

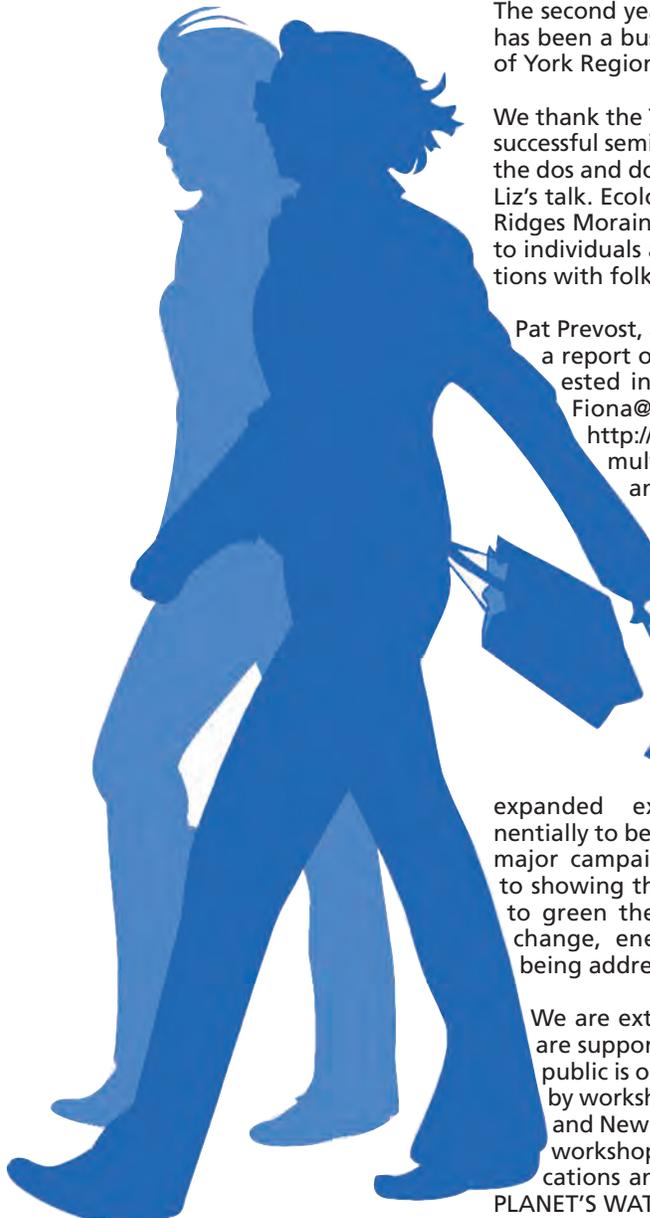


# GREENWORKS



## Message from the Executive Director

### WHERE WE'VE COME FROM (RECENTLY), WHERE WE ARE GOING



The second year of YREA's capacity-building project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation has been a busy one. Our increased civic engagement has forged alliances beyond the borders of York Region.

We thank the Town of Aurora and the Aurora EAC who partnered with YREA to present a most successful seminar by Liz Benneian of Oakville Green. Sharing of experiences and information on the dos and don'ts of dealing with policy and responding effectively to issues was a highlight of Liz's talk. Ecological concerns go beyond our boundaries – air pollution, peaker plants, the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Greenbelt. The exchange of knowledge and ideas was mutually beneficial to individuals and groups involved in the environmental sector. We anticipate future collaborations with folks in Halton.

Pat Prevost, a YREA volunteer attended a Good Green Jobs For All conference and has posted a report on YREA's blog <http://yrea.org/blog/?s=green+jobs>. If any of our readers are interested in participating in a working group on this topic, please let Fiona Wood know [Fiona@yrea.org](mailto:Fiona@yrea.org). A link to a recent conference gives an inkling of topics addressed <http://goodjobsforall.ca/?p=975#more-975>. Growing a local green economy would mean multi-stakeholder partnerships, perhaps with York Small Business Enterprise Centre and Green Connections (see Green Connections article in this issue).

The York Region Environmental Alliance has joined the TRCA's Don Watershed Regeneration Council for a two-year term. We look forward to making a meaningful contribution through the lenses of YREA's unique perspective.

A working group on waste that evolved from our Planning for Action (PFA) meetings focused on how we could support municipal and regional waste reduction initiatives without replicating their efforts. SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING was born and has

expanded exponentially to become a major campaign geared to showing the public how to green their shopping habits. In so doing, climate change, energy conservation and sustainability are being addressed.

We are extremely grateful to the municipalities who are supporting SHOP. Our launch date to the general public is on April 20th at the Aurora Library followed by workshops in Whitchurch-Stouffville on April 29th and Newmarket on May 26th. Check our website for workshops details, links to registration, dates and locations and come and learn how to SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING at [www.yrea.org](http://www.yrea.org).

Sincerely,  
  
Gloria Marsh

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## **FARMING & FOOD, MAKING IT BETTER FOR ALL**

by Jamie Reaume, Executive Director, Holland Marsh Growers' Association

It has been around for nearly 100 years; is recognized all over the world for productivity and economies of scale; has a diversity found nowhere else in Ontario; and yet, it exists on no map of Ontario. It is renowned for its organic-like black soil, responsible for the creation of both a unique micro-climate and the ability to produce safe, quality products, and its farmers working side-by-side, without fences, in a community-like setting.

This is the Holland Marsh – Ontario's soup and salad bowl – an area that has seen turmoil, hurricanes, tornadoes, and yet comes back each and every year in a way that renews the spirit of agriculture and peaks the interests of locals.



But why the focus on the Holland Marsh now? Perhaps it is because of the ever-growing interest in connecting back to one of four essential components to human existence: food. People, mostly three generations removed from any farming background, are more interested today in food than ever before. That growing pressure from the buy local movement is forcing dramatic changes across the entire stakeholder system – from retailer to government. Consumers, even those reading this newsletter, have greater power than they realize – and it is through that power that changes within the food system are occurring.

The Holland Marsh Growers' Association is capitalizing on the interest in local food by communicating a positive message about the diversity and richness of the area just north of Toronto while repairing long-time fractured alliances and partnerships that exist within the area. A co-operative approach, designed to improve relationships throughout the value chain, is needed to ensure sustainability of both the Holland Marsh's agricultural industry (and its various packing houses) and the farmers working the richest organic soil in Canada.

Consumers know of the Holland Marsh – because most drive through it to arrive at other destinations. This organization wants to make the Holland Marsh a destination in itself by high-

lighting its agricultural diversity, uniqueness, and ability to bridge the ever-expanding urban-rural divide. This, in turn, reaffirms the need for agriculture both in Ontario and throughout Canada, and leads to stronger growth of alternative markets for Holland Marsh farmers. In addition, farmers and packers in the Holland Marsh are part of Ontario's Greenbelt and learning to work within the regulatory regime means adapting growing methods to reflect the new order of business. Environmentally-friendly growing practices ensures clean water; safe, healthy, and nutritious food; and a consumer focus on the overwhelmingly positive impact farmers have locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally. And that is key.

Much of the work by the association has been to let consumers know what, exactly, farming is about in the Holland Marsh and, more importantly, ensure that there is a connection between your food and our farming. From events throughout Ontario – whether it be soup-a-licious, now soupfest or The Royal Winter Fair, from new signs on the 400 or Highway 9 announcing that consumers are *Entering the Holland Marsh* to stories in local, provincial, and national media about food and farming – the association is moving beyond conventional ideas because farmers are concerned about what is in store for society and their future.

Rather than be an isolating factor, Holland Marsh farmers have become part of the solution to some of the immense challenges facing Ontarians. Food – we are pushing to bridge that rural-urban gap by meeting with groups from the Toronto Food Policy Council to various gardening societies or school-aged groups. Energy – we are both energy users and energy producers in agriculture – and we need to remind our consumers of that fact. Farming is more than food; it is fibre, fuel, even construction and industrial resources. And we are renewable. Farmers are carbon catchers and oxygen distributors. In an era of high cost North American societies, we have become more efficient in everything that is done – including the usage of chemistries, water, fuel, and land.

Farmers have long been touted as stewards of the land – but the Holland Marsh Growers' Association is reminding our consumers, our fellow citizens, that we are much more – to both you and our society. We are the cornerstone of human existence – and nowhere is that shown more than in the Holland Marsh. And it is yours because it is in your backyard. Visit sometime and view it up close – not speeding north to the cottage, but in a leisurely tour that will highlight cutting edge technology against the backdrop of virtually the oldest profession known to man. Farming and food – the Holland Marsh brings it all together for you.

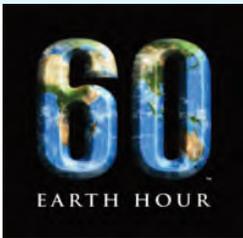


## TIME OF USE(TOU)

The more we factor our electrical uses to Off-peak and at least Mid-peak the less we will risk brown outs and the less we will need peaker plants. So even if time of use (TOU) hasn't kicked in in your area, the chart below, available at [http://www.pow-erstream.ca/app/pages/TOU\\_Rates.jsp](http://www.pow-erstream.ca/app/pages/TOU_Rates.jsp) is handy to print off and put on your fridge as a reminder.

### TOU Prices - November 1, 2009 - April 30, 2010

	Times	TOU Period	TOU Price
Weekends & holidays	All day	Off-peak	\$0.044 per kWh
Weekdays	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	On-peak	\$0.093 per kWh
	11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Mid-peak	\$0.080 per kWh
	5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	On-peak	\$0.093 per kWh
	9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	Off-peak	\$0.044 per kWh



### EARTH HOUR IS ON SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010, 8PM - 9PM

Richmond Hill set the record last year for the greatest energy reduction during Earth Hour 2009. They want to set another record and do even better this year. YREA is asking all the other municipalities to rise to a challenge and try to beat Richmond Hill's record. EVERYONE can do their part. CAN YOU SWITCH OFF FOR THIS HOUR?

### BATTERY USE PROLONGED

After reading the battery article in the winter 2009 issue of GREENWORKS, YREA member Stephen Cockle of Richmond Hill shares these insightful tips from his own experience for getting every last bit of energy from batteries:

"Different applications require different levels of battery power. To get the maximum use, particularly out of non-rechargeable AAs, I use them in turn for different applications. When the flashlight or power toothbrush begin to wane, the batteries still work fine in a clock for a long time. After that they go to my little Sony Walkman radio until virtually dead. And even an almost dead battery works fine in a flashlight using an LED bulb. I wouldn't mind betting that the majority of batteries that get thrown out still have plenty of useful life in them for the right application."



## ELECTRONIC WASTE(E-WASTE): IT'S IMPACT AND WHAT WE CAN DO

Although use of computers is doubling every 8 years and 10% of our electricity is now needed to run them, for most of us, doing without computers would be unimaginable. It is said that we still use as much paper, but information now so readily available on-line has at least saved the trees that would have produced such paper consuming items as encyclopedias. Following are some facts to consider:

- The electronics we buy have a short life span
- More E-waste is thrown in the trash than recycled
- There are over 1000 toxic materials including mercury, cadmium and lead found in E-waste that are harmful to humans and the environment
- Many recyclers export to developing countries with no worker safety or environmental protections making e-waste a global problem

### QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION

- Does it have an environmental policy statement? If so is E-Waste included?
- Is this policy understood by employees and supported by management?
- Does it have a recycling strategy that addresses data security?
- Does your IT department have a recycling process that maximizes value?
- What are you recycling, and what are you not recycling, do opportunities exist to improve?

### FOR BUSINESSES

Vernon Technological Disposals offers audit services, data destruction, employee purchase program and computer recycling. <http://www.vernontech.ca/computer-recycling/contact.htm>



### EXPORTING

Most of the world's E-waste is exported to less developed countries with horrid working conditions and low wages. Recyclers only strip the valuable pieces from the electronics and then ship the rest out to rid themselves of the hazardous waste.

### RE-USE MOST BENEFICIAL - WHY?

It keeps new electronics from entering the E-waste stream. Acquisition of re-used electronics is affordable for a community, organization, or individual which otherwise would not be able to afford them. Before thinking of disposal consider donating electronics to nonprofits such as schools or charitable organizations.

### FOR INDIVIDUALS

York Region provides drop-off depots for recycling and safe disposal of e-waste. Items accepted include TVs, computers, monitors, printers, cell phones, electronic games, stereos, VCRs and DVD players. For depot locations and hours of operation, visit <http://www.york.ca/waste>.

Additional e-waste drop-off locations can be found throughout Ontario. <http://www.dowhatyoucan.ca>

### Information sourced from:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/06aug/02342/websitefinal/takeaction.html> and from a presentation by James Drohan, President of Vernon Technology Solutions [jdrohan@vernontech.ca](mailto:jdrohan@vernontech.ca)



## **LEAF'S BACKYARD TREE PLANTING PROGRAM EXPANDS TO GREENING YORK REGION**

by Matthew Higginson, Marketing Assistant, LEAF

When it comes to helping the environment, real change starts at home. We are all searching for ways to save money, improve our quality of life, and contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change. What if we could do all of these things from our own backyard? Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving urban forests, is helping the residents of York Region do just that.

'The simple act of planting a tree in your backyard can do so much. Trees provide shade, help cut air conditioning costs, and reduce noise pollution. They also absorb carbon dioxide, filter air pollutants, and increase property value,' says Janet McKay, Executive Director at LEAF.

With spring just around the bend, there is no better time to think about planting trees and shrubs to beautify your yard, cool your home and cut down on air conditioning. According to a study by the University of California Berkeley properly placed trees can reduce cooling costs by 25 to 40 per cent. Shading an air-conditioning unit with shrubs allows it to run more efficiently, which can help you cool down without breaking the bank.

LEAF's goal is to help property owners make educated choices about what will work well in their yards, and working with LEAF to plant species that are native to this area can help homeowners transform their backyards into much needed habitat for songbirds and butterflies. Because these trees and shrubs grow naturally in York Region, they are adapted to the local climate. Native species also support a higher level of biodiversity because of their natural relationship with native wildlife.

LEAF's Backyard Tree Planting Program is now offered in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The program is subsidized by York Region and participating municipalities, as well as Ontario Power Generation and Ontario Power Authority. Homeowners only pay between \$80 and \$180 per tree, which includes a 30-minute site consultation with an arborist to help choose the best species and planting location, a five to eight foot tall tree and full planting service. LEAF also offers many educational materials including a handy guide to caring for your trees.

Starting in late spring of 2010, all residents of York Region, including King Township, Aurora, Whitechurch-Stouffville, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and Georgina, will be eligible to take part in a new do-it-yourself version of the program. Both variations of the program offer a wide variety of flowering and berry-producing native shrubs priced from \$25, which includes delivery. Visit [www.yourleaf.org/bytp](http://www.yourleaf.org/bytp) or call 416-413-9244 for more information about LEAF's programs and volunteer opportunities.



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## Green Connections

by Cathy Nesbitt

Are you a green business owner? Are you looking for more exposure? If so, Green Connections may be the place for you.

Green Connections is a networking and mentoring group of small businesses. Members are dedicated to exploring and sharing information on environmentally sustainable practices and products and encouraging all businesses to 'Go Green'.

The group was founded during The York Small Business Enterprise Centre's (YSBEC) Annual Entrepreneur's The Green Economy Conference in January of 2009. YSBEC saw an opportunity for environmentally conscious businesses to help each other. Dan Ruby, a consultant with the YSBEC invited Cathy Nesbitt of Cathy's Crawly Composters and Renee Blake of The Biz Mates to take the lead by forming a group of like-minded businesses that offer green products or services.

Green Connections is now run by its members in conjunction with YSBEC. Our website includes a directory of members with a brief profile, upcoming events and video links. The group has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Our members are inspirational and passionate about their solutions for sustainability. Annual membership in Green Connections is only \$50.

At our monthly meetings two members have an opportunity to make a presentation about their business. With this understanding, it is easier to promote each other and raise awareness about sustainable choices. We learned last month that dental offices are highly toxic. Did you know dental hygienists can now operate independently from dentists, providing a service to clients in a safer environment? Check out one of our member's websites <http://www.woodlanddental.ca> to discover more about eco dental hygiene and other eco options.

The Green Connections banner is displayed at festivals and events and members exhibit as a group under it. In addition to group placement at green events, Green Connections is now being featured on Daytime York Region on Rogers Cable the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Tune in to learn more.

We wish to establish ourselves as the go to group for green business solutions. Our green members' businesses include everything from composting to earth friendly cleaning supplies, alternate energy, eco-building supplies, recycling, electric bikes and much more. We have attracted a unique blend of business owners who are not only passionate about what they do, but also want to help others create more sustainable practices. Intrigued? Won't you join us?

Check meeting dates and locations: <http://www.cathy-scomposters.com/greenconnections/index.htm>

*Bring the whole family to the 12th Annual*

## RICHMOND HILL MILL POND SPLASH DON RIVER ECO-FESTIVAL



**Sunday 6 June 2010, 12:00 - 4:30 pm**  
**Mill Pond Park, Richmond Hill**

- ★ Environmental displays
- ★ Native wildlife shows
- ★ Bird-box building
- ★ Conservation tips
- ★ Eco-friendly gardening
- ★ Tree planting
- ★ Nature walks
- ★ Children's games
- ★ Organic food market
- ★ Art Gallery exhibition
- ★ Music, entertainment, refreshments, and much more!



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## SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING



Dear YREA supporter,

When you donate to the York Region Environmental Alliance or become a member, your support goes directly to helping us maintain an active, green presence in York Region through environmental education activities and through direct involvement addressing ecological issues of concern in our communities.

**SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING** is one of our new campaigns which will engage young and old with informative workshops, eco-shopper quizzes, challenges and tools to make greening shopping habits easy.

We run an efficient, frugal organization yet it takes money to mount successful programs. As dedicated environmentalists we will never solicit you via direct mail. Our quarterly newsletter is our way of appealing to you in an environmentally friendly, cost effective manner.

**Your financial assistance will make a vital difference in helping us to continue our work.** Won't you support us? To make a tax-receiptable donation click **Donate Now**.

If you prefer, mail your donation to YREA, 225 Lakeland Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 3A5. To become a sponsor of **SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING**, or to volunteer, contact Fiona Wood, Communications and Community Outreach Coordinator [fiona@yrea.org](mailto:fiona@yrea.org).

**Thank you for considering this request.** There's no better time to support the environment. Charitable Registration Number: #84559 0553 RR0001

Sincerely,

Gloria Marsh, Executive Director, York Region Environmental Alliance  
*Partnering for a greener planet*



### YREA extends its heartfelt thanks to our latest donors

STEWARDS: Angela Marsh & Justin Keating  
KEEPERS: Leslie Atkinson, Rae Bowie, Carl Moolman, Rosemary Park  
FRIENDS: Sylvia Bowman, Sharon Bradley, James Carver, Liz Couture, Cassandra Daas-Pearce, Mary Dubé,

FRIENDS (cont'd):

Caterina Liberatore, Sue Massa, Sari Merson, North American Native Plant Society, Klaus Wehrenberg,

### Thumbs up to these volunteers

Pat Prevost and Lynda Sutherland