

MTA and Buckthorn Removal Projects

by Brian McCulloch

These projects have their origin in the newly formed Eco/Enviro subcommittee in 2021, where we decided that the highly invasive Buckthorn would be a target of our efforts. Initial focus was on the Maitland Woods and \$1,000 of funding was received from the Invasive Species Centre (ISC). We went to work on the north end and successfully removed dozens of the trees, dragging them out to the parking lot. With a qualified Herbicide Exterminator, volunteers successfully sprayed and killed the stumps. We've also moved south, along the eastern and western trails, doing the same. MTA has worked with a variety of groups to eradicate Buckthorn and plant native saplings in the Maitland Woods, including the Town of Goderich, Coastal Conservation Youth Corp, Goderich Rotary Club, and Goderich Lions Club.

Meanwhile, we applied for another ISC grant to address the heavy infestation in the Sifto Loop forest. In June, we were awarded \$2,000 for this project, so in consultation with Compass Minerals and Keith Homan (landowners), we are concentrating here to complete the project by the required year end deadline. Currently, we are over 70% complete, and expect to meet the deadline. The Sifto Loop has proven to be more difficult than expected due to the dense and prolific concentration of the Buckthorn.

In 2024, we plan to continue our efforts in the Maitland Woods and on the Sifto Loop, add an additional Herbicide Exterminator to the volunteer team, and work with Bayfield River Valley Trail Association volunteers to clear the Tranquility trail at the Huron Hospice near Clinton. This work is only possible with the hard work of dedicated volunteers, having taken over 200 hours of time this year. For more information on the Buckthorn removal projects, contact Brian McCulloch at bluewaterhs@gmail.com. If you would like to join MTA's invasive species removal team, contact Kathleen at klush2@gmail.com.

