



The Green Door

Citizens Supporting Ontario's Prosperous and Sustainable Future

The Yorklands Green Hub Newsletter

| January 2022 |

No. 21

Best Wishes to all Our Supporters for a Healthy, Sustainable 2022 A message from YGH's Chair Norah Chaloner

Dear Members and Friends,

2021 was an amazing year!

With continuing challenges from Covid-19, we were again unable to offer our annual Enviro-Series of speakers on Water, Food, Energy and Heritage at various venues. But like other non profit organizations, we did “the pivot” and focused on our programming online and outdoors.

Your generous support in 2021 allowed us to hire part time professional help. With David Alton’s expertise coordinating our committees and our volunteers, we delivered many outdoor programs and events in spite of the pandemic. David is now on a leave of absence until we rebuild financial support for our 2022 plans to continue our environmental engagement activities and events. We also want to be ready to participate with the Ministry of Infrastructure Ontario following any decisions regarding disposal of the parcel of land that we are looking to acquire at the former Guelph Correctional Centre.

Fusion Homes, a Guelph developer, has just bought a significant part of the Guelph Innovation District (GID): 325 acres on which the University of Guelph Turfgrass Institute stands, at Victoria and Stone Roads.

The major highlight of the year included your 30 delegations and 100+ letters and calls to City Council in support of Heritage Guelph’s appeal for the city to require a Heritage Conservation District Part 4 and Part 5



A dusting of snow along one of the Yorklands heritage stone walls.

designation from the province as part of any sale of the former Ontario Reformatory. These complemented a campaign by our partners in the Coalition to Protect Ontario Reformatory Lands. The motion was fully supported, and passed unanimously by Mayor Guthrie and our city council members.

<https://www.protectorlands.org/partners/> And YGH won an award for advocacy thanks to everyone’s efforts! (see p. 2).

In 2021 we offered our first “**We Love Yorklands Walkathon**” and raised \$11,000 to keep our many programs going (see Green Door #20 for details). Over the past year we have continued to model the kinds of public programming we wish to be representative of YGH’s educational efforts at a future ecology centre at Guelph’s historic Yorklands at 785 York Road. Our **Ten Tall Trees (TTT)** program was rolled into our **Foodsters Pilot Program** off-site at Sacred Heart Catholic School, and ran from April until November.



The **Polli-Patch Program** had much increased participation, and was successfully coordinated by Kiki Danninger with help from University of Guelph student, Julia Harvey.



Kiki Danninger plants a front yard Polli-Patch with a client.

We also hosted our second annual **Plein Air events**, our **fifth annual Artspiration Exhibition and Sale**, and our **Indigenous Support Gathering**. On September 25th we celebrated the **110th Anniversary of the Ontario Reformatory** with all-day, on-site walks and talks to showcase both the past historical use of the property and our future vision for creating a regional centre of environmental urban sustainability and resilience. (Con’t p. 3)

Yorklands Green Hub Wins the A.K. Skulthorpe Award for Advocacy



ARCHITECTURAL
CONSERVANCY
ONTARIO

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) annually offers a series of awards for the preservation, restoration, innovative reuse,

municipal championing and scholarly documentation of heritage sites, and for special contributions to their own heritage conservation work.

Thanks to an enthusiastic response to YGH's call for voices in support of a proposal to grant heritage status to Guelph's Yorklands (and the work of the other members of the Coalition to Protect Ontario Reformatory Lands), City Council voted unanimously to pass the motion.

YGH was awarded the 2021 A.K. Skulthorpe Award for Advocacy. We are very grateful to all who spoke up in support of Yorklands heritage status! 🌟

Polli-Patch Program Year 2: A growing success

One of YGH's programming goals is to increase awareness of the vital importance of pollinating insects to our biodiversity. In 2020 we piloted our Polli-Patch program to help people protect and nurture our urban pollinators. Program lead Kiki Danninger coordinated with local households to plant a garden patch with pollinator-friendly plants.

In 2021, building on the success of the initial pilot, the Polli-Patch program grew to install twenty-five pollinator garden plots across Guelph. These projects model the simplicity and pleasure of creating beneficial-



Julia Harvey presents a Polli-Patch sign to a participant.

insect habitat in one's own back or front yard. This year the program also offered resources to help people get to know the pollinators who visit their new floral attractions.

Many thanks and kudos to Kiki and our summer student Julia Harvey who organized the plantings with the participants, and have been monitoring their success. 🌟

A September Forest Ecology Walk: Fresh eyes on Yorklands habitat



Will Barbour

YGH was fortunate to have guest forest ecologist Will Barbour lead a walking tour around the Yorklands on a golden afternoon in September.

How, he began, has the Yorklands become habitat since the Guelph Correctional Centre closed in 2001? He invited participants to think about that landscape as a dynamic one that changes over time, and how people and nature can best work together to let nature make a home.

As the group walked the lawns beneath rows of stately silver, sugar and Norway maple trees, Will pointed



A Special Thank You

YGH extends grateful appreciation to three particular volunteers who have done amazing work for us in the past few years:

- * **Patricia Belder** for graphic design
- * **Donovan Bestari** for his videography
- * **Andres Reyes** for technological help with mailouts and website work

We wish you well in your future pursuits. Your help has been wonderful.

out areas with potential for restoring tree cover, wetlands, nesting sites, and enhancing already-existing regenerating areas. Heritage Norway maples, he said (to the surprise of some), although non-native, provide cool, shade, cover and nesting for birds, and would best be left beside new native plantings that would one day overtake them.



Looking over the regenerating meadow beside the ponds, he emphasized how hydrology, soil and plant cover are key considerations in land use planning.

Everyone pondered the ways that nature will work to reclaim healthy, diverse green space – given the space and care YGH envisions for it. 🌟

CHAIR'S MESSAGE (con't from p. 1)

An eco-centre set in 70 acres of protected heritage parkland will allow the site's meadows, streams, ponds and biodiversity to continue to play an important ecological role in our region.

We are grateful to everyone who has contributed in so many ways to our successful year, in spite of its challenges. All of you, and all our donors and volunteers are our champions! We wish you a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you again in 2022!



Every Child Matters: A YGH gathering in solidarity, honouring Indigenous child victims of residential schools



Peter Howlett drummed the Strong Woman Song

The news came as a series of shock waves across Canada, as the unmarked graves of 1,655 Indigenous children buried beside five former residential schools came to light. This sudden new exposure of the cruel colonial history of forced acculturation and mistreatment of First Nations students confronted Canadians with a real examination of conscience. For many, it also sparked a desire to share compassion at a time of renewed trauma for so many Indigenous families.



On July 23, 2021, YGH held a gathering at the Yorklands to honour and mourn the lost children, and stand in solidarity with the First Nations community.



Author Deborah Ironstand speaks to honour lost residential school children.

The event included a land acknowledgment, a brief history of the Indigenous peoples who first lived on this land, drumming, and a talk by sixties scoop survivor Deborah Ironstand honouring the unrecognized children. It concluded with a candle-lighting, orange-ribbon tying ceremony to commemorate the spirits of these young people whose memory must remain part of truth and reconciliation in Canada's future.

Ten Tall Trees-Foodster Program Teaches Food Web Connections

YGH seeks to include people of all ages in its educational programming. Ten Tall Trees, a school program introduced in 2018, gets classes up close and personal with their local trees. Students begin with tree names and key characteristics, and then move on to discover the importance of keystone trees which support the diets of their local community of insects, birds and mammals.

In 2021 YGH rolled the Ten Tall Trees program into our middle-school level Foodsters program which took place weekly for 8-week sessions over the spring, summer and fall. With

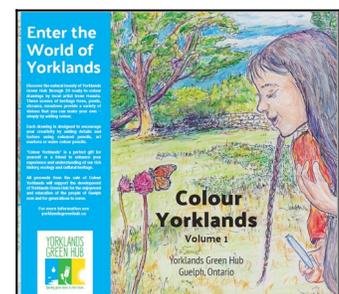
support from Transition Guelph and Pollination Guelph, these interactive outdoor classes on the nature connections of the entire food web were delivered to grade 7 and 8 students at Sacred Heart Catholic School. Students planted, cared for and harvested food crops they grew in raised bed gardens while learning about and building biodiversity in soil and plants.



The students also planted 30 burr oak acorns: we look forward to their results in the spring!

"Colour Yorklands" Draws a Great Response

Dedicated YGH volunteer and artist Irene Hanuta created a delightful set of sketches from the Yorklands site, and proposed turning them into a colouring book as a relaxing diversion. The project was embraced enthusiastically by YGH. It took over a year to produce, and was released in August 2021. In the process it also became a little history of the Yorklands.



Irene exhibited her black-and-white and coloured images in September at Guelph's (con't p. 4)



ARTSPIRATION 2021

Hui Kwong Cheuk "Plein Air" (detail)

Artspiration: Beautiful Artwork for a Sustainable Future

Once again, YGH's annual art fundraising event was beautiful, innovative, and movingly inspired by the unique natural heritage of Guelph's Yorklands site. Most of this year's artists participated in our Plein Air sessions held at the Yorklands over the summer.

Artspiration 2021, our fifth annual show, featured 28 contributors, with nearly 50 individual works on offer. For this October exhibit, we were excited to welcome artists not only from the Guelph, but the Toronto area as well. Nearly 75% of this year's work was from new participants.

The artwork was on display for a month, two weeks in our live show at 10C Shared Space, and for the entire

month of October on our auction website. There was a great show of attendance at our October 2 evening open house despite a terrific downfall of rain.

Artists were asked to donate 50% of the sale price of the work in support of YGH's ongoing work; several generously gave the full 100%. The event netted over \$3,000 towards YGH's ongoing operating funds.

Many thanks to all of the wonderful artists who participated this year, and to those who purchased their beautiful work in support of ours.

Special thanks also to our show organizers, in particular Pat Flood, Irene Hanuta, Sharyn Seibert and Bryan Lauder, with help from Nelly Hanuta, Katherine Elliott, Lynn Roodbol, and Paula and Gary Morin.



COLOUR YORKLANDS (con't from p. 3) East End Library, and sold books there.

Many thanks to Irene and the team (graphic design Patricia Beader, text Katherine Elliott, final edit Norah Chaloner) for this innovative, evocative project which raised over \$1,300.00 towards YGH's work. Contact Irene if you'd like one: ihanuta@yorklandsgreenhub.ca



CITY OF GUELPH PARKS SURVEY
Your input is needed!
DEADLINE January 20th

Here's a chance to have a say in Guelph's future parklands planning. Let's make sure the Yorklands becomes part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. We successfully called for a Heritage Designation for the Yorklands site. Now please take a few moments to say the beautiful Yorklands should remain a part of the future east end development along York Road.

The survey is on-line at haveyoursay.guelph.ca with information about the Park Plan.

"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