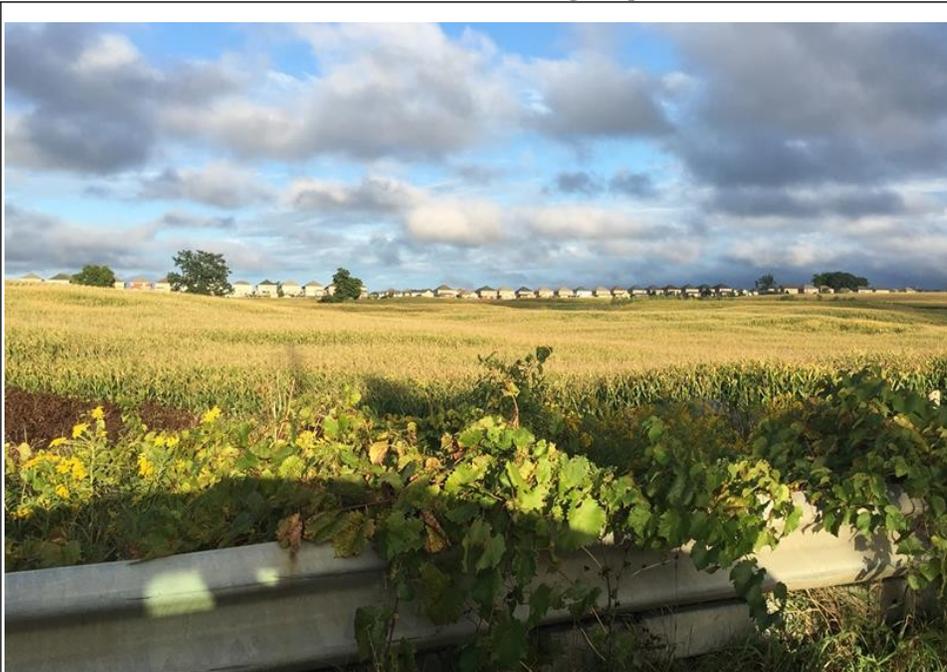




Ford's Bill 23 Opens 7,400 Acres of Ontario's Green Belt to Highways and Sprawl

Join Ontarians fighting to keep it – and our environmental and heritage protections



Agricultural fields, forests, lakes and wetlands wind through urban development in Ontario's Green Belt. Doug Ford plans to pave and develop swaths of it and remove the "red tape" of environmental and heritage protections.

YIKES! What is happening?! We have another mountain to climb!

Bill 23, named the More Homes Built Faster Act, has just been passed into law, pushed through by our provincial government. This move will decimate our green space – 7,400 acres, specifically, for a first incursion into Ontario's hard-fought-for Green Belt. **It enables development without adhering to current environmental and heritage protective laws, and can also override local protections.**

Cutting into protected Green Belt land and its environmental protections is a terrible precedent for all of our protected parklands. It could also

have repercussions for the future status of our own Guelph Yorklands when the province sells the remaining Ontario Reformatory property at 785 York Road.



[Green Belt "Explainer" – Narwhal Magazine](#)

Susan Ratcliffe is a Yorklands Green Hub board member and long time advocate with the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, and champion of local heritage protection. In her delegation on Bill 23 to Guelph Council she stated: "The present proposals for changes to the Heritage Act [[Schedule 6 of Bill 23](#)] will not only willfully lead to destruction of many of our city's heritage buildings and landscapes, but also will significantly diminish our environmental sustainability." Gutting Ontario's Heritage Act could seriously affect Guelph heritage, including future protections of the Yorklands. Ratcliffe concluded, quoting from Guelph staff recommendations, "This proposed regulation effectively ensures that the majority of the City of Guelph's significant built heritage resources will have no heritage protection by 2025." You can read her full delegation [here](#).

Two Simple Actions

We suggest two simple actions to speak out for keeping our Green Belt intact. **1. Say NO!** Write one-line emails to Premier Doug Ford (premier@ontario.ca) and his minister of Urban Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark (minister.mah@ontario.ca). Just write "NO TO BILL 23!" as your subject line *and* message, with your name and address in the message. Numbers count!

2. Say Thank You! We have a new city council in Guelph. A second action would be to contact your councilor, expressing your appreciation for voting [Guelph's opposition to Bill 23](#) and the sweeping threat it poses to our greenspaces. You'll find a list of the new Guelph City Council contacts [here](#).

Every message opposing Bill 23 builds public momentum to counter this disastrous "red-tape removing" destruction of protections for our environment and our heritage. ★



Winter at the Yorklands. Only working together will keep this treasure of an urban space green, public, and protected for the future.

Yorklands Status Update 2022

Repurposing part of the Ontario Reformatory lands is closer than ever.

Many of our members attended Guelph's Open House #2 which wrapped up the public engagement for the big plan of the Reformatory Heritage Conservation District. In general, we think the plan is a good one, and would protect what we need for our goals. You can view the presentation at this link.

<https://www.haveyoursay.guelph.ca/reformatory-district/widgets/126870/videos/10046>

It is up to city staff now to finalize it with the consulting team. Keep connected and continue our promotion of this site among your own connections. We need to stay on their radar still. The timeliness and urgency of urban sustainability initiatives accelerate. We long to celebrate our cultural and natural heritage at these biodiverse meadows, lakes and wetlands with increased programming connections. The superintendents' house awaits repurposing for year-round shared space at this landscape.

★

Thank you, Brian!

We are grateful to Brian Skerrett for his dedication to the preservation of Guelph's rich cultural heritage and his support for Yorklands Green Hub.

Brian has worked tirelessly as Chair of Heritage Guelph to assist the City with the identification and preservation of cultural heritage assets. In October he educated and entertained members of the Guelph Wellington Men's Club with his presentation "The Ontario Reformatory: Valuing What We Can't See." His talk highlighted some of the "hidden" cultural heritage assets on the Reformatory grounds. He emphasized the need to preserve them through designating a portion of the Reformatory lands as a Heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act.

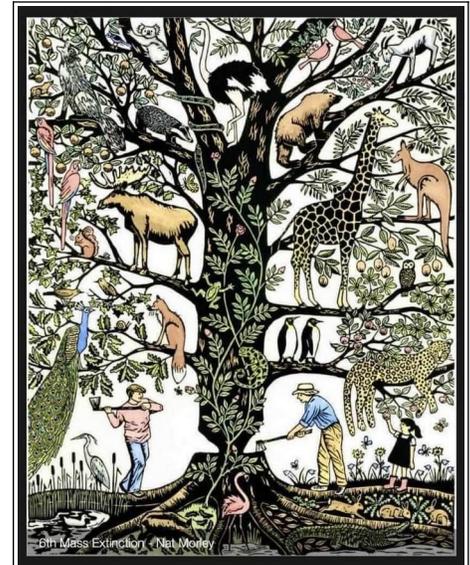
Brian generously gifted \$100 of his honorarium from the Men's Club to Yorklands Green Hub. ★



Brian Skerret visits the imestone quarry on the Ontario Reformatory site with new Ward 1 Councillor Erin Caton. Inmates quarried stone here for the buildings and walls at the Guelph institution. We hope to see the quarry gain heritage status.



Another Very Important COP



Consumer society: chopping down the tree of life.

When you hear talk of "the COP" you may automatically think "climate change conference." But an equally important topic, Biological Diversity, is being debated at another United Nations conference of the parties, COP15, underway right now in Montreal.

Globally, species are facing extinction at an unprecedented and ever-increasing rate. Protecting species, habitat and green space is essential to combatting both biodiversity loss and climate change. But after 14 COPs on biological diversity, there is still no global agreement in place to protect nature.

"A [landmark 2019 UN report](#) on the state of global biodiversity found that human impacts have eliminated half of the world's natural ecosystems and cut the biomass of wild mammals by 82 per cent, while approximately one million animal and plant species are at risk of extinction," writes Brian Banks in National Geographic.

Every decade, the world negotiates a set of draft biodiversity targets. None of the previous set was achieved. (Con't p. 3)

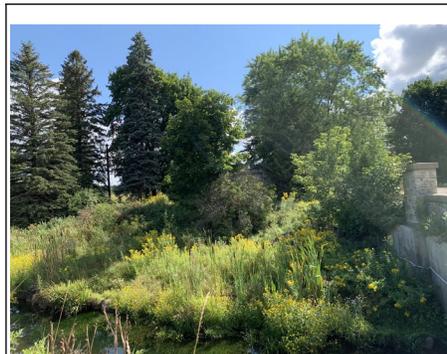


*Biodiversity habitat abounds at the Yorklands. Sit quietly and observe. The cattails and vegetation provide cover for many species under, over and in the shallow water and boggy soil. Send us **your photo for inclusion in our 2023 contest for Best Photos of the Yorklands as biodiversity habitat.** Watch for details and the entry form in January with the prize list.*

Biodiversity COP (con't from p. 2)

For this year's COP there's a new list: four long-term goals for 2050, and 22 set for 2030. They range from habitat conservation and resource management, to policy, investment and equity initiatives. Thus far, parties have only agreed on two. But 100 countries have agreed to support the goal of protecting 30% of land and ocean by 2030. Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia (critical homes to biodiversity) are holding out until there are firm financial commitments from industrialized countries to act.

There are 10,000 delegates registered; but no world leaders will attend. Three very broad main objectives are to conserve biodiversity, to determine sustainable use of its components, and to foster equitable benefit-sharing from use of genetic resources. It's a lot to attempt, covering three different international agreements, from December 7 to 19. And, as usual at COPs, there's a heavy



"Whether it's a swamp, bog, marsh, fen, estuary or any of the 25 names Merriam-Webster cites, wetlands are "spongy land saturated or covered with water" that prevent flooding, recharge aquifers, filter contaminants before they go into our groundwater, reduce wastewater treatment costs, and store carbon to help combat climate change. Human-built stormwater ponds pale in their ability to do what Mother Nature figured out with wetlands." -- Susan Koswan <https://www.therecord.com/opinion/2022/12/07/battle-for-wetlands-can-still-be-won.html/>

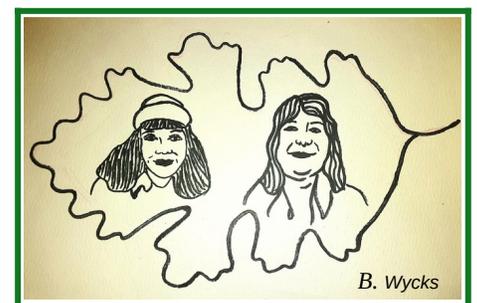
representation of industry interests to ensure that their products (e.g., pesticides) or activities will not be limited by any agreements made. (For comparison, there were close to 650 fossil fuel company representatives at the climate change COP27 in Egypt this fall.)

As with climate mitigation, legislation to protect the world's living things has been totally inadequate. The world has not shown willingness to set planetary boundaries on humanity's intrusions into natural systems or the destruction of the natural links that support life for all of us.

If we continue to chop up and degrade our green spaces that serve our healthy future, we are trashing the future of our young people, as well that of all species, beginning with those already at risk.

Climate change and biodiversity need to become key elements of education in every field if we are to have a chance of reversing the damage our high-consumption societies cause. ★

Trillium Grant Success Provides YGH with Two Staff



We will have two wonderful part-time employees on our staff into next year, thanks to an Ontario Trillium Fund grant. We hope many of you have had an opportunity to meet Bernadette Wycks and Kerry-Lynn Wilkie, who have been managing our programming including walks and events at the Yorklands site, and our Ten Tall Trees school program. (Con't p. 4)

Trillium Grant, YGH Staff (Con't from p. 3) Along with many volunteers, Bernadette and Kerry-Lynn have managed to keep our communications flowing and our activities going throughout the Covid stresses that we, like so many non-profit organizations, have experienced.

We're grateful to Trillium for supporting our efforts to maintain our public engagement in the kinds of activities we wish to continue and expand. Simultaneously, our board continues to pursue the more complex negotiations regarding our envisioned role as an educational and research sustainability hub into the future. ★

BEST PHOTOS OF THE YORKLANDS CONTEST 2023

One of the ways we grow public appreciation for Guelph's unique urban green space at the Yorklands is to document its beauty and variety in pictures.



One way you can enjoy time at the Yorklands is to *take* photos. And we would love you to share your favourite photos with us.

Our photo contest will open early in the new year. Watch for details soon!

Green Holiday Gift Ideas

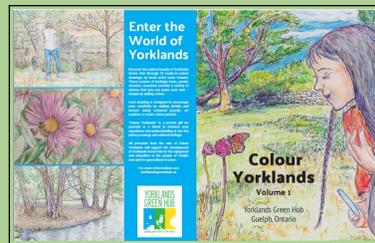


Colour Yorklands Colouring Book

History with art in a unique expression of Guelph's heritage.

Order your copy at:

<https://yorklandsgreenhub.ca/colour-yorklands-preorders/>



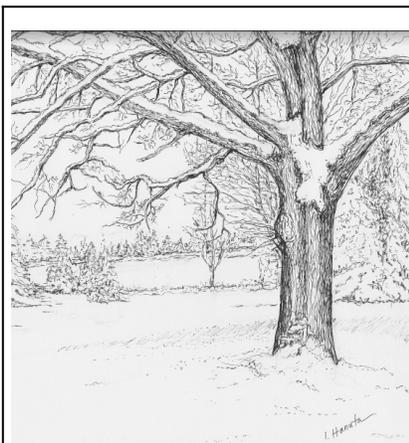
Send Tree Trust greeting cards for Guelph trees

Buy cards at www.treetrust.ca

Contact them at

guelph@treetrust.ca

for a charitable tax receipt.



First Snow, from Colour Yorklands



ALL WALKS, MEET AT MAIN GATE, 785 YORK ROAD. TRANSIT BUS #4. NO WASHROOMS ON SITE.

WINTER SOLSTICE FOREST BATHING NATURE WALK

Tuesday, December 20th, 2-3 pm

Come celebrate the winter solstice with a meditative Forest Bathing experience, a calm and peaceful walk through the trees.

BRIGHT COLOURS DAY WALK

Sunday, January 15th, 1-2 pm

Monday, January 16th is Blue Monday – for some one of the hardest times of the year. Wear some mismatched bright colours, and come enjoy a cheering mental health walk in nature.

FAMILY DAY/HERITAGE DAY WALK

Monday, February 20th, time TBD

Join our resident expert Susan Ratcliffe on a guided heritage walk for the whole family.

GUELPH ORGANIC CONFERENCE

YGH will be at the Guelph Organic Conference on Sat-Sun. January 28th - 29th at the University Centre, University of Guelph.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kerry-Lynn
kwilkie@yorklandsgreenhub.ca

YGH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Earth Day, Saturday April 22, 2023

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