The Talon

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NEWSLETTER COVID-19 edition #8

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN *is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.*Telephone 905-722-8021 (www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (<u>www.zephyrsociety.ca</u>)

It looks like the provincial Stay-at-Home Emergency Order will be lifted June 11, and we will be entering Stage 1 of a start to opening up in the G.T.A. area. Some outdoor recreational activities including specific gatherings are being allowed to happen, with restrictions, and that is great news for field naturalists.

We all know we are a long way from normal, as a return to pre-pandemic times but any improvement is welcome. We are hopeful that this means we will be able to proceed with our tentatively planned **outdoor meeting/nature outing for the end of June, Sunday the 27**that **4:00 p.m. at the Brown Hill Park**, where we met last September. We will be monitoring public health notices details and will confirm as we approach the date and will advise you. I note that the COVID-19 India (Delta) variant that has shut down parts of Australia and threatens the U.K. opening in the last week or so is confirmed in Peel and Toronto and quickly growing, so hopefully this distressful development can be brought under control, with stepped up vaccines delivery and not affect plans. Stay well and follow all Public health guidelines.

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Paul	Harn	ev

Media Programs – Zoom Meetings, Webinars etc.

Some members have been interested in spending some screen time on their computer. Various high-quality programing is now readily available after the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic and continuing of much better quality and technical merit than we in our organization could produce. These programs include You-Tube, Zoom meetings, Webinars and related digital platforms programing. Below are some recommended Links, of many that members could search themselves, to partake in below. Enjoy!

2021-05-26

Wildlands League

The People's Summit

Suggested by SLSN Member Barrie Braiden



Canada is not immune to the global biodiversity crisis. We are approaching almost 700 species at risk in this country. How do we turn the tide? Protect enough habitat. Science says nature needs half.

Canada has pledged to protect 30% of our land and ocean by 2030 (the 30 x 30 commitment). US President Biden has also made this commitment. Québec and California are ahead in delivering on the promise of 30×30 . Yet, Ontario sits at 10.7% with no pledge to do more.



The <u>Peoples' Summit</u>, a virtual event, taking place June 15 – 17, will showcase Ontario's special places needing protection.

Getting to 30% requires leadership from of all of us: Indigenous Nations, environmental organizations, communities, municipalities, conservation authorities, progressive industry, land trusts and more.

Join us to hear amazing speakers discuss:

- Indigenous leadership on protected areas
- Protected areas opportunities in every region of Ontario
- Urban protected areas
- National Marine Conservation Areas
- Ecological linkages and wildlife corridors

Save the Date (click to add to <u>Apple iCal</u>, <u>Google Calendar</u>, our <u>Outlook Calendar</u>). Information on free registration to follow.

The People's Summit on Growing Prtoected Areas-- is shaping up to be an amazing 3 day summit with panelists from across the province presenting in panels on special places they are working on protecting. The first day is all Indigenous presenters!

Register to attend and support! https://peoplessummit.ca/

More Information: https://mailchi.mp/a4882e7a4e48/send-a-wave-of-support-13782366?e=a53b450fd0

2021-05-20

Ontario Biodiversity Summit 2021

http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/summit/

2021 Ontario Biodiversity Summit Nature-based solutions for the 21st century

Join us for the virtual 2021 Ontario Biodiversity Summit!

Our engaging sessions will be led by subject matter experts and will bring together people from across Ontario and around the globe to talk about, celebrate, and take action to protect biodiversity using nature-based solutions!

nformation and Registration: ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/summit	

Restoring aquatic biodiversity

June 17, 2021 9:00am – 4:00pm

The natural aquatic biodiversity in Ontario, with 250,000 lakes alone, is a remarkable endowment. This full-day session consists of four panels that evaluate the experience of sustaining the natural aquatic infrastructure and restoring damaged ecological functions. One panel will summarize advances in the measurement of the state of aquatic biodiversity (species, genetic, community). Another will debate the appropriate balance of the tools of protection, restoration and offsetting. A third will consider connections between Ontario aquatic policy and international agreements related to aquatic biodiversity. The final panel will explore equitable and diverse public engagement in aquatic biodiversity issues.

Restoring biodiversity and ecological connections

June 24, 2021 10:00am – 5:00pm

This session will feature four panel discussions profiling large-scale habitat restoration needs and opportunities. Restoration offers us a chance to curb biodiversity loss by creating habitat and enhancing connectivity on the landscape while providing increased ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and flood mitigation. Ecosystem restoration contributes to the green economy by creating jobs and generating demand for locally and sustainably grown native plants and seeds.

We will discuss restoration policy, and the importance of seed conservation strategies in meeting biodiversity targets within restoration timelines, using "the right native species in the right places for the right reasons."

Enhancing protection and resilience: Indigenous ways of knowing

This session will highlight current and future work that is needed to increase our system of interconnected protected areas including other effective conservation measures (OECMs) and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). This work will enable Ontario and Canada to achieve its 17% targets under OBS Target 13 and Canada Target 1 respectively, as well as the 25% and 30% targets established nationally for 2025 and 2030. These actions for biodiversity, climate change, including achieving Canada's emission reduction targets (i.e. Gt of carbon sequestered due to "avoided loss" to other land uses), and for people will be highlighted in the context of multiple wins for society. The need and opportunity for an inclusive, respectful and collaborative approach between governments, civil society and Indigenous Peoples will be discussed and profiled.

Information and Registration: ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/summit

Muskoka - Virtual Programs

More information: http://realmuskoka.com/sustainability/

The Muskoka Steamships & Discovery Centre and regional partner organizations are hosting a digital webinar series on sustainability with a roster of great speakers and important topics of interest to viewers in Muskoka, and beyond (virtual).

- Climate change impacts for Muskoka with Dr. Peter Sale & Dr. Richard Lammers
- Indigenous Perspective: reconnecting with the natural world
- The future of our lakes despite climate change with Dr. Norman Yan

Click the image at the side to download the series poster (PDF, 1 page). Register for one session, or all six, here: http://realmuskoka.com/sustainability/

F.O.C.A Webinars

Lake Partner Program – Sampling Results & Assistance

A note to lake association volunteers: FOCA reminds and encourages everyone to always keep physical distancing in mind while at the lake. It is incumbent on each individual to monitor their own behaviour and volunteering activities to adhere to the latest Public Health protocols related to COVID-19.

the Lake Partner Program's province-wide sampling results from 2020 are now available for download:

- 1. Total Phosphorous results (Excel; 4 MB)
- 2. Average Secchi depth (water transparency) results (Excel; 3 MB)
- 3. Calcium results (Excel; under 1 MB)
- 4. Chloride results (Excel; under 1 MB)

<u>Contact the Lake Partner Program Coordinator</u> if you cannot access your lake's results.

World Oceans Week 2021

The Explorers Club

A Global Event: Virtual Programs – June 6-12,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p UPdd-dlk



One Earth Virtual Programs

Water Conversations: Episode Two – Growing the Greenbelt

Wednesday, June 16th – 6:30-8:30pm ET

Hosted by the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and Environmental Defence, this is the second of three in-depth workshops on actions needed to ensure healthy waters. This session will focus on coordinating efforts to maintain momentum around the Ontario government's consultation to grow the size and further enhance the quality of the Greenbelt. Participants will learn about what other organizations are doing, get an update on what is happening provincially, and discuss potential joint priorities and actions, and how they can work together.



Online discussion: June 22, 2021, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

The Sustainability Consultant Network is presenting a new series about how the climate crisis is affecting us here in the GTA in the present time. Using a Kitchen Table Conversations format we will look at the many different issues that are making our community and city undergo many interrelated threats.

The first part of the series is about food security, food prices and food nutrition, all of which are affected by the climate crisis.

More Information: Website: www.climatefast.ca, www.climatefast.ca/contact. Registration

Telephone: (416) 731-6605

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Campaign for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

Webcast June 14 - 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Join the movement for a fossil fuel free future! Learn about the global campaign for a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty and about our campaign for Toronto to endorse the Treaty.

We will need to build a huge movement in order to move City Hall forward on climate action and the phasing out of all dependence on fossil fuels. So join us!

Speakers to include: **Tzeporah Berman**, Chair, and **Seble Samuel**, Cities organizer from the international **Campaign for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.** This webcast is organized by MobilizeTO, ClimateFast and other groups in the Toronto climate action community.

Please endorse the campaign. Groups and individuals are welcome to sign on!

Webcast information and registration

SLSN Membership Renewals

NORMA KNOWLTON 418 BOUCHIER STREET KESWICK, ONTARIO L4P 3C8 Phone 905-476-4747

Membership year starts on October 1. Dues have not changed since last year: Single \$25.00, Family \$30.00

Norma

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Irving Himel Bird Report 2021-05-18

Terry Betts and I started off by birding the Holland Marsh sewage lagoon on a very quiet morning. Another birder lied saying he had seen this and that when in fact it was so quiet that the anything moving was the sweat off my brow

We did see however
BUFFLEHEAD
MALLARD
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
COMMON GRACKLE
Canada goose
SOLITARY SANDPIPER
SPOTTED SANDPIPER
LESSER YELLOWLEGS
TURKEY VULTURE
Along Bruce st /Ravenshoe St
OSPREY
BALD EAGLE both on their nests
SONG SPARROW
TREE SWALLOW

EASTERN KINGBIRD my first for the season MOURNING DOVE YELLOW WARBLER CASPIAN TERN I Rounded up the week-end and today by watching birds come to my feeder CROW STARLING CHICKADEE CARDINAL COWBIRD DOWNY WOODPECKER BLUE JAY WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH REDBREASTED NUTHATCH GOLDFINCH WARBLING VIREO ?? Tiny little small green bird YELLOW-RUMP WARBLER HUMMINGBIRD. First of the season m & f GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER. First for the cottage And a drive along the lakeshore toward Jackson's Pt Purple martin COMMON MERGANSER HOUSE SPARROW HERRING GULL RING-BILLED GULL And the streets around the Keswick cemetery REDSTART WILD TURKEY CATBIRD BALTIMORE ORIOLE CHIPPING SPARROW KILLDEER Not bad

Irving	(Itche)) Himel
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416 569 5358

Peat

Article recommended by SLSN member Mary Green.

Mary with SLSN many years ago were involved in efforts to stop peat extraction in the Wilfrid Bog, that was an important natural area in South Lake Simcoe. The practice still continues in many parts of Canada.

2021-05-21

The Conversation

Peat compost to be banned – luckily, green alternatives are just as good for your garden

May 19, 2021 11.36am EDT

Authors

1. David Bek

Reader in Sustainable Economies, Coventry University

2. Margi Lennartsson Turner

Associate Professor of Horticulture, Coventry University

Disclosure statement

David Bek receives funding from Horticultural Trades Association.

Margi Lennartsson Turner has received funding from Defra, EU Horizon 2020 and Horticulture Trades Association.

Partners

Peat has been a staple ingredient of composts sold in British garden centres since the 1960s, even though it's not actually that nutritious for plants. The reason why this spongy turf is coveted by gardeners is that it can hold onto both water and air and it's generally free of pests and diseases. This makes peat the perfect environment for seeds to germinate and establish strong roots.

But few realise that the peat compost people buy each spring for their gardens took thousands of years to form. Extracted from bogs, fens and marshes, peat is the partially decomposed remains of ancient plants and animals. Peatlands in Europe contain five times more carbon than forests and disturbing peat for agriculture or harvesting it for compost releases CO₂ to the atmosphere, accelerating climate change.

The UK government plans to ban peat use among amateur gardeners by 2024. It had originally hoped garden centres in England would voluntarily stop selling peat-based products by 2020. But peat is a cheap resource and swapping it for compost made from alternatives makes little financial sense for these companies without binding regulation. As a result, peat still accounts for around 35% of all compost sales – an increase of 9% in 2020 alone.

With the proposed ban and a pledge to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland across the country by the year after, retailers can no longer delay the transition to peat-free compost. Happily for

green-fingered consumers, evidence suggests more ecologically benign compost can still keep gardens blooming beautifully.

Peat-free compost blends

Research to find peat replacements began in the 1970s, as the environmental consequences of destroying peatlands started to attract concern in the UK. The first generation of compost alternatives were often made from waste materials that had been composted, such as grass and tree clippings from parks and gardens (known as green waste), food processing byproducts such as spent brewers grain and animal manures.

These composts were inconsistent for a number of reasons. The blends were often changed from one year to the next, making it difficult for gardeners to adapt. Many contained higher levels of nutrients than some plants needed and the physical structure of some alternatives were rather different to peat, making it necessary to change the watering regime of plants, which was confusing for hobby gardeners. At the time, these composts were primarily sold in the retail sector to the general public, disappointing many who were accustomed to working with peat. This fostered a long-lasting resistance to peat alternatives.

More recent research led by manufacturers, professional growers and consultants has revealed a new generation of composts. Different materials – especially bark, wood and coconut fibre – can be blended to form composts which perform as well as peat. This new phase of research looked closely at how different materials interacted within blends, and led manufacturers to reduce the amount of green waste they use, which tends to vary in quality...

Read full article: https://theconversation.com/peat-compost-to-be-banned-luckily-green-alternatives-are-just-as-good-for-your-garden-160315
IgorAleks/Shutterstock

2021-05-23

York Media

'For the planet, we need to rethink 'lawn'': Aurora gardener gives the dirt on benefits of gardening

A blooming good year for gardening's popularity but limited supply means you should hit garden centres early

Lisa Queen

Aurora Banner Sunday, May 23, 2021 Donna Lewis digs her work. The president of Garden Aurora is also a professional gardener for the private estate of Frieda and Frank Stronach, founder of the Magna International auto parts empire.

While Lewis laughs that she's lucky to be able to "play" in the dirt every day, she knows not everyone can spend as much time as she does tending to plants.

Still, gardening is growing in popularity, especially as people realize the mental health and physical benefits of the activity during the pandemic when many pastimes have been off-limits, she said.

While flowers remain popular, more gardeners these days are turning to producing food, Lewis said.

"If you grow it yourself, you know it's safe. Even though the ornamental part of gardening is quite important to our self-esteem, if grow your own foods, you're reducing your own bills and you're also utilizing land for agricultural purposes basically rather than ornamental purposes," she said...

Read full article: <a href="https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10396829--For-the-planet-we-need-to-rethink-lawn-aurora-gardener-gives-the-dirt-on-benefits-of-gardening/?s=n1?source=newsletter&utm_content=a02&utm_source=ml_nl&utm_email_autm_email_sutm_email_sea0e815B8ffe40a55C58C2297De34C8&utm_campaign=yrha_99333

Pollinators at your Lawn

2021-06-01

York Media

'No Mow May': East Gwillimbury residents let their lawn grow

More than 60 residents took the pledge to let their grass grow to help protect pollinators

Simon Martin

East Gwillimbury Express

Monday, May 31, 2021

The grass is high at Mark Goldsworthy's house in River Drive Park and it's not because he is neglecting to cut the fescue. He's not cutting it on purpose.

Goldsworthy is one of more than 60 East Gwillimbury residents taking in part in the "No Mow May" initiative launched by the East Gwillimbury Environmental Advisory Committee this year.

Goldsworthy explained that insects like bees, butterflies and others are busy pollinating much of the month and the long grass is beneficial for the biodiversity of the ecosystem.

"I certainly have noticed a difference," Goldsworthy said. "I think my grass is the longest in the neighbourhood. There's a lot of tall grass going to seed. It will be more drought resistant," he said.

An arborist by trade, Goldsworthy joined the environmental advisory committee shortly after he moved to East Gwillimbury in 2019. He said the No Mow May initiative has brought him closer to his yard and understanding the ecosystem that is thriving there...

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: Report Simon Martin went to see why some East Gwillimbury residents are letting their grass grow this year.

Read full article: https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10404490--no-mow-may-east-gwillimbury-residents-let-their-lawn-

grow/?s=n1?source=newsletter&utm_content=a03&utm_source=ml_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=yrha_99870

Plastic Issue Update

2021-05-12

Environmental Defence – Plastic

Did you hear the news? The federal government has officially added plastic to the Toxic Substances List under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA).

This is important! The listing of plastic under CEPA is a crucial first step in Canada's fight against plastic pollution. It means the federal government can better manage the production, use and disposal of plastic. It also means Canada will be required to address the harms caused by plastic in the environment.

Paul, this is a pivotal moment made possible by your continued support. Every action you take helps us take one step forward toward zero plastic waste. Thank you.

Now it's time for the federal government to follow through on its commitment to ban six single-use plastic items. With an election looming, there is no time to waste. The chemical industry will continue to push back on the federal government's plans to reduce plastic pollution in Canada—we must stay vigilant. Every day that goes by, some 8,000

tonnes of plastic waste ends up in landfills, incinerators or directly in the natural environment.

The coming months are critical. We'll continue to push the federal government to release regulations on the plastic ban list and update you on the next steps.

For now, I would like to thank you again for joining us and taking action. Together, we can make a difference.

Karen Wirsig

Program Manager, Plastics

2021-06-02

York media

'Wow, why didn't we do this 20 years ago?' Newmarket moves toward singleuse plastics ban on town property

Industry leader and Newmarket company Eco Guardian president calls the move 'great'

Lisa Queen

Newmarket Era

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Newmarket's Eco Guardian is an industry leader and one of Canada's fastest-growing businesses.

The Leslie Street company started in 2004 producing reusable shopping bags and these days sells millions of compostable, eco-friendly food packaging products such as plates and cutlery.

President Anil Abrol is calling a move by Newmarket toward a ban on single-use plastics on municipal property beginning July 1 "great."

"Slowly but surely, consumers are demanding replacement for single-use plastics. That is what is flaming the change (locally and nationally)," he said.

Abrol stressed it's not a change that can happen overnight and will only occur if there is buy-in from residents and businesses, especially since compostable items cost 50 to 100 per cent more than single-use plastics.

While priority needs to be given to reducing plastics in packaging and reusing products, Abrol argues moving away from single-use plastics makes environmental sense, pointing out 89 per cent of plastics end up in landfills and also fill oceans and waterways.

Under Newmarket's new policy, plastic cutlery, plastic straws, stir sticks, black plastic, and single-serve milk and cream containers used by staff at town facilities will be eliminated as of July 1.

The town will also stop providing the same products at municipal events, meaning gone are the days when the town handed out water bottles at Touch a Truck, Canada Day and other occasions.

Instead, the town has purchased a \$40,000 water trailer for municipal events, where residents can fill up their (hopefully) reusable bottles.

The trailer carries about 1,000 litres, replacing up to 2,000 disposable water bottles each time it is used, public works director, Mark Agnoletto, said.

The town's new policy also means snack bars in municipal facilities will no longer provide single-use plastics.

But the policy is not a total ban.

Contractual obligations mean single-use plastics will remain in vending machines for the time being, and residents will be allowed to bring disposable water bottles on to municipal property — although the town is launching a public education campaign. People who rent town facilities will be able to use single-use plastics for now, but they will be encouraged to use eco-friendly alternatives such as products.

Although Newmarket's policy comes only six months before the federal government's planned ban of plastic grocery bags, straws, stir sticks, plastic cutlery, six-pack rings and food containers made from hard-to-recycle plastics, Mayor John Taylor and Coun. Grace Simon called the town's new policy meaningful...

Read full article: <a href="https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10405341--wow-why-didn-t-we-do-this-20-years-ago-newmarket-moves-toward-single-use-plastics-ban-on-town-property/?s=n1?source=newsletter&utm_content=a03&utm_source=ml_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=yrha_99943

2021-05-30

Care 2 Petition

These 20 corporations are responsible for most of the world's plastic waste. They must switch to sustainable alternatives now!

You and I already know we are positively swimming in plastic. Our trash overflows with it. Our oceans are morphing from ecosystems of fish into piles of plastic trash. Even governments don't know what to do with it — often tossing plastic onto other countries' soil to have them deal with it. Even more shocking: Of all of the plastic waste created in the world, it turns out that *just 20 businesses* are responsible for the vast majority of it. And of these 20 firms, every single one is involved in producing either fossil fuels or chemicals, such as oil- and gas-based petrochemicals, or sometimes both.

Why are oil and gas companies so interested in producing plastic? Because **most plastic is made of petroleum.** Every year, more and more greenhouse gas emissions are from plastic creation. Since most single-use plastic is never reused and never recycled, this is causing epic climate and pollution catastrophes for our planet. Out of all these horrible, polluting VIPs, one ranks the absolute worst: **ExxonMobil of the U.S.A.** This Texan company accounts for more plastic waste pollution than any other company on the entire planet, leaving our world a huge, toxic legacy of never-ever-biodegrading refuse. **It's time to hold these companies accountable. Tell the Dirty Top 20 to stop producing wasteful petrol-based plastic, and start producing Earth-friendly alternatives instead!**

Miranda
The Care2 Petitions Team

More Information: actionalerts@care2.com

P.S. Plastic production and climate change are tightly interconnected. <u>Sign the petition to</u> demand the dirtiest companies take responsibility!

2021-05-10

York Media

Striking out to stop bird-window collisions.

Beverley Golden

YorkRegion.com Saturday, May 1, 2021

As an Aquarian (an air sign) who has always dreamt of flying, I've had a special love for birds most of my life, spending hours watching their effortless ability to take flight. Birds are the perfect harbinger of spring, with their beautiful songs able to penetrate through even the noisiest of landscapes.

When a small bird died after flying into my living room window, I was devastated. How could this dear bird mistake my window for a safe flight path? After researching, I discovered that roughly <u>25 million birds</u> die every year in Canada after colliding with windows. In the U.S., <u>collisions are killing up to a billion birds</u> every year! Staggering, isn't it?

Sadly, the number of bird deaths continues to increase as humans alter our landscapes, erecting more buildings with larger windows in areas that were once bird domains.

According to <u>Brendon Samuels</u>, a PhD student from Western University researching this issue, unless governments begin to seriously address the problem, bird populations will continue to drop and our ecosystems will be severely impacted. The opposite of what we need, as birds are critical to maintaining a healthy <u>environmental balance</u>. Birds support our environment by helping in plant reproduction, control pest populations and are nature's cleaning crew.

Why Do Birds Fly into Windows?

So why do birds fly into windows? According to <u>FLAP Canada</u>, an advocacy group raising awareness of the issue and fighting to change the laws to protect birds from strikes, there are different reasons for daytime strikes vs. nighttime strikes.

During the day, it's the reflected light that poses the most severe threat to birds. Birds can see through glass and what is reflected on the glass, but they cannot see the glass itself. Many birds fly straight into windows and reflective building exteriors as they are attracted to the reflection of a landscape that is actually behind them, or to a plant that is on the other side of a window.

At night, it's artificial light from our buildings and cityscapes that endangers birds. Many species of birds migrate at night, using light from the moon, the stars, and the setting sun to navigate. The bright lights of our urban areas confuse birds, diverting them from their path, especially in low-ceiling or foggy conditions.

Read full article: https://www.yorkregion.com/opinion-story/10381464-striking-out-to-stop-bird-window-

<u>collisions/?s=n1?source=newsletter&utm_content=a05&utm_source=ml_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm_campaign=yrop_98507</u>