



# UPDATE QUARTERLY

March 2025

## NVEB Asks Wilmot Council to Renew 50x30 Pledge

*by Bart Van Andel*

**N**ith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) will present to Wilmot Council on March 24 regarding Wilmot's **50x30 Pledge** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2021, Wilmot Council – along with the other municipalities in Waterloo Region – pledged to reduce by 2030, Wilmot community Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by fifty percent lower than 2010 levels.

To date, Wilmot has made little progress and there are only five years left until 2030.

Township-owned buildings and vehicles create the “corporate” portion of total emissions. They

form up to three percent of **total** community emissions for all of Wilmot Township.

If we are to make an impact, we need to focus on the large **Community GHG Emitters**.

Natural gas, primarily used for space heating and hot water in buildings, is a major contributor to **Community GHG Emissions** in Waterloo Region accounts for 40 percent.

Wilmot staff is now tracking our Wilmot **community natural gas consumption** on a yearly basis to determine progress. Statistics should become available early in each year.

The purpose of this presentation is to shine light once again on our **50x30 Pledge** and request renewed focus on this important initiative. ✿

## Youth Advocates Plan Clothing Swap

*By Ashley Ropp*

**N**VEB Youth Advocates has been preparing to emerge from this restful winter and greet the spring! They will be hosting their first event on April 26th – a clothing swap! A clothing swap is an event where people can bring clothes they no longer want, and everyone can go ‘shopping’ through each others collections – free of charge!

The fashion industry has contributed to the climate crisis by encouraging new trends every month, which leads people to discard the parts of their wardrobe that are no longer considered “trendy”. And while many people think this cycle isn’t an issue because they donate their clothing to thrift stores, only about a **quarter** of clothing in thrift stores gets bought, leaving the other **three quarters** to be sent to a landfill!

Events like clothing swaps give people an opportunity to give their clothes a new home instead of simply throwing them away, or donating them, only to be thrown away anyway.

This event also gives people the chance to get a new cycle of clothing without supporting the unsustainable practices of many clothing brands, all while learning about the connections between our wardrobes and the environment.

There will be snacks, refreshments, resources on the topic, and most importantly – the chance to hang out with your community! While Youth Advocates is obviously targeted towards youth and young adults, anyone is welcome to come! It will take place at Zion United Church, New Hamburg, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. People can drop by and leave as they please. We hope to see you there!

Youth Advocates is also participating in the Waterloo-Wellington Science & Engineering Fair by providing a trivia game for the students during their bus ride to the Waterloo Landfill Site. The trivia game is all about landfills and sustainability, and will give the kids an opportunity to learn in a fun and engaging way!

To keep up to date on what Youth Advocates are up to, you can follow their instagram at (@nvebya). ✿

# GETTING OFF GAS

## **ELECTRIFY** YOUR HOME!



Learn about why we should stop using natural gas to heat our homes and water and cook our food!

### EVENT DETAILS:

- Tuesday, April 1st, 2025, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- **Keynote Speaker:**  
**HEATHER McDIARMID**  
Researcher & Communicator  
McDiarmid Climate Consulting

### LEARN ABOUT:

- The best ELECTRIC alternatives to gas furnaces, water heaters, stoves, clothes dryers and fireplaces.
- The Federal interest free loan program and the new Ontario energy efficiency rebate program.
- Get answers to your questions during our Q&A period.

**FREE WEBINAR, REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED**

Register at: [nvecoboosters.com](https://nvecoboosters.com) or <https://bit.ly/gettingoffgas> or Scan:



# Getting Off Gas – Electrify Your Home!

## WEBINAR

by Tom Knezevich

**D**id you know that buildings are Canada's third-largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? Much of that comes from the natural gas, oil and propane used to provide space and water heating. But other equipment in and around our homes also uses fossil fuels, such as gas stoves, fireplaces, lawnmowers, and generators. The good news is that electrifying this equipment can significantly lower your GHG emissions—along with providing many other benefits for you and your family.

Of all the actions households can take to act on the climate crisis, the most important is to fuel-swap, meaning, to stop using fossil fuels in our structures. In particular, we need to **stop using “natural” gas**. Gas is a polluting fossil fuel that produces harmful carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Going all-electric isn't just good for your wallet and the climate, it's also good for your family's health. Far from the “clean and natural” image that the gas industry promotes, the use of gas for heating and cooking indoors carries many health risks.

In this free webinar, co-hosted by the **Nith Valley EcoBoosters** and **Reep Green Solutions**, participants will learn about:

- Problems associated with the use of natural gas.
- Heat pumps and other “electric” alternatives to gas furnaces, water heaters, stoves, dryers and fireplaces.
- The minimum specs someone should look for in these alternatives.
- Information about the Federal interest free loan program and the new Ontario energy efficiency rebate program.

Our keynote speaker is Heather McDiarmid who is the founder of McDiarmid Climate Consulting. She specializes in researching, analyzing and communicating climate mitigation solutions for the residential sector. She is the proud owner of an all-electric home and if she ever moves, she is taking the induction cooker with her!

A **Question & Answer period** will follow Heather's presentation.☁

**Register for this free event at:**

<https://bit.ly/gettingoffgas> or [nvecoboosters.com](https://nvecoboosters.com)

## Wilmot Land Assembly Project Update

by Dorothy Wilson

**O**n December 14, 2024, some members of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters joined about two dozen people gathered at Wilmot Mennonite Church in New Hamburg to strategize about how to ramp up the Fight For Farmland Campaign. Mike Balkwill, the VP of Campaigns and Engagement with the Small Change Fund, led a very productive workshop that resulted in enough interest being expressed for a new group to be formed.

This group's purpose would be to work in concert with, but separate from, the landowners' “Fight For Farmland” group. Such a group would have the ability to take actions and do important messaging different from what the landowners can do. Mike came with a wealth of experience after working with communities to shut down a Nestle/Triton water bottling plant in Wellington County and to oppose the Xinyi Glass Plant in Stratford Plant which eventually was cancelled.

Mike explained that it was necessary to go through a sequence of steps to achieve whatever goal is determined. The workshop included a lot of brainstorming sessions in addition to Mike's guidance around process. The first step was to establish what a win would look like and to determine what would be small wins versus big wins. By the end of the afternoon at least half of the participants indicated that they were willing to commit to a new group and several of those people volunteered to organize the group.

Two more meetings took place in January. The first one focused on developing and implementing the group's strategy which included coming up with specific actions. During the second meeting there was a screening of one of three documentary film clips that have been created to showcase the issues surrounding the land assembly project. Just before the second meeting the provincial election was called and this resulted in a shift in focus for

the group. It was decided that there was a need to put significant pressure on MPP Mike Harris in addition to members of Wilmot Council with regards to the land assembly project. The organizers of the group, which has decided on the name of Wilmot Civic Action Network <https://wilmotcan.com/> (Wilmot CAN), commissioned a poll to hopefully show that the majority of people do not support the land assembly project. The participants of the second meeting were introduced to a letter writing campaign and learned about plans for a community meeting to take place on February 13 at Zion United Church.

Over 120 people attended the community meeting in person and dozens joined online. The first two documentary film clips were shown and were well received. The videos can be accessed on the WilmotCAN website. <https://wilmotcan.com/> Community member John Jordan, who arranged for the creation of the films, moderated the meeting. Inspiring presentations were given by Susanna Compton, who grew up on a farm adjacent to the land in question, and by John Drummond, a farmer from Perth County. Their messages reinforced that the land assembly project is a threat to all farmers in Ontario who will no longer feel that their farm is secure from being taken over for development. Stephen Palmateer shared the results of the poll which showed a significant lack of support for candidates in the upcoming election who were in favour of the land assembly project. Fundraising efforts at the meeting raised over \$10,000 which will be needed for fighting the project in court. NDP and Liberal candidates who attended were available to speak with attendees after the formal meeting ended.

Needless to say, the results of the provincial election have been disappointing for WilmotCAN but the group is not giving up. A meeting to continue with planning strategy is being organized for later in March. The Nith Valley EcoBoosters group is continuing their support of this group by booking meeting space as well as member involvement. The threats to water and essential agricultural land are definitely issues that align with our group's mandate.☁

# Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday... Let's Tree Wilmot

by Maureen Knezevich, Chair LTW

Let's Tree Wilmot has come a long way from its first meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, the evening COVID pandemic was pronounced by WHO. We had a COVID pause, but with lots of support from the community, we were able to fund and complete our first planting on October 24 at Scott Park, New Hamburg. NVEB was instrumental in getting LTW off the ground. LTW became a project of Garden Wilmot because they had insurance, charitable status and tree planting fit their mandate.

Since then, various sponsors have funded the planting of trees on Wilmot Township parks and property. Township of Wilmot Park's Department have been true partners. We have planted trees in every Wilmot settlement that has parks. Three years ago, LTW was awarded a \$160,000 Two Billion Tree Natural Resources Canada Capacity Building Grant. This allowed us to support the township plantings and maintaining more trees. The township does not have the resources to fully support tree planting and maintenance. "Billy," a used Ram Truck, was purchased and outfitted with water tank and pump. Since the 2020, we have planted 4,639 native trees, grow 2000 seedlings in our nursery bed and by the end of 2024, we

were watering 2600 trees.

Education is just as important and we have listed many resources on our website, created videos on several topics posted on our YouTube Channel, offered tree pruning workshops, Forest Walks, a booth at Canada Day celebration, and presented talks in the community. We had renown Doug Tallamy come and talk about Nature's Last Hope which is everyone of us.

By the time you are reading this article, LTW hopes to have received a new Fed. Cdn Municipalities Funding Grant. Plans are underway for planting in New Hamburg and Mannheim this year.

What are our goals for the long term? We wish to continue to increase the native tree canopy of Wilmot Township. Soon our public lands will be fully planted so the focus will be on private lands. Many Wilmot landowners have already been planting trees to increase wildlife habitats and to leave a legacy. Why focus on private land? Most of the property in Wilmot is owned privately. Excluding farmland, we have large rural properties and the smaller urban properties that all offer excellent opportunities to plant more native trees, large and small.

Doug Tallamy has an excellent concept, the Homegrown National Park. "Our National Parks, no matter how grand in scale, are too small and

separated from one another to preserve (native) species to the levels needed. Thus, the concept for Homegrown National Park, a bottom-up call-to-action to restore habitat where we live and work, and to a lesser extent where we farm and graze, extending national parks to our yards and communities."

[homegrownnationalpark.org](http://homegrownnationalpark.org)

Let's strive to make Wilmot Township a park. A greener township will create connected wildlife habitat corridors, increase biodiversity, offer more green space to enjoy and benefit our health, provide cooling, improved water management, and many more benefits. Wilmot will become more beautiful.

We have been collaborating with owners to increase their tree canopies and also wetlands. This includes working with Ducks Unlimited. The largest project is the Nithview Floodplain, New Hamburg owned by Tri-County Mennonite Homes. The owners cover the costs and we provide expertise and volunteers. There are grants available too to help out landowners. Email us at [letstreewilmot@gmail.com](mailto:letstreewilmot@gmail.com) for more information. We have a Tree Pruning Workshop on Saturday, March 30 in Mannheim. Registration is required. Go to our events page at [LetsTreeWilmot.ca](http://LetsTreeWilmot.ca).

Have a tree...mendous spring! ☘



Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday Let's Tree Wilmot

## NVEB Member BIO

## Linda Lackey Is a Founding Member of Nith Valley EcoBoosters

by Linda Lackey

In 2013, a young woman from our church youth group, announced, “I think our church needs to do more about protecting the environment, will you help me do something about it?” Her enthusiasm resulted in an ad hoc “Green Team” at Zion United Church in New Hamburg to focus on green initiatives such as educating one another about environmental issues and living sustainably.

In 2015, our Green Team partnered with Divest Waterloo for a community event to screen the film documentary “Do the Math” featuring Bill McKibben (environmentalist) in a David vs Goliath battle with the fossil fuel industry. This event was the catalyst that moved this small environmental group forward to become a community-based group called the Nith Valley EcoBoosters.



As a founding member of NVEB, I have always been a lover of nature. As a teen, I enjoyed helping my parents on our 25-acre property. I recall asking my dad “Why do you and mom work so hard on the land?” My dad’s response which sticks with me to this day was, “I see this land, the fields, creek, pond, bush, sheep, geese and chickens as a gift, and it’s up to us to care for it all in the best way we know how.” For me this has become an important life message. This planet Earth, so broad in its biodiversity, so beautiful, our only home, is a gift and it’s up to us to be the best caretakers we can be. Now in retirement I recognize more and more the interdependence and interconnectedness of all of life and my volunteer focus has become that of giving back, contributing in ways that promote justice and wellbeing for all of life. I do this to help build a sustainable future for my children, my grandchildren and those who come after. Every action we take will impact the whole in some way. I hope my actions will have a positive impact.

Robin Wall Kimmerer says in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass* “The moral covenant of reciprocity calls us to honor our responsibilities for all we have been given, for all that we have taken....Whatever our gift, we are called to give it and to dance for the renewal of the Earth”. Nith Valley EcoBoosters, has provided so many opportunities for me to use my gifts, to live out my passion in caring for the earth.

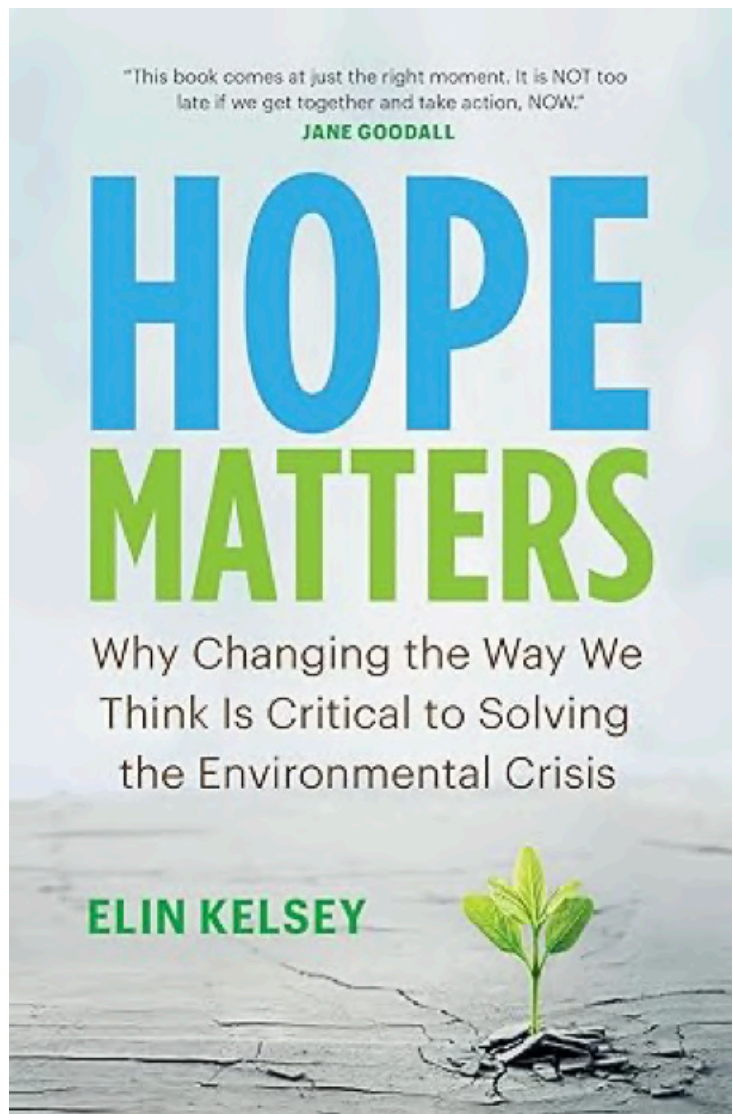
I am currently a member of NVEB Communications Working Group and the Education Working Group. In my spare time I love having creative times with my seven grandchildren, my husband Neil, hiking, canoeing, and camping, gardening, baking sour dough bread, playing the piano, singing, as well as dabbling in pottery, watercolours and gathering with family and friends, enjoying food & having meaningful conversation around the table. ❁

# “Why Hope Matters: The Practice of Evidence- Based Hope in a World of Climate Doom”

Climate change and other global issues impact the health of the planet and our own feelings of well-being and those of the people we love. With problems deemed more newsworthy than solutions, we are awash in a 24/7 news cycle that reinforces the myth that it is already too late or that climate issues are too big or too broken to change. It's only natural to feel overwhelming emotions of anxiety, fear, or anger. But at the same time, it is critically important to engage with sources of evidence-based hope that are already happening and that we need to amplify. Hope, not fear, is our most powerful tool for tackling the planetary crisis.

We invite you to join the **Nith Valley EcoBoosters** as we host this free online webinar on Thursday, **May 15th** from **7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** (Eastern Daylight Savings Time).

The keynote speaker for this event is **Dr. Elin Kelsey** an international thought leader, scholar and science communicator on Climate Emotions and the role of Evidence-based Hope. She is the author of **Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis**. Recognizing the crucial role of climate emotions to climate engagement, she works on a range of collaborative projects with researchers, artists, journalists, educators and youth. Dr. Kelsey is passionate about bringing science-based stories of hope and multi-species resilience to the public through workshops around the world. In her presentation, she will be sharing research findings from the new academic discipline of climate emotions - and climate justice solutions trends - in ways that honour our feelings and empower us to engage with the crises we face through the practice of evidence-based hope. A **Question & Answer** period will follow Dr. Kelsey's presentation. Registration for this free webinar will begin in April. Go to [nvecoboosters.com](http://nvecoboosters.com) for more details. ❁



# NVEB Activities November 2024 to March 2025

## November

- Delegated on behalf of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters to the Region of Waterloo Council on November 20 to state our reasons for opposing the Wilmot Land Assembly Project.

## January

- Endorsed a letter written by Ontario Nature to the Ontario Minister of Finance during the pre-budget consultation period requesting an increase in investments in nature-based climate solutions and a commitment to funding the actions in the Ontario Biodiversity Strategy in alignment with national efforts. The letter was not sent because of the budget consultations being put on hold because of the election call. It is expected that this action will be revisited after the election.

## December

- Climate Corner article debuts in The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, written by NVEB Youth Advocate Ashley Ropp.  
[https://www.granthaven.com/\\_files/ugd/a53e8e\\_3f2c6b12950148f79f8d46a3c94fe493.pdf](https://www.granthaven.com/_files/ugd/a53e8e_3f2c6b12950148f79f8d46a3c94fe493.pdf) page 25

## January

- First installment of 2025 EcoNuggets in The Baden Outlook - **Carbon Pricing: The Good News:** <https://nvecoboosters.com/2025January.pdf>

## February

- Second Climate Corner article in The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette  
[https://www.granthaven.com/\\_files/ugd/a53e8eead03c3569b04223aca0a8a94fd86502.pdf](https://www.granthaven.com/_files/ugd/a53e8eead03c3569b04223aca0a8a94fd86502.pdf) page 34

## March

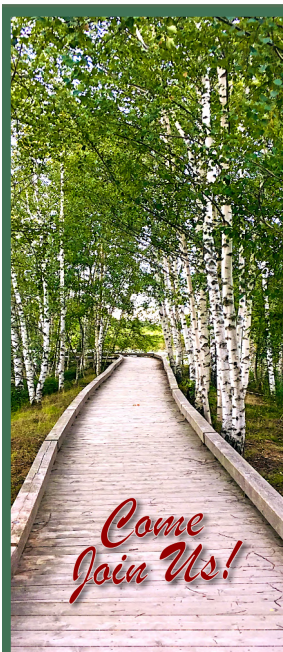
- 50x30 NVEB Working Group delegation to Wilmot Council

## Ongoing

- Participation in Ontario Nature's Nature Network, WR Climate Collaborative, Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign, Green WR, Cooperate for Canada and biweekly meetings of concerned citizens from Waterloo Region and adjacent communities to share information and plan responses to provincial government threats to the environment.
- Sending regular updates re local issues and activities to our contacts.
- Participation in the Fight for Farmland campaign and the newly formed Wilmot Civic Action Network. See separate article.
- Monthly EcoNuggets in The Baden Outlook

## Upcoming

- April 1 – **Getting Off Gas - Electrify Your Home.** See separate article.
- April 8 – Youth Advocates are providing an activity for students during a bus trip to tour the Waterloo landfill site that is part of the Waterloo-Wellington Science and Engineering Fair; Grades 7 & 8
- April 11 – Participating in Sustainability Expo at Eastwood Collegiate in Kitchener
- April 26 – Clothing Swap at Zion United Church in New Hamburg organized by the NVEB Youth Advocates
- May 15 - **How to be Hopeful in a World of Doom: The Practice of Evidence-Based Hope** with Dr. Elin Kelsey. See separate article.



Are You  
Environmentally  
Conscientious?

**Nith Valley  
EcoBoosters  
seeks new  
members  
to take the path  
toward a safer  
environment...**

*Come  
Join Us!*

[nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

### About Nith Valley EcoBoosters

Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) is a not-for-profit volunteer organization committed to achieving and supporting long-term healthy environments in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships. Environmental goals are achieved through education, action and collaboration.

Formed in 2013, NVEB was an ad hoc committee at Zion United Church in New Hamburg. In June 2015, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters became a community-based group adopting its current name.

NVEB holds at least two general meetings per year for our members plus we have working groups that meet more frequently to focus on specific activities. One of them organizes our educational events, another focuses on communication, and a new one is working on how to engage our local governments with respect to reducing GHG emissions. We also have a Youth Advocates working group that is made up of youth and young adults.

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters has organized or participated in multiple environmental related events each year. It has been an active supporter of most regional environmental groups and activities.

We are funded by donations, fundraising efforts and grants. There is no membership fee to join.

#### Contact Information

<http://www.nvecoboosters.com>

[nvecoboosters@gmail.com](mailto:nvecoboosters@gmail.com)

## NVEB 'EcoNuggets' — The Latest Solution



**EcoNugget**

### Reducing Green House Gases in a Community

#### Where do GHG come from?

- The main sources of GHG in a community are transportation (47%) and buildings (45%).

#### Effective reduction of GHG in a community requires targeting these sources:

- **Transportation:** Whenever possible, use public transportation and carpooling, and combine trips to reduce fuel consumption.
- **Electric vehicles:** Today's new car options include full electric, plugin hybrid and hybrids.
- **Buildings:** Insulation of existing buildings reduces heating costs. Reducing use of natural gas (methane) is critical, as unburned methane is a potent GHG. Replace natural gas stoves and water heaters with electric appliances. Install a heat pump in your house.
- **Government grants:** Provincial and federal grants are available in some circumstances to help with the cost of upgrades.
- **NVEB Webinars:** See [nvecoboosters.com](http://nvecoboosters.com) for webinars on **Your Home's Energy Use and Getting Off Gas.**

### MEMBERSHIPS

#### The NVEB are Members of

- **GREN** (Grand River Environment Network), a collective of environmentalists in Waterloo Region that work on a variety of issues.
- **Future Ground Network**—An online organizing resource, associated with the David Suzuki Foundation. It is a convener & mentor for community environmental groups.
- **Nature Network**—A province-wide network of groups and individuals that are a collective voice for conservation.
- In addition, since 2015, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters have collaborated with the **Waterloo Region Blue Dot Team** to promote the rights of all Canadians to a healthy environment. <https://bluedot.ca>