



Final Funding Report Ontario Kirtland's Warbler Restoration Initiative

To: Ontario Wildlife Foundation

Submitted by: Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

Date: September 30, 2025

The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) has continued its partnership with the Ontario Kirtland's Warbler Working Group, a group of dedicated conservationists that have come together to better understand Kirtland's Warblers in Ontario and to identify and restore suitable nesting habitat for this species. This collaborative includes GEI Consultants, Birk's Natural Heritage Consultants, The Nature Conservancy of Canada, Mary Gartshore, Fleming College's School of Environmental and Natural Resources Sciences, Simcoe County Forest, the American Bird Conservancy, and the U.S. Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team.

The Kirtland's Warbler serves as a flagship species for this initiative, highlighting the importance of restoring lost oak-pine habitats. These habitats support a diverse range of flora and fauna, including several species at risk such as the Grasshopper Sparrow, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Whippoorwill, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Hognosed Snake, Monarch Butterfly, and American Bumblebee.

Project Update

The restoration to date has taken place in Northumberland County at the MapleCross Featherstone Nature Reserve, owned by ORMLT. The first field, FMSC 8, was seeded in fall of 2023 and planted with trees in 2024. The site is showing amazing progress and is already teeming with life. Trees like Jack Pine, Red Pine, White Pine, and Red Oak are showing excellent survival rates. Plants including Yellow Wood Grass, Grey Goldenrod, Early Goldenrod, Arrow-leaved Aster, Yellow Wood Grass, Poverty Oat Grass, Kalm's Brome, Wild Bergamot, Black-eyed Susan and more are thriving and providing habitat to a host of species. The fields are being enjoyed by hundreds of Eastern Common Bumblebees, a Yellow-banded bumblebee, Field sparrows, Vesper sparrows, American pipits, Juncos, grasshoppers, crickets Monarchs and more. We were able to install automatic recording units (ARU) to monitor for Common nighthawks and Eastern Whippoorwill this past summer, and a stationary sonar detector to monitor for bats. The analysis is being done by a third party, and we are awaiting those results. We will be happy to share any positive results when we get those.

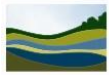


Figure 1 FMSC 8 Before planting – Nov 2023

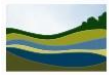


Figure 2- FMSC 8 first year after seeding - Aug 2024



Figure 3 – FMSC 8 second year after seeding and planting - Jul 2025

The seed collected last fall was cleaned and another 17.5 hectares were seeded this spring (due to weather delays) with 234 kilograms of native seeds, containing 85 different species. Despite the drought, early results are showing great progress.



OAK RIDGES MORaine LAND TRUST



Figure 4 Aerial view of FMSC 5, 6 and 7 , facing north, before they were seeded in 2025.



Figure 5 - FMSC 5 taken April 2023, facing north



Figure 6 - FMSC 5 first season after seeded in 2025, facing south

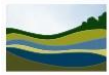


Figure 7 - FMSC 5 taken July 2025, facing east

To date, we begun the restoration of close to 30 hectares of marginal farmland by seeding and planting native grasses, sedges, vines, flowers, shrubs and trees. The remaining fields, totaling 20.4 hectares, will be seeded this fall and planted next spring, which is not part of this funding, but is part of the larger project.

Communications

Since our last update, we have created a video update which has been shared on our social media sites and to our newsletter list of over 3,500 people. The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/dE8HeJVR-dQ>.

Use of Funds

The funds provided by the Ontario Wildlife Federation have contributed to the collection, and cleaning of 235 kg of native seeds of plants, grasses, sedges, shrubs, and trees which were used to seed 17.5 ha of marginal farmland as part of this restoration project.

We are very grateful to have the Ontario Wildlife Federation be part of this amazing project. We again invite the OWF board or staff to visit the site at Featherstone to see this project firsthand. To arrange for a site visit, or for any questions, please contact Aileen Barclay, Director, Conservation and Operations: aileen@oakridgesmoraine.org or 905-939-3333 x2