



Celebrating 35 Years of ACER in Our Communities!



The year 2022 marked a very special year for the Association for Canadian Educational Resources (ACER) as it coincides with a major milestone: 35 years working with schools and communities to help care for the environment.

We can all take pride in ACER's successes over the years and we hope you will celebrate this very special milestone with us, by making a [special donation](#) to ACER's 35 Years and Growing Anniversary Campaign.

By giving to ACER, you are helping ACER support science-based community climate action. Every tree we plant and monitor together helps keep our communities green, safe and healthy.

[Click here to donate today!](#)



President's Message

Greetings to everyone!

Well, we made it through another amazing COVID-bound year! Under the pandemic's radar, ACER managed to plant P4C tree suites in three schoolyards and give 36 students Canada Summer Jobs planting, measuring, and reporting. Our six interns completed courses at Sheridan Davis and UT - Mississauga while gaining ACER experience in administration, campus tree inventories, and carbon calculations.

ACER is proud to have completed our federal Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative project of plantings and measurements in 10 Mississauga parks, with help from Blooming Boulevards, People Against Litter, and Heritage Mississauga and great support from Councillors Stephen Dasko, Dipika Damerla, and Chris Fonseca. Big thanks to Sadia Butt, our Programs Manager and our very active ACER Board, and welcome to our newest Board members Ian Orchard, Ayub Khan, and Margaret Geare.

In the fall of 2022 ACER launched our Great Lakes Local Action Fund project in the Ganaraska River watershed. By the end of the one-year initiative, 960 trees will have been planted and monitored in riparian zones, with the participation of Port Hope- and Cobourg-area volunteers and experts from Sustainable Cobourg and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority.

We are all looking forward to working together in 2023 and wishing everyone a better year!

Alice Casselman, Founding President

Breaking News Fall 2022: ACER Awarded Great Lakes Local Action Fund Grant!

ACER is excited to announce our new initiative in the Ganaraska region that kicked off in November of 2022 at Sylvan Glen Conservation Area.



ACER volunteers plant and measure trees at Sylvan Glen Conservation Area - November 2022.

ACER's track record in planting and monitoring trees and their effects on the environment and people was one compelling argument in our successful appeal to this fund. Recognizing that the Great Lakes, holding a fifth of the world's fresh water, are vital to Ontario's economy, social well-being, and ecological health, the Ontario government established the [Great Lakes Local Action Fund](#) (GLLAF) to support "community-led projects that have a positive environmental impact on the Great Lakes and their connecting rivers."

The one-year initiative for which the GLLAF funds were secured was kicked off on November 12 at the Sylvan Glen Conservation Area east of Toronto. During this initiative, ACER will take the lead working with the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) in the planting and monitoring of trees and removing invasive species on the banks of creeks within the Ganaraska Watershed. The Ganaraska River flows from the Oak Ridges Moraine through the town of Cobourg on the north shore of Lake Ontario.

This sensitive area, which also includes the municipality of Port Hope, is vulnerable to serious flooding, necessitating the restoration of riparian areas facing continuing erosion and damage due to

heavy rainfall and runoff in spring. Climate change is intensifying the problem. Sylvan Glen is the site of a water-level gauging centre to help warn of flood danger to area communities.

ACER's major local partners for this new initiative are Sustainable Cobourg, responsible for recruitment, coordination and education of area volunteers, and the GRCA, responsible for securing planting locations, planning, and co-hosting planting events. Students of Trent University and Fleming College in Peterborough are also assisting with mapping and IT support; City Studios will provide marketing, PR and media expertise. Overseeing all aspects of the project from grant application to final reporting is ACER founding President Alice Casselman. Programs Manager Sadia Butt is responsible for project implementation. Jonathan Brown is the project's local liaison.

Planting the actual trees requires a small army of volunteers— area residents, students, community organization members— people who care about the health of their fragile riparian environment. And their work has already begun. At the Sylvan Glen launch session in November, ACER staff collaborated with partners to demonstrate optimal planting, mulching, and measuring procedures for participants that will be working through the two major planting cycles scheduled for April and October 2023. About 150 trees were planted at this event.

The project's tree list is impressive: eastern white cedar; white and Norway spruce; white pine; tamarack; red, silver, and sugar maples; red, white, and bur oaks; white birch; viburnum; dogwood; and willow. ACER has trained its local partners in measuring and monitoring their growth at regular intervals. Collected data will be entered into the ACER database and analyzed to determine the success of the trees selected.

Hoped-for project outcomes are reduced erosion of riparian regions; reduced risk of flooding; increased understanding of the role and extent of climate change, and of the role of community-led improvement measures; and greater community participation in restoring and protecting the health of the Great Lakes. Success will be measured by testing turbidity of water samples, updating flood maps for accuracy and availability, assessing citizen involvement in subsequent project activities and webinars, and the ongoing engagement of members of the regional environmental action committee.

Work will resume in the spring, and by the end of October, 960 trees will have been planted and mulched. Ten percent of these will be measured and monitored by ACER going forward.

ACER staff, Board, and volunteers are happy to have been chosen for this important grant. Alice Casselman says, "We provide a 'one-stop shop' from writing the grant application to implementation and reporting." She is convinced that ACER's strength, working "on the ground with people," training, equipping, and supporting local citizens, in solid, evidence-based scientific planting, care and recording procedures, is the key to success.

WATCH THIS! Click on the links below for two videos from the event:

[ACER Programs Manager Sadia Butt showing volunteers how to plant a tree.](#)

[Chris Collins, newly elected member of the Port Hope Council, being an enthusiastic volunteer!](#)

Recap Summer 2022: ACER Canada Summer Jobs Students Develop and Contribute their Skills

Summer 2022 was an exciting time for 42 Mississauga-Brampton area students engaged by ACER to work through the summer. We have long trained high school and university students, but 2022's program welcomed our largest cohort to date of youth with a wide range of interests, expertise, and ambitions. -

Thirty-six of the students were hired through the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program, which funded 4 positions for each of nine area electoral districts — Brampton North, South, East, and West, and Mississauga East-Cooksville, Mississauga-Erin Mills, Mississauga-Lakeshore, Mississauga-Streetsville, and Mississauga Centre. ACER thanks their Members of Parliament for their help in securing these jobs, in some instances the first paid employment for the winning applicants. Four students from Sheridan College and two from the University of Toronto Mississauga also joined ACER as interns, as a component of their academic coursework.

Unlike in 2021, when COVID restrictions forced most students to work from home, in 2022 all were trained in campus tree inventory, data collection and updating procedures and participated in outdoor projects. Other assignments included study of carbon sequestration and climate-change impacts in ACER's tree plots at Sheridan College's Davis Campus and Humber Arboretum, warehouse inventory, and refinement of the [TreeTrackers.ca](https://www.tree-trackers.ca) mobile app started by a team of 2021 CSJ students.

Most CSJ hires have now returned to their formal studies. Sheridan Davis interns have graduated after their summer work and are now continuing further studies. UTM interns work with ACER throughout the academic year. But all leave the program with enhanced and new skills, meaningful practice of field techniques, and the satisfaction disciplines.

Help ACER Celebrate our 35th Year!

If you have not done so already (thank you to those who have!), please consider making a special 35th anniversary donation to ACER! Your donation will help ACER continue to drive and support science-based community climate action. Click [here](#) to donate today!

The Basswood—A Tree with Many Gifts

By Elizabeth MacLean

The basswood tree is one of the five species included in almost every ACER planting. Two other trees in the grouping, Maple and Oak, have been profiled in previous editions of our newsletter that can be found [here](#).

That tall, shapely shade tree with the large, asymmetrical yellow toothed leaves falling to the ground in autumn or the pale feather-shaped bracts with pea-sized nutlets on a fine stalk from its centre floating down in early summer is quite probably a Basswood (*Tilia americana*). In Canada it is a common tree across New Brunswick, southern Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba.



Useful wherever it grows, it has provided shade, medicines, materials for woven baskets and footwear, and wood for musical instruments and artisans.

The basswood is a member of the linden (sometimes called “lime”) family, with more than 30 species in most of the Northern Hemisphere. Linden flowers, leaves and bark have been used in soothing teas and medicinal preparations since ancient times, and their fragrant flowers attract bees that produce a prized honey. Associated with the Greek love goddess Venus and with justice and goodness, the linden is a traditional presence in town and village squares and parks, and near hospitals throughout Europe. And the linden has a special place in the hearts of musicians—both Gustav Mahler and Frank Schubert immortalized it in song. Schubert’s achingly beautiful *Der Lindenbaum*, from his 1827 Winter Journey song cycle, portrays the tree as a source of serenity, refuge, and joyous memories of youth that beckons a weary but determined traveller, buffeted by the wind and snow of his life journey.

Its hardy relative, the Basswood is common in Ontario, and does well in both cities and forests, partly because its loose canopy allows light to reach the ground beneath it, and its adaptability to the

space it occupies—in confined areas, its single stem grows tall before branching; in open space, it branches lower. It grows in full sun and shade, to heights around 35 metres, liking moist, nutrient-rich soil. Fast growing with large, deep spreading roots and a life span of around 200 years, it has been planted on the windward side of orchards to protect more delicate fruit trees. Its seeds are eaten by small rodents, and its fissured bark by rabbits and voles. Japanese beetles, an invasive species that feeds on the leaves, can be fatal to the tree.

More than shade, serenity and visual beauty, the basswood has many practical uses. In addition to the antioxidant infusions of leaves and flowers, it produces a “light hardwood,” pale in color with few defects, that takes paint, stain, and glue well, and is used for such products as shutters and blinds, moldings, and musical instruments, ranging from recorders to guitars. Some indigenous groups carved it—still on the tree—into ceremonial masks. It is also prized by beginning woodcarvers, and curiously, by makers of duck decoys. Under the outer bark is a layer of flexible fibrous material that Russian peasants used to weave footwear, and North American native peoples have used for baskets, rope, and fishing nets.

The gifts of a basswood extend into the future. Its nutrient-rich fallen leaves nourish the soil, and the stumps of felled trees often sprouts shoots that can form new ones.

AN ACER INTERN REPORTS ON HER WORK EXPERIENCE

My name is Anne, and this past summer I was an intern with the Association for Canadian Educational Resources (ACER). I was a part of the data collection team, where I worked with a group of interns to collect data on trees planted through various initiatives and compile a report of our findings to help inform future resource allocation.

I was also allowed to work independently to collect soil samples from schools that participated in ACER’s Planting for Change (P4C) program. With the support of the Project Coordinator Dr. Sadia Butt, I sent the samples to a lab for analysis and am working on a report to summarize my findings. Soil conditions and nutrient contents are a vital part of tree health, so they must be continuously monitored so that the planted trees have the best chance for survival.

This internship strengthened my skills in more ways than I anticipated. It highlighted the importance of communication to me. Whether I was relaying ideas to my team members or writing our findings in a report format, I had many chances to learn how to communicate my ideas clearly and succinctly. I also gained valuable experience in data collection and academic writing. These skills have been a great asset in my academic career as well.

Something I am grateful for beyond the skills that I gained was that I was able to meet and talk to so many wonderful people. I was interested in working with ACER because I think it’s important to spend your time on issues that you care about, so working with people who feel the same way was so rewarding. Overall, I learned a lot this summer through this internship, and I feel like I was able to make an impact in our community.

**The summer and autumn of 2022 were productive times for
ACER! Special thanks go to:**

Canada Summer Jobs Program

2022 Canada Summer Jobs students

MPs for Brampton East, Brampton North, Brampton South, and Brampton West

MPs for Mississauga Centre, Mississauga East-Cooksville, Mississauga-Erin Mills,

Mississauga-Lakeshore and Mississauga-Streetsville

Great Lakes Local Action Fund

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority

Sustainable Cobourg

ACER interns from Sheridan College and University of Toronto Mississauga

Local ACER community, educators and students

All ACER donors (thanks for your generous support!)

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH ACER? Contact us, either by filling
out [this form](#) or emailing our office at office@acer-acre.ca!



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