



# The Green Door

Citizens Supporting Ontario's Prosperous and Sustainable Future

The Yorklands Green Hub Newsletter

| September 2017

| No. 8



## Nature Today and Tomorrow at the YGH Site: Walks Through Science and Imagination

June 10<sup>th</sup>. A perfect spring Saturday for an inspiring walk at the former Ontario Reformatory in Guelph.

YGH member Bob Giza, B.Sc., B.Ed. from Ontario Streams, and Tom Woodcock, Ph.D., Planning Ecologist with the Rare Charitable Research Reserve in Cambridge, led two tours over the proposed Yorklands Green Hub (YGH) site and its adjoining parcels, some 200 acres of artistic landscape. They invited walkers to imagine the unique conservation and restoration opportunities offered by these heritage lands.

Restoring healthy ecosystems through ecological planning, removal of invasive species and naturalization of habitat and stream flows could contribute to heritage protection and native species regeneration in this part of Guelph, surrounded by new

development. The proposed YGH site (Parcel 2 – 70 acres) will engage citizen stewardship in re-naturalization, water protection and increased biological diversity on this urban green space as we strengthen the resilience of the urban environment. This parcel includes wetlands and creeks that join Clythe Creek and the lakes on adjoining Parcel 3, whose waters flow into the Eramosa River.

YGH's Val Morse introduced visitors to the walks and the site. She outlined the organization's vision to create a public education, demonstration and research eco-centre with chosen themes of water protection, sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

Retired teacher, fisherman and stream rehabilitation enthusiast Bob Giza pointed to the potential for restoration of Clythe Creek, as he had at the April YGH Annual General Meeting. He gave a fascinating overview of the geology, water table profile, temperatures and habitat here as they affect cool-water fish native to southern Ontario, such as trout. Ontario Streams works with Trout

Unlimited, advocating for water quality rehabilitation, monitoring and sometimes dam removal in provincial streams. These steps encourage the return of species which have disappeared locally due to human alterations of the landscape.

Aquatic ecosystem rehabilitation is a timely idea for Parcels 2 and 3. With widening planned for York Road soon, Clythe Creek will need protection from increased traffic run-off. Rerouting it further in from the traffic could help. Then there are the unique heritage features of small dams built by the inmates as part of the skills-building training of the OR. Can these attractive landscape details also be protected by being moved further inside the site? Could they be separated from the main run of the creek to support trout habitat?



Water quality, naturalization and invasive species removal were discussed by Tom Woodcock as he led his group around the ponds and along the Eramosa River. He pointed out a problematic species in many parts of this watershed: buckthorn. Rare has experience at stewarding their 900 acre site in Blair, ON with a vision of demonstrating “the link between ecological integrity and economic sustainability...critical to enhanced quality of life”. An urban nature reserve beside an active eco-centre on this unique heritage site would be a great opportunity for Guelph and the Greater Golden Horseshoe. ■



## Noticing Nature at the Yorklands Green Hub

You. A child. A friend. Plan a ramble (or a run!) through nature, on the unique heritage Yorklands in Guelph.

Get to know the special place where we plan to create a future science centre that showcases best sustainable practices. For the protection of waterways and wetlands; for low-carbon-dependency in a retrofitted Reformatory Superintendent's house; for growing organic raised-bed produce for local support of farmers, markets and community sharing. The opportunities for teaching and learning sustainable living here are wonderfully diverse and open to our collective imagination.

Besides sustainability, we will focus on heritage, both built and natural. We envisage restoration to a more natural state of the local waterways and ecosystems. We envisage workshops to create art while appreciating seasonal changes in the flora and fauna around the site's creeks, ponds and landscapes.

Walk the site or watch for our tours that highlight historical and ecological details. YGH membership includes e-news to keep you up on plans to make this place a special destination for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

**Location 785 York Road (Hwy.7), Guelph. Parking on York Road** ■

## ARTSPIRATION 2017

### Guelph Artists: Let Nature be Your Muse!

If you're an artist, or an aspiring artist, we invite you to create and showcase your artwork inspired by a visit to the lovely landscape at the former Ontario Reformatory at 785 York Road.

Stroll the stone-walled meadows, shady paths, sparkling ponds and streams while you enjoy this bit of "country in the city." Create a work inspired by the vision of the proposed Yorklands Green Hub for sustainable urban agriculture, water protection, renewable energy and protected heritage at this site.

**Artspiration** is designed to put a spotlight on the breadth of artistry in the Guelph community while promoting Yorklands Green Hub's vision of re-purposing this land to become a centre of learning for a greener, climate-stable tomorrow.

#### Entry Criteria

Artworks may be in any medium: painting, drawing, photography, mixed media, fiber. Subject matter must be drawn from the site itself, and

our four themes of sustainable food, water, energy and heritage. **Entries will be selected based on relevance to site landscape and organizational themes.**

#### To Make a Submission

To propose an entry, please submit photos of works with details of title, type and size **by September 25**, or direct inquiries to Carol-Ann Betz at [cbetz@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:cbetz@yorklandsgreenhub.ca) or 226-820-3426. Accepted pieces must be delivered ready for hanging, not excessively heavy, and able to fit through a 7' x 4' entrance.

#### Exhibition – Opening & Gala

Selected works will be received on October 5 and exhibited for sale from October 6 to 27 at the new **10 C Shared Space** located at 42 Carden Street at in Guelph.

All are invited to the exhibit opening on Friday, October 6, from 7-9 pm, as well as the closing gala and silent auction of any donated pieces on Friday, October 27, from 7-9 pm. ■



"Embracing the Land," Artspiration entry by Barbara Stefaniak, 2016



## What is the Yorklands Green Hub?

The Yorklands Green Hub is a non-partisan citizens' group that is promoting the creation of an Ontario sustainable eco-centre at the former Guelph Correctional Centre (GCC). The goal: a self-sustaining forum where institutions, groups and sustainable businesses can come together in a structured setting to promote greater understanding and participation in making the transition towards a low-emissions, climate-stable future.

### Board of Directors

**Norah Chaloner, Past Chair/Community Liaison & Land Acquisition Committee**

**Leo Medeiros, Treasurer**

**Val Morse, Secretary, Governance Committee, Co-chair Finance, Promotions Committee**

**Colette Mesher, Promotions Committee**

**Ashley Henbrey, Land Acquisitions Committee**

**Abdelsalam Elfahal, Business Plan Committee**

**Brooke Billings, Co-chair Finance**

**Carol-Ann Betz, Events Committee**

You can contact YGH at  
[info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca)

## Holding the Vision: The 2017 YGH Annual General Meeting

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, YGH chair Terry O'Connor called the 2017 Annual General Meeting to order at the Red Papaya downtown. He began with a land acknowledgement, recognizing the peoples who came before us on these traditional lands.

After the business portion of the meeting was concluded, former teacher, Ontario Streams representative and fishing enthusiast Bob Giza presented an engaging slide show. His topic was lessons learned from the restoration of Marden creek to natural flow as the approach offers a model for Clythe Creek on the proposed YGH site. Ontario Streams and partner organization Trout Unlimited are proponents of stream naturalization and removal of dams to restore



AGM 2017: Members learn the science of creek restoration from Bob Giza of Ontario Streams.

The first order of business was the election of the 2017 Board of Directors. YGH is pleased to welcome our new board members to this year's lineup of directors (see list, left). Each director will play a leading or active role on at least one of YGH's committees.

The chair received 2017 committee reports from Governance, Land Acquisition, Finance, Business Planning, Promotions, Events and Programming. YGH Secretary Val Morse presented the financial report on behalf of Treasurer Leo Medeiros.

In light of YGH's new goal to acquire 70 rather than the original 47 acres of the former Guelph Correctional Centre heritage land, organization by-laws were amended to substitute this new acquisition goal.

water temperatures required for native species such as trout which have been extirpated from many southern Ontario waterways. Bob illustrated how successes at re-naturalizing other streams could provide guidance for Clythe Creek. To protect both built and natural heritage, scenic waterfalls built by former OR inmates could be re-situated in a smaller stream near a main run that would support trout habitat.

Water conservation, research and education protection are among key focus areas of the Yorklands Green Hub's mandate. Creek renaturalization would fit within a broader vision of re-naturalizing parts of the property to create more connected, biodiverse habitat areas. ■



## History Meets the Future: YGH Creating Display for Guelph Civic Museum

This fall we will have some exposure in a special venue: the Guelph Civic Museum. YGH Events chair Carol-Ann Betz is heading up the creation of a display case montage that will blend the site's history with our future vision. It will tell, in pictures and objects, the fascinating story of the history of the Yorklands site – how the Ontario Reformatory was built and landscaped. And was transformed for a time into a convalescent hospital for rehabilitation and trades-training for soldiers returning from World War I. The historical background provides context for the vision of our proposed transformation of the site: from a former prison to a unique educational centre designed to engage the community in building a sustainable future.



YGH is grateful to the Civic Museum for their assistance in providing archival material and design guidance, as we celebrate Guelph's past heritage and green future. ■

## Executive Director Needed. You can help.

The Yorklands Green Hub is currently conducting a GoFundMe campaign aimed at raising funds to cover the salary for a part-time Executive Director.

Adding a professional staff member to the organization would give an tremendous boost to the capacity of our currently all-volunteer board and committee membership.



“An experienced ED will be an invaluable guide to our volunteer board and committees,” said community liaison Norah Chaloner, “in particular as we move forward to capital fundraising in readiness for purchase of the property when the province sets the date in the near future.

(<http://yorklandsgreenhub.ca/update-sale-former-guelph-correctional-centre/>)

The premise of crowd-sourced funding is to raise funds from many small contributions from many supportive people.

If you think creating a model eco-centre on heritage land in Guelph is a not-to-be-missed idea – go to [https://www.gofundme.com/help-fund-yorklands-green-hub/donate?pc=expt\\_ot\\_dn\\_toastbanner\\_w\\_v1](https://www.gofundme.com/help-fund-yorklands-green-hub/donate?pc=expt_ot_dn_toastbanner_w_v1) and give generously to support our common sustainable future!! ■



### October

#### Artspiration 2017

(See article above) Entry deadline September 25 for selection. Opening October 6, exhibit and sale of work Oct. 6-27, closing Gala, October 27 at the new **10C Shared Space**, 42 Carden St., Guelph. All welcome!! Benefit for YGH operating fund.

#### YGH Display – Civic Museum

Drop by the Guelph Civic Museum between October and January to browse our exhibit in the main lobby display case. You will find some fascinating history and photos of the former Ontario Reformatory's past, framing YGH's vision of what the future might hold for this unique and beautiful site.

**\*\* Admission to the Museum is free after 5:00 pm on the fourth Friday of each month.**

**MEMBERS MAKE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE!**

**Become a member of the Yorklands Green Hub!!**

[yorklandsgreenhub.ca/become-member](http://yorklandsgreenhub.ca/become-member)

**“The Green Door” is a publication of the Yorklands Green Hub Promotions Committee. We welcome news, articles and letters. Each must include the author's name and full contact information.**

**We reserve the right to refuse or edit all submissions. Questions should be directed to the editor or a member of the Board of Directors at [info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca)**