

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County of Simcoe to conduct controlled burn in the Tosorontio Tract in Adjala-Tosorontio Township

Midhurst/March 31, 2021 – The County of Simcoe will be executing a controlled burn on 40 hectares (100 acres) of County Forests within the Tosorontio Tract in the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio (west of Base Borden and near the western boundary of Simcoe County). The controlled burn will occur as early as conditions allow between mid-April and early May and is anticipated to take 2 days to complete. The exact timing of the burn will be dictated by site and weather conditions and cannot be determined at this time.

Once the date of the controlled burn has been confirmed, every effort will be made to keep media, stakeholders and the public informed through a variety of communication channels.

A highly experienced company has been retained to plan and conduct the burn and trained and experienced personnel will be on site until it is completely extinguished. Smoke impacts will be minimized by burning under specific wind and atmospheric conditions, however there will be times when large amounts of low-lying smoke will be present. At other stages of the operation, a large smoke column protruding hundreds of metres into the atmosphere may be seen for many kilometres. There is no cause for alarm as this is all part of normal operations for the type of fuels being burned. The County does not anticipate any road closures or any major impact or disruption to local residents.

While controlled burns differ from wildfires in that they are managed by professionals to control their duration and smoke exposure to the public, concerns can arise regarding the potential health implications. Smoke exposure may pose a risk for more vulnerable individuals such as children, seniors, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Here are some simple steps you can take to minimize your exposure to smoke:

- If you live close to the controlled burn site and have chronic health conditions such as asthma or chronic lung disease, you may wish to minimize your exposure by staying indoors during the burn. If you have health concerns, please follow up with your health care provider
- If you have concerns regarding exposure to smoke while outdoors, consider reducing your outdoor activities near the affected area
- To help reduce smoke in your homes and businesses, keep windows and doors closed

County Council approved the Simcoe County Forest Management Plan in 2011 to guide our policies through 2030. The Plan outlines that fire has historically played a primary role by influencing composition, structure and patterns of our forests and will be used as a strategy moving forward. This particular controlled burn is part of a long-term plan to enhance an Oak forest ecosystem.

Controlled burns are common throughout Ontario and Canada. Controlled burns have been conducted previously within the County Forests with the two most recent burns occurring in 2020 within the Packard Tract in Essa Township and 2018 within the Museum Tract in Springwater Township.

Public questions and inquiries can be directed to our County Forestry Department by contacting Customer Service at 1-800-263-3199. More information about the controlled burn can be found at <https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/fbl>.

About Simcoe County Forests

The Simcoe County Forest network dates back to 1922 when it became the first municipal government to opt into the Government of Ontario's Agreement Forest program. The Simcoe County Forest is the largest municipally owned forest network in Ontario and among the largest in Canada. It now includes more than 33,000 acres distributed across more than 150 properties throughout the County. Over 20 million trees have been planted within the County Forest since inception. The County's team of experienced foresters continues to implement important ecological forestry management techniques, including controlled burns and tree harvesting operations, to maintain and grow our forests, with all profits for lumber sales being reinvested into the Forestry program, including tree planting, education efforts and acquisition and protection of new forest properties.

The County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at [**simcoe.ca**](http://simcoe.ca).

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