



Annual Report 2009-2010

Sixteen years ago FGCA started advocating for biodiversity conservation strategies that go beyond species conservation to recognize the importance of populations and genes. Since then threats to all levels of biodiversity have increased and especially climate change and new invasive alien species. But happily, 2009-10 was spent juggling opportunities to collaborate with an increasing number of partners addressing gene conservation.

Examples include the Rideau Valley CA's Eastern Ontario Butternut Archive, Maples Leaves Forever's incentives that promote source-identified maple stock in urban programs and Trees Ontario's plans to develop a seed collection area network to ensure supplies of high quality locally adapted seed. Landowners, despite reservations about ESA regulations are reporting healthy butternuts and expressing concern about beech and ash; new growers are asking about local seed for native species, and planting agencies are asking about assisted migration.

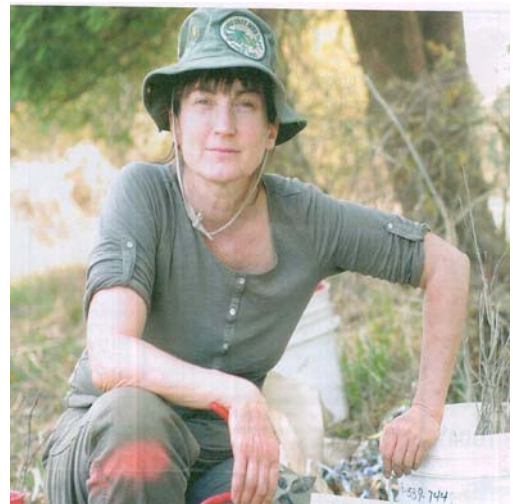
There were challenges and changes, especially on the OMNR front with the move of a large part of Forest Division to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The remaining Forest Branch refocused on Policy, while the operations of its Ontario Tree Seed Plant moved to MNR's Southern Region. But this move resulted in a new formal connection to Gary Nielsen, Climate Change Project Coordinator and MNR liaison with Trees Ontario and the 50 Million Tree Program - and our new FGCA Director.

We all need to connect more than ever - formally and informally - to share and interpret observations, to develop strategies, and to build capacity to conserve and restore southern Ontario's biodiversity. I look forward to another year of forging connections - especially those made in the field - even on the really hot days!

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This report is laid out in 5 sections as per our current FGCA Strategy and Objectives:

- I. Biologically Appropriate Reforestation** - Increase quality and quantity of source-identified, native species seed
- II. Forest Conservation & Management** - Increase awareness and use of genetic resource management principles to help conserve and improve existing native forests
- III. Species Conservation & Recovery** - Increase awareness of native species diversity and threats to their status.
- IV. Promotional Activities** - Increase awareness of FGCA program among forest management and conservation sectors in southern Ontario
- V. Administration** - Maintain a not for profit corporation and serve its membership. Please refer to the 2009/10 Financial Statement in a separate document.

I have bolded **people** and underlined organizations involved in various projects. Contact me if you are interested in hearing more detail on any of the items described briefly below.

I. Biologically Appropriate Reforestation

Ontario's Natural Selections Seed Source Certification Program

- Certified Seed Collector (CSC) Training
 - 3 Workshops Delivered to 65 participants by CSC instructors **Brian Swaile** and **Ron Thayer** in partnership with Trees Ontario and OMNR Ontario Tree Seed Plant, at the Seed Plant resulting in 45 new CSCs.
 - 2 1-day Mentoring Workshops at Ferguson Forest Centre & Conservation Halton to help approximately 30 new collectors develop field expertise and become more active.
- Program Development
 - Participated on OMNR/Trees Ontario advisory Committee re the 50 million Tree Program regarding seed management, new afforestation approaches and climate change
- Many SeedWhere analyses were completed to help direct use of source identified seed and stock to collectors, new and current growers and forest industry and planting agencies. Increasingly climate change trends were included in the analyses to help make the argument for better source identification of seed.
- Advised Maple Leaves Forever re native species and genetically appropriate stock standards in their incentive program to encourage municipalities and landscape growers to plant maple. MLF's incentive program resulted in the City of Ottawa requesting trees sourced from southern Ontario seed zones.

Building a Seed Source Network

- Seed supply management - contributed to Trees Ontario and the 50 MTP seed management plan which includes establishment of a network of seed production areas for many species along with white pine seed orchard management.

White pine seed orchard management

- Cone beetle management - this year was limited to monitoring in some orchards and beetled cone picking at Taylor Lake by Ontario Stewardship Rangers to reduce the population.
- Crown Management - Remedial topping methods were continued to maintain crop accessibility and thinning to maintain crown health while retaining as many clones as possible:
 - Topping in Cayuga (7E) managed by **Terry Schwan**, OMNR Guelph and the Haldimand and Area Woodlot Association,
 - Toppng in Scugog (6E w) managed by **Barb Boysen**, FGCA and **Laurie Uetz** of Durham Stewardship,
 - Toppng in Conger (5E w) managed by **Ken Webb** of Westwind Forest Stewardship (SFL).
 - Thinning - 1 in 4 trees removed in Taylor Lake (6E e) (see top photo)
- 2009 Crop - Generally a poor year with an extended maturing timeline in comparison to recent years:
 - Scugog (6E w) ~ 70 HI, (see cones photo on right)
 - Glencairn (6E w) > 17 HI



Realised Gain Trial

- Two of 3 RGT's were planted this spring with the help of Westwind Forest Stewardship and OMNR ON Forest Research Institute staff in the Districts of Parry Sound (under shelterwood - photo on near right) and Pembroke (old field site).
- The Kemptville Ferguson Forest Trial was tended with the help of Ferguson Forest Centre and is growing well (see photo at right)



Climate Change

- Worked with Southwestern Ontario Stewardship, Trees Ontario and NRCAN partners on an OMNR Climate Change Initiative Project to develop and test assisted migration guidelines with local landowners, with the goal of establishing potential seed production areas. Detailed planning occurred for an April 2010 red oak/white oak trial with a landowner near Woodstock.
- Used SeedWhere climate analysis program to guide questions from consumers and growers about seed movement under climate change
- Participated in OMNR Science led meeting on assisted migration research (September 2009)

II. Forest Conservation & Management

Partner Collaboration:

- Contributed to OMNR's Southern Region Forest Forum and Planning Unit
- Participated on OMNR Southern Ontario Forest Task Team (SOFFT)
 - Topics: municipal by-laws, sustainable forest management practices, urban forestry, forests and natural heritage systems, managing crown lands in southern Ontario and invasive exotics.

III. Species Conservation

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- participated on Standing Technical Committee and the subcommittee on gene conservation guidelines (by conference call) and the development of Butternut Guidelines.

Butternut Conservation

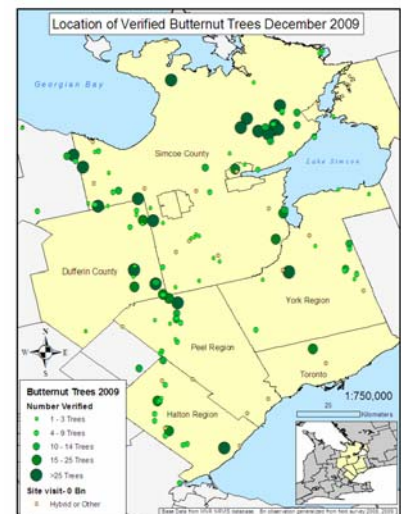
- Re new *Endangered Species Act 2007* and the exemptions for butternut (Section 5 of O. Reg. 242/08) - working with the MNR SAR staff, **Barb Boysen** ...
 - Led the delivery of 7 workshops for hundreds of participants wanting to be OMNR designated Butternut Health Assessors using FGCA presentations, manual, and forms.
 - Reviewed tree removal permit conditions that would require planting or cloning of trees to result in an over all benefit to the species (ESA, 2007, Section 17 - 2c)
- FGCA received a Grant of \$106,000 from OMNR Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to work with 6 local recovery programs from Huron County in the west to greater eastern Ontario to undertake:
 - landowner communications material - website, posters, new Landowner Guide re planting and stand management;
 - butternut grafting and archiving capacity in eastern and central Ontario
 - health assessments on private land to locate seed crops and putatively resistant trees.



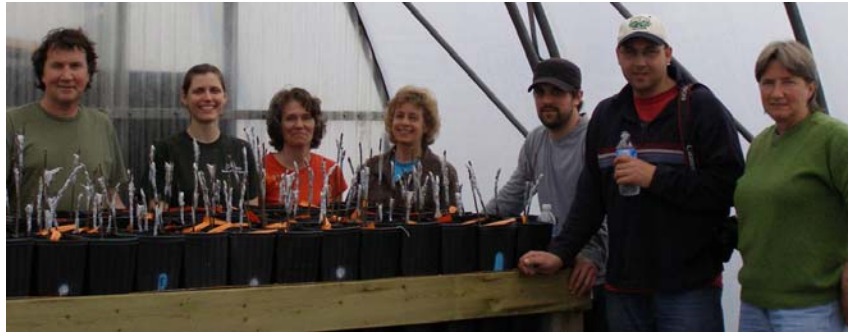
Examples of butternut locations/assessments done by:

<- local program managed by **Steve Bowers, Huron Stewardship Council;**

local program managed by **Greg Bales, Aurora and Midhurst District Stewardship Councils** - >



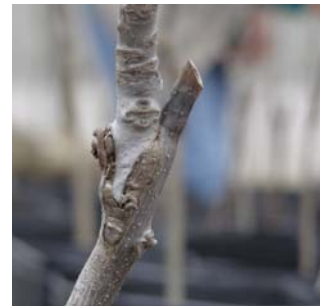
- A Butternut Grafting Workshop and Manual project was supported by \$10,000 from Forest Genetics Ontario. The manual is in progress and a March 22-23 training workshop was held at Ferguson Forest Centre to graft 10 putatively resistant trees from eastern and central Ontario. Workshop leaders Rose Fleguel of Rideau Valley CA and Sylvia Greifenhagen and Glenna Halicki-Hayden of OMNR Ontario Forest Research Institute taught 'students' from other local recovery programs who want to develop grafting capacity and butternut archives in their own areas.



Greg Bales & Madelaine Danby of Aurora Midhurst recovery program
Sylvia Greifenhagen and **Glenna Halicki-Hayden** of OMNR OFRI
Al Winters of Aurora Midhurst recovery program
Kevin Hansen of Kingston & Area recovery program
Rose Fleguel of RVCA recovery program

Butternut scion grafted onto black walnut rootstock April 2009, FFC, by Rideau Valley CA butternut recovery program technician, **Rose Fleguel**

Central Ontario Landowner, **J Laking**, whose putatively resistant butternut was grafted in March 2010



IV. Promotional Activities

Presentations:

- Trent University - Forest Management Class - MNR forest programs
- Fleming College - Forest Renewal Class - Forest Genetic Diversity
- Ontario Maple Syrup Association meeting in Lanark County - Climate Change and Sugar maple
- Grey County Woodlot Meeting - Butternut conservation
- Chinese Delegation, Markham Ontario - Forest Gene Conservation in Southern Ontario
- Ontario Woodlot Association Annual General Meeting Display

Website:

- Our website was over due for some updates which have occurred with plans for more in 2010

V. Administration

Forest Genetics Ontario, (FGCA is 1 of 3 regional members) underwent a significant review with several recommendations made to improve our effectiveness. Brian Swaile and Monique Rolf Von Den Baumen-Clark sat on the FGO Board representing FGCA.

FGCA Strategy - **Brian Swaile**, **Ed Patchell**, and **Glenn McLeod** provided guidance to finalise this work

FGCA Board - Brian Barkley retired last year from the Eastern Ontario Model Forest and is not standing for re-election to our Board. Brian has deep roots in genetic resource management and we appreciated his valuable input on the Board and look forward to continued connections with him as an FGCA member.