



## Trees for Woolwich puts down roots

By Brent Davis, Record staff

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WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP — There's one thing that can be said about the soggy conditions that volunteer tree-planters endured last Saturday as they embarked on an ambitious four-year undertaking.

"It minimizes the amount of watering," laughed Inga Rinne, chair of Trees for Woolwich.

The new organization aims to plant 23,000 trees by 2015 — one for each of the township's residents.

On Saturday, they planted the symbolic first tree — a sugar maple — in Elmira's Gore Park, along with 48 others at the recreation centre in Bloomingdale.



**IMG\_1921.** Mark Bauman of St. Jacobs plants a tree in Bloomingdale on Saturday. Matt Cowan, for the record Source: Matt Cowan, for the record

"We're becoming increasingly aware of the importance of trees for all kinds of purposes," Rinne said, from boosting yields and reducing erosion near farm fields, to improving air quality and providing shade.

It's estimated that Woolwich has about 14 per cent forest cover and 30 per cent is considered environmentally ideal.

By 1900, forest cover throughout the Grand River watershed had dwindled to just five per cent. Intensive reforestation efforts in past decades have returned forest cover over the entire watershed to about 19 per cent.

Rinne said Trees for Woolwich is building upon tree-planting efforts in recent years by groups like the Elmira Lions Club and Woolwich Healthy Communities' Clean Waterways Group.

Trees will be planted on public and private land. One of the group's main goals will be to construct natural windbreaks along roads and between fields.

"We encourage people to look at their own properties and think about what they can plant on their own," Rinne said.

Waterloo Region and the Waterloo Stewardship Network have provided some startup funds to support the initial round of planting this fall and next spring.

"After that, we're going to have to do some serious fundraising," Rinne said. They're also looking to build a sizeable roster of volunteers.

The next event is planned for Saturday at the Floradale Dam. To register as a volunteer, email [treesforwoolwich@gmail.com](mailto:treesforwoolwich@gmail.com) or call Ann Roberts at 519-669-6027. The group also has a Facebook page.

Forests were also celebrated on Saturday at Shade's Mills Conservation Area in Cambridge as the Grand River Conservation Authority celebrated the United Nations International Year of Forests with a family-friendly event featuring wagon rides, bug hunts, tree harvesting and sawmill demonstrations.

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