



# THE TOWNSHIP OF McNAB/BRAESIDE

2473 Russett Drive, Arnprior, Ontario K7S 3G8

---

## MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

### **20,000 Trees and Counting: Township of McNab/Braeside and Arnprior Rotary Saving the Environment, One Tree at a Time**

Arnprior is one of the fastest-growing small towns in Ontario and Highway 417 expansion is in the works from just outside Arnprior through to Renfrew. To counteract the loss of trees due to real estate development, expanding road construction (the planned widening of Highway 417 will result in a reduction of 39 hectares or 99 acres of forest cover), the removal of agricultural windrows and tree mortality from insects, the Township of McNab/Braeside and Arnprior Rotary have joined forces to plant thousands of trees — 22,840 over two years to be exact — with the help of Forests Ontario.

**Working with the Township, Arnprior Rotary helped to secure funding from Forests Ontario for significant tree planting operations beginning on April 25, 2022.**

The Township has signed a landowner tree planting agreement with Forest Carbon Alliance Inc. under Forests Ontario's 50 million tree program to plant white spruce, red pine and white pine.

The Township is contributing another 2,500 hybrid poplar, and Arnprior Rotary is contributing 240 black walnut and black willow trees.

The bulk of the trees are being planted on land behind the Township's municipal offices on Russett Drive. The remaining are being planted at the newly named Clay Bank Nature Park for Outdoor Learning on White Lake Road, which has also received an infusion of funds from Forests Ontario's Grasslands Stewardship Initiative.

Number of trees and species in 2022 and 2023:

2022

- 3,000 white spruce, 10,000 red pine and 2,500 hybrid poplar (municipal office property)
- 1,500 white spruce, 210 black walnut and 30 black willow (Clay Bank)

2023

- 5,000 white pine (municipal office property) and 600 white pine (Clay Bank)

Overall total for 2022/2023 is 22,840, with 20,500 earmarked for the municipal office property and 2,340 for Clay Bank.

## Why plant trees?

- Increase property values
- Improve soil quality
- Increase wildlife and fish habitat
- Increase water quality and quantity and decrease flooding
- Enhance recreational and tourist values
- Increase the health of the local environment
- Restore biodiversity
- Combat climate change
- Yield a myriad of timber and non-timber forest products
- Leave a lasting legacy

## Forests Ontario Provides Funds to Preserve Grasslands at Clay Bank

The Township of McNab/Braeside received \$15,675 from the Grasslands Stewardship Initiative, a habitat restoration initiative implemented by Grasslands Ontario, a division of Forests Ontario. The goal is to support the conservation and recovery of Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark populations through the management and protection of high-quality grassland habitat in Ontario.

The GSI funds and in-kind contributions (Macnamara Field Naturalists, Rotary Club of Arnprior, Township of McNab/Braeside) will be used to enhance five hectares of grasslands at Clay Bank Nature Park for Outdoor Learning, a 20+ hectare property situated along the Madawaska River between Arnprior and the village of White Lake. The grasslands at the Park attract Bobolinks (up to 20 nesting pairs have been sighted in the past) and Eastern Meadowlarks. The population for both bird species has been declining across Ontario and beyond because of the loss of prairies and other grasslands habitats.

“This funding support is one more piece in our efforts to enhance and preserve the natural habitat of Clay Bank Outdoor Park for Nature Learning. This small but mighty park attracts an amazing diversity of bird species, including the endangered Bobolink and the threatened Eastern Meadowlark,” says Councillor Heather Lang, who has focused much of her efforts over the past six years to the park.

“I am thrilled to see the tremendous support that we are receiving for our efforts—and I can’t thank the Arnprior Rotary Club enough, in particular its chair of the environmental committee Rod Smith, who has been with me every step of the way in our efforts to preserve and enhance the habitat found at Clay Bank. I also wish to thank the Macnamara Field Naturalists Club for its support for this initiative, in particular its founder and president, Michael Runtz, who helped write the habitat assessment piece of the grant application.”

“The leadership shown by Heather Lang and the Township of McNab/Braeside in working to establish Clay Bank Outdoor Park for Nature Learning as an active demonstration of how we can all best sustain our local and Ottawa Valley natural heritage is both far-sighted and practical. Rotary International has taken on environmental sustainability as one of its primary areas of focus worldwide and the local Rotary Club of Arnprior is pleased to do its bit by actively supporting creative and meaningful projects such as this that help us to learn by doing,” notes Rod Smith.

“In addition to offering safe haven for species at risk such as the Bobolink, Clay Bank Nature Park for Outdoor Learning is an outstanding educational resource not only for local residents but also for visitors from afar. The forest fringe that borders the Madawaska River is an important corridor for migration and offers exciting opportunities for both young and old to observe birds at close hand. With development continuously consuming what was once habitat for birds and other animals, the park plays an essential role in the preservation of natural habitats,” says Michael Runtz.

The GSI grant will be used to undertake vegetation surveys; prepare the grasslands for seeding with native grasses; remove invasive plant species; conduct breeding bird surveys pre- and post-treatment; and build and erect birdhouses for non-target bird species such as the Eastern Bluebird and American Kestrel.

### **Calendar of Upcoming Earth Week-related Events**

April 21-24 — 2022 McNab/Braeside spring cleanup

April 25 — mass planting at municipal property behind municipal offices and strategic planting at Clay Bank Nature Park for Outdoor Learning (with 11 a.m. ceremony)

April 30 — planting of 240 black walnut and black willow at Clay Bank Nature Park, with approx. 10 volunteers (1 p.m.)

May-June — vegetation survey at Clay Bank Nature Park

July 9 — It’s the Bees Knees (all-day event with focus on bee keeping, pollinators, a moth night, bird walk, botany walk), at Clay Bank Nature Park