Barb and Bernie Smith have lived on their property outside of London since the 1980s. They own a 43 acre farm on a corn, soybean and wheat rotation.

Concerns:
When the Smiths bought the property, they continued to farm the land as it had been farmed for ages. Barb became concerned with an area of the field that was prone to erosion due to a steep slope (9-15%). Loss of soil resulted in decreased agricultural productivity on this part of the land.

Solution:
In 1994, Barb decided to retire the area of the field with the steep slope by planting trees.

Benefits:
Taking the sloped land out of agricultural production and planting it with trees has reduced the loss of soil, as the tree roots increase slope stability. The trees also have the added benefit of enhancing wildlife habitat.
Project Timeline:

**Fall 1993** – The planting site was prepared by mowing the existing vegetation, planting a cover crop and delineating the tree planting area with stakes.

**Spring 1994** - Trees were machine planted by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA).

Maintenance:

In spring 1994, UTRCA sprayed herbicide around seedlings to limit competition by weeds and grasses. To further limit competition, Barb mowed between the trees for six years. Rodent bait stations were used to deter mice, voles and rabbits for the first five years, to protect the trees against girdling which can damage or kill trees. Barb continues to monitor the trees.

Tree species planted on Barb’s land:

- White Ash
- White Cedar
- Red Oak
- Norway Spruce
- White Spruce
- Black Walnut

By the numbers:

- 7.5 acres retired from agricultural production
- 5800 trees planted

Additional BMPs:

An erosion control berm was constructed on the Smith property to slow the flow of water moving downslope from their field onto a neighbour’s field. There is also a windbreak on the property which aids in reducing wind erosion.