

Final Report: Restoration of a Pine Plantation at George G. Newton Nature Reserve

A Report Prepared for the Ontario Wildlife Foundation

September 30, 2026



Project Overview & Site Context

George G. Newton Nature Reserve (GGNNR) is a 33-hectare property located between Goderich and Bayfield in the municipality of Central Huron, within Treaty 29 territory. The property features a forested ravine dominated by mature eastern white cedar, stands of upland mixed hardwood, and an aging white pine plantation reaching the end of its natural lifespan.

Invasive glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) had established heavy concentrations throughout the pine plantation, suppressing native understory regeneration. Funding support from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation enabled Ontario Nature, in partnership with Huron-Bruce Nature (HBN) and the Invasive Species Centre, to execute targeted invasive species management, community planting, and public outreach to transition this declining plantation into a resilient, biodiverse native forest.

Summary of Completed Activities & Achievements

1. Fall 2025 Restoration Phase

- **Invasive Species Removal:** On October 24, 2025, 11 community volunteers used extractigators to manually remove buckthorn across 0.75 hectares.
- **Native Re-planting:** On October 26, 2025, 10 volunteers planted 65 large-stock native trees and shrubs within the managed area to withstand winter deer browse.

2. Winter & Spring 2026 Treatment Phase

- **Mechanical & Chemical Control:** In early 2026, Ontario Nature staff executed chainsaw control on large-diameter stems (>10cm DBH) that were too large for extractigators. Due to the Canadian discontinuation of Lalcide Chondro, stems were treated using cut stump application of Garlon RTU to prevent resprouting.
- **Spring Follow-Up Event:** On May 24, 2026, a second community event was hosted to address seedbank flush, treat remaining regrowth, and planted an additional 200 native herbaceous plants to fill canopy gaps. Herbaceous plants include wild ginger, Canada anemone, white snakeroot and tufted hairgrass. An additional 0.11 ha of garlic mustard was removed in the restoration area alongside this planting.

3. Outreach, Education & Capacity Building

- **Volunteer Training:** Volunteers were trained in Best Management Practices for identifying and removing buckthorn. Extractigators purchased for this project remain with Huron-Bruce Nature stewards for ongoing management.
- **Digital Outreach:** 2 social media posts were published on Ontario Nature Facebook channel to highlight project milestones and educate the public on buckthorn identification, which resulted in almost 100 engagements.

Key Project Outcomes & Metrics

Metric / Objective	Target	Final Result Achieved
Area of Buckthorn Managed	~1.0 ha	~0.75ha
Native Trees & Shrubs Planted	100+ stems	65 native trees and shrubs + 200 herbaceous plants
Community Volunteers Engaged	20+ volunteers	20 volunteers
Buckthorn Suppression Rate	~95% control	100%

Long-Term Stewardship & Next Steps

Through Ontario Nature’s Nature Reserve program, GGNNR is stewarded in perpetuity in close collaboration with Huron-Bruce Nature. Annual monitoring visits will continue to track plant survival rates, monitor canopy gap succession, and manually pull buckthorn seedlings emerging from the seedbank.

Final Financial Summary

Total Project Budget: \$13,438.89 | OWF Grant Award: \$3,466.50

Expense Category	OWF Budget	OWF Actual	Variance / Notes
Equipment & Supplies (Chainsaw, safety gear, treatment)	\$1,025.00	\$1294.60	chainsaw, batteries, chainsaw chaps, protective face covering, helmet, hearing protection. Partial funds for one additional battery re-allocated here from plant material.
Native Trees & Shrubs	\$1,200.00	\$927	Purchased 65 native trees and shrubs (varying between 1-3

			gallon pots)
Equipment & Logistics (Portable washrooms)	\$200.00	\$203.40	Covers fall/spring events.
Project Administration (10%)	\$256.50	\$256.50	Fully allocated
TOTAL OWF GRANT EXPENSES	\$3,466.50	\$3,466.50	

**Matching support for remaining project costs (\$9,972.39) was provided by the Invasive Species Centre (\$4,183.33 cash) alongside in-kind contributions from Ontario Nature (\$3,683.50) and Huron-Bruce Nature (\$500).*

Ontario Nature is deeply grateful for the Ontario Wildlife Foundation’s generous support. Your partnership made it possible to restore critical forest habitat, empower local community volunteers, and safeguard the ecological integrity of George G. Newton Nature Reserve for years to come.