

Aug 9, 2025 - Forestry Director Report

Forestry Harvest Management Plans - Ongoing

Overview

Within the Little Mississippi River Watershed sits Lake Weslemkoon and multiple other surrounding lakes and rivers which feed into the Madawaska River, and eventually the Ottawa River. The Little Mississippi River Watershed is at a higher elevation than all of its bordering watersheds and is therefore termed a “headwater” to the Madawaska. Our shared “headwater” watershed is situated within three separate Forest Management Units, two of which are in areas that contain headwaters which flow into Weslemkoon: the Mazinaw-Lanark Forest Inc. (MLFI) and the Bancroft Minden Forest Company (BMFC). MLFI and BMFC hold the Sustainable Forest Licences (SFL) issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources for Crown Lands.

The LWCA has advocated for the protection of Lake Weslemkoon during the preparation and issuance of the ongoing current 10-year Forestry Management Plan (FMP) and thus now aims at maintaining the protection of our lake during the 10-year term from 2021-2031. Both MLFI and BMFC are currently responsible for monitoring all harvest and renewal operations to ensure compliance with the FMP, other legislated requirements, and reporting observations to the MNR which includes:

1. All silviculture activities including tree marking, tree planting and tending.
2. Preparing annual reports for approval by MNR which describe the progress in implementing the FMP.
3. Training and educating forest workers in conjunction with shareholder/partners plan.

Current FMP Block Activities

Harvesting is currently planned for 2025 east of McKennzie/Arnott Lake (block 16-187) with the appropriate setback from the lake and avoiding the old forest Hemlock stand on the north side of the lake.

Planting and Site Preparation is currently taking place in block 21-149 along the lake road, SW of the Weslemkoon Lake Marina. No other harvesting is scheduled for this year south of the lake in this block other than South and SW of Effingham Lake.

Salvage and standard harvesting is still ongoing South and SE of Mink (Shiner) Lake in block 21-172 (with majority of the harvesting being salvage until NE of Dog Lake).

Invasive Species

Invasive species—both plant and insect—continue to pose risks to the forests and shorelines around Lake Weslemkoon. These species threaten tree health, reduce biodiversity, and can alter our forest ecosystems. Early detection, proper identification, and rapid response are critical to slowing their spread.

Current Concerns at Lake Weslemkoon

1. Brown Spot Needle Blight

- Fungal disease affecting evergreens, observed spreading from the west/southwest areas of the lake.
- Causes browning and shedding of needles, reducing tree health and growth.

- Early pruning of infected branches is important—remove and destroy affected material to slow spread.
- Members are encouraged to monitor understory evergreens and report cases to LWCA.

2. Other Notable Tree Diseases

- **Needle Cast Disease** – fungal, similar symptoms to brown spot; reduces tree vitality over time.
- **Oak Wilt** – lethal to oak trees, spread by beetles and root grafts; not confirmed locally but present in Ontario.
- **Beech Bark Disease** – fungus and scale insect combination killing beech trees across the province.

3. Invasive Insect Pests

- **Spongy Moth** – present in southern Ontario; caterpillars defoliate oak, maple, birch. Control by scraping egg masses into soapy water and using burlap traps.
- **Spotted Lanternfly** – not yet in Ontario but high risk due to US outbreaks; targets Tree-of-Heaven, grapes, apples, hops. Report any sightings immediately to CFIA.
- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid** – not confirmed locally; produces white wool at base of hemlock needles; kills trees in 4–10 years if untreated.

4. Invasive Plants in Our Area

- **Garlic Mustard** – displaces native groundcover, spreads quickly in shaded areas.
- **Giant Hogweed & Wild Parsnip** – cause severe skin irritation; handle with protective gear, never compost.
- **King Devil Hawkweed** – highly dominant; releases chemicals into soil (allelopathy) that suppress native plants such as Canada Mayflower and Blue Violet.

Identification & Reporting

- Use the **iNaturalist** or **Seek** apps to photograph and identify unknown plants, insects, or fungi.
- Report confirmed or suspected invasives to:
 - **EDDMapS** (Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System)
 - **Ontario Invasive Plant Council**
 - **Invasive Species Centre**
 - **CFIA** for regulated pests (Spotted Lanternfly, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid).

Management Best Practices

- **Pruning:** Remove infected evergreen branches early; burn or dispose of material in landfill (do not compost).
- **Manual removal of plants:** Pull garlic mustard before seed set; cut hogweed/parsnip before flowering. Wear gloves and protective clothing.
- **Egg mass control:** For Spongy Moth, scrape egg masses into soapy water and dispose after 24 hours

Actions from Members

- Monitor your property regularly for signs of unusual plant, insect, or tree health changes.

- Report sightings to LWCA and the appropriate provincial or federal agencies.
- Follow FireSmart advice on the **FireSmart** website and app which gives guidelines such as maintaining defensible space around structures, reducing brush, and managing vegetation to improve fire resilience.

By staying alert and working together, we can limit the impact of invasive species on Lake Weslemkoon's forests and protect our natural heritage for future generations.