

## KEY INFORMATION REPORT

### Transportation Services

October 21, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Pre-Purchase of Nursery Trees for Regenerative Planting at SDG 20-21

#### BACKGROUND:

In 2019 and 2020, SDG Counties completed a white pine harvest at SDG 20-21. Although this was a successful harvest, unfortunately, in our area, natural regeneration of white pine does not occur in these stands. To successfully regenerate the site, site preparation and physical planting of trees (container stock) is required. The challenges with managing plantations have been intensified because of invasive species on the landscape. In some cases, Foresters can no longer rely on regeneration under conifer plantations, and need to actively manage these sites to control and enhance the biodiversity through intensive reforestation efforts.

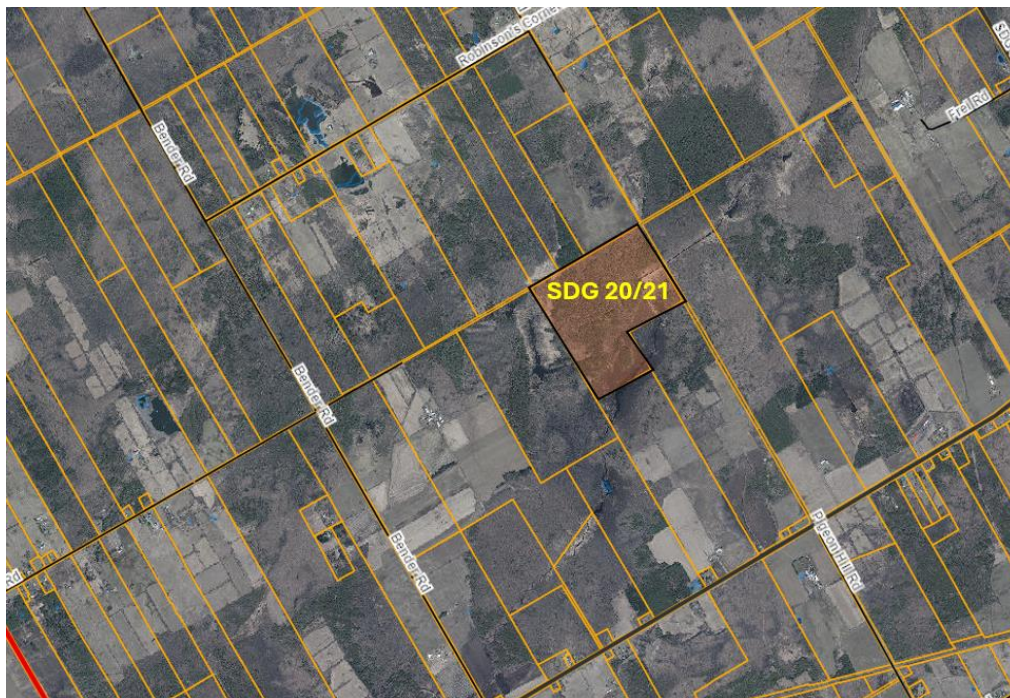


Figure 1: Location of SDG 20/21



Site preparation at SDG 20 / 21 has been underway over the past two years. In 2023 the mechanical site preparation was completed. This process was done with logging skidders that physically moved around soil and stumps throughout the harvested area. The purpose of the mechanical site preparation is to prepare the soil base for the planted trees through the digging, plowing and scraping of the overburden to provide new trees with ideal planting conditions.

The second part of the site preparation was completed in 2024 and consisted of chemical treatment. Chemical treatment is commonly employed in these situations to support planting areas and reduce competition from other vegetation.

The plan is to plant approximately 23,700 container stock white pine on this site in spring of 2025. To ensure that there is sufficient tree stock available, seedlings need to be put into production well in advance of the order so that they can grow and mature.

## **COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:**

This report is provided to Council to ensure that there are no objections to staff reserving the tree stock from the Ferguson Forest Center in advance of the 2025 budget. The purchase of the trees this year would commit the Counties to budgeting for and planting the trees in 2025.

The total cost for the trees is \$0.60 per tree, which equates to a total purchase of approximately \$14,220 plus tax. Delivery of the trees would be charged next year, and staff plan on having the trees brought to and stored at Larose Forest (United Counties of Prescott Russell), where they have tree cold-storage space available.

Based on savings realized throughout the year, the Forestry Division has sufficient funds to fully purchase the trees before year end. Tree nurseries typically only require a 25% deposit; however, staff are inquiring if the full purchase can be made to make use of funds from 2024 and assist with budget impacts next year.

Planting costs are expected to be approximately \$13,000 to \$15,000 based on estimated planting costs of approximately \$0.55 per tree. With Council's blessing, staff would also like to prepare and issue a request for proposal (RFP) from qualified planters this fall so that they are able to fill their work schedules in spring next year. The secondary benefit of issuing the tree planting RFP this fall is that it allows staff to accurately budget for the work next year.

Staff are also currently exploring options to secure external funding to support these planting efforts.

**Report Prepared by: Phil Duncan, SDG Forest Coordinator**