



York Region Environmental Alliance

raising awareness of sustainability issues

2011 Annual Report



YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

THE PATH OF SUSTAINABILITY

Embracing the path of sustainability means adopting a triple bottom line approach that ensures environmental, social and economic bottom lines are considered together.

YREA began to explore the economic, social and environmental sustainability of establishing a local hemp industry in York Region and beyond. Our strategic plan focus for the next few years will be as follows:

Vision

To establish and participate in a local green economy by introducing and raising awareness of the benefits of industrial hemp farming to farmers and other stakeholders in York Region.

Mission

- Produce a feasibility report and business plan researching the viability of a joint venture social enterprise industrial hemp farm so as to enhance the long term sustainability of the York Region Environmental Alliance and the health of our communities by participating in and developing a sustainable, local green economy.
- Promote and facilitate the growing, harvesting, manufacturing and marketing of Industrial Hemp while fostering an understanding of the environmental and rural economic development benefits of this plant.
- Promote the development of new products based on industrial hemp fibre and seeds.

WHO WE ARE

Formed in 1999 to initially campaign against the cosmetic use of pesticides, the York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA), registered charity #84559 0553 RR0001, has continually expanded its mandate to address ecological issues that impact our health and the health of our environment. We reach thousands of people annually in York Region, the Greater Toronto Area and beyond, through community events, workshops, seminars, our quarterly Greenworks e-newsletter and our website.

The York Region Environmental Alliance is governed by a volunteer board of directors and is administered by three part-time staff.

2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeffery Laidlaw, Chairperson

James Carver, Treasurer

Sharon Bradley, Secretary

Sylvia Bowman

Susan Sigrist

Lynda Sutherland

STAFF

Gloria Marsh, Executive Director YREA
& Project Manager - Industrial Hemp

Fiona Wood, Outreach Coordinator

Anita Komorowski, IT, Webmaster

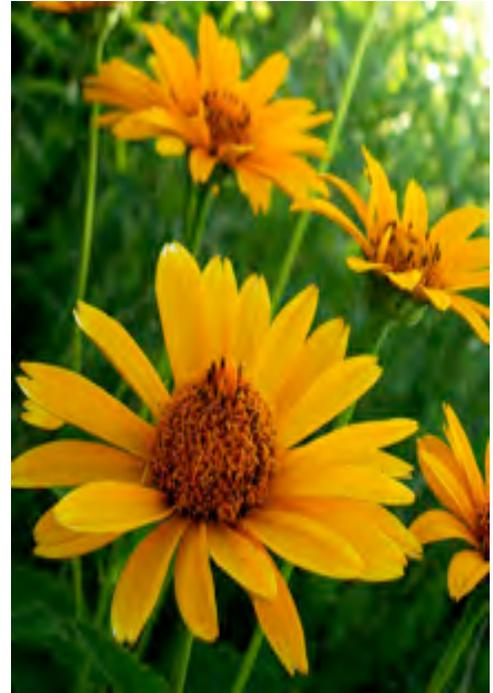


2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

PROGRAMS

ORGANIC LAWN CARE THAT WON'T COST THE EARTH

We have given over 75 organic lawn and garden workshops. This program is still in demand where we made presentations to horticultural societies in 2011 and continue our partnership with the Town of Richmond Hill to deliver seminars in the spring and fall. A synopsis of our workshop and our organic lawn care calendar is available for downloading from our website http://yrea.org/?page_id=523.



SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING

SHOP
LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING

An interactive workshop on how to "green" your shopping habits and become an eco-friendly shopper
Learn how you can do your part to help address:

- ✦ Climate Change
- ✦ Waste Reduction
- ✦ Energy Conservation
- ✦ Sustainability

Thursday, October 28, 7pm
Dufferin Clark Library 1441 Clark Ave West, Vaughan
Call 905-653-7323 to register
Presented by York Region Environmental Alliance

 YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE 

SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING, year 2 saw us show thousands more consumers how they could green their shopping choices. It was a testament to the success of this campaign to learn that **SHOP** is being adapted into school environmental studies as well as at Sibbald Point Outdoor Education Centre and the Kortright Centre.

YREA's dedicated, trained volunteers made many **SHOP** presentations at schools, community centres and libraries. YREA staff continued lunch and learn presentations for municipal workers.

Our travelling **SHOP** exhibit reached employees at their workplaces and residents at numerous community events. All these activities will continue into 2012.

We have distributed nearly 20,000 smart shopper booklets to date and gladly provide these upon request info@yrea.org.

PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNICATIONS – We talk to each other

As YREA's centre of attention evolves, we plan to continue to offer insightful information in areas of our focus, as we build new partnerships and collaborations.



ONTARIO ZERO WASTE COALITION (OZWC)

As a member of OZWC our Summer 2011 issue of Greenworks included an overview by Coalition founder Liz Benneian, of what steps need to be taken to move towards zero waste without compromising environmental and human health http://yrea.org/?page_id=350. More on this in 2012 as we address the spectre of burning compostables and recyclables within any energy from waste projects.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SUDA) [HTTP://WWW.SUDA.CA](http://www.suda.ca)

Commentary on sustainable development by John Stillich, Executive Director of SUDA appeared in the winter 2011 issue of Greenworks http://yrea.org/?page_id=350 and YREA principals contribute to SUDA's board.



SEEDS FOR CHANGE

A very successful first year for Seeds for Change with two community gardens completed. Summary of accomplishments appeared in the Winter 2011 issue of Greenworks. There is still a school community garden remaining to be established as part of the YREA/Seeds for Change funding partnership, completion of which is planned for June 2012.

HUMBER GATEWAY PROJECT

Funding was secured in partnership with Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment through RBC Blue Water Project for a Humber headwaters enhancement at King Road and Yonge Street in Richmond Hill. We produced a CLEAN RIVERS, CLEAN LAKES = CLEAN DRINKING WATER brochure as a component of this endeavour. This brochure is available to communities upon request at info@yrea.org.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

GREENWORKS newsletters are emailed quarterly to over 1600 subscribers and posted on our website for public access www.yrea.org



GREENWORKS

Spring 2011 Volume 5, Issue 1 Page 1

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT? WHAT IS, WHAT ISN'T...

It was very gratifying to recently learn that the new Vaughan Council has voted in favour of first focusing development within its present urban boundaries before expanding into countryside areas. The constant need for more land is a direct result of poor land use planning. During my deputation to Vaughan Council, I asked them to picture a typical NOT SO SMART CENTRE of one story retail and a mass of paved parking in the middle – in other words, a normal big box development.

I next asked them to picture a similar configuration but instead, to envision a mixed use combination of retail with 6 or 8 stories of residential above. Replacing a sea of asphalt, parking would move underground to make way for community gardens, a playground and green infrastructure in the centre. This type of development would create more opportunities to live, shop, work and play because of the close proximity of amenities with less need to drive for these services. A much better use of land with a much smaller overall footprint.

There are plans for just such a development with a host of green features for Oak Ridges, but this project might be kyboshed because it is on the Moraine. Yet across the road there have been two sprawling strip plazas approved and built recently with an application in for another.

How can the ecological footprint of these plazas be considered sustainable for the Moraine - or anywhere else, while a mixed use project with green infrastructure is not? I fail to understand this.

Gloria Marsh



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TIME TO LEGISLATE AUDUBON STANDARDS FOR ALL GOLF COURSES IN YORK REGION

In 2006 the Township of Uxbridge passed a policy stating that all golf courses within the Township must be fully Audubon certified by 2015 or within 10 years of opening their doors. The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSPGC) is an educational and certification program that sets guidelines for golf courses to protect the environment and preserve the natural heritage of a property. The ACSPGC standards assist golf courses in becoming a part of our conservation landscape, while building support for more eco-friendly golf. The program addresses: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Water Quality, Water Conservation, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Outreach and Education, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the natural areas and wildlife habitats that golf courses provide and minimizing potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations. With the recent outcry against the removal of 343 mature trees that shade the greenways at the Beacon Hill Golf Course in Aurora, I question the environmental management practices at this site. A more ecologically sound alternative to the problem, to my mind, would be to overseed with shade tolerant fescue species of grass seed. At a recent meeting of stakeholders, a golf course member pointed out that other turf areas not affected by shade are in as poor condition as the shady sites. So 343 trees could be removed and the problem could still not be resolved.

The Town of Aurora is taking measures to align its tree bylaw with other municipalities by removing exemptions for golf courses. That bodes well for the future, but will not protect the trees in question.

If a York Region-wide ACSPGC policy is put in place then these sorts of problems could be prevented before they happen. Golf courses could be prohibited from being situated in gouged-out forests. Others may argue that displacing farmland is also a detriment but sound regional planning should stipulate that golf courses be located for minimal environmental impact while demanding that they are designed for maximum ecological benefit with an ongoing stewardship plan.

There are over 50 Audubon certified golf courses in Ontario and more than a dozen already in York Region. Raising the standard of all golf courses in York Region to this level will do much to 'green' this industry and further us along the path of environmental sustainability.

Gloria Marsh



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MY WHITE ROOF IS REALLY COOL

Temperatures in the arctic are rising at almost twice the rate of the rest of world. As polar ice caps melt, more sunlight is being absorbed by the open water with less of it reflected back into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

There is a worldwide movement afoot to paint dark, heat absorbent roof colours heat reflective white. It has been said that this is one of the top three measures that can be taken to mitigate global warming.

Although white membrane roofing material did cost me 15% more than black, I expect to get a longer roof life and am more comfortable in summer. Energy savings are typically 10%-30% for those with air conditioning. U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu maintains that if we were to paint 30 billion square feet of roof space white, it would be the equivalent of taking 75 million cars off the road for a year.

The mayor of the borough of Rosemont in Montreal is proposing a bylaw making white the mandatory colour for new roofs and roof repairs, as white roofs can stay up to 30% cooler in the summer. I think the cold climate argument that dark roofs lower heating costs is unfounded as my roof is covered in snow all winter.

The Cool Roof Rating Council lists benefits which include:

- Urban Heat Island Mitigation - By reflecting solar radiation back into the atmosphere, white roofs help to maintain cooler air temperatures in the urban environment.
- Reduced Smog - Reducing urban heat and ambient air temperatures in turn improves air quality. White roofs help decrease the rate of smog formation which increases at higher temperatures.
- Health Benefits - Lower temperatures and improved air quality result in a reduction of heat and smog related health issues.
- Peak Energy Savings - As cool roofs reduce AC use, the energy savings occur when demand for electricity is at peak, reducing grid demand and risk of brownouts.
- Secondary Energy Benefits - A cooler urban environment means vehicles need less AC. There are less CO2 emissions from both cars and electricity generating power plants.

My 900 sq.ft. white roof may not do much to replace the melting polar ice caps, but if we all had white roofs ...

Gloria Marsh



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MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTREACH COORDINATOR

WATCHING OUR 'WASTE' LINES AS WE GREEN OUR HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS

While we all fret about our waistlines around holiday time, we need to also watch our 'waste' lines. As we prepare for, attend and host seasonal activities, let's keep the planet in mind.

When packing gifts, try some of these green wrapping ideas:

- Reuse items such as hair bows, ornaments, shoe laces or toys
- Stencil or paste pictures from holiday cards on to plain brown paper bags or boxes
- Cut up last year's holiday cards for gift tags
- Use old neckties and scarves rather than purchasing ribbon
- Opt for reusable bags instead of wrapping paper
- When mailing, use biodegradable starch packing peanuts or packing peanuts from previous gifts (unwanted peanuts, if they are clean, are accepted by many shipping stores for reuse) or use crumpled glossy newspaper. (The ink on glossy paper won't smear)

Decorating the house/table doesn't have to mean buying new ornaments. Try some of these:

- Scrap fabric, lace, yarn, rickrack and fringe
- Edible cookie ornaments: use gingerbread or sugar cookie dough; poke a hole at the top using a drinking straw; decorate and bake; thread a ribbon through hole; tie ribbon in a large loop and hang on bough of tree
- Popcorn and cranberry garlands (can be put outside for the birds after the holidays).
- Spices from the kitchen instead of commercially prepared and packaged products or aerosols (for example, stud oranges with whole cloves to create decorations that look and smell good)

These suggestions can really reduce the amount you have to throw away after a party:

- Use reusable tableware: if you don't have enough, borrow from friends or family
- Rent dishes, napkins, cups, tablecloths and glasses instead of using disposable
- Cut up last year's holiday cards and use as place cards
- Place easily identifiable recycling containers at your celebration so guests can recycle their pop cans, bottles, etc.
- Mention the ways your party demonstrates waste reduction and recycling, and SPREAD THE WORD

The above are easy ways for children to learn about conserving while participating in festive family activities. And don't forget when thinking of gifts, to make them "Stuff-less" so that you can continue not just to SHOP but to LIVE Like the Planet's Watching.

Best holiday wishes,
Fiona Wood



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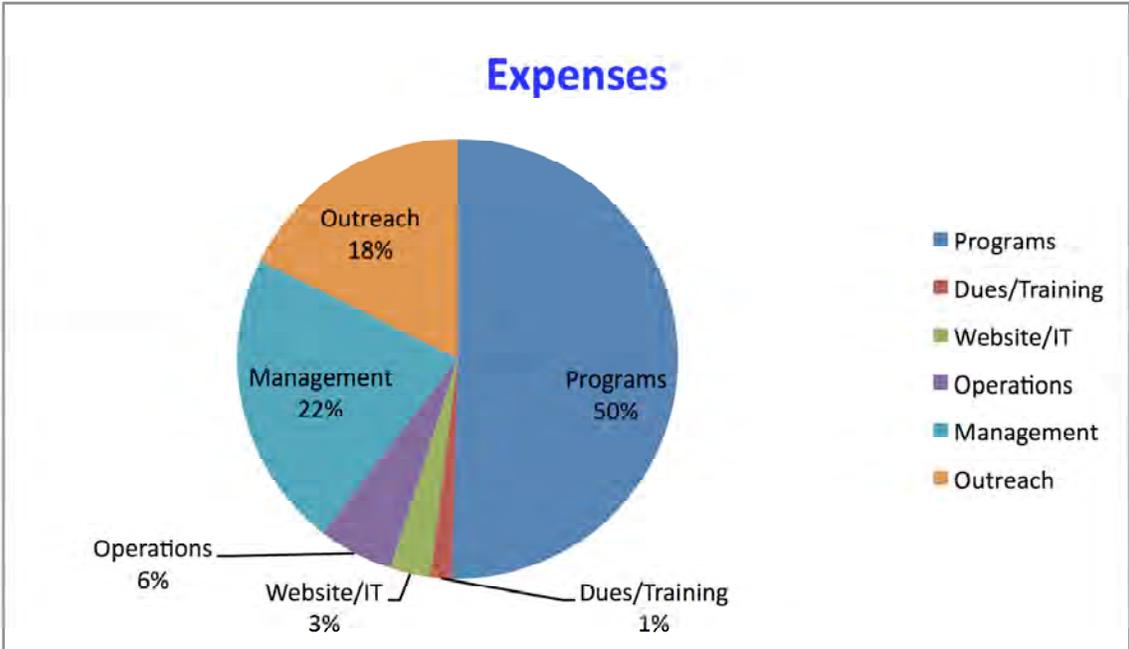
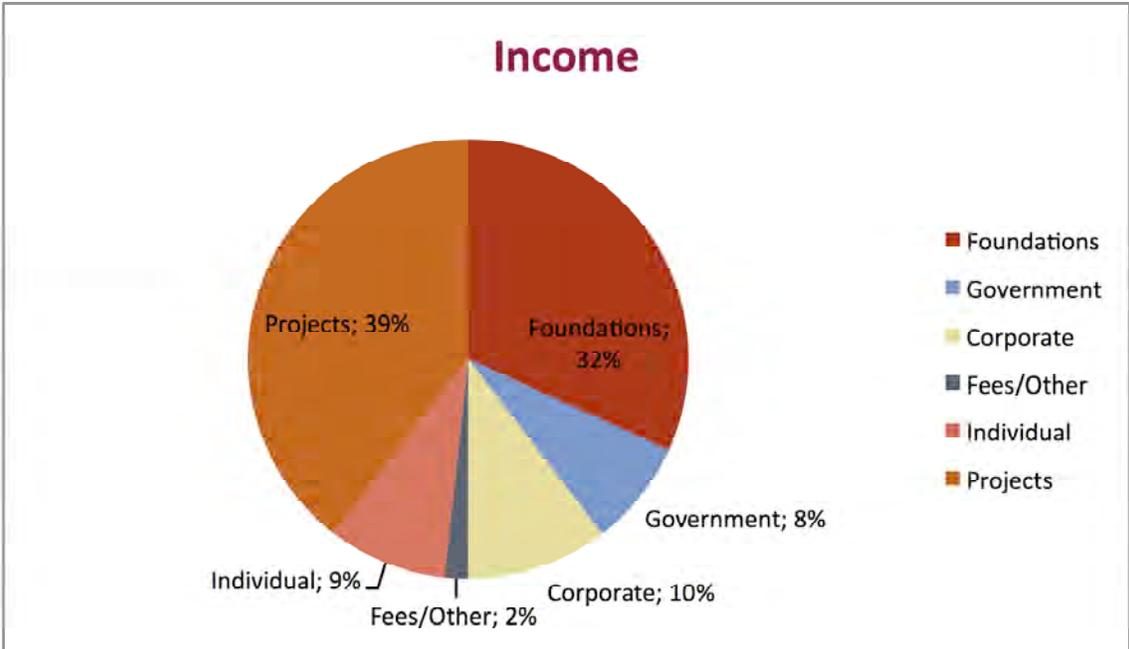
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YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

2011 YEAR END



Income continues to be secured from diverse sources with a large portion of our expenses focused on project development and program delivery.

SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OUR 2011 FUNDERS

The York Region Environmental Alliance gratefully acknowledges one year funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation which will be utilized in 2012 to initiate research to launch industrial hemp agriculture in York Region.



The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario

We wish to acknowledge the corporate support and a fruitful 2nd year partnering with PowerStream to get the energy conservation message out.



HUMBER GATEWAY PROJECT

Received funding with gratitude from the Royal Bank



SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING

Year 2 of our campaign was made possible because of support from the following municipalities:



SEEDS FOR CHANGE PILOT PROJECT

YREA gratefully recognizes these funders for our school and community gardens - Seeds for Change Pilot Project:

Community Environment Fund



SHELL ENVIRONMENTAL FUND



HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION



CANADA FOUNDATION

MORE THANKS

We also rely on individual memberships and donations - as every little bit helps. Thank you to all who supported us in 2011 with a contribution. Many of the donors listed below have generously sustained YREA with yearly donations. We are truly heartened by your constancy.

Leslie Atkinson
Ron Alfrey
Diana Bennett & Spencer Lanthier
Sylvia Bowman
Sharon & Jim Bradley
James Carver
Stephen Cockle
Liz Couture
Mary Dubé
Lissa Dwyer
Richard Krechowicz
Marilyn Isaac-Stewart
Sylvia and Ken Halligan
Diane Keating
Justin Keating & Angela Marsh

Terry Knight
Jeffery Laidlaw
Lorrie Mackness
Gloria Marsh
Catherine Marshall
Joyce McClelland
Katia Picada
Diana Piche
Debbie Schaefer
Sue Sherban
Susan Sigrist
John Stillich
Karen Verbeek
Anne & Pete Wilson

Volunteers have aided YREA in numerous ways – helping at our booths during community events, doing research for our programs and issues we cover, scanning the news of the day for environmental information we post on our website, assisting with administrative tasks and training to deliver our **SHOP** seminars. We value and thank these fine people who helped YREA achieve its goals in 2011:

Jim Bradley, Carolyn Brown, Stephen Cockle, Sheila Cording, Liz Couture, Patty Ella, Andrew Frolkin, Laurin Fulton, Sylvia Halligan, Dora Hu, Anita Komorowski, Terry Knight, Sara Mathew, Suzanne Perdeaux, Pat Prevost, Vanessa Pickett, Rudra Ramdial, Susan Sang, Joan Seto, Susan Sheard, Lynda Sutherland, Melloney Syrotiuk, Amie Tsang, Constance Tsang, Amy Weinburg, Rhianna Wood.

Our volunteer Board members lent YREA their expertise on committees and in these areas:

Jeff Laidlaw, Chairman, hemp advocacy; James Carver, Treasurer, SUDA board; Sharon Bradley, Secretary, fundraising; Sylvia Bowman, York Region waste committee, ON rep; Susan Sigrist, Don Council rep, community gardens; Lynda Sutherland, fundraising.

Besides our ongoing SHOP and Clean Water awareness campaigns our very important new project will be working towards the creation of a hemp industry in York Region. We invite your support as we join together to work towards a vibrant, greener 2012.

Jeffery Laidlaw, Chairman

Gloria Marsh, Executive Director

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