



The Green Door

Citizens Supporting Ontario's Prosperous and Sustainable Future

The Yorklands Green Hub Newsletter

| April 2019 | No. 13



John Lyle's classic Ontario Reformatory administration building and complex.

Great Cities Have Great Parks The Yorklands Green Hub would conserve 70 acres of parkland for Guelph

In the 1890s and 1900s, the City Beautiful Movement was a North American movement of urban planning that espoused beauty and grand design for urban spaces and institutions. Canadian architect John Lyle studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. He was inspired by the design of Central Park in New York City, and by the City Beautiful movement that guided Frederick Law Olmstead's approach to combined beauty, functionality and public accessibility in his landscaping design.

In 1910, Lyle was engaged to design and supervise the build of the Ontario Reformatory. His layout featured a tree-lined avenue along a long fieldstone wall leading up a slope to a complex of classically elegant limestone buildings. It's a plan that lends harmony, dignity and

order to all who enter the property. The buildings were built to look down the hill over landscaped fields, streams, ponds, waterfalls and bridges, contributing a landmark piece of parkland to the City of Guelph.



Postcard of an "OR" landscape, a public attraction in Guelph, early 1900s.

Today, this provincially-owned former prison farmland seems perfect for repurposing as an outdoor sustainable environments centre. Think of the value of urban green space to many cities, including High Park in Toronto, Stanley Park in Vancouver or Victoria Park in Kitchener. Then imagine a combined sustainability hub and public parkspace similar to the one at [Evergreen Brick Works](#) in Toronto.

How Many Ways can we Address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?



In 2015 the world adopted a set of 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) at the UN, mobilizing efforts to end poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change.

The SDGs are designed to guide strategies to build healthy economies while addressing social, environmental and climate change challenges.

YGH will aim to address as many of these goals as possible in the wide-ranging facets of our work, in relation to poverty, food insecurity, health, education, equality, clean water, clean energy, work, innovation, sustainable communities, production and consumption.

Environmental education, stewardship and strong partnerships underpin all of these efforts.

Our proposed site, Parcel 2 of the former Ontario Reformatory (Guelph Correctional Centre), is four times the area of Toronto's Evergreen Brickworks. Just imagine what a wonderful public park we could have on 70 acres of Yorklands meadows, trails, wetlands, streams and ponds! To house a sustainable environments centre would be a wonderful and timely use of this property.

You can walk the Yorklands in Guelph any day. (Con't p. 2)

Great Parks (con't from p. 1) See it to get a feeling for how changes in our values and actions can help us build a more sustainable future with enhanced ecosystems and preserved green space.

More details on the history of the former Ontario Reformatory can be found at the wonderful [Guelph Blog](#) by Cameron Shelley. ☒

Our Food Future

Our 2019 "Enviro-Series on FOOD" took place on March 12th and featured some great presentations.



A full evening: YGH's Colette Mesher, Jennifer Marshman, Kim Fellows, Joe Mancini, Norah Chaloner, Heather Beach.

As our organization plans to be part of the innovative opportunities of Guelph's Smart Cities food circularity future, we opened the evening with a presentation from Heather Beach, speaking for the City.

How can we strengthen our environmental stewardship and community resilience by being part of [Our Food Future](#)?

Another featured speaker was Joe Mancini from the [Working Centre](#) in Kitchener. The Working Centre philosophy includes living simply and serving others through their shared kitchen and cafe, urban agriculture, shared tools and training for re-skilling. Their model is an inspiration for us and deserves a closer look.

Kim Fellows from [Seeds of Diversity](#) engaged us with the



Heather Beach, intern with the City of Guelph (from Community Engaged Scholarship Institute at U of G).

importance of the collection, preservation and use of heritage seeds to strengthen our food security. Jennifer Marshman from [Bee Cities](#) reminded us that a third of our food supply is dependent on pollinators -- and that their currently falling numbers are very worrisome. She spoke of the importance of Guelph being a Bee City, and gave us many ideas for becoming involved. Factoring in the ecological function of plants as well as their beauty could lead to a dramatic boost in pollinator habitat in our urban spaces, increasing beneficial insect numbers and their pollination "services."

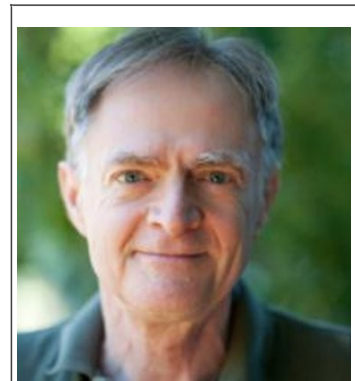
The full agenda didn't leave lots of time for questions, but it was an evening rich in ideas for building resilience and food security together as we reduce carbon emissions in our local environment. ☒

Thanks to YGH member Irene Hanuta who took pictures at the event, and shared them with [Guelph's Snapd.](#)

Resilience Festival Guelph 2019

Guest speaker Tom Ewart, Manager of Sustainability and Citizenship at the Cooperators Insurance Group, kicked off a week of wonderful community events coordinated by the team at Transition Guelph. Ewart explained the risks and costs of increasing numbers of extreme weather events in Canada. He emphasized that we must now organize our lives differently to anticipate such events, and prepare to respond locally to achieve a best recovery. He noted that the World Economics Forum's Global Risks Report 2019 listed the top three risks to people and society as climate, climate and climate.

Richard Heinberg of the [Post Carbon Institute](#) was the main speaker. He pointed out that we have lost 52% of all species since 1970! We need engagement at all levels of



Richard Heinberg of the Post Carbon Institute

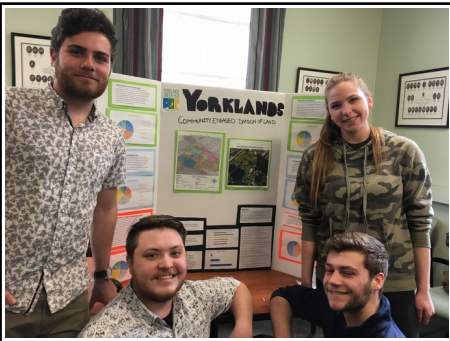
society to reduce our collective ecological footprint, and make ourselves resilient to the adverse effects of weather extremes.

Now is the time to be building networks in our community. What gifts can each of us bring?

Heinberg's Institute has an [online course on resilience](#), and [Transition Guelph](#) has many opportunities to get involved to learn and connect as we build a resilient future. ☒

The Strength of a Green Hub: Diverse and Fruitful Partnerships in Forward-Looking Research and Education

One of the numerous advantages of being a multidisciplinary, sustainability-focused organization is the wide array of opportunities for partnerships in research across academic disciplines.



Since 2014, YGH has partnered with many classes at the Universities of Guelph, Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier. In the context of their degree programs, many classes have done studies for YGH in landscape design, including ecological stewardship, green building, urban agriculture, soil remediation, heritage research and more. Some of these talented students' results have been on display at our public events. Other examples can be accessed on our website under [Design Projects](#).



Human Geography students from the University of Guelph visit the Yorklands site for an introduction to the YGH project.

In the past year alone YGH has partnered with an Interdisciplinary Arts and Science course with Cory Hector and Kaylan Schwartz, and a class in Landscape Architecture in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development under the leadership of Sessional Instructor Shirley Hall-McEachern and Kendall Fellows.

Some examples of the students' design concepts can be found on our website under the heading, "[Going Forward](#)."

U of G Applied Human Geography Students Investigate Food Security

Experiential learning and community engagement are important components in learning about the complexities of environment-societal relationships.

We begin our partnering experiences with all participating classes by taking them to visit the site to understand the YGH base goals of ecological education.

We introduce them to the Yorklands history and geography that are such a unique part of our Guelph heritage.

Back in the classroom we present our organizational mission and vision for fostering this opportunity for a multi-purpose public green space for our city. Students then break into small groups to tackle a part of the theme their class is investigating.



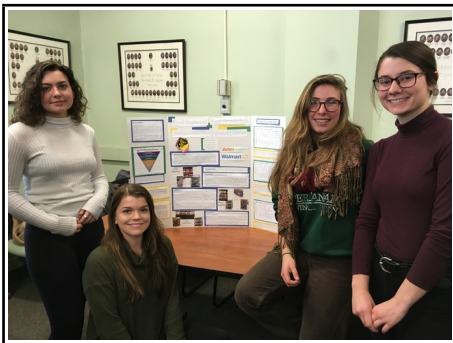
Partnering with Anna Stanley and Melissa Tanti's Human Geography class of over 40 students, we gained new knowledge through data collection, surveys and fresh approaches from the students. We introduce the students here with pictures of their end-of-term presentations to YGH. (Con't p. 4)

Partnerships (Con't from p. 3)

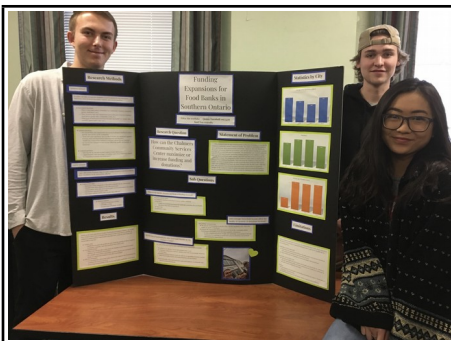
They studied and researched, and presented summaries of their ideas and designs for our future environmental centre.

Their investigations included a diverse range of topics, from phytoremediation (using plants to detoxify contaminated soil) to food deserts in our city.

One group did a survey of ethnic foods that newcomers to Guelph rely on for their health and cultural transition to a new country. A sample question: Do you know where to get yak milk in Guelph?



Citizens could grow hard-to-access foods at the Yorklands year round in solar greenhouses. Urban farmers there could also create an east end farmers' market to sell such produce.



Student research helps us refine our focus to meet needs that will strengthen our resilient future. It is always a privilege and a pleasure to work with them, and we are grateful for their contributions to building a community vision of a greener future with us. ☒

REDUCE YOUR PLASTIC USE!

YGH Make & Take



BeeSwax Foodwrap Workshop

**Saturday, May 4, 10 am - noon
EAST SIDE LIBRARY,
GUELPH, 1 Starwood Drive**

Join local beekeeper and long-time YGH member Colette Mesher, and learn how to make your own cotton food wraps. They're flexible, reusable, naturally antibacterial and, at the end of their lifetime, fully compostable.

\$40 fee includes all supplies. A \$10 rebate at the door for monthly funders (to become one, visit yorklandsgreenhub.ca/donate).

Workshop limited to 20 participants, so get your tickets early!

Register at [Eventbrite: Make & Take Beeswax Foodwraps](https://www.eventbrite.com/#!/event/Make-amp-Take-Beeswax-Foodwraps-2019-05-04)

or

Email info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca to arrange to pay for your ticket by cheque.

Volunteer!

Become a Member!

yorklandsgreenhub.ca



YGH 2019 Annual General Meeting - Monday, April 29

Victoria Road Recreation Centre - 151 Victoria Rd. N. Doors open 6:30. Presentation at 7:00 pm "The Past, Present and Future for the Yorklands" followed by refreshments and elections. Featured speaker Paul Neelands, the Year-Round Solar Aquaponics Greenhouse.

Second Sunday Yorklands Walk April 14, 2:00 pm

Let's look for *Spring!* Meet at 785 York Road (east of Victoria) for an early spring ramble in search of buds, green, returning birds.



Check the forecast, bring an umbrella and wear appropriate footwear in case any showers are in the offing.

2 Rivers Festival, Guelph 25 Events in May and June

Celebrate Guelph's two beautiful rivers and our watershed with a wonderful variety of events - walks, yoga, garlic mustard pull and pesto, rowing, film, cleanups, exploring and much more! Save the dates for your favourite activities - here's the [calendar](https://www.2riversfestival.org/calendar?page=1): <https://www.2riversfestival.org/calendar?page=1>! YGH leads a Yorklands walk on Mothers' Day, Sun. May 12 at 2:00 (785 York Rd.)

"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 at ehoughton@yorklandsgreenhub.ca or a member of the Board of Directors at info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca