

# UPDATE QUARTERLY

Q2 - 2022

# Have your say... Vote for the Environment June 2, 2022

Residents of Ontario will be going to the polls in just over two months. It is very important to make your vote count when it comes to protecting the environment.

Be ready with questions when candidates come knocking on your door and when you attend all-candidates meetings.

Ontario Nature suggests three topics with questions that you should consider asking.

The first topic has to do with protected areas. Canada, along with other countries around the world, has pledged to protect at least 25 percent of our lands and

waters by 2025. Ask those running for office if their party will commit to this level of protection in Ontario.

Regarding the second topic—species at risk. Will the candidates and their parties restore a science-based approach to protection and recovery?

Respecting the public voice is the third topic. An important question to ask is will the party that the candidate represents uphold the purpose and intent of the Environmental Bill of Rights in all decision making?

More information and questions can be found at:

https://ontarionature.org/vote-fornature-blog/

Environmental Defence is another organization that has prepared material to inform voters about key environmental issues, such as the proposed Highway 413, climate change and urban sprawl, that need to be addressed for the sake of Ontario's future environmental health.

Visit their Ontario Election 2022 webpage for details.

https://environmentaldefence.ca/ontarioelection2022/

—Dorothy Wilson

## **NVEB Youth Advocates Tasked**With Supporting School System

The EcoBoosters' newest working group, the NVEB Youth Advocates, has been very busy over the past few months! An entirely youth-led group, the Youth Advocates work to assist schools in their greening process and increase the leadership capabilities and confidence of youth.

They assist schools through providing them with available grants and programs, connecting them with other local organizations, and advocating for them to the school board. So far, the Youth Advocates have made preliminary contact with schools, researched green school grants and programs and have been getting involved in other environmental activities in the community.

They have had two successful recruitment events where local youth learned more about what Youth Advocates do and how to join.

The Youth Advocates' next big project is to work on a delegation to the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) regarding environmental policies.

The Region of Waterloo — and the cities and townships within — agreed to a 50% carbon emissions reduction by 2030 last June, but the WRDSB has made no mention of environmental policies in their Strategic Plan. So the Youth Advocates plan to propose some environmental policies to the WRDSB to add to their upcoming Strategic Plan.

The Youth Advocates are currently looking for new members to join their inspiring team! Youth who participate will benefit by: *Cont'd.../Page 4* 





# Let's tal k!

# YOUR HOME'S ENERGY USE

Learn how to make your existing home more energy-efficient and reduce carbon emissions



### **EVENT DETAILS:**

- Thursday, April 28th, 2022, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- Keynote Speaker:

Greg Labbe Building Science Consultant Ryerson University

## LEARN ABOUT: RETROFITS FOR YOUR HOME

- Insulation, air sealing, windows & doors, heat pumps, water heaters, solar panels, smart thermostats.
- Get answers to your questions during our Q&A period.

Free event but registration is required.

nvecoboosters.com







### SOMEBODY SHOULD DO SOMETHING



### APRIL 21, 2022 at 6:30PM

Everything you need to know about running for office in one evening.

Do you love where you live? Do you want to make a difference in your community? Ever wonder what the time commitment is? Curious about the life of a local politician?

A virtual session to inspire and inform. Get your questions answered by people in-the-know. Register today for free.

For More Information Visit: healthywoolwich.org/runforoffice

Scan to Register



# Somebody Should Do Something • RUN FOR OFFICE •

Do you want to make a difference in your community? Have you ever wondered what time commitment it takes to be a local politician? What's necessary to run for election?

Woolwich Healthy Communities and the Nith Valley EcoBoosters are hosting an online session on **Thursday**, **April 21 at 6:30 p.m.** to provide you with the knowledge and knowhow to put a campaign together.

Local politicians Ken Seiling, Patrick Merlihan, Angie Hallman, Shelly Wagner and Rod Rolleman will share their experiences and answer your questions about life on-the-job.

For more details and to register, visit:

https://nvecoboosters.com/

### Get Involved & Influence Positive Change for the Environment!

ith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) is considering having a representative on the **Ontario Environment**Network (OEN). You could be that person!

The Ontario Environment
Network www.oen.ca is a notfor-profit organization whose
mission is to strengthen connections and collaboration of member environmental organizations
across Ontario using webinars,
workshops and their monthly

newsletter. Their mandate is also to conduct education and research into environmental matters and disseminate results.

This representative would be a member of NVEB. To qualify as a member, individuals must participate in a minimum of four NVEB events in a year with at least two of those events being meetings (general monthly or working group meetings). The other two could be webinars or other NVEB

educational events. The anticipated time commitment for this volunteer position would be attending and participating in OEN virtual meetings approximately four times per year to share good news stories about what NVEB's is doing as well as to hear and learn from other environmental organizations and reporting back to NVEB. Send an email to nvecoboosters@gmail.com if you see yourself in this role.

# Wilmot Rain Barrel Sale Save money and protect our water!

Nith Valley EcoBoosters and Morningside EarthCare are sponsoring a rain barrel sale for Earth Day, April 22, with unbeatable prices.

Why use rain barrels? Storm water does not infiltrate the ground as it flows across the ground, driveways and roads into sewers and to our streams. The rain barrel is a low cost method for homeowners to reduce the amount of storm water leaving their property and to let it soak into the ground and eventually replenish the water table.

• Reduce your water bill using rainwater instead of tap water to

water gardens and lawn, clean garden equipment and fill fountains.

Protect our waterways: Storm water runoff picks up pollutants such as soil, lawn fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste, road salts, chemicals, etc.

and transports them into our creeks and the Nith River. These pollutants impair waterways and can harm aquatic life and human health. In Waterloo Region most of our drinking water is from aquifers and the rivers.

· Healthier Plants:

Rainwater is naturally soft and chemical free which is better for houseplants, container gardens and your soil.

Already have a rain barrel? Add a second one! These 220 litre / 55 gallon barrels are repurposed food containers so there is an additional environmental benefit in giving them a new use. Rain barrel maintenance is minimal.

Purchase Rain Barrels online at www.rainbarrel.ca/wilmot. For guaranteed delivery, place orders by April 15th.

Pickup on Friday, April 22, from 4:00 – 7:00 pm at Wilmot Recreation Complex parking lot. For more information, contact Dean Peachev

email: deanpeachey@gmail.com

phone: 519-722-6149

# TRY SOME FAVOURITE Info Sources

There are a number of environmental groups that are excellent sources of information and free webinars. You can sign up to be on their mailing list and get information about their activities.

One of our favourites is Ontario Nature:

https://ontarionature.org Another favourite is Environmental Defence:

https://environmentaldefence.ca

#### ...Continued from Youth Advocates Page 1

- Gaining skills to help boost their resume for work or to apply for post-secondary education
- Making a difference in their community and inspiring others
- Helping to combat the climate crisis
- Making community connections and finding mentors
- Building their confidence

• Receiving volunteer hours

Any youth that are interested in helping the community and combating the climate crisis can send an email to

nveb.youthadvocates@gmail.com

for more information. The Youth Advocates look forward to working with schools to create a greener future for today's youth!

-Lyndsay Dajka

# Volunteers Needed for May 7 and 28 Let's Tree Wilmot Has Big Plans Underway for 2022

et's Tree Wilmot (LTW), a project of Wilmot Horticultural Society, has big ✓ plans for 2022. Our largest project is the Triangle of three acres by the Wilmot Recreation Complex between Highway 7/8 and Gingrich Road near the Schmidt's Trail.

A planting day will be held there this spring and in the fall with completion of tree planting in 2023. A total of 1600 native trees will be planted. As they mature, a wind, sound and visual barrier of the highway will be created. Tree planting in St. Agatha's Saraus Park and Mannheim's Anna Tuerr Park will occur in the fall.

Our volunteers will support planting at the Mike Schout Wetlands again this spring and we are facilitating an international high school student group planting at Pfennings Organic Farm.

Funding for the majority of the tree planting on public land comes from Wilmot Township. Many individuals have donated as well.

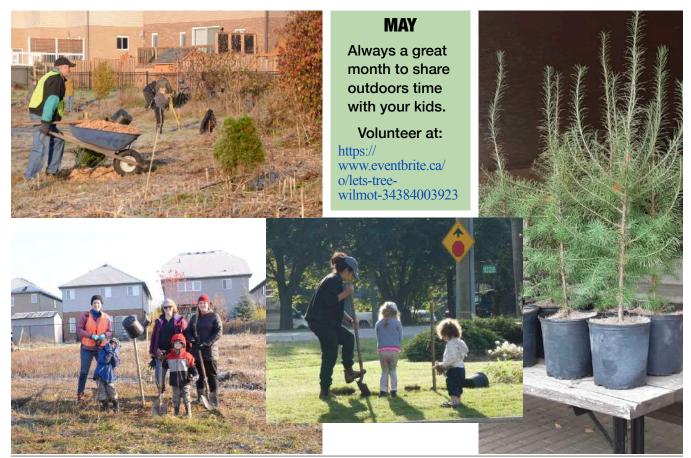
LTW applied for two grants this year. There is a lot of competition and we just heard we did not receive a Tree Canada Grant. In June, we should hear about the outcome of the two Billion Tree Grant.

We are looking for volunteers to help with fundraising, communications and education, so contact us please!

With the shortage of native trees available, LTW's new seedling bed will get started this spring, likely the last week of April with one of our volunteers providing land and managing the project.

The tree planting days are Saturday, May 7 at the Wetlands and Saturday May 28 at the Triangle. Register at: https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/letstree-wilmot-34384003923 or email letstreewilmot-@gmail.com Our Facebook page provides tree news, information and tips.

—Marlene Knezevich



**Nith Valley EcoBoosters** 

### MP Louis Agrees to Table Code Red Petition in House

In December 2021, a member of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) learned about the *Code Red* petition that the Council of Canadians organization was promoting.

The name of the petition was in response to governments con-

tinuing to let corporations call the shots despite scientists having issued a *code red for humanity* to tackle the climate crisis.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to enact "just transition" legislation which would not only include action on

Attending the virtual meeting on the *Code Red* petition were (clockwise from the top right): Dorothy Wilson; Lyndsay Dajka; MP Tim Louis; Betsey Daub and Bryan Stortz, staffer for MP Tim Louis.

climate change but also ensure that the transition to a greener future would not leave anyone behind. That means all workers would have access to decent, low-carbon jobs. Human rights and the rights of workers would be protected and strengthened plus Indigenous rights would be respected. The social safety net would be expanded through new income supports, decarbonized public housing and accessible public transit throughout the country.

Increasing taxes on the wealthiest and corporations would raise money to pay for the transition. Members of the NVEB supported this petition and managed to secure significantly more than the 25 signatures needed to present it to our local MP.

On February 25 Betsey Daub, Lyndsay Dajka and Dorothy Wilson met virtually with Tim Louis, MP for Kitchener-Conestoga, to explain the petition, share why it was important to us, and ask him to table it and read it aloud in Parliament.

Mr. Louis was very supportive of the petition and agreed to our request. He also indicated that he would provide feedback on his actions.

Dorothy Wilson

### NVEB a Key Player in Wilmot MZO Cancellation

On Christmas Eve, Wilmot Township announced a surprise Special Council Meeting for Tuesday, January 4 to consider a request to support a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) application by Cachet Developments for a big development in New Hamburg.

Though the holiday made it difficult to get information from township staff and to inform the public about this important issue, many community members and

groups — including Nith Valley EcoBoosters — rallied to oppose the MZO.

At the January 4 Council meeting, 13 passionate delegations presented concerns about the MZO application. As a result, the council's vote on the application was rescheduled to the end of February.

Over the following weeks, campaign members raised awareness of the issue and the community flooded township staff and council with emails detailing their concerns about the MZO.

Many questions about the proposed project were submitted to the township to be forwarded to Cachet Developments.

On February 4, Cachet withdrew their MZO request to Wilmot Township and indicated that they will work within the regular planning process — a victory for the residents of Wilmot — validating the importance of civic engagement and vigilance when it comes to decision making in our community.

—Dorothy Wilson

# uilding on 2021's Let's Talk— Plastics Unwrapped! The Real Story & Hope for the Future!

successful first family/youth webinar, the Nith Valley EcoBoosters hosted a second webinar in the Let's Talk Plastics series and 220 people registered for the event which was presented in two stages.

First, registrants watched the documentary film "The Story of Plastic" on their own. The film uncovers the ugly truth behind the current global plastic pollution crisis.

Striking footage shot over three continents illustrates the ongoing catastrophe: fields full of garbage, veritable mountains of trash; rivers and seas clogged with waste; and skies choked with the poisonous runoff from plastic production and recycling processes with no end in sight.

Original animations, interviews with experts and activists, and never-before-filmed scenes reveal the disastrous consequences of the flood of plastic smothering ecosystems and poisoning communities around the world – and the global movement rising up in response. Next, a webinar was held on February 3. Registrants had the opportunity to listen to a panel

discussion about the film and learn how our panelists are taking hopeful actions to solve the plastic pollution crisis. A question & answer period followed the presentations by our panelists. A recording of the webinar can be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/37qy2uoZHYY You can also access the

resource document that was created for this webinar using the

following link:

https://nvecoboosters.com/ plasticsunwrapped.pdf

It provides contact information for our panelists and links to websites, videos and articles that will help enlighten, educate and motivate you to take action on the plastic problem.

-Tom Knezevich

### Our panelists for the Plastics Unwrapped webinar

Kayli Dale – Co-founder & CEO, "Friendlier" (Because the planet isn't single use!) Kayli launched the company's reusable packaging system for restaurant take-out food. In the company's first year they have re-used 50,000 containers, diverting thousands of products from landfill.

Karen Wirsig – Plastics Program Manager, Environmental Defence Karen is passionate about helping to get plastics out of the environment. Her blogs strive to hold government officials and producers of plastics to account.

Gabriel Saunders – Co-founder of "Decomp" a biotech start-up company that plans to tackle the plastic waste pollution problem by utilizing plastic-degrading microbes and bioreactor technology to organically dispose of plastic waste in weeks as opposed to hundreds of years they take to decompose in landfills.

Jon Jukes – President, "Plastics Redeemed" (Recycling the Unrecyclables!) Plastics Redeemed, founded in 2015 and located in New Hamburg, takes multi-format plastic waste that is usually not recycled and, using unique technologies, transforms it into second life products.

New Hamburg's **Plastics Redeemed (Recycling the Unrecyclables!)** gave NVEB an opportunity to tour their plant prior to the *Plastics Unwrapped* webinar. It provided us with a sense of the many challenges that exist in recycling plastics and how Jon Jukes, company CEO and webinar panelist, has been able to successfully recycle many types of plastics that other recyclers reject. The photos below provide a super-simplistic example of the process.



Different

Industrial plastic sources



Plastic bags getting shredded in-house



Marketable Plastic Products



## Future Ground Network Excellent At Supporting Environmental Groups

You might be interested in knowing how the Future Ground Network (FGN), a project of the David Suzuki Foundation, has grown since NVEB participated as one of the first groups in FGN's "pilot" program back in June of 2020:

- FGN currently has **76 active groups**. Active groups are those that have gone through FGN's full onboarding process (including attending a welcome call), and who are active in their community (have hosted an event or meeting in the last six months).
- Those 76 active groups include a total of **1300 active members!** Active members are those who have attended an event or meeting in the past 6 months.
- As a network, FGN has a combined reach of **81,000 supporters**, ready to be mobilized through email lists and social media accounts.
- FGN is also currently supported by 30 highly engaged volunteers who offer design, grant-writing, digital tool, communications and grant-writing support.

We should be proud to be counted as one of the first groups to sign up with FGN and help get them off the ground!

-Tom Knezevich

### Webinar Keynote Speaker Announced

The keynote speaker for our webinar on April 28 will be **Greg Labbé** who is a "Building Science Consultant" from Ryerson University.

Here are a few words from and about Greg:

"Building energy efficiency resonates with my interests and technical aptitudes and through the years I've energy audited a thousand plus homes and insulated so many attics the fibreglass is still in my knees and elbows! I started a consulting firm mid-career that tested large residential, commercial and institutional buildings to figure out all manner of problems; roof leaks, attic condensation, ice damming, discomfort, tobacco migration, mould and, yes, I blame water for nearly everything!

I've been a Building Science educator for the Ontario Home Builder's Association, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Humber College, and McMaster University. Currently, I work full time with the brightest of the bright graduates at Ryerson University in the Building Science research laboratory."

See the poster on Page 2 for event details. Registration for this event is available on our website:

https://nvecoboosters.com/Upcoming-Events/

#### **Public Feedback on NVEB Activities**

#### **Webinar and Other Comments:**

- Every speaker had amazing knowledge and collaborated with their fellow panelists when answering the questions which made the webinar enjoyable.... So you paid attention and learned!!
- Panel members were well-chosen, articulate, passionate, experts in their field. Each brought a different perspective to the topic.
- The webinar was very well organized, with a clear structure and excellent panelists. I learned so much from the diverse group of speakers and I appreciated that the hosts moved the presentations and Q&A's along without stifling conversation. Thank you!
- The Story of Plastic is an excellent film which everyone should see. Should be mandatory for our elected officials.
- Thank you Nith Valley EcoBoosters for an

excellent and inspiring evening of discussion! I look forward to future webinars hosted by your team.

- The whole family participated (in the Let's Talk Plastics A Family Event webinar), including my 89 year old mother who just moved in with us from a retirement home that was overrun by COVID. She listened attentively and had questions and comments. Way to go, Mom!
- I spent a bit of time last night going through your website. Wow! Both the website itself, and the long list of your involvement and achievements are most impressive.
- Many congratulations to the NVEcoBoosters for your important work on this issue (Wilmot MZO application). And a giant, warm, Thank You for the leadership that you showed. You were always clear, informative and balanced. It made a big difference.

### War Will Damage Climate & the Environment

pring was finally in sight, Covid-19 numbers were improving, the 'Freedom' Convoys in downtown Ottawa and elsewhere were being disbanded, house prices were still skyrocketing and the end of pandemic restrictions were being planned. Trump was out, Biden was in. The 'new normal' was starting to feel tolerable.

Governments were even beginning to take global warming and climate change seriously, thanks to more hurricanes, tornadoes, massive rainstorms with floods and unending forest fires. Melting in the Arctic, Greenland and Antarctica were signs that there was a 'new normal' in those locations too.

But there were other signs. Auto manufacturers were suddenly adding many new models of electric cars to their lines... even battery-powered pickup trucks. Wind and solar power were becoming cheaper and more widespread. Climate Change was being challenged far less and looked like it might receive appropriate attention... everywhere.

And then Russia—or was it Putin—invaded Ukraine—something else to aggravate the environment. It will distract from the development and implementation of solutions that are so dearly needed and wasting too much money and much of the little time the planet has left to respond.

Of course, the war is unnerving in many ways, even thousands of kilometres from Ukraine. It is painful to watch the news as Ukrainians are dying from pointless and unnecessary war; for their homes, cities, culture and country being painfully nibbled away by endless artillery, missiles and bombs.

Man's inhumanity to man, is allowed to continue because Putin has threatened to play the nuclear card. Unfortunately, our atmosphere is being subjected to direct effects of

NVEB letter (right) expresses concerns that independent experts' reports on Wilmot water quality might not be considered before decision by Council.

this war and will be subject to much more over time. It is difficult to assess in real time. In immediate mode—besides the physical damage we see—there is the effect of the fossil fuels wasted in military vehicles—trains, ships, tanks, armoured personnel carries, army trucks, jets, helicopters, drones, motorized artillery. You get the point.

The bigger, long term effects will occur as Ukraine is put back together. Have you seen all the concrete buildings and bridges that have been destroyed. That is one major source of future CO2. Concrete produces

about one tonne of CO2 for every tonne of concrete produced. It is reported that currently, concrete produces more CO2 than all of the trucks on the planet. That is, about 7% is attributed to just one source.

It will likely take decades for Ukraine to recover. That means millions of tonnes of CO2 that we don't need generated, will come at a time when we are trying to reach zero CO2 levels. The concrete industry is seeking ways to create 'green' concrete. Let's hope they find a workable solution ASAP.

—Larry Kryski



- committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration. https://nyecoboosters.com

February 25, 2022

Ms. Sharon Chambers CAO, Township of Wilmot 60 Snyder's Road West Baden, ON N3A 1A1

Dear Ms. Chambers,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Nith Valley EcoBoosters to expressour concern about the protection of drinkingwater in Wilmot, Wellesley and the rest of Waterloo Region in relation to the application by Jackson Harvest Farms to develop the Hallman Gravel Pit. It is our understanding that the Township of Wilmot staff have not addressed the concerns raised by the independent experts that were commissioned by the Citizens For Safe Ground Water to review reports that were submitted by the applicant to support the development.

The concerns raised by the independent experts can have implications for the safety of the drinking water in the Region. Since there is an assertion that some of the information that the staff relied upon from the reports, supplied by the applicant, is possibly outdated and flawed, we would like to be assured that the staff does their due diligence in following up on the issues raised in the independent reports.

The Township of Wilmot Council will be making an important decision about the Hallman Pit in a few weeks. It is well known that the Region of Waterloo is very dependent on groundwater to provide safe drinking water for the residents. Thus, the safety of drinking water is a major consideration for the Council when making the decision about the Hallman Pit. The Council members and the public need to have confidence that the information, that the staff is providing, is comprehensive and accurate.

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters are requesting that the concerns raised by the independent experts are reviewed by staff and that their comments are included in a staff report that is available in plenty of time for councillors to be able to read it before they vote on the proposed Hallman Pit application.

Thankyou for your attention to this request. Yours truly,

Tom Knezevich Chairperson Nith Valley EcoBoosters

CC: Julie Truong, Mayor Armstrong, Councillors Fisher, Gerber, Gordijk, Hallman and Pfenning



### Are You Environmentally Conscientious?

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

nvecoboosters@gmail.com

### **About Nith Valley EcoBoosters**

Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB) is a not-forprofit, politically non-partisan 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.

The NVEB usually meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, except July and December. Monthly meetings are open to all. Subcommittees and working groups are established for various topics, issues or proposals as required. The meetings held by these groups are in addition to regular monthly meetings.

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

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters is funded by donations, fundraising efforts and grants. Membership fees are not collected.

#### **Contact Information**

https://www.nvecoboosters.com nvecoboosters@gmail.com



### **EcoNugget**

# Planting a native tree or shrub in my yard

- Reestablishes the original eco-system of the region and restores wildlife corridors
- ☐ **Creates nurseries** for larvae of moths, butterflies and other insects. Oaks host 500 species, Gingko 5, boxwood 2.
- ☐ **Feeds baby birds.** The insect larvae provides soft food for baby birds. One brood of chickadees need about 6000 caterpillars. Our bird populations are down 30% or more due to lack of habitat.
- Provides homes and shelter for many mammals and other wildlife
- □ **Provides shade:** a tree canopy can cool our yards by 5-7 degrees C and hence our homes.
- Provides: beauty, clean water and air, windbreaks, health benefits and more.

To learn more about native tree selection, how to plant/maintain and more, go to letstreewilmot.ca

#### For further information contact:

nvecoboosters@gmail.com

## 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 convenor & 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