

Buffer Zone Project

In the Spring of 2013 the Woodlot Owners Association made a presentation to the Legislative Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Forestry related to buffer zones and a number of restrictions the government has imposed on woodlot owners.

Under the current rules the government prohibits almost all activity on the forested buffer zones. In our presentation, we identified a number of activities that should be allowed in the forested buffer zone. In our view, these activities would actually improve the buffer zone over time. Our main point was that the buffer zone needs to be properly managed.

The government has not changed any of the rules related to the buffer zone but instead suggested a pilot project under which specific activities would be allowed.

In the fall of 2013 representatives of the Woodlot Owners Association had several meetings with the departments of , Labour and Justice and Agriculture and Forestry., and Environment and the Watershed Alliance to agree on the details of this pilot project.

The main goal was to ensure that activities allowed under this project should improve the buffer zones over time.

The details are as follows.

- You must be a member of the Woodlot Owners Association to participate.
- You must have a forest management plan that specifies the work to be done.
- The woodlot owner must complete a course from environment concerning what is allowed and what is not allowed.
- If someone other than the owner is doing the work, they must also take the above course.

Under this pilot project harvesting trees in the buffer zone is allowed but the cutting must be done by hand (chain saws) and no heavy equipment is allowed in the buffer zone. Forestry will inspect the sites after the work is complete to ensure compliance with the rules.

In the Fall of 2014 a number of wood lot owners and forestry technicians completed the required course. Additional courses will be held if sufficient woodlot owners are interested.