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OPINION

Buckhorn: Write to Piccini to protect the Catchacoma Old Growth Forest

Provincial environment ministry will not write a letter of support.

By **Marlys Kerkman** Special to the Examiner

Sat., Jan. 7, 2023 |  3 min. read

The protection of the Catchacoma Old Growth Forest remains in the realm of political motivation. Perhaps some of you read [Katie Krelove's article in the Dec. 9 Peterborough Examiner](#). Katie is part of the Catchacoma Forest Stewardship Committee (CFSC), a group dedicated to the conservation of 662 hectares within the borders of the municipality of Trent Lakes.

A letter from Dan Duggan, Algonquin Zone manager for Ontario Parks reported that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MEC P) would not be providing a letter of support for conserving the old growth forest. This rejection was in response to a request from the CFSC to meet with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks David Piccini requesting a letter of support for conservation/protection of the Catchacoma forest.

The MECP has a mandate to grow protected places. The Canadian government has pledged to protect 30 per cent of lands, waters, and oceans by 2030. Growing these places by one per cent would protect over one million hectares of land. Catchacoma protection would display that Ontario truly does have protection as a goal after the recent sell of Greenbelt lands to big developers being defended with the need for housing and the government cuts to wetland protection in Bill 23.

Logging is the activity which causes the greatest concern to the survival and continued aging of the old growth forest. The logging plan has put 50 per cent of the forest in "contingency" harvest, meaning it is less likely to be harvested in the near future. Another area of the forest logged in 2019-2021 has been spared additional harvest for 2021-31. Large sections were cut last winter including trees over 140 years old which is the age of onset for old growth for hemlock. Another 1/5 of the forest could be harvested 2021-2031 with a more intensive form of harvest proposed. Shelter wood harvesting takes even-aged timber and allows new seedlings to grow from the seeds of older trees as opposed to selection harvest which cuts trees from several age classes without removing the entire canopy.

The CFSC believes more logging will compromise the potential for the forest to reach an old growth state and the associated carbon sequestration, habitat, education and recreation values. While hemlock can grow to 600 years of age, logging will stunt this ability and likely encourage regrowth of more "profitable" timber species such as pine and hardwood. Hemlock is one of the least profitable timbers.

The CFSC would like everyone to write to Piccini to encourage him to provide protection to this growth of timber in our area which provides so many benefits to the environment. His email address is minister.mecp@ontario

Lions

While the Buckhorn Lions were busy last year one activity was left out of the last Lion's article summarizing '22. A fishing derby was held in August. A popular activity for children and families the 2023 fishing derby will happen June 11, '23. Put it on the calendar now.

Pilates/Yoga Workshop

A Yoga and Pilates workshop will happen at the Buckhorn Community Centre on Jan. 10 from 11 a.m.-noon. The workshop is to provide more information to build confidence about joining a regular "Yogalates" class

This workshop will provide participants with details on safely expressing Yoga poses and understanding their benefits. There will also be help with learning how to build core strength while protecting the spine and back. There will be "BoneFit" training with "osteoporosis Canada."

Instructor Michelle Doyle is a certified yoga and pilates instructor. She has been teaching at the BCC since the summer of 2020. Workshop is limited to 10 participants. Registration and prepayment of \$12 can be sent to buckhornwellness@gmail.com.

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