

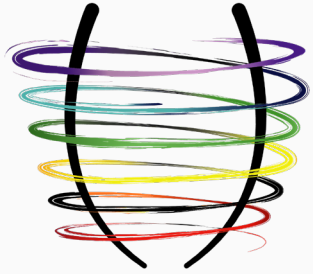
# Climate Smart Forestry: Silviculture Tactics and Indigenous Leadership for Improved Forestry, Climate, and Biodiversity Outcomes in Working Forest Landscapes

Leigh Fox  
Conservation Finance Catalyst  
[leigh@wahkohtowin.com](mailto:leigh@wahkohtowin.com)



Wahkohtowin





## Wahkohtowin Development GP Inc.

- Indigenous-led private company owned by three First Nations in Northern Ontario founded in 2016
- Diversified investments in forest sector: harvesting company, sawmill, co-gen, housing, nature-based climate solutions, policy and consulting services.
- Lead on mycorrhizal inoculation of forest seedling carbon project- 35m trees inoculated to date
- Pilot cohort for VERRA Nature Framework Biodiversity Credit— Avoiding herbicide application
- Youth Guardian program in 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation
- Sovereignty and cultural revitalization at the core of mandate from Owner-Nations



# Wahkohtowin Guardians Launching 5<sup>th</sup> Birch Bark Canoe-Chapleau River-July, 2025



Wahkohtowin



# Climate Smart Forestry Grant: Testing Silviculture Tactics and Indigenous-Led Delivery Methods

- SFI-ECCC Funding supported Wahkohtowin Youth Guardians to participate in treeplanting and manual brushing training program
- Theory of change: Highly trained forestry workforce can deliver more sophisticated prescriptions and achieve better results for forest companies
- Herbicide Alternative Program (HAP): Convened 35 forestry professionals for a 3-day field workshop to review silviculture tactics, demonstrate chainsaw brushing, hardwood management, and pre-harvest vegetation assessment surveying
- Manual brushing, pre-harvest vegetation assessment, and mycorrhizal inoculation combine to avoid herbicide application on thousands of hectares will generate biodiversity credits using VERRA's new *Nature Framework*



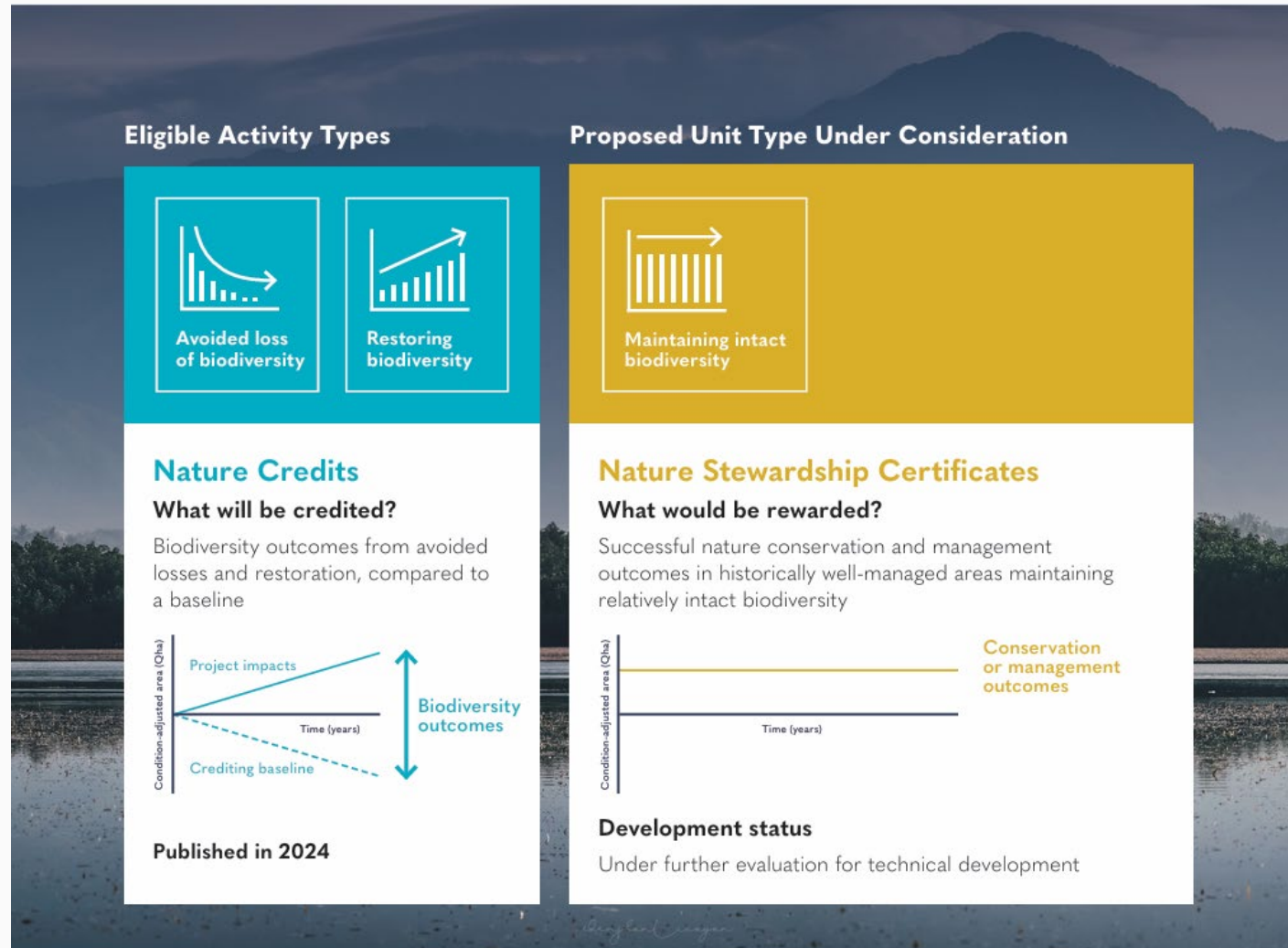
# Mycorrhizal Inoculation for Improved Forest Management: Carbon Financed, Indigenous-Led Solution

- Grant and Private Funding to assess 25-year-old research trial established by partner Mikro-Tek Inc.
- Commercialization funding to inoculate 53 million trees-currently in year 3 of 4 and certify stand volume increase as IFM carbon project.
- 35 million trees inoculated to date
- 15-45% increase in stand volume
- Targeting inoculation of 100m+ trees per year
- Host-Nation benefit sharing agreement and recognition of Nation-specific strains as locally owned intellectual property—UNDRIP Article 31





# Emerging Biodiversity Credit Market





# National Research Council (NRC)-Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) Commercial Forest Seedling Inoculation Project

Project Lead



First Nation/Rights-Holder Partners



Project Consortium Partners



Wahkohtowin  
Development GP Inc.



Forest Company Partners

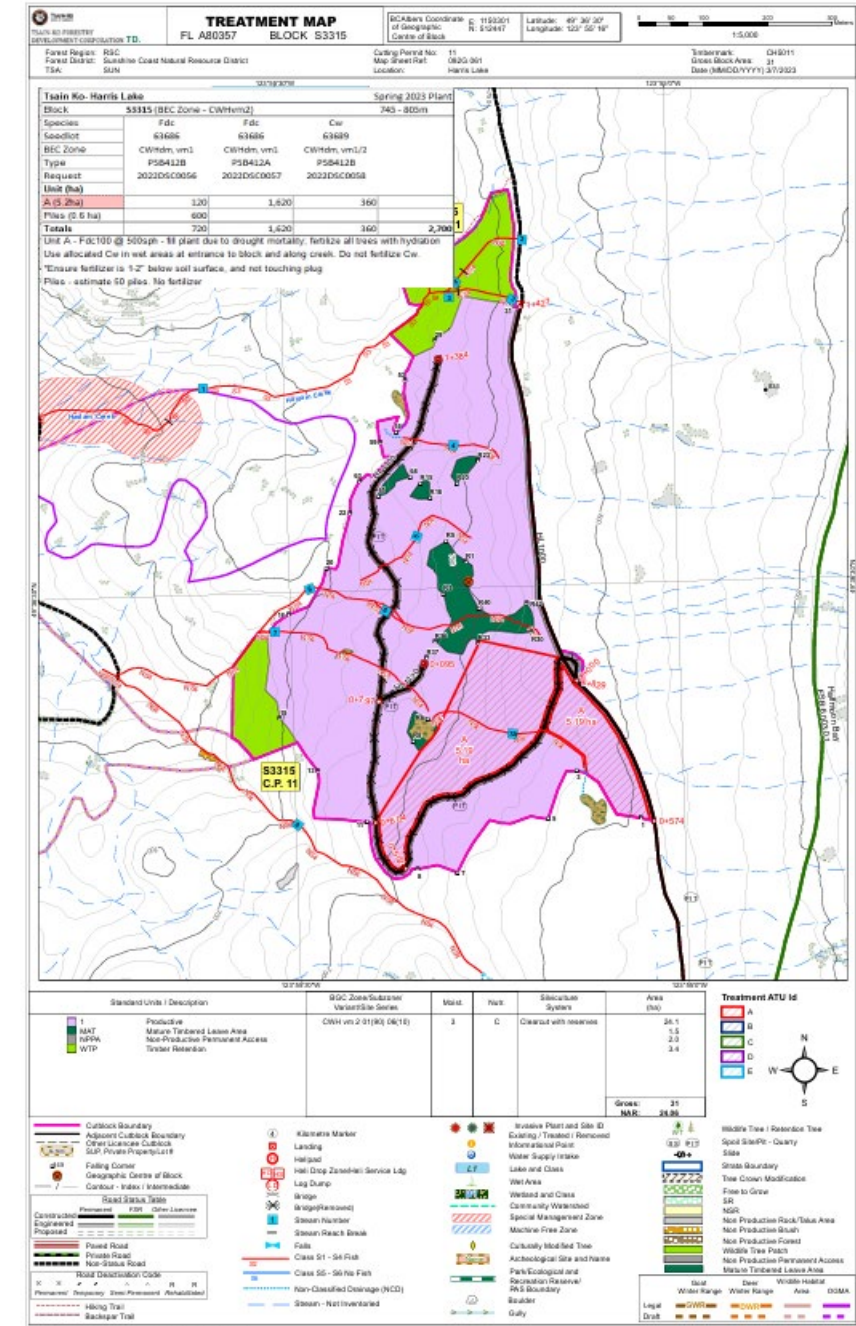


Funding Partners

SDTC/NRC



- Market Conditions
- Cost of Production including long-term management
- Duties and Tariffs







# Distressed Firms are Less Able to Invest in Long-Term Sustainability

- Additional public and private capital deployed through First Nation and Indigenous firms is an opportunity to leverage demand for sustainable forest management outcomes: Carbon, biodiversity, Indigenous-led multi-generational forest stewardship



# Resilient Forests Need Land Guardians and Indigenous-led Forest Stewardship

