



## Tracking Change

Tracking or monitoring the changes to the recovering ecosystems is vital. It tells us whether the interventions are making a difference; if additional interventions are needed; and if interventions in an area should be ended and nature left to do the rest.

The Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit has been monitoring lake ecosystems in Greater Sudbury for decades. An equivalent, coordinated effort is now needed for ecosystems on land.

So what needs to be tracked ?

The number of different native plant species in a recovering forest is important as is the size and health of the trees. Numbers and variety of frogs and salamanders in wetlands and adjacent forests also can provide insight as to the health of these systems. Many birds are very choosy about their habitat so they make excellent indicators of a healthy forest at all stages of its development. Even the variety of insects in the forest soils speaks to its health.

Although most of the monitoring will be undertaken by professional biologists, there will be opportunities for skilled naturalists to continue participating in specific monitoring projects, such as marsh monitoring and forest bird monitoring.