



# What's HAPpening?

A regularly published newsletter from the MERC-Tembec Herbicide Alternatives Program (HAP) Steering Team

**The HAP Goal:**

*Develop and implement a strategy to regenerate forests on Tembec tenures in northeastern Ontario using alternatives to the application of chemical herbicides.*

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Matachewan First Nation, Chief Lake just outside the band office taken January 2015, photo submitted by: Cathy Yandea

## **A Perspective - Tembec's Approach to Silviculture in the Boreal Forest**

Tembec is actively involved in managing forests within the Boreal Forest. The Boreal Forest is a large natural ecosystem that circumnavigates the earth. The Boreal Forest contains natural species and processes that have evolved based on natural disturbances; fire has been the major historic ecological driver of this.

Presently, in the absence of natural fires due to widespread fire suppression, harvesting has become one of the landscape disturbances that can be managed by sound silviculture practices and principles to produce a new naturally growing forest.

Silviculture is the art and science of growing forest crops.

Silviculture is a very important tool as we are required to maintain and/or enhance forest cover for the purpose of growing future forest products and wildlife habitat. As forest managers we have a very brief moment in time to influence the new regenerating forest, maintain natural species through succession, culminating into a forest that

ultimately supports future harvesting and a variety of wildlife habitats.

This brief moment of influence is directly related to knowing how certain plant communities, in combination with on-site resources, will react in order to promote certain forest species. At the end of the day we are riding on Mother Nature's coat-tails... no more, no less.

In addition, forest managers need to understand the importance of harvesting and the amount of sunlight that will activate certain plant species and the requirements to regenerate a new forest crop... the marriage between silviculture and harvesting is paramount! A forest manager must also understand the autoecology of plant species, the "living" soil and moisture regimes, ecosite health and management and more recently the challenges of a changing climate, if one is to promote forest succession in a desired direction.

First Nations Environmental Stewardship is and will have a greater impact on the way forestry is carried out moving into the future. Traditional knowledge that is learned will help shape the future forest to produce crops

important to all. Good communications, being respectful and by working together will be the path forward. Our hand plantings and protection of conifer tree seedlings are one of our most important activities and one we are very proud of. Conifer dominated forest stands will not only meet the needs for future forest crops, but also supply unique wildlife habitat required by a variety of wildlife species. Tree planting is an honourable profession!

In summary, silviculture is a tool that can be used more effectively by increasing one's knowledge... "boots on the ground" contributes greatly to this. Along with this knowledge one must also build respectful relationships with the people who contribute to growing the new forest and those who look to have their needs met both socially and personally into the future.

Jeff Leach, Silvicultural Specialist  
Tembec Forest Resource Management  
Chief Foresters Group Ontario

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## Herbicide Alternatives Project

### Update HAP Block G015 – Planted Spring 2012/Brushsaw Summer 2013



Photo #1 – White Spruce Seedling



Photo #2 - Aspen Re-Growth after Brushsaw

HAP Block G015 was planted with large white spruce and jack pine seedlings into "trenches" during the spring of 2012. This is the "Quebec non-herbicide" recipe that is currently being trialed on the Gordon Cosens Forest north of Kapuskasing.

During the summer of 2013, after the seedlings completed their second season of growing, a brushsaw operation was carried out by Outland Reforestation Inc. The aspen stems were cut at approximately the 25-30 cm level during the summer when plant reserves are low with the hope of holding back the aggressive growth of the aspen hardwood regeneration.

A survey was carried out during the summer of 2014 with the following results:

- 1) The seedlings showed very good survival at 97% living.
- 2) No ill effects from snow press could be found, this indicates that the conifer seedlings have sufficient girth to withstand the heavy snow loads encountered.
- 3) The height of the aspen and the spruce are very even and both tree species are growing well together at this point.

This block will be interesting to visit over the next number of years to see how the different tree species grow in relationship to each other. No herbicide was used.

Jeff Leach

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## ***SPIRITUALITY OF MOTHER EARTH***

***By Archie Nolan – HAP Traditional Elder***

In the world view by Nishnawbe people regarding spirituality of the land, water and air, the understanding in my teachings is that MOTHER EARTH is alive and provides for the two legged, 4 legged, winged ones, finned ones, including the plants and trees.

Everything that sustains us comes from Mother Earth in some shape or form and all that is asked from Mother Earth is that we respect and honour what she provides for all of us and that we 2 leggeds take care of her and her bounty. The earth is alive, which means that she is spiritual, a simple concept to understand but many people don't understand this and exploit her to a point whereby she is damaged by the ones who only seek to take her resources, make money and give nothing in return.

As it was told, many years ago by our elders, that if we did not take care of Mother Earth in a good way, we humans would suffer because of the unbalancing of things in the "Hoop of Life".

The teaching is that everything is in the Circle of Life and when there is not a balance, then we see things happen, like the climate and weather changes in the world, the extinction of animals, insects for example, like the Bees, who pollinate plants (medicine plants) and by doing so, the benefits from this pollination are many. But, if the Bees are destroyed by herbicides and pesticides, what happens then??

Mother Earth in my teachings is that she is alive and has given us many things in our lives, but the way things are going in the world, there soon won't be a world to live in anymore. Companies who make money off Mother Earth have to realize that if, we don't take care of her, she will not take care of us any longer.

Lastly, when we gather stones for a sweat ceremony, we say that those stones are Grandmothers and Grandfathers who are spiritually alive and that when the steam comes out of the Grands, it represents the spirit of that Grandfather (stone). Many people have a difficult time in believing this but in our Nishnawbe way, we know this to be true as the Grands come from Mother Earth.

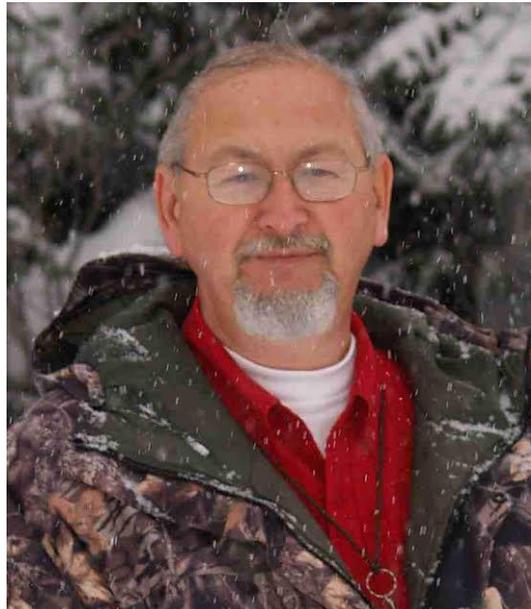
In closing, I would like to say, take care and respect and love Mother Earth and she will return these gifts to all of us.

Ahow, Chi Meegwetch,

**Archie**

## **HAP Steering Team Profile: Lark Ritchie**

HAP Co-Chair, Chapleau Cree First Nation



*Lark Ritchie: He's most content: "In the bush listening to snow fall"*

A member of the original HAP Steering Team since 2011, and HAP Co-chair for nearly three years, Lark has a wide background, much of which he attributes to his parents and grandparents. Growing up in Chapleau and a member of Chapleau Cree First Nation, he learned his love for nature and his bush skills with his grandfather, father and from the stories told and retold in the native tradition.

Lark took his first moose at eleven, a bull, with 'double-paddled' antlers, and shortly after started his long career as a fishing and hunting guide in his father's tourist business at twelve, continuing the guiding profession on a part-time basis, until he was 60. A hunting enthusiast, Lark is a published writer, noted for his thoughts regarding hunting ethics.

His work experience covers a broad area, from the tourist business to Information Technology and Process Analysis, to Management consulting. He has provided services to Chapleau Cree FN, Michipicoten FN, Mushkegowuk Environmental Research Centre (MERC), Quebec and Ontario Paper, Tembec, Noranda, Falconbridge, Xstrata Copper, and several small business operations.

Why is he dedicated to the HAP? "Because as a member of the wider Aboriginal communities, we have a great opportunity to influence how forests are managed. After all, this world needs stewardship over that Land. I do what I can to help."

## HAP Update:

### Strategy Sets Course for Herbicide Reduction

Aboriginal communities have expressed concern for the use of herbicides on their traditional territories for many years.

After three years of intensive engagement (over a dozen meetings, field trips, expert analysis and dialogue), the Steering Team agreed it was time to develop a 5 year herbicide reduction strategy for the period 2015-2020.

In April, July and December 2014, a special HAP Strategy Working Group including First Nations, MERC, MNRF and Tembec met to identify the desired components of the strategy and review drafts. Based on active engagement of the participants, and compiled by Chris McDonell, Manager of Aboriginal and Environmental Relations Tembec, a draft strategy was presented to the HAP Steering Team for review and discussion at the December Steering Team meeting.

The draft strategy identifies a herbicide reduction target for the combined Tembec-managed Sustainable Forest Licenses (SFLs) in northeastern Ontario (Gordon Cosens, Romeo Malette and Martel Forests). The target, as proposed, functions as a 'maximum' cap on herbicide use by Tembec.

While meaningful in an operational context where applications rates vary with weather and other factors, the Steering Team requested more clarity on: the target, updated herbicide application information by forest and data specific to the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve (CCGP). Additional review of data is underway to display usage trends over a 5 year period for inclusion in the next version of the Strategy.

To support the herbicide reduction goal, 10 Action Areas are described in the strategy, including Tactical Options, Cross-Cultural Understanding, Knowledge-to-Action, Monitoring and Annual Reporting.

Significant herbicide reduction has been achieved over the past five years. Achieving additional reductions as envisioned in the Strategy will take innovation, resources and creativity and it will require the continuing spirit, support and guidance of First Nations and Metis for whom this strategy is so vitally important.

### Did You Know?

The Herbicide Alternatives Program (HAP) is pleased to announce two new Steering Committee Members. We welcome to the table, **Ernest Gatien (Ernie)**, PCMNO, Regional Councillor, Chair, Historic Sault Ste. Marie (HSSM) Consultation Committee and his alternate, **Yvonne Jensen**, President of the North Channel Metis Council.

<b>Need more information? Contact any of these HAP Steering Team members.</b>	
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