



First Tree Planted at Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve

NEW HAMBURG, ON – Friday, May 7, 2021 - While an overcast sky with rain in the forecast might seem like a less than ideal day for most activities, it was the perfect setting for Mike Schout to plant the first tree at the Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve in New Hamburg today.

Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve is a 55 acre property abutting the Nith River in New Hamburg. Township Council authorized Mr. Schout to transform the property from a corn field into a planned preserve of wetlands, pollinator meadows and forests. Weaving through the property will be a network of trails and boardwalks to allow residents to have a front row seat to watch the multi-year naturalization project unfold.

The project is much more than a naturalization and recreational project. Urban stormwater run-off, that currently flows through the property, from a significant portion of New Hamburg, will be ultimately re-routed through the network of wetlands to slow its path to the river and ensure that the health and quality of the Nith is improved over time.

Through a partnership between Mr. Schout, the GRCA and Forests Ontario, the first stage of planting approximately 4,000 trees was undertaken using the mechanical tree planter of GRCA.

“These trees have been specifically chosen for their biodiversity to grow and develop into a forest that will thrive in this environment, offer shelter and homes for animals and to sequester carbon as a carbon sink,” said designer Phil Holst.

Township Council has endorsed the design of the project and, while regulatory approvals are being obtained for the physical construction of the wetlands, planting the seedlings in the reforestation areas was a timely opportunity.

“We are sincerely hoping that the pandemic lockdown will pass and that we will be able to invite the entire community to participate in kicking off future stages when we begin digging the wetlands later this summer and planting tall stock trees later this fall,” commented Mike Schout.

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