

# The Facts – Catchacoma Forest

(supporting documentation available for all facts)

Catchacoma Forest Stewardship Committee

June 23, 2021

1. Natural eastern hemlock forests are endangered ecosystems in Ontario and are likely so throughout the remainder of their eastern North American range.
2. The Catchacoma Forest (662 ha) is the largest known old-growth eastern hemlock stand in Canada based on MNRF FRI data (1987), scientific literature and numerous recent field data (see photo).
3. The Catchacoma Forest is more than a mature and old-growth forest – it is an ancient forested landscape also containing many other types of pristine ecosystems including wetlands, streams, small lakes and riparian zones. In addition, it contains individuals and/or habitat for at least 10 species at risk including the Algonquin Wolf.
4. Ontarians, Canadians and all of humanity are facing at least two crises that threaten the future of the planet: one is the biodiversity loss crisis, the other is the climate warming crisis. Relative to the latter crisis, the managed (logged) forest region of Canada is no longer a sink for carbon storage, but rather it is now a significant source of CO<sup>2</sup>.
5. It is now generally accepted that old-growth forests store and sequester more CO<sup>2</sup> than any other terrestrial ecosystem type on earth, and that they support a higher than average number of species across all Kingdoms including many that are “at risk” of extinction.
6. The Canadian Federal Government commitment to increasing biodiversity protection to 30% land cover means that biodiversity protection in the region logged by the Bancroft Minden Forest Company (9%) must increase by 208,000 ha or 21% of the Company region.
7. By protecting the Catchacoma Forest as a *community-based reserve that is inclusive of all interested parties*, this reserve would not provide timber for producing pallets and garden mulch, however it would provide the following benefits to society at the local, regional and international levels: spiritual respite and renewal, physiological and mental health benefits to people immersed within the forest, both formal and informal education, scientific study of landscape baseline conditions including carbon dynamics and biodiversity conservation, long-term studies as the best way to truly understand nature, storage and sequestration of CO<sup>2</sup>, provide habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species, provide for the most natural conditions possible to support natural evolution (undirected by humans), to function as a sentinel of biological invasions (e.g., hemlock woolly adelgid) that are on the rise globally, adds a separate and contiguous area to Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park making the region more resilient to both climate change and biodiversity loss, and provides for current recreational activities with potential for more light trail-based activities.
8. From an economic perspective, the Catchacoma Forest is at least 10 times more valuable if left unlogged.
9. Logging contingency areas are available to replace the removal of 662 ha from the productive forest.
10. To not protect the Catchacoma Forest from logging is to miss a significant opportunity to address two issues that are extremely important to the public, including the positive public relations that could be achieved. In addition, the Bancroft Minden Forest Company and/or MNRF could decrease the amount of protection required for their logging region to 207,388 ha if logging was removed and the 662 ha were converted to protected status.

**PHOTO – Uneven-aged Old-growth Forest at Catchacoma Lake** (next page; many more available upon request)

