



What's *HAP*pening?

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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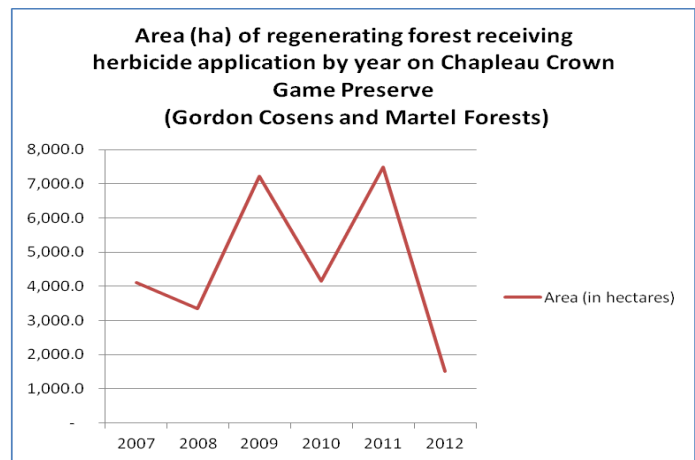
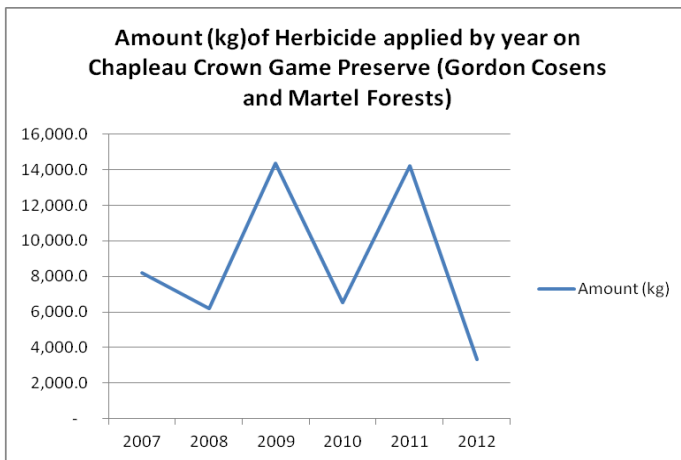
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Herbicide Application in the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve (CCGP) - A 5-Year History

Recently the HAP Steering Team received the most up-to-date herbicide application statistics for those portions of the CCGP under Tembec’s control. (Other forest management -companies, which also have areas within the Game Preserve, maintain their own data separately from Tembec, and are not included in these statistics.) We present a summary of the data below, with some introductory information.

Both to meet its legal requirements and to track herbicide reduction efforts as part of its commitment to Forest Stewardship Council¹ (FSC) certification, Tembec measures and reports herbicide use in two ways: 1) by Area (in hectares) over which herbicide was applied, and 2) by Quantity (in kilograms (kg) of active ingredient of herbicide applied.

The two graphs presented below show herbicide use statistics for the combined portions of the Gordon Cosens Forest and Martel Forest within the Chapleau Crown Game Preserve (CCGP) for the period 2007 – 2012², the years for which location data is available.



Herbicide use can vary significantly from year to year as a result of two principal factors and other related factors, for example, non-herbicide alternatives. Firstly, very precise weather conditions called ‘indices’ dictate when herbicide application can occur in a safe and effective manner. Adverse seasonal conditions such as wet and windy weather affect herbicide use because they cannot be applied under those conditions.

Secondly, the potential amount of planted/seeded area and natural regeneration areas requiring tending from competing plants is linked to the amount of forest harvesting in previous years. As the HAP Steering Team moves through the Program, they’ll review statistics such as these for the purpose of achieving the HAP herbicide alternative objectives (See ‘*The HAP Goal*’, above.)

¹ The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international not for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization established in 1993 to promote responsible management of the world’s forests. Its main tools for achieving this are standard setting, certification and labeling of forest products. The FSC vision “is healthy forests [that provide] an equitable sharing of benefits from their use, while respecting natural forest processes, biodiversity and harmony amongst their inhabitants”. The FSC mission is “to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world’s forests”. The FSC works with Environmental, Economic, Social and Aboriginal organizations and individuals to set strict environmental and social standards for forests. “By setting such Standards FSC creates an incentive for forest owners and managers to voluntarily meet the best social and environmental practices.

². Note: Prior to 2007, Tembec was not tracking the quantity of herbicide applied by area. Data for those areas treated in 2013 will be available in November 2014.

HAP Steering Team Member Profile

In each issue of 'What's HAPpening!' we introduce to you a current member of the HAP Steering Team.

Elder John Tangie, Michipicoten First Nation

On the HAP Steering Team since its beginning, and promoting the views of an Elder, John Tangie is the third of fourteen children born to Allan and Lena Tangie in Chapleau.

John grew up in the bush playing with friends and younger siblings, hurrying home after school to drop off his school bag and tell his Mom he was going to check the rabbit snares he and Dad had set the day before. Now, several years later, John still looks forward to spending time in 'the bush'.



The HAP Steering Team's John Tangie, a member of the Michipicoten First Nation, near Wawa, on a recent winter outing in the Chapleau area.

John started guiding at the early age of 15 and began working full-time for CP Rail's car department at 17. He continued to guide American tourists, hunters and fishermen each summer until his early twenties. As a CP employee, John eventually worked his way to a supervisory position.

A founding member for the local (Chapleau) Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association, John has taken First Nation community youth on 3-day to week-long canoe trips. During these ventures, participants learned safe canoeing practices and experienced the thrill of running rapids, portaging, all the while, learning valuable wilderness survival skills. Such trips included visits to sites where pictographs are still visible. Such trips instill a sense of cultural pride and create a memorable connection to their ancestors and the past.

John takes personal responsibility to be of service to people and continues to realize his dream of a better life for Anishnabe.

As a devoted Firekeeper, John Tangie lovingly cares for Sacred Fires in various ceremonies. He was gifted with a

Firekeeper's staff from Greenland for caring for the Sacred Fire of the Thunder Lodge which burned for 7 years straight without going out. John was there for six-weeks one summer.

He continues to use and share his knowledge of the land in and around the northeast Superior region. Whether it's walking the land or harvesting fish, wild game, berries **and medicines, or in the Lodges of our People, John is always happiest doing Creator's work and being with Mother Earth.**

Did You Know?

A 'weed' is a plant considered undesirable, unattractive, or troublesome, especially one growing where it is not wanted. The same plant can be considered a 'weed' by one person, while another would not classify the same plant as a 'weed'. Desirability is in the eye of the beholder. Similarly, plants in the forest can also be recognized as valuable to some, and not others.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, lecturer, and poet has been quoted as saying "*What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.*"

Are you under 26 with an Interest in Forestry?

Are you a youth between the ages of 18-25 interested in the environment, learning from Elders, and making a difference for your community?

The Herbicide Alternative Program (HAP) is looking for Youth to join with us in eliminating the use of herbicides across Northeastern Ontario.

The HAP Steering Team is looking for Youth to become involved in this project. If you are interested, please send us a letter outlining your interests and why you would like to be a part of HAP. As part of your involvement you will have the opportunity to learn from Elders and forest practitioners on the land, to participate in regular meetings, and to help us reach our goals of reducing herbicide use in Ontario.

If you would like to hear more about the project or to submit a letter of interest, please contact Erin Fletcher projectofficer@vianet.ca by June 30, 2014.

From the Land – The Chaga Mushroom

Travel on foot though the bush during the winter and early spring certainly has its benefits. The quiet open woods, shy of leaves, opens a vista to things we might miss when the trees have fully leafed out.

This mode of travel is at a pace that allows one to be truly observant. Trees sway in the winter wind and sound like a hundred wooden rocking chairs not at all in unison. Small mammal tracks play out different stories on the snow, who's chasing who and who caught who, let alone what is happening underneath the snow. In early spring, we begin to see the 'green' coming back to the forest. Ducks are back, searching out nesting sites, beavers are on the move. There is so much to see.

Certain items tend to catch one's eye, an abnormal crook in a tree, the workings of a Pileated Woodpecker or a bump on a tree that may resemble a cat!

The chaga mushroom is one such item that quickly draws ones eye... if you are in the right mind set, and at times, it does look like a cat on a tree!



Chaga Mushroom growing on Birch tree. Photo courtesy of Höyhens.

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Chaga... What is it?

Chaga is a fungus in the Hymenochaetaceae family; it grows on birch trees here within the Boreal Forest. Although not widespread, if you look, you will find it.

In England and Canada, this fungus is known as the sterile conk trunk rot of birch, which refers to the fruiting bodies growing under the outer layers of wood surrounding the sterile conk once the tree is dead, to spread the spores.

Birch wood is highly susceptible to fungal decay, according to North Dakota State University. Wood rots caused by fungus begin inside the tree. Branching filaments of fungus called mycelia eat and decay the wood around them as they grow. When they are ready, they send fruiting bodies out

through the bark of the tree. These are the mushrooms seen popping out of trunks and roots of birch trees.

The name "*chaga*" (pronounced "tsjaa-ga") comes from the Russian word of the mushroom (anglicized from czaga),

With the help of Pat Tangie Cultural Coordinator for the North Superior Regional Chiefs Forum in consultation with colleagues, we learn that the name in Cree is *wuskwahyahtik* (Annie Metat) and in Ojibwe - *shikitaagan* (Ernestine McLeod).

In France, it is called the carie blanche spongieuse de bouleau (spongy white birch tree rot),

It is also known as the clinker polypore, cinder conk, black mass and birch canker polypore.

This mushroom has long been considered a medicinal gift of nature and has been used as a folk remedy in Russia and Siberia since the 16th century.

Appearance:

The sterile conk is irregularly formed and has the appearance of burnt charcoal. It is not the fruiting body of the fungus, but a mass of mycelium, mostly black due to the presence of massive amounts of melanin.



Uses

Observed "to survive in harsh climates, chaga concentrates natural compounds for its protection, and that is why it is so powerful. To strengthen the tree, as well as heal, it makes potent phytochemicals, including sterols, phenols, and enzymes. Researchers have inoculated sick trees with chaga

to strengthen them. People benefit by consuming these forest-source phytochemicals and nutrients.”

As with a lot of medicinal plants numerous claims have been made of the Chaga Mushroom and the benefits may not be fully supported by certain authorities.

Harvesting:

Although professional pickers are currently on the lookout for this elusive fungus the presence and availability of this forest ingredient would lend one to believe that to maintain a sustainable source on the land only personal/local use should be considered.

Chaga can be harvested in winter and is typically processed and taken internally as a steeped tea.

Jeff Leach January, 2014

- Until next issue, Happy Adventures on the Land!

Modernization of Forest Tenure in Ontario

The modernization of forest tenure in Ontario has been underway for several years, with efforts being made at both the local and provincial levels to find ways to increase engagement of local level stakeholders. Through the collaboration of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), several First Nation Communities, Forest Industry and Forest Based-Community working groups, a set of principles have been developed that will guide the transition to enhanced Sustainable Forest Licence (eSFL) companies. This transition will result in more inclusive forest tenure models based on locally developed solutions that address local circumstances and interests.

Discussions have begun in the Northeast Superior Region, encompassing the Martel and Magpie Forests, around how this new system could be implemented. The participants in the process include local Aboriginal communities, the local forest industry and wood supply commitment holders, local communities and the OMNR.

As reported in the Algoma News, Wawa Ontario

See www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Forests for more information

Need more information? Contact any of these HAP Steering Team members.

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