



# SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

SNC STAFF PLANTING TREES  
ON A PRIVATE PROPERTY  
IN THE TOWNSHIP OF  
NORTH STORMONT



SOUTH NATION  
**CONSERVATION**  
DE LA NATION SUD



## STREAMLINING PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RECORD YEAR

SNC working continuously to improve efficiencies



*SNC Staff working on a permit application*

In 2020, our planning staff processed:

- 432 development applications
- 48 property inquiries
- 155 technical reviews
- 254 Section 28 Conservation Authorities Act permits
- 49 municipal drain requests
- 21 applications reviewed for threats to municipal drinking water
- 45 complaints managed by septic officials and regulations staff

2020 experienced an approximate two-fold increase over recent years in the number of development files that required SNC environmental reviews. This can be attributed to the expanded jurisdiction within the City of Clarence-Rockland, the increase in development pressure in urban expansion areas and the increase in home renovation and improvement projects as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

For all municipally initiated reviews, timelines are established by municipalities depending on the type of development application and nature of the review.

For permits issued under the Conservation Authorities (CA) Act, review standards are established by the Province of Ontario (30 days for minor applications and 90 days for major applications). In 2020, 70% of the CA permits were issued ahead of schedule and 30% were issued outside of the Provincial standard.

Through SNC's participation in Conservation Ontario's Timely Review Taskforce, SNC has begun tracking service standard timelines to improve efficiencies to exceed the following standards: 21 days for minor applications, 28 days for major applications and 14 days for routine applications. Improved customer service tools were rolled out during the year including a new online 'Report a Concern' webpage and improved application forms with helpful examples. Updates to service standards and reports on timelines are now available online.

SNC continues to work with municipal and agency partners, developers, landowners, and contractors, to safeguard human life and property from natural hazards.

## RECONCILIATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE TREE PLANTING

First Nations and Environmental Partners come together for Reconciliation and Climate Change Planting on Traditional Territory

Last fall, over 250 culturally significant native trees were planted on the traditional territories of the Algonquin and Mohawk First Nations in Shanly, Ontario to form: The Healing Place | Tsi Tehshakotitsénhtha | Endaji mino-pimaadizi | Lieu de guérison.

The planting took place on one of SNC's newly acquired properties in the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. The site is traditional First Nations territory, and its grasslands are home to several species at risk including the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. The Conservation Authority has plans to undertake additional restoration to help maintain its natural legacy, increase biodiversity, and protect the local environment.

The idea for a local Reconciliation Climate Change Planting started at the 2019 Climate Change Summit hosted by the Assembly of First Nations in Whitehorse, Yukon, where those in attendance made a commitment to offset their carbon emissions by planting trees.



*SNC Staff planting trees alongside participant in Shanly*



*SNC Staff featured in Nature at Home videos series*

## SNC GOES VIRTUAL AMID PANDEMIC

SNC supports Municipalities and delivers critical environmental services throughout Pandemic

Through it all, the Board and Staff were able to find ways to collaborate, innovate, be resilient and collectively support communities and the environment.

Following the postponement of in-person educational programming, SNC was able to quickly shift gears to provide live streaming family-friendly videos online called "Nature at Home".

This virtual content brought viewers to various locations across SNC's 4,441 square-kilometer jurisdiction to learn about tree planting, land management, wildlife, fishing, and invasive species among others!

Virtual content was also created to support a variety of existing programs and encourage safe use of outdoor spaces: over 11,000 unique viewers watched various SNC videos.

Board and Committee Meetings, Staff Meetings, Public Meetings, and a variety of workshops were seamlessly transitioned online thanks to IT infrastructure upgrades completed in recent years that supported safe remote and in-person work to ensure that staff could continue to support our municipal partners efficiently and effectively.

## SNC EXPANDS JURISDICTION

Conservation Authority Jurisdiction to include the City of Clarence Rockland



*SNC Board and Staff with Representatives from the City of Clarence Rockland in February 2020*

SNC's environmental services that help protect people and property from natural hazards (such as flooding), support sustainable development activities, and protect water quality are now available to the entire municipality of Clarence-Rockland and its residents along the Ottawa River.

The enlargement expands upon the municipality's existing 197 square-kilometers within the SNC jurisdiction to now include the full municipality within CA jurisdiction, the community of Rockland, and the Ottawa River shoreline. This will ensure that new shoreline and floodplain construction is subject to SNC review to ensure that development is safe from flooding and erosion.

Jurisdiction expansion also enables SNC to receive ecologically significant land in other areas of the municipality, to add more forests to the public land trust.



# 2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## ENDLESS RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT SNC CONSERVATION AREAS

Record setting visitation throughout 2020 as SNC kept most of its Conservation Areas open through the Pandemic. Over 177,000 visitors were recorded at some sites, doubling previous visitation records.

### The most popular destinations?

J. Henry Tweed CA in Russell with 43,000 visitors and W.E. Burton CA also in Russell with 37,000 visitors recorded. Followed by seasonal sites Jessup's Falls CA in Plantagenet with 26,000 visitors and High Falls CA in Casselman with 22,000 visitors.

Increased visitation contributed to increase demand on maintenance activities and a need for park improvement projects including hazard and ash tree management, vandalism and litter control, restoration activities and parking lot and trail improvements.



Trails at the Robert Graham Conservation Area in South Dundas were resurfaced and new culverts were installed to help alleviate seasonal flooding.



A newly expanded parking lot at the High Falls Conservation Area in Casselman will welcome and accommodate boat and trailer parking. Replacement trees were also planted, with more planned to help "spruce" up the park.



SNC will be restoring the J. Henry Tweed Conservation Area in Russell thanks to a new 3-year partnership with Ontario Power Generation. Restoration work will include Ash Tree removal, native tree planting, repairing erosion and streambank stabilization.

## LAND PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMY

SNC partners with area businesses and community members to sustainably harvest locally sourced products from our land to support the local economy.



### TIMBER HARVESTS

Approximately 7,894 m<sup>3</sup> of timber products were sold on SNC and SDG Forests, contributing \$81,840 in revenue.



### HUNTING

Nearly 9,000 acres of SNC land is used by hunters; 113 permits issued in 2020.



### HONEY

SNC is gifted 10 lbs of honey annually from local beekeepers; 1 land lease in 2020.



### MAPLE SYRUP

33 acres of land is leased for sugar bush operations. 8,700 gallons of Maple Sap was sold from the Oschmann Forest Conservation Area in 2020.



### TRAPPING

Nearly 9,000 acres of land is used by trappers; 4 permits issued in 2020.



### CROP PRODUCTION

30 acres of SNC land is leased to local farmers in 2020.



Pipeline through Oschmann Forest in North Dundas

The guidance, wisdom, and holistic perspectives shared through partnerships with First Nations ensure the protection of culturally-significant species.

SNC co-hosts the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group with its Mohawk and Algonquin partners to work collaboratively on projects and ensure that the sustainable management of public forests protects the economic, ecologic, social, and cultural values of forest resources.

## WOODLOT MANAGEMENT AND TREE PLANTING

In 2020, SNC:

- Planted 140,620 seedlings, adding to the 3.2 million trees planted since 1990.
- Worked with 22 Forest Stewards to monitor forest activity on 42 SNC properties.
- Provided \$113,954 in grants through Forest Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program to help plant trees on private land.
- Provided \$36,550 in grants to 74 property owners to create forest management plans for 4,004 acres of land which provide tax savings for owners and ensure forests are maintained for the next 10 years.
- Provided \$191,523 in cost-share funding to residents in the City of Ottawa to support 108 projects to control the invasive Emerald Ash Borer and replant 730 native trees.
- Worked with municipalities to provide recommendations on ways to improve forest cover.
- Through donation and partial purchase, SNC added 65 acres of forest to its public lands inventory.

## WATERSHED MONITORING AND REPORTING

Environmental monitoring programs focus on quality and quantity of land and water ecosystems including: surface and ground water; native, invasive and at-risk species; stream assessments; and municipal drains.

SNC collects and provides scientifically accurate data for stakeholders and municipalities to make informed decisions; data also helps guide SNC stewardship projects and programs.

In 2020, monitoring initiatives assessed the condition of the South Bear Brook. These catchment studies include the collection of baseline surface water quantity and quality data to support City of Ottawa subwatershed reporting initiatives, and recommendations for best management practices to protect and enhance water resources. Data collection included Headwater Drainage Features, Baseflow Investigations, Water Quality, Biological Communities – Benthic Invertebrates and Fish, and Thermal Assessments.

## CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Approved \$74,510 in cost-share grants for 20 projects that improve water quality within the SNC jurisdiction.

Approved \$94,113 in cost-share grants for 37 projects within the City of Ottawa. The Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program is delivered by the Ottawa Conservation Partners (Rideau, Mississippi, and South Nation Conservation Authorities) on behalf of the City of Ottawa.



*SNC Staff collecting water samples in Andy Shields Park in Greely*



*SNC staff at the East York Creek Open House in 2019*

## FLOODPLAIN AND EROSION MAPPING

In 2020, SNC hosted 5 Natural Hazard Mapping Open Houses, with 2 hosted online. These information sessions helped residents learn more about new floodplain and erosion hazard mapping.

SNC staff mapped 4 streams within the South Nation River Watershed with financial support from the Federal Government and partner municipalities.

The streams that were mapped included:

- Findlay Creek and North Castor River (26,837 m)
- South Indian Creek (15,923 m)
- South Castor River (35,141 m)
- Shaws Creek (13,833 m)



# 2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## COMMUNITY FREE TREE PICK-UPS

As a recommendation from SNC's Forest Conservation Initiative, SNC has been providing free seedlings to residents since 2019 to raise awareness around the value of forest conservation and to support good environmental stewardship. In 2020, SNC felt that it was important to virtually adapt this program to provide people with a chance to plant a free tree in a time of great uncertainty.

Over 15,000 trees were distributed by delivery or contactless pickup in partner municipalities.

*SNC Staff on site in the Township of North Glengarry for the Community Free Tree Pick-Ups*



## SNC'S MUNICIPAL SEPTIC PROGRAM

SNC septic officials conduct septic inspections for 13 municipalities. In 2020, 465 septic permits were issued for new construction, replacement or decommissioning of septic systems, marking the most septic permits issued by SNC in 1 year to date. SNC also hosts an annual contractor meeting and provides the only provincially-certified septic installer course offered in French.

*SNC Staff conducting septic inspections*



## ONLINE ART AUCTION

SNC hosted its first Art for Trees Online Silent Auction, raising funds to help SNC reach a record-setting goal for 2021: planting over 200,000 native trees in a single year. The Art for Trees auction is yet another example of how SNC has adapted to working, fundraising, and engaging with its partner municipalities and area residents during the Pandemic.

*Local Artist Olivia Wright with her Art Donation*



## SNC DEVELOPING NEW CONSERVATION AREA IN AUGUSTA

SNC will be opening its first public Conservation Area in Leeds and Grenville thanks to a municipal and federal partnership to protect local natural spaces and provide new outdoor recreational opportunities. This property was donated to SNC by the municipality to help create a public river access site. Work was ongoing through 2020 and included creating a small parking lot and trail. This park will open later in 2021 and will provide access to the South Nation River to paddle to the historic Spencerville Mill.

*Augusta Township Mayor Doug Malanka with SNC Staff at new park site*



## SNC DONATES TREES TO FRONTLINE WORKERS

SNC donated tree seedlings to the Winchester District Memorial Hospital (WDMH) and Dundas Manor Nursing Home during National Nursing Week to provide frontline staff with tree seedlings and an appreciation of "thanks" through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

*SNC Staff at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital delivering tree seedlings to nurses*



## COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

In 2020, SNC amended its popular Community Environmental Grants Program to support community garden and tree planting initiatives in public spaces. \$10,000 was awarded to 28 local community groups and municipalities to support various projects and add over 60 large native trees to public spaces.

*The Chesterville Green Gang and SNC Staff planting a caliper sized Sugar Maple tree at the Chesterville Arena in the Township of North Dundas*

## 2020 Board of Directors Vice-Chair, Chair and Past Chair

### 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*SNC's Board of Directors consists of appointed representatives from SNC's 16 member municipalities who govern and provide direction for all the work completed by SNC.*

**The 2020 Board of Directors include:**

Pierre Leroux, Vice-Chair, Prescott-Russell; George Darouze, Chair, City of Ottawa; Bill Smirle, Past Chair, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry.

**City of Ottawa:**

Gerrie Kautz, Michael Brown, Councillor Matthew Luloff/Councillor Catherine Kitts

**United Counties of Prescott-Russell:**

Mayor Daniel Lafleur/Mayor Guy Desjardins,  
Mayor Stéphane Sarrazin/Mayor François St. Amour

**United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry:**

Councillor Steve Densham, Councillor Archie Mellan

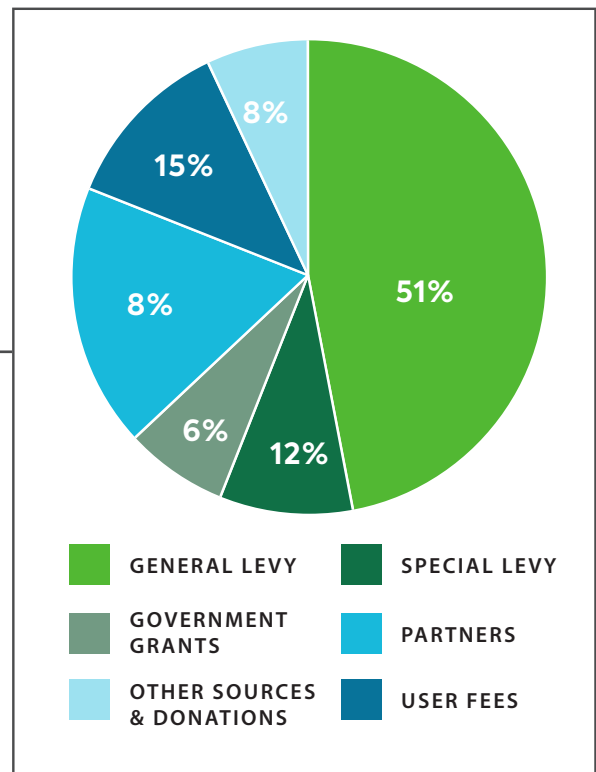
**United Counties of Leeds and Grenville:**

Dana Farcasiu, Councillor John Hunter/Peggy Taylor

## 2020 SNC BUDGET SUMMARY

**2020 Budget:** \$6,855,520

- General Levy: \$3,478,942
- Special Levy: \$815,394
- Government Grants: \$395,294
- Partners: \$600,968
- User Fees: \$1,012,670
- Other Sources and Donations: \$552,252



OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT; WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER.  
 NOTRE ENVIRONNEMENT LOCAL, PROTÉGEONS-LE ENSEMBLE.



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