

## **Forest History Society of Ontario (FHSO)**

### **Report to the Canadian Forest History Society Network**

**April 14, 2021**

At the March Annual General Meeting, Jim Farrell was elected to the role of Chair of the FHSO and our outgoing Chair, Rob Galloway, and past Chair, Mark Kuhlberg, were roundly thanked for all their dedicated work to advance the interests of the Society.

Given the meeting constraints we faced due to the pandemic we experimented with a virtual format for our March 18<sup>th</sup> AGM on ZOOM and added a panel of speakers. Moderated by new Board member Bill Thornton, the panel included Rob Keen President and CEO of Forests Ontario, Lacey Rose County Forester for Renfrew and co-founder of Women in Wood and Art Groot retired scientist and forest historian living in Sault Ste Marie.

Rob provided an insightful perspective on the history of tree planting in Southern Ontario illustrating great potential for Ontario to participate fully in the new federal 2.0 Billion Tree Program. Lacey provided an engaging look at some of the fascinating history of county forest blocks across Renfrew County and valuable insights into the early days and current engagement in Women in Wood (which she co-founded) which has become a forestry social media phenomena. Art has immersed himself in natural resource history in the Algoma Region and provided a very well researched and documented history of the early days (1920's) of the Austin-Nicholson timber empire across northern Ontario which harvested, cut and delivered jack pine ties for building the national dream...the CPR line across northern Ontario. Interesting factoid...in 1931 Austin-Nicholson was the largest producer of railway ties in the British Empire.

Their presentations are posted on our website. We had a record attendance of almost 50 join our meeting, suggesting that in future we will need to build in a 'virtual' component to entice participation.

At the business session of the AGM, members heard about our bold new plans to rejuvenate the Society starting with a transition to a working Board whereby Board members take a hands-on role in various aspects of the administration and

operation of the Society. The two priorities for the Board going forward are: increasing revenues and memberships; and, updating and enhancing our web presence, including social media. The latter is an essential component of driving the former priority. While we will be exploring opportunities to strengthen the value of the Society, *Forestry* will continue to be the centerpiece of our engagement with members. All are encouraged to contribute articles and stories for our journal and post freely and often on our social media accounts.

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