

The story of Ganaraska is a long and proud one. Before the arrival of French fur traders in the 1600s, the Ganaraska region was inhabited by tribes of Native peoples. When Upper Canada became part of the British Empire at the end of the next century, the region's forests offered an unlimited supply of lumber for the ships of Britain's North American naval fleet. During the 19th century, much of the present day Ganaraska Forest was cleared by settlers and erosion became a problem and by the time of World War II the area was largely barren. But then came a remarkably successful regeneration program. The 1944 Report on the Ganaraska Watershed called for reforestation in the northern section of the watershed. Two years later the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority was created and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources agreed to buy, reforest and manage degraded lands in the watershed.

The first trees were planted in 1947 and today the forest is a living example of how integrated resource management can be used to balance multiple uses of forested lands in a way that is both sustainable and ecologically sound. The result? This magnificent forest has been regenerated.

A forest reserve is a region set aside by statute. In other words, it is an area to be preserved for the future. And well it should. Forests moderate our climate, regulate water systems, prevent erosion, absorb carbon dioxide and provide wildlife habitat. The Conservation Authorities of Ontario -- which protect, manage and restore the province's woodlands through tree planting and woodlot management programs -- claim no bigger success than right here - Ganaraska.

The management plan for the Ganaraska Forest identifies these key objectives: conservation and protection of the headwaters of the Ganaraska River, protection of heritage and timber resources in the forest, maintenance of wildlife habitat, and provision for outdoor recreation and education. The new and improved Ganaraska Forest Centre will bring all these objectives to fruition.

The story of this forest is worth telling and not only to the young, but to all. Only here do you bear witness to a truly remarkable conservation effort of land reforestation. The rolling hills with their great tracts of mixed hardwood and pine forests, spring-fed creeks, beaver ponds and the glorious array of wildlife, make for a bona fide paradise of learning.

This is a story that begs to be told. And it will be with a new, expanded facility entrusted with a broadened mandate. The Ganaraska Forest Centre -- the latest chapter in a decades-long legacy of regeneration -- will make the forest sustainable and viable and render it a testament for future generations.

**GANARASKA REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
2216 COUNTY ROAD 28
PORT HOPE, ONTARIO
L1A 3V8
TEL: 905.885.8173**

**GANARASKA FOREST CENTRE
10585 COLD SPRINGS CAMP ROAD
CAMPBELL CROFT, ONTARIO
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The Ganaraska Forest Centre - *Building for Change* Paver Campaign



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