



Szabo Forest Management Plan

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**St. Clair Region
Conservation Authority
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1.0 Introduction

For more than 15 years, the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and the County of Lambton have had a very successful partnership for the maintenance and development of the Perch Creek Habitat Management Area (HMA) and Marthaville HMA. In 2008, the County renewed contracts for maintenance of these two properties and added additional ones including Szabo Forest for Authority management. This management plan (10 year operational plan) was initially written to act as an appendix to the master agreement. It was to provide direction to the Authority for the management of Szabo Forest, as well as a guide for the costs associated with the required management.

In order to develop management recommendations, properties managed by the Authority are broken down into subunits known as Vegetation Management Units (VMUs). Generally, each VMU is composed of a certain plant community, habitat, and/or landuse. If relevant, forest inventories are conducted and basic description of the history, soil type, herbaceous plants, wildlife features of each VMU are provided. This information is used to develop recommendations for each VMU individually and for the Management Area as a whole. Since Szabo Forest is relatively small, it only has one VMU which is a plantation.

Key recommendations for the Szabo are as follows:

1. Regular trail maintenance (trail modifications, extensions, and improvements).
2. Trees affected by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) should be removed and the affected area re-planted.
3. Exotic and invasive species (mulberry, purging buckthorn) should be removed.





2.0 Property Location and Description

The Szabo Forest is located in north Wyoming, within the Township of Plympton-Wyoming, at Lot 16 Concession III.

The entire property, including Lambton County administrative offices that front onto Broadway Street, is 4.3 hectares. The plantation, 2.8 hectares, is located northeast of the administrative buildings and parking lot (Map 1 and Map 2). The surrounding property uses include agriculture and residential properties.

Map 1. Location of Szabo Forest



Map 2. Vegetation Managements Unit Inventory



3.0 Vegetation Management Unit Inventory

In order to develop a management plan, properties managed by the Authority are broken down into subunits known as Vegetation Management Units (VMUs). Generally, each VMU is composed of a certain plant community, habitat, and/or landuse.

Recommendations are normally given for each VMU separately and for the Management Area as a whole. Since the entire Szabo Forest is a fairly uniform plantation there is only one VMU for this property.

VMU 1. Plantation

Area 2.8 hectares

Soils Clay

Drainage Imperfect to poor

History This area was purchased, in the late 1970s, as part of the building site for the County Administrative Services Building. In 1992 the Ministry of Natural Resources planted the site (replacement trees through Union Gas). In 2001, St. Clair Conservation refilled the plantation in areas with high mortality. Trails have been added to the site to provide opportunities for passive recreation. This plantation was then named Szabo Forest in memory of Peter Szabo in 2007. Mr. Szabo was a dedicated staff member killed on a job site. Additional trees are planted on the site in memory of County Councilors and staff.

<i>Species Composition</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Height (m)</i>	<i>DBH (cm)</i>	<i>Condition</i>
	Norway spruce	30	5	4	Good to fair
	Green ash	30	6	6	Good
	White cedar	25	4	6	Good to fair
	White pine	10	8	16	Good to fair
	Other species*	5			

* Silver maple, Manitoba maple, black walnut, sycamore, honey locust, white mulberry, and burr oak.

Shrubs and Vines Choke cherry and purging buckthorn

Herbaceous Plants Goldenrod, asters and grasses along the edges

Diseases and Insects None observed

Canopy closure 90% to 50%



*Ten Year
Management*

- An annual maintenance program for passive recreation is required for this area which includes, trail modifications, extensions and improvements due to wet terrain.
- In the 0.8 hectare block of ash, removal of the dead trees effected by EAB and replanting will be required, as there is no regeneration of trees in the under story to naturally regenerate the area.
- Removing the non-native invasive species of mulberry and purging buckthorn would benefit the area.
- The continued planting of native trees especially in the open areas will continue as part of the memorial tree planting the county has established for the site.
- Fence the southern edge of the woodlot to protect from influences of abutting subdivision.



4.0 General Management Strategies

The key priority at Szabo Forest is passive recreation, followed by wildlife and environmental protection (Table 1). From these priorities, specific management strategies are as follows:

1. Regular trail maintenance (trail modifications, extensions, and improvements).
2. Trees affected by EAB should be removed and effected area re-planted.
3. Exotic and invasive species (mulberry, purging buckthorn) should be removed.

Table 1. Summary of Current Use and Projected Priority

VMU #	Area Ha	Current Use	Goal Priority				
			Continue current use (y/n)?	Environmental Protection	Wildlife	Recreation	Forest products
1	2.8	Tree Pl	y	3	2	1	0

0-Not a goal/priority

Recommendations adopted by Council October 19, 2011

1. Continue/strengthen environmental (including control of invasive species) and wildlife enhancement while allowing safe and passive use by the Public.
2. Restrict use as follows:
 - Dogs - must be leashed
 - Motorized vehicles (ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles, etc.) - not permitted
 - Horseback riding - permitted on trails only at walking speed
 - Hunting - not permitted
 - Bicycles - permitted on trails only at recreational speeds (no extreme or bicycle-cross)
3. Focus on pedestrian use initially and consider multi-use trails in the future should demand warrant.
4. Erect signage with regards to: intended use, hours (daylight use only), ownership, property boundaries, interpretive areas, and trail designation.



Appendix A. Tree and Shrub Species of Szabo Forest 2008

Abbr.	Common Name	Scientific Name
Ag	Green ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>
Cw	White cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>
Ms	Silver maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>
Mm	Manitoba maple	<i>Acer negundo</i>
	White mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i>
Ob	Bur oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>
Lh	Honey locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>
Pw	White pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>
Sn	Norway spruce	<i>Picea abies</i>
Sy	Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>
Wb	Black walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>
	Purging buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>
Pv	Choke cherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>

