



## Enviro-Series Pollinator Talk: a Full House Biologist Victoria MacPhail tracks pollinator health with citizen input

It was a full house at the Victoria Road Recreation Centre in Guelph for Victoria MacPhail's February 25<sup>th</sup> Enviro-Series 2020 presentation, *Bees, Trees, Food: The Essential Role of Pollinators in our Food Ecosystem*. Victoria is a pollination biologist pursuing a PhD at York University with a focus on citizen science and pollinators. She is also the co-chair of Pollination Guelph, and a key player in the Bumble Bee Watch program at York, which engages citizens to be part of data collection on Canada's bee populations.

Having citizens participate in observing bees adds enormously to scientists' work in studying which species are doing well and which are declining dramatically, e.g., the native American bumblebee (*bombus pensylvanicus*) in Canada.

Pollinators – of which bees are one of the most efficient – provide essential ecological services to nature and to humanity. Eighty percent of flowering plants and over half of crops rely on active animal pollination.

Victoria points out that we would lose 2/3 of a hearty breakfast – berries, honey and jam, even yogurt (cows need pollinated seed plants), chocolate and cocoa – without our bees. Their benefits to agriculture were valued (2005) at \$75 billion per year.

Not all bees are doing well – and we should be paying attention. Some bee populations in Ontario are declining. A comparison of bee populations in Guelph between 1970 and 2000 noted 4 increases, 3 with no change, 4 decreased, and 3 absent. Native bees are vulnerable to a variety of threats, including habitat loss and



*Victoria MacPhail: Did you know there are 855 bee species in Canada?*

fragmentation, pesticide use, diseases and parasites, competition from exotic species, and climate change.

If you'd like to be part of the enormously helpful citizen observations of bees, you can become a citizen scientist. Find out how at the **BumbleBeeWatch.org** website.



Citizens have submitted 60,000 records of observations in the US and Canada, with 1,900 records of at-risk species verified. Bee watchers find local habitats, take pictures of bees, and upload pictures to the website. Their input helps identify sites for habitat restoration, research

opportunities, topics for policy discussions and assessments. They assist in tracking bee movements and changes in ranges.

Victoria's assessment of data from this program will help to answer pressing ecological questions related to the conservation status of bumble bees.

Many thanks to Victoria for educating and inspiring us to take more care of our so-important pollinators. Nice SnapD coverage at <https://guelph.snapd.com/events/view/1306732>

## YGH Goes Online in Pandemic Time Self-guided Outdoor and Nature Activities Alleviate the Isolation of Sheltering at Home

The world has changed since our last newsletter. And our lives have changed with it. Canada's social distancing policy to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic finds us separated from our communities and our normal activities.



At YGH, we have had to cancel our plans for our spring Enviro-Series presentation on water, and our Noticing Nature summer outdoor program. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, we now have to move to virtual events.

### Get Outside for Yorky's Challenge

But thanks to a generous donation from Polycon Industries in Guelph, a subsidiary of Magna Exteriors, YGH





Meet Yorky, our virtual Yorklands guide!

has gone on line with stimulating activities to keep you connected to nature.

Yorky the Frog, our new little mascot, invites you and your household members to get outdoors in the springtime, explore the Yorklands, and enjoy some self-guided activities. Visit our Facebook page, and you'll find Yorky's two word searches, a scavenger hunt and a nice new site map to help you get to know the interesting features of this heritage site at 785 York Road in Guelph.

Another enticement for your safe distancing outdoor pleasure is Yorky's nine-week **Little Discoveries Challenge**. Our nature challenge activity is designed to pique the natural curiosity of children and adults, and help them connect with nature's ecosystems in springtime. Each week, Yorky will visit a different Yorklands spot, show us something he found, and ask if you can find his spot and his find.

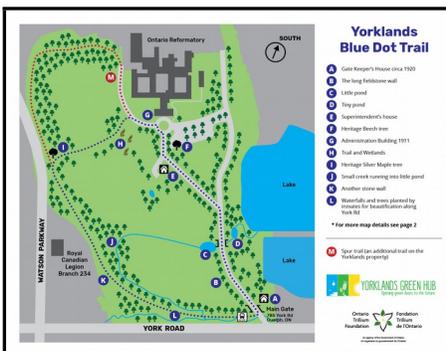
All Yorky's finds are along the **Blue Dot Trail**, which is shown on our site map. Look for his clues on our

Facebook and Instagram pages, and email your name, photo and answer (during the week of each clue) to [noticing@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:noticing@yorklandsgreenhub.ca).

Winners of our two draws will receive a gift voucher from their choice of three local stores that have nature inspiring supplies, books, and identification charts.

### Walk the Blue Dot Trail

Our Blue Dot Trail circles the 70-acre portion of the former Ontario Reformatory property that we wish to acquire, protect, and develop as a sustainable environments centre. Its trail map indicates some of the cultural and natural features that are part of this unique heritage parkland. You can download the map [here](#), with a back page [here](#) that provides more background on legend details.



The map will enrich your experience of visiting this historic site with its ecosystems of ponds, trees, meadows and creeks.

Active outings in natural green space are conducive to our well-being, mentally and physically: nature is a great stress reducer. Our spring activities and games will keep you active and observant as the world of other species is gearing up.

Many thanks to Magna for their generous support for Yorky's Little Discoveries Challenge! ♡



## YGH's pilot Polli-Patch project welcomed

### Mini pollinator garden for Guelph homes

Pollinators need our help! And this spring, YGH is introducing a pilot project called Polli-Patches, mostly in east Guelph. Under the supervision of Kiki Danninger, a small team of people will



deliver the program to registered applicants. Our package includes a small flowering shrub or tree, six perennial pollinator plants, planting and maintenance instructions, educational material and a small sign. It also includes horticultural support from this enthusiastic team. The Polli-Patch program is offered free thanks to donations and generous funding from **Pollination Guelph**. Details at: <http://yorklandsgreenhub.ca/poli-patches-a-ygh-pilot-project/> To join the support team or donate, contact: [kdann@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:kdann@yorklandsgreenhub.ca) ♡



### COVID-19 TIME:

## Keep Safe Outdoors!

During this pandemic time, be sure to keep to yourself, or with your own household members, at a safe minimum social distance of 2 metres.

The wide Yorklands driveway makes spreading out easy while enjoying some lovely urban green space.



## Community Workshops Move YGH Vision Forward

An update from Amy Barnes

Ontario Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, YGH has been busy engaging local leaders and community groups through a series of design sessions hosted between February and May 2020. A compelling cross section of expertise and disciplines have contributed to this process. Workshop participants included community leaders, land trust experts, indigenous voices, academics, heritage experts, and community stakeholders.



*YGH workshop series participants help shape future vision and define community needs.*

The first two workshops took place in person at 10C Shared Space. The goal of the first workshop was to establish a shared vision and priority outcomes for the former GCC site that are rooted in the social and environmental needs of Guelph. Building on the first workshop, the second workshop explored various land acquisition and governance strategies to maximize outcomes. The workshop allowed YGH to explore the strengths and challenges presented by

various ownership models.

The third workshop which explores governance structures is to be carried out in alternative virtual formats.

A feasibility study evaluating the various ownership and governance models discussed during the workshops will be produced by Scaled Purpose in June 2020. This document will prepare YGH and community stakeholders for the potential acquisition of the site, and outline a potential strategy for working together to offer mission-aligned programming.

In addition to the workshops, hours of meaningful dialogue will be used to fill in some gaps. Numerous one-on-one conversations with various experts in the community, and representatives of the provincial government, provided a better understanding of the provincial sales process, heritage conservation obligations, and the role of existing municipal policies. All these conversations help YGH move from vision to strategic plan.

It's an exciting time for YGH! ♠

## Guelph's 2020 2Rivers Festival Goes On Virtually - and, hopefully, on Riverbanks YGH to host 4 events

Every spring since 2012, Guelph has been treated to a remarkable array of imaginative and inspiring events which connect people to their water. More specifically, to their two beautiful rivers, the Eramosa and the Speed, which converge right in the heart of the city. The 2Rivers Festival is a celebration of Guelph's watershed, as ecology, as history, as recreation. It invites the whole community to focus on the good fortune of plentiful water, and join in the protection and regeneration of our river systems.

Wellington Water Watchers, the lead organizers of the 2Rivers Festival, are partnering with other local organizations to host this year's series of free events. With the difference that this year, during the Covid-19 pandemic, many events will be offered online. Others *may* be offered along the rivers – if social distancing measures loosen in time.

This year's theme is "Making Guelph the Most Nature Rich City." The Guelph Outdoor School will be the Festival Sponsor financially, and plans to host a townhall event to invite discussion on this theme.



*Birding at the Yorklands.*

The Yorklands Green Hub will host four 2Rivers events at the Yorklands site at 785 York Road:

\* **Sunday, May 10 – Mother's Day walk (with Nature Guelph) at 2:00 pm**

\* **Sunday, May 31 – Birding for Beginners at 9:00 am**

\* **Sunday, June 14 – Wildflower ID walk at 2:00 pm**

\* **Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> - Biodiversity Exploration at 2:00 pm**

Due to Covid-19 gathering restrictions, all events are poised to run with a backup plan. Reserve your events at [2Riversfestival.org](http://2Riversfestival.org) You will be sent a link to join the event closer to the event date. ♠

**Updates will be provided as further guidelines are announced by the City of Guelph.**

## YGH 2020 Annual General Meeting Went Virtual on April 30 to Vote in New Board

Due to the serious health implications of Covid-19, YGH canceled the in-person AGM on April 24th, 2020. The health and well being of our membership is our top priority and we are following Provincial protocols. A 'virtual' AGM was arranged on Thursday, April 30 to present our annual report and to vote in the new Board of Directors. Members were invited to vote via an online surveymonkey platform.

Returning board members are Norah Chaloner, Alex Smith, Abdelsalam Elfahal and Lynn Bestari.

We welcome two new board members, Beth Shier and Susan Ratcliffe, both of whom bring invaluable community experience to our organization. ♣

### YORKLANDS GREEN HUB

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020 - 2021

Norah Chaloner

Alex Smith

Lynn Bestari

Salam Elfahal

Beth Shier

Susan Ratcliffe

## Guelpher Features Yorklands Site in Spring Issue

We were delighted to have a feature on the proposed site of the Yorklands Green Hub in the current issue of *The Guelpher* (p. 10–11).



*The Guelpher* is a new publication of local information that showcases the city's businesses, events and lifestyle. It publishes seasonally and is mailed out free to thousands of Guelph households.

*The Guelpher* aims to provide coverage and profiles on existing and new businesses. It's an information-packed publication that supports the city's evolution as a green city by recognizing businesses and non-profits whose products, services or events reflect environmentally sustainable practices and principles. We are very grateful to them for including distribution to Guelph's east end, the Yorklands neighbourhood.

They cover everything, from green space to city culture, from Guelph's unique history to all the new and exciting things that continue to keep us thriving. Events and happenings that bring us together as a community. Like the Yorklands Green Hub!

Check your mailbox, or read the Yorklands article in *The Guelpher* at their website

<https://guelpher.ca/publication/>

You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram. ♣



### Yorky's Little Discoveries Challenge April 26-June 27 A virtual, self-guided Yorklands exploration for households

Every week for nine weeks from April 26, Yorky the Frog will post his photo clues on the YGH Facebook and Instagram pages. You are challenged to find where Yorky was in each of his stops at the Yorklands site (785 York Road in Guelph), and answer a question about what he found there. Email us a photo of Yorky's spot and the answer to his question that week, and you'll be entered in our draw for twelve \$40 gift certificates:

[noticing@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:noticing@yorklandsgreenhub.ca)

### 2Rivers Festival – YGH Events – Yorklands Site, 785 York Rd. Guelph

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**2Rivers Events must be reserved in advance. Click on your choices.**

<https://www.2riversfestival.org/>

**"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 or submissions should be directed to a member of the Board of Directors at [info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca](mailto:info@yorklandsgreenhub.ca)**