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Winter 2026

# Woodland PEI

Newsletter of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association



*Butternut Canker - An Extinction Event on PEI?*

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- **A Tour of Winter Woodlot Tours**
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# 15th Annual General Meeting - April 11

## Linkletter Community Hall

- ✱ Registration, 9am. Opening remarks, 9:30. Presentations, 10:00. Lunch, 12:00.
- ✱ Guest Speakers:
  - Susannah Banks**: Chair of Canadian Forest Owners.
  - Julie-Lynn Zahavich**: Forest Conservation Specialist
  - Joel Tremblay**: Management Forester with the Government of Prince Edward Island
  - Derek D. Key KC**: Key Murray Law.
- ✱ Snacks, coffee and a catered lunch. Door prizes (win a chain saw!)  
Information tables on topics like fire protection, carbon pricing and “2-Billion Trees”

Register at [PEIWOA.CA](http://PEIWOA.CA)

## Women in Forestry Seminar – March 14, 2026

### Tracadie Community Centre

In many countries, including Canada, the forestry sector’s workforce has traditionally been male-dominated. Despite this longstanding trend, women are increasingly making significant contributions to the industry. According to data from Statistics Canada’s 2021 Census, women make up 19% of the overall forest sector labour force.

Female representation is notably strongest within specific forestry occupations. Women comprise 33% of logging and forestry labourers and 20% of forestry technologists and technicians. These figures highlight the growing involvement of women in key roles within the Canadian forestry sector.

In recognition of International Women’s Day on March 8, 2026, and the International Day of Forests on March 21, 2026, the PEI Woodlot Owners Association, with generous support from the PEI Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species at Risk (FLPP), is proud to host a Women in Forestry Seminar Day. This special event will take place on March 14, 2026, at the Tracadie Community Centre.

This full-day event will celebrate the knowledge, leadership, and experiences of women working in and connected to forestry across the region. The morning will feature keynote presentations from:

**Helena Perry** - Independent Consultant | Chartered Herbalist

**Kate MacQuarrie**- MSc - Director, Forests, Fish & Wildlife, Government of PEI Land and Environment

**Mary Jane Rodger**-MFC, RPF — Executive Director, Medway Community Forest Co- operative (Nova Scotia) and Nova Scotia Working Woodlands Trust

In the afternoon, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in an interactive panel discussion featuring women who are actively working in the forested habitats of Prince Edward Island.

**Sarah Champion** – Educator – Macphail Woods

**Joanna LeClair** – Provincial Forest Technician - Government of PEI - Land and Environment

**Hanna Murnaghan** – Watershed Coordinator - Morell River Management Cooperative

**Jennifer Woods** - Lead Forestry Technician – Macphail Woods

Space is limited, so please register through [www.peiwoa.ca](http://www.peiwoa.ca) under the events section.

# Invasive update: Butternut Canker and Oak

## Butternut Canker

As an Invasive Species Technician with the PEI Invasive Species Council (PEIISC), Clay Cutting is always on the lookout for what he actually doesn't want to find.. a newly arrived invasive species.



*Extensive canker on Butternut stem  
(Photo: PEIISC)*

One day in August 2024, while doing a guided walk for the town of Stratford, Clay noticed the butternut trees he encountered were not doing so well. He was aware that a disease called Butternut canker was present in the region, although not yet recorded on PEI. He took some photos but at the time there was no funding for further study, so he had to wait till the spring of 2025 to proceed with further investigation. In the meantime, he reached out to the Forest Gene Conservation Association in Ontario, which specializes in preserving the genetics of species. They advised that there were no lookalike species in our area resembling Butternut canker, so it was likely that the disease Clay observed was in fact Butternut Canker. That was not good news.

Butternut canker is a fatal tree disease for which there is no known treatment. It is caused by a fungus and spread by sap-sucking insects, root grafts and water. The hallmark signal of the disease is the cankers, found along the trunk, branches, or in a place where a branch emerges from a trunk. Cankers take the form of a small depression surrounded by a ring of scar tissue where the tree has tried to heal itself. During wet conditions the canker will exude a sooty black substance.

It was first described in the state of Wisconsin in 1979. In short order it moved into Quebec (1990), Ontario (1991) and New Brunswick (1997). In Ontario it is estimated that the fungus has killed 80% of Butternut trees in the province. There is little reason to expect a different outcome in PEI. Butternut trees appear to have no resistance to the fungus and there is no known treatment.



*Ophiognomonia clavignenti-juglandacearum  
The unpronounceable fungus causing Butternut  
canker*

Early this past June, Clay went out with Charlottetown City staff to sample some trees.

Most of the trees they encountered had symptoms of Butternut canker. Photos were sent to Canadian Forest Service scientists in New Brunswick for verification. Genetic testing has not been done yet, but Clay suggests, "based on all evidence, we can certainly say that it's here." Prior to his 2024 discovery, the aim was to offer PEI as a Butternut canker-free zone. That plan has been abandoned.

While there are no truly resistant trees, there are some trees that display a higher level of tolerance to the fungus. The Forest Gene Conservation Association in Ontario hasn't been able to find any specific genes that would give trees the ability to survive the canker, so their aim has become finding trees that can withstand the canker long enough to reproduce. It seems the canker does worse in some areas and better in others, so certain growing conditions seem to be less favourable to the canker.

For Clay Cutting, "The dream would be to find a resistant tree. That hasn't happened yet. We don't have that silver bullet. We do have those more tolerant trees. But as yet there is no fungicide."



*Butternut canker: another great reason to drop off-Island firewood in the bins at Gateway Village and Wood Islands. (Photo: PEIISC)*

Until the 'magic bullet' of a resistant tree is found or a fungicide developed, the only available means of control is to destroy infected Butternuts in order to lower the fungal load threatening uninfected trees.

This is a very sad option for someone like Clay Cutting who devotes himself to the protection of trees like the Butternut, a federally registered species at risk and an endangered species specifically because of the impacts of the canker.

At present there is no species-at-risk funding directly devoted to butternut canker study. Butternut as a species is not economically important and tends to be overlooked by the administrators of funding streams. Butternut canker is the kind of invasive species that makes Clay Cutting's job really interesting, but also really sad. "Not a lot of people are looking into it. Not a lot of people seem to care. Realistically we could lose, eventually, all Butternuts. We are living through the functional extinction of one of our tree species. [There's] not a huge diversity of species here in Canada, and to lose an entire species is quite significant for us."

And so Butternuts must be added to the growing list of trees under threat on PEI. The fungus causing Butternut canker has a first cousin that attacks European Larch. White, green and black ash are under attack from the emerald Ash borer. Our Eastern Hemlock are threatened by the Hemlock wooly adelgid. Beech is assailed by several diseases including the ubiquitous Beech bark canker. Even our provincial tree, the mighty northern red oak, is in the cross-hairs of a fungal disease for which there is no fungicide and which can kill a red oak in a matter of weeks or months. The disease is Oak wilt. It is present in 24 American states and was recently identified for the first time in Canada.

### Oak Wilt

Oak Wilt is not in PEI yet. It first showed up in Canada in 2023, in Niagara Falls, in nearby Niagara On The Lake, and in the Township of Springwater, near Barrie. The infected trees were destroyed, no symptoms were noticed in any other trees and there have been no new detections since then, so it is hoped the disease has been stopped in Ontario for the time being. But Oak wilt remains widespread in the central U.S, ranging from Texas to the shores of the Great Lakes. The nature of infection varies with oak species. White Oak tends to be a bit more resilient than our native Northern Red Oak, which is probably the most drastically affected of the oak species. According to the Ontario provincial government website, red oaks can die within 2 to 12 months of infection.

Symptoms appear first in the leaves which show a distinctive and expanding brown pattern of decay, starting at the leaf margins and moving into the leaf center. The pattern has a hard, distinct edge, not a gradient, as the fungal decay advances. The border between healthy and infected leaf area is brown on one side and instantly green on the other, with the brown area moving steadily inwards. The disease also produces 'pressure pads', spore-producing fungal mats that grow under the bark of infected, usually dead, trees.

These pads exert pressure, splitting the bark to release a sweet, 'juicy-fruit' odour that attracts sap beetles which then carry fungal spores to uninfected trees.

Oak wilt can also spread underground, through root connections. Just as roots can transport nutrients and information, they can also enable the flow of microscopic oak wilt spores. One method of protecting wilt-free oak from nearby infested trees is to dig a trench between the trees to sever all those root connections.

Another protective measure is to avoid pruning trees during the season when sap beetles are going to be active. The pruning process wounds the tree making it more attractive to sap-feeding beetles. Also, cleaning tools between cuts and between trees can reduce the risk of spreading the disease during the pruning process.



*Brown decay pattern on Oak leaf  
(Photo: Hamilton Conservation Authority)*



*Oak Wilt Fungal Mat  
(Photo: PEIISC)*

PEI may currently be free of Oak wilt but the recent Ontario experience should be a wake-up call. Clay Cutting suggests that going forward we need to be careful about importing oak saplings or seedlings or moving oak wood. If the disease is detected on PEI, the infected tree(s), including stumps, should immediately be destroyed and root connections severed. Before taking action, report the disease observation to the PEIISC to they can confirm the presence of Oak wilt and survey the surrounding area. Contact the PEIISC at [peiinvasives@gmail.com](mailto:peiinvasives@gmail.com).

As we keep our eyes peeled for Oak wilt, it should be remembered that there are a number of lookalikes. Bacterial Leaf Scorch looks like Oak wilt, although with a gradient of leaf colours rather than a clearly defined green/brown divide. Several diseases also discolour leaves in separate 'spots'; Anthracnose creates black splotches.

And if you are the proud owner of a towering chestnut tree, you'll want to stay alert. The Oak wilt fungus has been confirmed on Chinese, American, and European chestnut trees.

# 2 Billion Trees Program - Not Dead Yet!

The headlines last November loudly announced the ‘scrapping’ of the federal government’s 2 Billion Trees Program (2BTP):

“Liberals scrapping 2 billion trees target..” (CBC)

“2 Billion Trees program has been cut..” (David Suzuki Foundation)

“Budget will scrap program to plant two billion trees” (Globe and Mail)

But based on a recent conversation with Jacob Read, PEI’s 2BTP coordinator, it appears reports of the programs’s death may have been exaggerated.\*\*

While it is true that 2BTP is no longer accepting funding applications and any future federal funding has indeed been ‘axed’, commitments or contracts that have already been made with the 2BTP are still going forward. The Province of PEI has a 2BTP contract in place until the end of 2030. The federal government is contractually committed to funding the province’s goal of planting 300,000 trees per year to the end of 2030. It’s expected that by the end of 2030 about 2.1 million trees will have been planted on PEI through the 2BTP.

The 2BTP was announced in 2020 but Jacob Read says it took a while to expand the provincial nursery, sign various agreements and grow the seedlings needed to meet the program’s ambitious planting goals. On PEI, planting began in 2023. Planting programs were initially focused on municipalities, so the first groups to received trees were in communities that had parks or recreational areas damaged by Fiona. Then the federal government started their own municipal program, so the province started concentrating their planting resources more on landowners. So far, hundreds of landowners have applied for plantings, and according to Jacob Read, there’s room for many more.

“There’s absolutely room and people can keep applying. We’ve had close to 300 people apply in the last couple of weeks. There’s been a bit of a surge recently but not huge, so there’s steady demand for tree planting.”



*Clearing Fiona damage is not done by the 2 Billion Trees Program.  
Fiona cleanup is the responsibility of the landowner.  
(Photo: D.M.)*

There are 6 species available for plantings: white spruce, white pine, yellow birch, white birch, red maple and eastern hemlock (when seed stocks available). Sugar maple is not included because many of the plantings are in open areas and sugar maple is a shade-loving tree. PEI plantings are focused on open areas because the original intent of the province was to boost the amount of forested area. After Fiona, some effort was shifted into replanting damaged forest areas, but the original intent of boosting erosion control and carbon sequestration remains, so creating new forest is still an important goal.

Planting requests can be big or small. Jacob Read says they can plant as few as 50 trees for a cleared yard, all the way to several hectares, e.g. for retired cropland. There's a monetary incentive of \$650 per hectare to convert land from agriculture to forest.

Initial applications for planting come from landowners, Jacob then sends the application either to the PEI Watershed Alliance (if it's less than a hectare) or to a provincial forestry technician (if a hectare or greater). From there, the planting is arranged either by the watershed group or the provincial forestry technician.

#### Harvesting Contractors List 2025

CONTRACTOR	CONTACT NAME	ADDRESS	COMMUNITY	POSTAL CODE	COUNTY	PHONE NUMBER
Arsenault Sawmill		94 Arsenault Mill Rd	PO Box 29, Richmond	COB 1Y0	Prince	902-854-2210
Bob MacDonald		3391 Seven Mile Rd	Glenfanning	COA 1G0	Prince	902-969-0203
Glen Wood	Glen Wood	PO Box 12	Coleman	COB 1H0	Prince	902-859-2811
Jamie Wallace		493 Rte 14	Coleman	COB 1H0	Prince	902-853-7966
Joe O'Connor Inc.		766 Newton Rd	RR#1, Kinkora	COB 1N0	Prince	902-887-3382
MRJ Logging	Mathew Richard	726 Rte 17	Wellington	COB 2E0	Prince	902-854-2393
Matthew and Mark Richard				COB 2E0	Prince	902-854-2393
102413 PEI Inc.	Greg Black	3154 Hopedale Rd	Rte 13, Hartsville	COA 1Y0	Queens	506-474-2360
Back Woods Tree Cutting Services	Jeremy Wyand	150 Toronto Rd Ext	Hunter River	COA 1N0	Queens	902-394-3261
Corey Gallant		1214 Loyalist Rd	North Wiltshire	COA 1Y0	Queens	902-393-1157
CrossCut Silvics	Stephen Alfred	9 Hurry Rd	Charlottetown	C1E 3C5	Queens	902-628-7345
East Coast Timberjack	Matt Hughes	1440 Rte 13	Kelly's Cross	COA 1Y0	Queens	902-314-2117
Desi MacNevin		990 Village Green Rd	Village Green	C1B 3B3	Queens	902-747-2255
Guindon Firewood Products	Mitchell Guindon	1177 Eliot River rd	Green Bay	COA 1Y0	Queens	902-213-2741
Robert "Andrew" Cudmore	Robert "Andrew" Cudmore	921 Eliot River Rd	Rte 249, Green Bay	COA 1Y0	Queens	902-675-4723
Stephen Lank Enterprises Inc.	Stephen Lank	38 McKinley Cres.	Cornwall	COA 1H8	Queens	902-393-0892
Twins Pines Tree Services	Jon Pearcey		Brackley		Queens	902-314-1102
Alan MacKinnon		RR#3 St. Peters Bay	St. Peter's	COA 2A0	Kings	902-969-4494
Crawmac Forest Service	Rory MacDonald	153 Stewart Pt Rd	Belle River	COA 1B0	Kings	902-969-7800
Working Forest PEI	Dan Doupont	PO Box1525	Montague	COA 1R0	Kings	902-969-2845
Martinus Rose		37 Dr. Wren Drive	Montague	COA 1R0	Kings	902-969-7599
Island Pulp Producers	Frank McAree	2508 Hwy 3	RR#6, Cardigan	COA 1G0	Kings	902-838-4671
Ryan Wood Producers Ltd.	Tim Ryan	1454 Queens Pt Rd	Montague	COA 1R0	Kings	902-628-5528
Timberview Logging	Vernon Myers	404 Georgetown Rd	Georgetown	COA 1L0	Kings	902-652-2202
Travis Crane		1362 Lorne Valley Rd	Cardigan	COA 1G0	Kings	902-218-3134

Applications for Fiona-damaged land are still eligible for replanting, but the actual clearing of the area is not done by the 2BTP. Landowners can apply if their Fiona damage hasn't yet been cleared, but they should have a contractor lined up, or have a confirmed plan for clearing their property first. Help with the Fiona cleanup process can be hard to find, so now would be the time to start lining up a contractor (see contact list below) for clearing work at some future date, so you can get your land in the 2BTP cue before the province's funding is all spoken for.

Information on applying to PEI's 2BTP can be found at:  
[www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/2BT](http://www.PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/2BT)

\*\* Apologies to Mark Twain

# Winter Woodlot Tour - 15th Anniversary

The 2026 Winter Woodlot Tour enjoyed its 15th anniversary this year, taking place behind Bluefield High School on a cold-imposed 'storm date', Saturday, January 31st, under a crystal clear sky with somewhat breezy but only a bit frigid conditions.

Here's how the very first Winter Woodlot Tour was formally announced back in 2011, from the archives of the provincial government.



*The PEIWOA Winter Woodlot Tour booth in warmer times: Feb 2, 2013.  
(Photo: Woodlot Tour Planning Group)*

The number of participating environmental groups has grown to four; Wheatley River Improvement Group, Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group, Central Queens Wildlife Federation, and Trout River Environmental Committee. A different site is chosen every year and the 4 groups rotate the duties of hosting, submitting the funding application, etc.

The 2011 event was an unexpected grand-slam success. After plowing snow to make room for the expected 20 or so vehicles, over 600 people showed up. According to media accounts, organizers described themselves as 'shocked' by the turnout. Over the years attendance has continued to be excellent, frequently exceeding 1,000.

*"The department [of Environment, Energy & Forestry] is partnering with the PEI Model Forest Network and the watershed groups from Wheatley River and the Hunter-Clyde Rivers to host a winter woodlot tour on Saturday, January 29, 2011... The workshop will be held on a private property on the Buffalo Road, located midway between New Glasgow and Wheatley River on Rte. # 243."*

For the first 10 years, the Winter Woodlot Tour was made possible through the partnership of a provincial funding body and members of environmental groups. These days the sole funding body is the Wildlife Conservation Fund, which draws revenue from licence plate registrations and hunting, trapping and angling licenses.



*Sleigh rides; a big hit, as usual, at the 2026 Winter Woodlot Tour.  
(Photo: Woodlot Tour Planning Group)*

Maggie McConnell, Watershed Manager of the Wheatley River Improvement Group, is a member of the Woodlot Tour Planning Group. She says this year they counted about 650 visitors on the clicker and about \$225 in the donation jar. The Tour route featured about 20 different displays presented by 55 exhibitor volunteers, with 12 'general' volunteers supervising parking, hauling tables and other gear, maintaining trails, helping with crowd control and giving out digit-saving hand warmers.

It was a bit colder than usual this year, but all told, the event ran smoothly. That has not always been the case. In past years there have been some outright cancellations; 2019 for instance. Fiona damage made it impossible to find an intact woodlot for the 2023 tour.



*PEIWOA booth this year. Board member Marcel Arsenault (sunglasses) at the 'chainsaw safety' table. (Photo: Woodlot Tour Planning Group)*

The last 2 years have been unusually cold, which has made for better parking but has been hard on presenters who must stand in deep snow for several hours as the cold slowly saps body heat through their feet.

Maggie McConnell says planning for next year is already underway and early priorities are sourcing a new site, dealing with cold feet and easing accessibility issues caused by deep, shifting snow. They're thinking of trying to find a way to access something like the mats employed at Brackley Beach to enhance security underfoot and maybe even make it possible to access part of the trail with a walker or wheel chair. As well, they're planning to buy big plastic toboggans to help with transport of gear and tables. They also also want to get foam mats for volunteers/presenters to stand on to keep the cold snow away from stationary feet.

Given decent weather, no 'century' storms and no pandemics, the 2027 tour is already looking like another winner.

Organizers still shake their heads when recalling the February 6, 2021 tour on the Buffalo Road, a return to the same site as the first tour in 2011. Unfortunately the unseasonably warm and wet 2021 event turned the parking lot into a mud bowl and the farmer who owned the field adjacent to the woodlot had to bring his tractor and pull cars out of the muck. To make matters worse, that was just a year after the Covid outbreak and everyone had to be masked and sign in. Organizers made up 50 stakes with orange arrows to create a 'one-way' forest trail to help people space out effectively.



*Private Land Forest Technicians Craig Phillips (region 5) and Daniel Gavin (region 2) on hand to answer questions about PEI's Forest Enhancement Program. (Photo: Woodlot Tour Planning Group)*

# PEIWOA Membership Application

## 2026 Membership Rates:

One-year PEIWOA membership, ending March 31, 2027 .....	\$ 25.00
Two-year membership, ending March 31, 2028 .....	40.00
50% discounted rate for members of PEIFA or NFU, ending March 31, 2028 .....	20.00

If you wish to join as a new member, or simply to renew if your current membership has expired, please do so now **by Interac e-transfer** to ***peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com***

**Be sure to include your current mailing address, the County where your woodlot is located, your e-mail address and your phone number so you don't miss out on any of our communications. Or contact us for an application form (same info).**

If you prefer, mail your cheque and above information to: **PEI Woodlot Owners Association**

***PEIWOA.CA***

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