited Partnership, which supports improved forest management practices led by coastal First Nations communities in British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest.

Through this partnership, our Grow Clean Air program offers individuals and businesses an opportunity to offset their carbon emissions by helping protect old-growth forests."



 Colin Little, Manager, **National Greening Program** 



Our ambitious efforts to increase Canada's tree canopy require many hands – which is why our collaborative approach is more important than ever.

Tree Canada is committed to inspiring and empowering Canadians of all ages, sharing our expertise, forging meaningful partnerships and ultimately, strengthening our community of supporters in every province and territory. These efforts drive us forward, with hope, to improve lives and address climate change.

### **National Tree Day**

"For twelve years now, we've celebrated National Tree Day every September during National Forest Week.

Last year's celebration was the largest one yet, with almost 1,500 volunteers coming out across the country to connect with nature and take action to green their communities. It's an opportunity to meet inspiring people from all walks of life who want to make a difference while having fun.

For me, it's the best day of the year!"



- Robert Henri, Director, **Communications and Brand** 

## Thank you, BMO

BMO (≅



For the second year in a row, BMO was the presenting sponsor of National Tree Day. Their generous financial support and commitment to engage their staff and Canadians across the country made it possible to celebrate at Tree Canada events in every province.



## 2023 Impact

1,464

6,354

64

volunteers

trees

Tree Canada events

community-led events

### Congratulations

Canadore College (North Bay, ON)

## **Contest Winner**

This year marked the second annual National Tree Day contest - a contest that encourages schools, workplaces and other organizations to host their own event for a chance to win a free tree planting event.

#### How they won

Sustainable Canadore gathered a group of over 50 volunteers, staff and community members who supported the planting of 100 native trees at the College Drive Campus.

#### The prize: A free planting event

Canadore College and The Lindsay Weld Centre for Children collaborated to plant 28 maple trees at the site of a newly announced daycare centre.



## Relive the magic of National Tree Day 2023

Watch Celebrating Trees with Presenting Sponsor BMO on National Tree Day 2023 here.



#### Research & Engagement

"Tree Canada is uniquely positioned to make an impact both on the ground and within the urban forest sector. By convening urban forest professionals, practitioners and academics, we create opportunities for knowledge sharing that benefits urban forests now and in the future.

We also collaborate with partners to conduct research, coordinate educational events and resources, facilitate Canada's largest network of urban forest experts and host the Canadian Urban Forest Conference to help advance the sector."



- Dr. Adrina Bardekjian, Director, **Research and Engagement** 



#### **Research Projects & Partnerships**

Many of the research projects we collaborated on last year investigated the needs, barriers and existing infrastructure that influence the current state of the urban forestry sector in Canada. For example, Tree Canada participated in a two-day workshop on identifying barriers and opportunities to improve cross-sectoral collaboration with industry professionals, hosted by Concordia University and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Results of this workshop are under review for publication.

To learn more about past and ongoing research projects, visit https://treecanada.ca/researchengagement/research-projects-partnerships/.

#### **Professional Engagement**

#### E-lecture series

For the 8th year in a row, Tree Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Forestry hosted two E-Lecture series in 2023.

These free webinars are an excellent forum for our urban forestry community to share knowledge with students, academics and colleagues on topical subjects across the sector. Last year, the two series focused on "Finding and Training Urban Forest Staff in 2023" (Spring) and "Equity and Urban Forests in Canada" (Fall).

#### Presentations

Tree Canada regularly delivers presentations at seminars and events. These are valuable opportunities to demonstrate our expertise and commitment to advancing the urban forestry sector. In 2023, Dr. Adrina Bardekjian, presented:

- · As a panelist at Career Conversations: Postdoctoral Careers Inside and Outside Academia for York University in October 2023.
- The Social Side of Trees: Interdisciplinary directions in urban forestry for US Forest Service, International Programs, Urban Ecology Community of Learning and Practice Alumni Seminar in May 2023. She also hosted three mentoring sessions for international delegates at this seminar.

## **Coming Together for a Common Goal**

Tree Canada cultivates hope for environmental change through our bold commitment to collaboration. We work closely with industry partners and local governments to green at the community level across the country. We could not achieve such large-scale impact without the help of these dedicated partners, whom we can rely on to plant the right trees in the right places, and ensure their long-term growth. We are grateful for our shared values and vision to help improve the lives of Canadians by planting and nurturing trees.

#### Some of our key partners in 2023-2024 include:

- ACAP Saint John
- · Association forestière des deux rives
- · Calgary Tree Planting Team
- Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority
- · City of Airdrie
- City of Belleville
- City of Calgary
- City of Coquitlam
- · City of Guelph
- · City of Hamilton
- City of Kitchener
- City of Markham
- · City of Mississauga
- City of New Westminster
- City of North Vancouver
- · City of Richmond
- City of Sudbury
- · City of Winnipeg
- Conservation Halton
- County of Lambton
- Credit Valley Conservation Authority
- Downsview Park (Canada Lands Company)
- East Coast Trail
- Éco de la Pointe-aux-Prairies
- · Essex Region Conservation Authority
- Fish Creek Provincial Park
- Forests Canada
- Forêt Capitale Forest

- · Friends of the Rouge Watershed
- · Great Bear Initiative
- · Halifax Regional Municipality
- · La Solitude de Pré-d'en-Haut Inc.
- · Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- Lytton First Nation
- McLeod Lake Indian Band
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- MultiCaf
- Natoaganeg School
- National Capital Commission
- · OakvilleGreen Conservation Association
- · ReForest London
- · Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- · Root For Trees
- · Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation
- Siksika First Nation
- · Soverdi
- · St. John's Rehab at Sunnybrook
- · Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (Redd Fish Restoration Society Project)
- Tłycho Government
- · Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- Town of Canmore
- · Town of Truro
- Village of North Hatley
- · Williams Lake First Nation



#### **2023 Sponsors and Donors**

"On behalf of Tree Canada, I wish to sincerely thank each of our sponsors and donors. It's because of your commitment to help the environment, and the trust you put in Tree Canada as your partner to do so, that we're able to accomplish our important work."



- Greg Hotte, **Chief Development Officer** 

### **Ultimate**



















#### Gold























Wealth Management



















#### **Foundations**

Annual donations above \$50,000.





The Sixty Three Foundation

### **Testimonial**

"It is important to take responsibility for our carbon footprint in order to offset emissions.

We want to align with global efforts to combat climate change and do our part and inspire others to do the same. We did a lot of research and found that Tree Canada's values aligned without ours and we wanted to be a part of everything Tree Canada stands for and does for the environment.

We felt no one else was doing what Tree Canada is doing to this scale and have been honoured to represent being in partnership."

- Brittani Jensen, Natalia Russell, & Isabella Russell of EcoGlow Candles



### **Testimonial**

"CGI is committed to creating a positive impact, and our 11,800 colleagues across Canada are the driving force behind our efforts to benefit our clients, communities, and the planet.

This commitment is reflected in our partnership with Tree Canada, where we celebrate our colleagues'

work anniversaries by planting a tree for each year of service as part of a meaningful recognition program. To date, we have planted over 58,000 trees."

> - Michael Godin, President of CGI Canada

## **Individual Giving Story**

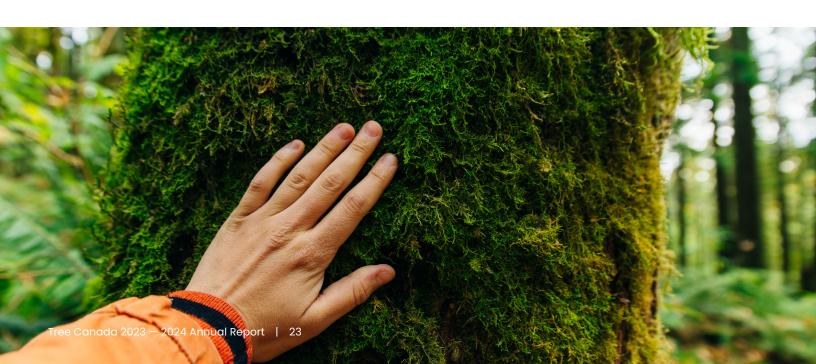
In 2023, Tree Canada was contacted by two individuals who wished to make a significant donation in honour of a milestone birthday.

After exploring different projects in need of funding, the Toronto couple chose to support a post-wildfire reforestation project with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band in British Columbia. Over time, their investment will enable the planting of 800,000 trees, with an additional 200,000 to be planted closer to home in Ontario.

"Both of us have always felt the need to leave the world in a better place than we found it, for our kids and for future generations. The 2023 forest fires consolidated our desire to lead by example. Knowing that the local community was involved in this reforestation project, and that the trees would be cared for after planting, gave us confidence that we could put our trust in Tree Canada.

Our hope is that others who have the ability to make large contributions will take responsibility and support initiatives like this one."

- Aaron Goldstein and Christina Laing



## **Financial Highlights**

#### Statement of financial position

For the year ended March 31, 2024	Operating Fund	Restricted Fund	2024	2023
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	10,078,269	-	10,078,269	8,965,833
Accounts receivable	165,569	3,075,116	3,240,685	289,791
Prepaid expenses	145,546	-	145,546	199,830
Short-term investments	1,306,007	-	1,306,007	654,009
Inventory	-	-	-	39,811
Total current assets	11,695,391	3,075,116	14,770,507	10,149,274
Long-term investments	630,414	-	630,414	1,296,726
Tangible capital assets	41,457	-	41,457	77,366
TOTAL ASSETS	12,367,262	3,075,116	15,442,378	11,523,366
Liabilities and Fund Balances				
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	213,830	1,385,722	1,599,552	216,281
Interfund payable and receivable	9,941,242	(9,941,242)	-	-
Total current liabilities	10,155,072	(8,555,520)	1,599,552	216,281
Fund Balances				
Invested in tangible capital assets	41,457	-	41,457	77,366
Restricted fund		11,630,636	11,630,636	9,366,092
Internally restricted	650,000	-	650,000	400,000
Unrestricted	1,520,733	-	1,520,733	1,463,627
Total fund balances	2,212,190	11,630,636	13,842,826	11,307,085
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	12,367,262	3,075,116	15,442,378	11,523,366

#### Stament of operations and changes in fund balances

For the year ended March 31, 2024	Operating Fund	<b>Restricted Fund</b>	2024	2023
Revenue				
Programs	-	12,538,091	12,538,091	9,631,804
Donations	1,626,658	-	1,626,658	1,116,835
Sales	416	-	416	6,916
Investments	146,747	-	146,747	40,703
TOTAL REVENUE	1,773,821	12,538,091	14,311,912	10,796,258
Expenses	1,502,624	10,273,547	11,776,171	7,803,344
Excess of revenue over expenses	271,197	2,264,544	2,535,741	2,992,914
Fund balances beginning of year	1,940,993	9,366,092	11,307,085	8,314,171
Fund balances end of year	2,212,190	11,630,636	13,842,826	11,307,085



## **Working with Indigenous Communities**

#### Workshop: Indigenous Understanding

In December 2023, Cambium Indigenous Professional Services hosted a two-day workshop for Tree Canada's staff, partners, and sponsors. The workshop highlighted important considerations for increasing our understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories and how to build more meaningful relationships in the context of our work. The workshop helped foster further discussions and initiate opportunities to continue our shared learning.

#### The T'exelcemc - Williams Lake First Nation **Planting Project**



The 2017 wildfires in British Columbia severely burned many regions across the province, including around Williams Lake. Since then, some forests in the region have struggled to regenerate naturally. To help restore the area, Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) planned to plant a mix of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine to stabilize terrain and ensure carbon sequestration.

In 2023, Tree Canada supported WLFN's project, helping to plant 102,000 seedlings through the National Greening Program. Unfortunately, 2023 was a season of severe drought and survival assessments indicated 52% survival. Though it's not uncommon for planting projects to require infill planting, especially in climates prone to drought, Tree Canada continues to work with WLFN to plan an infill planting to account for the loss of seedlings.

Last year we captured the impact this project will have on the environment and the local community of Williams Lake. Watch the video here.

#### Tłįcho Caribou Habitat Reforestation Program

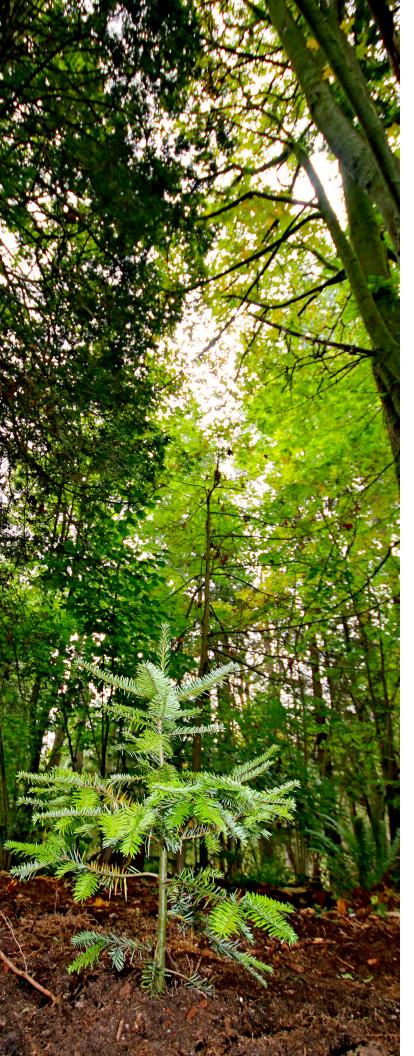
Tree Canada has partnered with the Tłycho Government and Let's Plant Trees to heal lands devastated by wildfires and regenerate caribou habitat by planting one million trees in the Northwest Territories. Millions of hectares of land were devastated by wildfires, with 2023 being the worst season on record. While the evacuation of Yellowknife made national news, the four communities that make up the Tłycho Nation were also deeply affected.

The Head of Tree Canada's National Greening Program, Randall Van Wagner, was invited by Tłycho Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty to visit the areas that will be replanted:

"During my visit, I was fortunate to meet with Elders from the community, who spoke about how wildfires have impacted their lands and people," said Van Wagner. "Planting one million trees will help bring back the caribou over time, but it will also improve the lives of Tłıcho citizens who are engaged in all aspects of the project, from seed collection to planting and monitoring the trees."

In October 2023, a group of Tłycho citizens, including community Elders, were trained and engaged in coning and seed collection. They collected millions of black spruce cones and white birch seeds, which were shipped to a nursery in Saskatchewan. From here, they will be grown into viable seedlings before being shipped back to the Northwest Territories for initial planting in 2025.

This innovative partnership represents the most ambitious reforestation project ever undertaken in the Northwest Territories.



Watch this video to learn more about the program's progress and the impact it will have.



Special thanks to Chad Galloway and Trail Films for kindly allowing the use of footage from Walking With Caribou (2023).





## **Connect With Us**

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