

SDG County Forest Annual Report January 1st – December 31st, 2020



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1 INTRODUCTION

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry owns land including forests and wetlands. These lands are managed in accordance with an approved forest management plan which provides for sustainable timber harvest that generates revenue, improves forest health, provides wildlife habitat, protects natural heritage, and creates recreational opportunities.



Forestry Staff Social Distancing – North Glengarry

This report outlines the administrative and operational activities that have been carried out from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

During 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forest management activities were maintained in compliance with guidelines and regulations set forth by the Province of Ontario and Eastern Ontario Health Unit. The SDG Forest with other managed forest was considered essential to the supply of natural resources.

The pandemic also saw the closure of many public recreational facilities and increased the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities. SDG Forest trails experienced a four-fold increase in use during 2020.

2 ADMINISTRATION

Management of the Forest is governed by a 2017 Memorandum of Understanding between South Nation Conservation (BD-021/17) and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry (By-Law No. 5093, Resolution No. 2017-24). The Memorandum of Understanding is in effect until December 31, 2021.

2.1 FOREST CERTIFICATION

The SDG County Forest maintained group certification under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certificate and submitted all documents required for independent annual audits as prescribed under the certification process but were not selected for field audit during the 2020 operating period.

On February 12, 2020, in compliance with FSC requirements, the SDG Forest was subject to an activity assessment report conducted by the Group Certificate holder (EOMF). Management activities, social, economic, and environmental impacts were monitored in relation to the scale of the operation. The assessment concluded that the forest was managed in compliance with operational standards and FSC Principles & Criteria.

The Annual Reporting Form was submitted to the Group Certificate holder (EOMF) on August 25, 2020. The annual report indicated for the period July 1st, 2019 to June 30th, 2020 an annual harvest volume of 2,894.6 m³, 10.18 liters of pesticide was used to control competing vegetation

during tree planting, no accruals or depletions to the forest area, and a total forest area of 3,951.97 hectares.

The annual report also included the following staff changes and forestry training acquired during the operating period:

New Staff

Martin Streit, B.Sc.F., R.P.F., Forester (part-time)
Caroline Goulet, B. Am. For., Dipl. Forestry & Wildlife Management

New Accreditations

Cheyenne Brunet, R.P.F. in Training
Caroline Goulet, Certified Arborist, R.P.F. in Training

Forestry Training

Tree Marker Certification (3 staff)
Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) Data Sensitivity Training (4 staff)
Certified Arborist (1 staff)
Certified Seed Collector (2 staff)
Butternut Health Assessor (3 staff)

3 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property management includes activities which occur because of property ownership regardless of forestry operations and includes responding to public enquiries/complaints, investigating encroachments on County property, property inspections, maintenance of property infrastructure (gates, fences, trails, etc.)

The SDG County Forest compartment mapping was updated in 2018 consistent with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) records of County-owned lands. During 2020 work progressed on reviewing property records and creating a property database.

3.1 FOREST ACCRUALS AND DEPLETIONS

Several potential acquisitions were investigated during 2020. There are two acquisitions approved by Council in progress. There were no addition or depletions to the County Forest in 2020.

3.2 ASSET MANAGEMENT

There were no capital projects undertaken in the SDG County Forest. Two minor projects were undertaken: replacement of the sign on the Howard S. Mitchell Tract and a modification of the gate at the entrance to the Summerstown Trail.



New sign Howard S. Mitchell Tract



Summerstown Trail Gate

3.3 COMPLAINTS

Several concerns were expressed regarding public use of the County Forest and potential conflicts. These were dealt with by staff on a case-by-case basis.

3.4 ENQUIRIES

There were several enquiries regarding forest operations. Information was provided regarding forest operations and no concerns were expressed.

As required by FSC certification standards landowners immediately adjacent to all forest operations are provided notice of upcoming management activities. Twenty-three adjacent property owners were contacted regarding County forest operations during 2020.

3.5 PERMISSIONS

3.5.1 Work Permit – Trans Northern Pipeline

Trans-Northern Pipelines Inc. performed additional pipeline maintenance activities on SDG Forest Compartment 45 located on Lot 32 Concession 5, South Stormont (Osnabruck) north of Edwards Road during 2020.

The pipeline maintenance work area was inspected on completion to ensure that the area was satisfactorily cleaned up. No further cleanup was required.



3.6 FOREST RESEARCH

3.6.1 Ministry of Environment Climate Change & Parks

A letter of permission was issued to the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change to access and perform assessments of a permanent sample plot on SDG 36. This plot is part of a Provincial network and information is obtained to monitor forest health.

3.6.2 Carleton University

A letter of permission was issued to Carleton University to perform ecological assessments on 4 SDG County Forest properties. The information collected under this research project will provide insight into the ecological health of the County Forest.

3.7 TRAIL MAINTENANCE

There are currently two hiking/skiing trail systems maintained within the SDG County Forest, the Warwick Forest and the Summerstown Forest.

3.7.1 Warwick Forest

The Warwick Forest, the third largest contiguous block of forest in SDG, is a collection of several parcels of land owned by the United Counties of SDG, South Nation Conservation, and the Province of Ontario. The forest includes over 1,500 acres of wetlands, natural hardwood forests and conifer plantations.

. As a “Working Forest” it is managed for a wide variety of uses including timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation, and environmental protection. The Warwick Forest offers all-season access to over 10 km of nature trails and 4 km of interpretive trails. Management activities included 29 property inspections and hazard tree removals.

Trail usage was monitored using electronic car counters from January through December 2020. Trail usage increased from 1,448 visitors in 2019 to 4,946 visitors in 2020. The highest monthly visitations occurred in April with visitations. April had the second most visitations with 209 trail users.

3.7.2 Summerstown Forest

The Summerstown Forest is managed in partnership with the Friends of the Summerstown Trails (FOTST). The FOTST Annual Report indicated nearly 80 volunteers contributed to a successful 2019 season which included the Annual Official Trail Opening on January 13th, the 6th Annual Summerstown Snowshoe Race on February 9th, and the 8th Annual Family Day on February 19th. Accomplishments included:

- Annual fall clean-up & maintenance day and, 5 days of trail work;
- 9 km of snowshoe trail groomed for fat biking;
- 2 days of mowing back vegetation from the A Trail (Twp of S Glengarry);
- Four loads of grindings on Trail A to repair pot holes & low ground;
- Installation of a lean-to structure on A1 near the “T”; and
- Emergency information posted at key location along the trail system.

4 FOREST MANAGEMENT

4.1 TWENTY-YEAR FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The SDG County Forest continues to be managed under the approved Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2007-2026 as amended in 2009. No changes to the 20-year forest management plan were made during 2020.

4.2 FIVE-YEAR OPERATING PLAN

The Five-Year Operating Plan (FOP) 2017-2021, prepared for and approved by Council in 2017 (Resolution No. 2017-86). The management planning period ends December 31, 2021.

Table 1 summarizes activities within the SDG County Forest and progress to completing the current Five-Year Operating Plan targets as at December 31, 2020.

Table 1
2020 Summary of Operations
SDG Five-Year Operating Plan 2017 – 2021

Compartment	Treatment	Actual Area			Planned Area (ha.)
		Completed (ha.)	In-Progress ^{1,2} (ha.)	Pending (ha.)	
SDG 11	Shelterwood		6.5		6.5
SDG 12	Shelterwood		1.9		1.9
SDG 12	Thinning (2 nd)		4.2		2.1
SDG 13	Thinning (2 nd)		11.4		10.5
SDG 14/15	Cancelled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SDG 20/21	Shelterwood	21.6			21.6
SDG 21/22/23	Thinning (2 nd)	23.1			23.1
SDG 25	Salvage	1.9			1.9
SDG 25	Thinning (2 nd)			4.9	4.9
SDG 26	Thinning	12.3			12.3
SDG 34	Thinning			16.6	16.6
SDG 86	Thinning			7.3	7.3
SDG 88/91	Thinning		56.6		61.5
SDG 90	Thinning		9.0		9.0
SDG 90	Thinning		27.1		32.8
Total		48.5	125.2	28.8	212.0

The Annual Harvest Area (AHA) which refers to the annual harvest level that could continue indefinitely without exceeding the productive capacity of the forest thereby ensuring long-term sustainability of the forest, is 121.5 hectares. The selected harvest areas for 2017 through 2021

¹ Bold-faced - Sold

² Highlighted – Ready for Tender

included a new allocation of 81.8 hectares (within the 121.5-hectare AHA) and 134.2 hectares from previous operating periods.

In 2020, the allocated harvest area was adjusted, removing Compartments SDG 14/15 from the harvest schedule due to access issues and adding Compartment SDG 90 to the harvest schedule. Public notice of this harvest schedule change was provided on the SDG County website.

Significant progress has been made to completing planned forestry operations. Twenty-four percent of five-year harvest operations (48.5 hectares) are completed. In-progress operations, including 32.5 hectares of harvest allocation sold and 83.7 hectares tender-ready, account for an additional 57% of five-year planned activities.

4.3 ANNUAL OPERATIONS

4.3.1 Inventory

Inventory was completed in November on approximately 48.1 hectares of conifer plantations and included forest compartments SDG 20/21/22/23 and SDG 11/12/13.

4.3.2 Prescriptions

Table 2
2019 Silvicultural Prescriptions Summary

Compartment	Treatment	Area (Ha.)	Species	Quantity	Comment
SDG 11/12/13	Selection Thinning ³	26.0	Pr, Pw, Sw, Sn	1,169.0 m ³	Sold
SDG 46	Planting w/ spot spray		Sw	1,300	Deferred to 2022
SDG 90	Systematic Thinning ⁴	9.0	Sw	594 m ³	Spring 2020
SDG 90	Selection Thinning	27.1	Tol. Hdwd.	894 m ³	Spring 2020

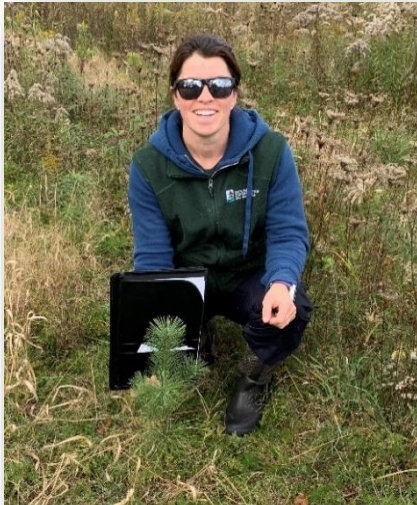
New silvicultural prescriptions were prepared for SDG Forest compartments SDG 20/21/22/23, SDG 11/12/13 and SDG 90 in 2019. These prescriptions included 23.7 hectares of selective thinning in White Spruce, 22.1 hectares of uniform shelterwood thinning in White Pine, 32.9 hectares of selective thinning in upland hardwoods, and 23.7 hectares of selective thinning in lowland hardwoods. The total area is 102.4 hectares and represents 47.4 per cent of the

³ Selection Thinning – periodic partial cuts controlled by spatial distribution resulting in uneven-aged stand.

⁴ Systematic Thinning – removal of trees based totally on spacing or arrangement; row removal.

harvest allocation in the current five-year operating plan (2017-2021) and accumulated allocations from previous operating periods.

4.3.3 Tree Planting



There was no new tree planting conducted within the County Forest during 2020.

Second-year tree survival was assessed at the end of the growing season for trees planted on SDG 56 in 2019. Survival was 75%. The plantation will be assessed at the end of year 5.

The planting was subsidized by Forest Ontario under the 50 Million Tree Program. The total cost of planting was \$5,800 with SDG County contributing \$1,310 plus applicable taxes. After each assessment, if survival falls below 60%, the plantation will be eligible for refill under the 50 Million Tree Program at no cost to the County.

4.3.4 Tree Marking

Over 60 hectares of SDG County Forest was marked during 2020 by staff. All tree marking was done by certified tree markers and audited in compliance with FSC certification standards.

Tree marking completed during 2020 and included compartments SDG 11/12/13 (North Stormont) and SDG 90 (North Glengarry).

Tree marking completed during 2020 also contributed to the certification field requirements for various operational staff



4.3.5 Tenders

There was one tendered sales of forest products during 2020. Tender for Forest Resources SDG 90 was posted on October 2, 2020 and awarded on October 21, 2020.

4.3.6 Harvest

Table 5 provides a summary of forest products harvested from the SDG County Forest during 20. Forest operations commenced on November 2019 and were suspended on December 2019

in compliance with FSC operating standards due to deteriorating site conditions . The harvest will resume in August 2020.

Operations occurred on SDG Forest Compartments 20/21/22/23 in North Stormont near Monkland. The total harvest area was 45.8 hectares. To date 78% of the estimated wood volume has been processed. The County received \$15,308.16 to date.

Operations under Tender for Forest Resources SDG 11/12/13-2019 will commence in January 2021.

Table 5
Summary of Annual Harvest
2020

Harvest Year	Compartment(s)	Species ⁵	Estimated Volume (m³)	Actual Volume ⁶ (m³)	Harvest Area (ha.)	Value (gross)
2019-20	SDG 20/21/22/23	Pw	2,057.5	1,931.9	22.1	\$6,761.80
		Sw	1,654.3	1,562.5	23.7	\$12,031.58
Total			3,711.8	2,894.6	45.8	\$18,793.38

⁵ Pw-White Pine; Sw-White Spruce

⁶ Harvest suspended until August 2020