



Tree Trust Report  
Summer 2019  
Submitted by Neighbourhoods  
Centre Wellington, ON  
[www.treetrust.ca](http://www.treetrust.ca)



## Project Summary

Thanks to funding from the Canadian Tree Fund, Neighbourwoods introduced Tree Trust, the first program of its kind in Canada. It is a local carbon offset solution to raise funds to steward mature trees to prolong their life as carbon capture heroes.

Our online calculator at [TreeTrust.ca](http://TreeTrust.ca) allows air travelers to quickly calculate the carbon cost of a given trip and remit their purchase payment through Canada Helps, which issues a tax receipt.

We have partnered with the Centre Wellington Arborist Association which is a group of local, certified arborists who set the highest standards for tree care. For Tree Trust stewardship, members work together, sharing skills and approaches.

Marketing for Tree Trust encourages homeowners to hire qualified arborists, especially members of the Association, for their own tree needs.

## Research and Development

We wanted compare Tree Trust to other offset solutions, such as programs from major Canadian airlines. We found that while these programs encourage people to donate to make amends for their carbon footprint, they are not well known and how funds are used is unclear. With some research we learned that WestJet and Air Canada have third party partnerships which channel money into a variety of programs – for example, solar installations for social housing in Montreal and supporting greening in the Niagara escarpment. We wanted to initiate a local option to keep offset dollars in our community *for our community*.

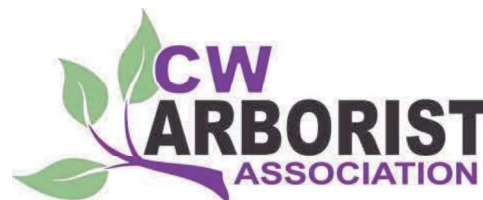
We know that it had to be easy. After some discussion we determined that we need our own online calculator and easy to use offset button. We used the data from other offset tools (WestJet, Air Canada, and [carbonfootprint.com](http://carbonfootprint.com)) to determine an average carbon load of 0.12 tonnes /hour/per person. We set a carbon cost at \$30/tonne.

We then built a webpage on our existing Elora Environment Centre site and included an online calculator, with coding from our winter high school student!

Pearl Street Communications, a local marketing firm, came on board to offer their services pro bono; they liked what we are doing. We are grateful for the graphics, messaging and support they provided. Invaluable.

### CW Arborist Association

Members of the CWAA are fully insured, qualified, certified arborists or graduates of an arboriculture program from an Ontario College. Members advocate and practice tree preservation as their first step in addressing all tree concerns while never compromising public safety. Members advocate for a healthy urban forest and work to promote best practices with their clients and the general public.



The CWAA select three trees (two park trees and one residential option) for consideration and submit to the Neighbourhoods Board. The Neighbourhoods Board then create the story and background for the selected tree and then post the trees for nomination on social media. The citizens and donors select which tree they would submit their donation towards. Once the fundraising amount has been reached for the specific tree, the CWAA will commence with the restorative pruning.

### Launch



At our June 1<sup>st</sup> event, four members of the CWAA worked collectively on the tree, which made an excellent backdrop to festivities. The arborists were from Baum Tree Care, Full Circle Tree Care, MW Tree Service, and Out of Your Tree Care.

MP Michael Chong of Wellington-Halton Hills attended and encouraged everyone to offset their carbon by investing in local trees. Al Koop and Gary Bryant of Older Voices dressed in late 1800s clothing and offered a history of the site.



Jason Thompson, the first to offset his carbon using Tree Trust, spoke about the importance of carbon neutrality. The local radio station broadcasted remotely from the site. Volunteers, led by Urban Forest Manager Mat Alain, planted two sugar maples donated by Green Legacy. The launch capped off with a tree walk, led by the knowledgeable Rob Guthrie of the University of Guelph.

### Tree Trust Promotion and Advertising

**Online and Traditional Media:** The launch event was covered by various media, including the Wellington Advertiser, Guelph Today, and the Grand at 101 radio station. Coverage over the program continues, the latest article being published in Exchange Magazine out of Waterloo.

**SwapTalk:** The Grand@101.1 radio station hosts a talk show every evening. On one such evening, the hosts interviewed the project coordinator about Tree Trust.

**Social Media:** We created a Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram page, where we continually update followers on Tree Trust.

**Newsletter:** Tree Trust was featured in our summer newsletter, which goes out to 400 Elora Environment Centre subscribers.

**Travel Agents:** Tree Trust partnered with Noecker Travel of Elora, and Ursula's Travel of Fergus, who promote the program to their clients when they book flights. We offered them a \$5/booking incentive – which yielded no uptake.

**Print materials:** We created posters and postcards distributed to travel agents, local businesses, to colleagues, etc.

**TV:** We were guests on a 30 minute gardening show on the local Cogeco cable station during which time we promoted Tree Trust, the CW Arborists Association and good tree care.

**Offset purchasers:** For the first month, customer whose offset amount exceeded \$200.00 received a special certificate which included their name, the picture of the tree they were sponsoring and the location. Buyers now receive a TreeTrust.ca luggage tag and a holder.



## Successes

- The contribution from Pearl Street Communications was invaluable. We think that jumped on board because they recognized the direct benefit to our urban forest and the value of keeping money local.
- Most people we talked to did not know about traditional existing offsets. However, they quickly grasped the concept and were pleased to take part.
- With our modest offset price, it is affordable which likely encouraged participation. That said many contributed more – and some didn't tie it to a flight, but just want to help our big trees.
- Members of the CWAA, who are competitors, have enjoyed working together and feel some satisfaction for their contribution to our big trees, which otherwise would be neglected.
- We raised \$2,000 in the first 4 months, all of which is allocated for tree work.

## Challenges

- We need to develop criteria for tree selection.
- We need to keep the momentum going – but are hopeful that offset purchasers will make this part of their routine.
- Despite a modest \$5 incentive per offset purchase made by clients, it would seem that the 2 local travel agents were not effective promoters of the program.
- While Canada Helps streamlines receipting, there is still on-going admin time required, for example, sending out luggage tags, thank you notes and maintaining marketing momentum. This is not really a challenge, it is more a fact of running any program.

## Financial Information

Service	Amount	Details
Income		