

Help needed for local tree planting initiatives

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) is calling out for volunteers to help with tree planting initiatives set to take place in the coming weeks.

On May 1, from 9 a.m. until noon, NVCA staff will be hosting an event to plant native trees and shrubs along the banks of the Pine River on Airport Rd, near Mansfield and Creemore. Volunteers will be given an orientation and tutorial on tree planting before helping to plant around 150 native trees and shrubs.

“The trees that we're planting are little seedlings with bare roots so we don't have to dig a huge hole and place a potted tree,” explained Laura Wensink, river restoration technician for NVCA. “This is really kid friendly if anyone wants to come with their family, youth group or another community group. We encourage individuals, families and community groups to come – everyone is welcome.”

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority has been running a river restoration project for the last five years known as the Nottawasaga River Restoration Program, which looks to improve water quality, native fish habitat and stabilize stream banks from erosion. A key component of NVCA's large river restoration project has been their tree planting initiatives.

“The tree planting is part of a much larger strategic initiative and not just a standalone,” said Fred Dobbs, NVCA's manager of Stewardship. “It's an integral part of these larger river habitat and water quality improvement projects we're reworking on.”

Last year, the NVCA conducted a temperature study on the Pine River and found that moving downstream, towards Airport Rd, the rate of warming was much higher and this, in part, is due to the lack of tree cover along the river.

“It's in great shape down to almost Airport Rd, but when you drive by Airport Rd, you see a landscape that's been pretty modified by human beings in the past including older agricultural property,” said Dobbs. “We're trying to do tree planting right at those critical transition zones where really healthy, cold, high quality trout stream starts to get impacted a little bit.”

Through restoring tree cover along the Pine River, NVCA expects to see improved habitat for native fish, reduction in erosion on stream banks, and a reduction in algae growth which will improve overall water quality.

“There's so much good that trees can do there,” said Wensink.

“Whether you're into fisheries and recreation or you just want a healthy river that your kids can play in, the habitat restoration work sort of addresses both priorities,” said Dobbs.

More than 20 species of trees and shrubs will be planted during the May 1 event.

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority will also be hosting a tree planting event in partnership with the Mono Headwaters Streams Committee on May 15 in the Hockley.

Registration is required prior to the events and can be done by visiting the NVCA website at www.nvca.on.ca. The conservation authority is aiming to have around 30 to 40 volunteers per site, and is open to students looking to get their volunteer hours.

The event will take place rain or shine. Volunteers are encouraged to wear rubber boots or closed toed shoes as well as bring weather

appropriate clothes, sunscreen, bug spray, water, a lunch, and work gloves.

?Let's plant some trees that will benefit the rest of the river for generations to come,? said Wensink.