

YOUR OWA AT WORK

By Ben Gwilliam, Master of Forest Conservation Candidate, University of Toronto, York-Durham Chapter

People working together is at the heart of sustainable forest management, as many specialties contribute to our knowledge and understanding of best practices. Organizations that foster collaboration and promote knowledge sharing are essential to good land stewardship, and our Association is certainly in this category. Through my internship this summer I have been honoured to help lead the collaborative efforts of our Woodlot Economic and Inventory Project in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. In recent years the OWA has partnered with the Master of Forest Conservation program at the University of Toronto (UofT), with the objective of providing real-world experience to students through projects that inform and empower woodlot owners. I am proud to be part of this continuing partnership between the OWA and the UofT.

Nowhere were the achievements in collective effort on greater display than during the recent data gathering blitz in the Larose Forest as a part of our Economic and Inventory Project. The goal was to update the aerial laser (LiDAR) scanning that was done in 2014 by measuring how much the forests have changed in seven years. This work involved establishing plots to measure trees for their species, condition, diameter, and height. Normally this level of effort represents a huge task reserved for an entire summer of cruising. However, with the collaborative effort of the OWA, the Algonquin College forestry technician program, the Larose Forest,

and funding from the Forestry Futures Trust, the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio Economy (CRIBE), and Cascades Pulp and Paper... we measured over 2,600 trees in just 24 hours!

Not only was the data gathering blitz successful, but the weekend was also a blast with everyone working together during the day, and all of us sharing stories and songs by the campfire at night. On deck to help me supervise the Algonquin student crews were members Al Stinson, John Pineau, Peter Arbour, and also Steve Hunter—the Larose Forester who provided invaluable advice and support. As well, Shan, Erica and Scott from our staff came to help out, and OWA President Paul Robertson stopped by for a much-appreciated morale boost. The days were hot, and we were worn-out but well-fed. We were all left with the satisfying experience of what can be accomplished by people pooling resources and working together.

The long-life spans and many benefits of forests make their management a unique field where people are naturally encouraged to work together towards a common goal. The OWA reflects this concept, bringing together industry, government, academia, and citizens to provide a benefit much greater than the sum of its parts. If it sounds like I am gushing, it is because I am. To me, the members and chapters that make up the OWA are an inspiration in their collective achievement of advocacy for landowners and the private forests of Ontario, and I will forever be thankful for having been a part of it all!

Organizing the Algonquin student crews for data collection at the Larose Forest.



Algonquin forest tech students take a break after a long day of data collection at the Larose Forest.



OWA interns Shan Shukla (left) and Ben Gwilliam (right) prepare breakfast for the crews at the Larose Forest.



POP QUIZ

1

What are the locations of the two OWA Community Forest Owners Cooperative Pilots?

2

What are the names of our two OWA summer interns who are working toward their Master of Forest Conservation degrees at the University of Toronto?

3

Where has the OWA focused its Woodlot Economics and Inventory Project this year?

ANSWERS:

1. Fleetwood (in the Kawarthas) and Huronia
2. Ben Gwilliam and Shan Shukla
3. The United Counties of Prescott and Russell

