



The Green Door

Citizens Supporting Ontario's Prosperous and Sustainable Future

The Yorklands Green Hub Newsletter

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

June 10th. 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. ■