

WINTER - 2022

# LAND CARE NIAGARA

Official Newsletter

## Message from the Executive Director

This Winter has brought many great new things. As one door closes three more open! We have some exciting new projects in 2022. Take a minute, pull up a chair, and find out what we have been up to.

As our Species At Risk Bat and Gray Ratsnake project closes we have been working hard to prepare for many exciting projects this year. From reforestation work, riparian restorations, and a new wetland project. We have been collaborating with lots of great partners to create positive impacts on Niagara's Environment.

I am so pleased to welcome Emily into her new position as Stewardship Manager. Emily is at the heart of our projects and is always striving to bring LCN to new levels. We have an amazingly dedicated group: our new "Volunteer Corps" and a new board member Mercedes! All of which will bring so much great energy and support to our ever-growing community of Environmental advocates.

We have been carrying out much of our work remotely as current times have required, as many of you have also experienced. We are excited to get back out into the community this year. Come down and say hello to us at the Welland Market this Spring and Summer!

Let's all look ahead as new life Springs into Niagara!

Warm regards,  
Michelle



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# Welcome New Members

**We are very excited to welcome Mercedes to our Board of Directors!**



Mercedes Unwin is the Program & Resource Manager at AgScape, a charity focused on providing agriculture and food education programs, resources, events and initiatives to over 800,000 Ontario K-12 students and teachers annually. With a Master of Teaching degree from the University of Toronto, as well as being an Ontario Certified Teacher, she has always had a passion for fostering the learning of food literacy and environmental stewardship. Her role with AgScape allows her to help build and empower life-long agriculture and food learners, as well as encourage today's teachers and youth to take active roles in building stronger and more sustainable communities.

## World Wetlands Day: February 02

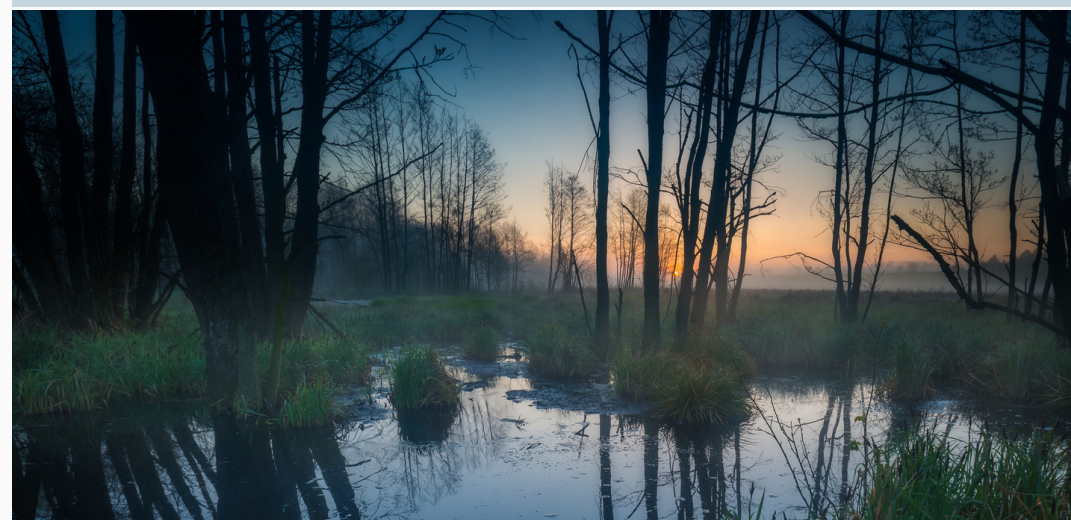
### **This year's theme:**

Wetlands and water:  
*"Inseparable for life in our community."*

World Wetlands Day is a day to raise awareness globally about the importance of wetlands in our lives and for the planet as a whole. This year's theme draws attention to the growing freshwater crisis the planet faces and the role wetlands play as a key source of freshwater.

Importantly, wetlands support us in many different ways, including being a source of clean water, keeping us fed through aquaculture, providing species habitat, and protection from floods and storms. Unfortunately, the growing pressure on our wetlands due to population growth, urbanization and increased consumption has resulted in increasingly polluted waters as well as the loss of some wetlands entirely. This not only threatens access to safe drinking water, but also endangers many other species who call these wetlands home.

Visit: [www.worldwetlandsday.org](http://www.worldwetlandsday.org) to learn more!





# Welcome New Members

## Welcome new Stewardship Manager!



Emily first became involved with Land Care Niagara during her academic studies as a volunteer on their Board of Directors. Emily holds a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from the University of Guelph, a graduate certificate in Ecosystem Restoration from Niagara College, and is a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner in training. Upon graduation, she worked at Land Care Niagara as their Environmental Technician at the Re-leaf Tree Nursery, and then as the Wildlife Technician on their Species-at-risk Bat and Gray ratsnake project. Now working as the Stewardship Manager at Land Care Niagara she looks forward to working with the community to continue to carry out environmental initiatives that work to improve and diversify natural areas throughout Niagara. We look forward to working with her in this new role!

## Be Smart with Road Salt!

Road salts (sodium chloride) is an effective deicer. When applied to ice the salt lowers the temperature and the ice will melt back into water. While salt can improve winter driving conditions road salts are known to have negative impacts on groundwater, vegetation, and local aquatic and terrestrial species.

What can be done?  
Encourage your municipality to use road salts effectively and reduce your own salt application where possible





# Project Updates: Rural Tree Planting Program

Our Rural Tree Planting Program is a large-scale reforestation program that works with private and public landowners to plant trees on their properties. We are excited to be planting an additional **21,000 trees** throughout Niagara this Spring! Tree planting can provide many benefits including:

- Providing shade / buffer / windbreak
- Restoring native forest cover
- Offering environmental protection – soils / air / water
- Enhancing wildlife habitat
- Mitigating climate change
- Providing a legacy to descendants
- Offering future income from wood products
- Potential eligibility for the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program

We are currently accepting landowners for our 2023 tree planting season! If you would like to be added to the contact list, please email **manager@landcareniagara.com** or call us at **905-348-5263**. Site visits will begin this Summer and spots fill up quickly, so please reach out soon if you are interested or would like more information about the program!

Tree planting is a great opportunity to engage the community in environmental conservation and restoration initiatives. For students, it can provide hands-on learning opportunities for understanding the ecological importance of forest cover, wildlife habitat, species diversity, water quality, and plant management. **If you are interested in helping us plant trees this Spring, please contact us to volunteer!**



# Project Update: Wetlands

Land Care Niagara is **looking for Landowners** to participate in our New Wetlands Project in the Niagara Region. The goal of this project is to create, enhance and restore wetlands with project partners across the Niagara Region.

Wetlands play an important role in ecosystem health across Ontario. Wetlands naturally improve water quality, help with nutrient cycling, stormwater management and mitigate the negative effects of climate change. Additionally, wetlands provide habitat to a variety of species including many Species-at Risk. In the Niagara Region and Southern Ontario, less than 10% of original wetlands remain.

This project will actively engage private and public landowners, schools, and community groups to participate in wetland restoration work and effectively raise awareness and provide education about the ecological and economic importance of wetlands to Ontario.

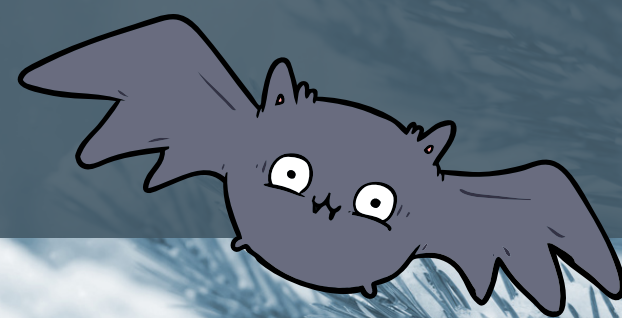
If you are a landowner interested in creating a wetland on your property or restoring an existing wetland on your lands, please contact us at [manager@landcareniagara.com](mailto:manager@landcareniagara.com) to see if you are eligible to participate!

Funding for this project is provided by the Federal Government through the Eco-action Community Funding Program.





# Project Updates: Species-at-Risk



That's a wrap! After many months of conducting habitat and acoustic monitoring surveys, we have successfully completed our Species-at-risk project for the endangered Gray ratsnake and endangered bats of Ontario. We had a great time working with our dedicated volunteers to collect data and carry out evening bat walks throughout Niagara. The results of our research found a rare discovery of Eastern small-footed *Myotis* at one of our candidate sites!

We hope to continue our efforts to protect and conserve these species in the future.

We would like to thank Bat expert, Toby Thorn, at the Toronto Zoo for dedicating his time and expertise to analyze the data for our project! If you want to learn more about bats and the great work being done at the Toronto Zoo, head to the link below!



FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT WAS PROVIDED BY  
THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO.



**Alexis Wilbee: Acoustic monitoring volunteer**



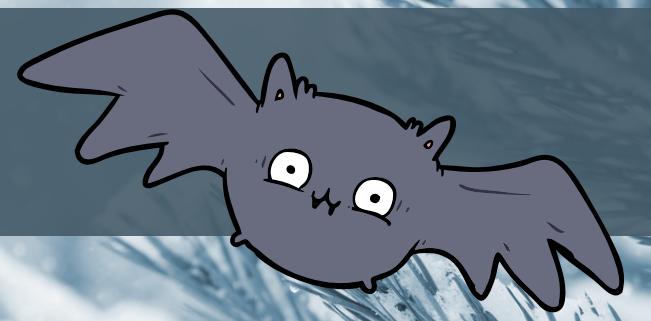
**Paige Schoenwolfe & Katja Odegarrd  
Acoustic monitoring volunteers**



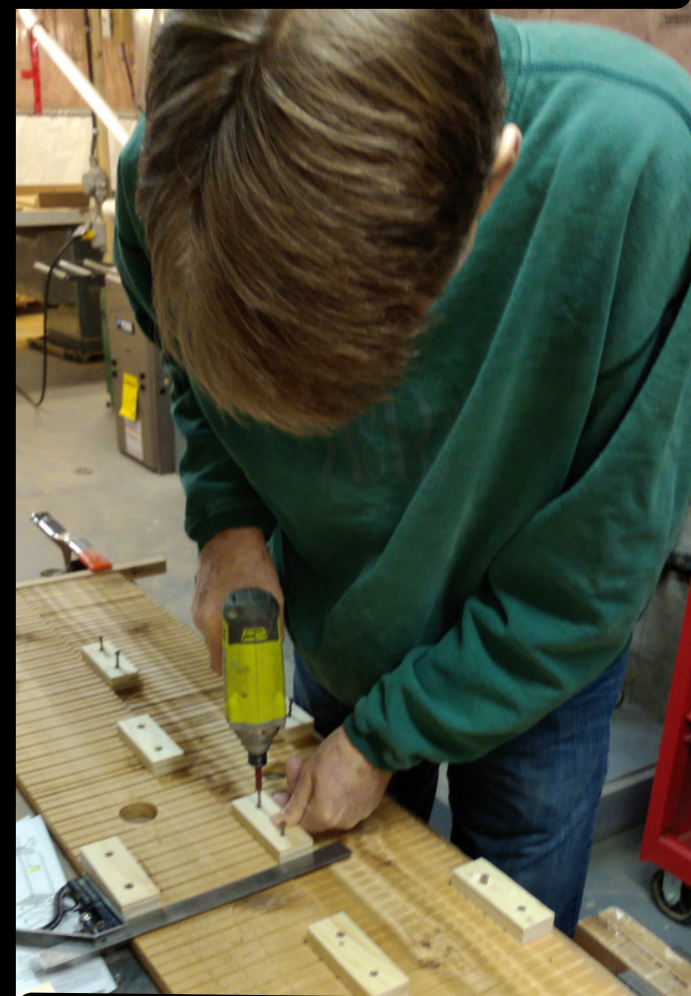
**Timothy Marostega & Rebecca Mueller:  
Acoustic monitoring volunteers**



# Project Updates: Species-at-Risk



A big thank you goes out to volunteers Howie Mcrae, Philip Beale, and Mark North! Howie has been a volunteer at Land Care Niagara since 2020, where he first helped us with irrigation repairs and maintenance at our tree nursery. Howie, Philip, and Mark recently volunteered their time to build us three bat boxes which will help provide habitat for endangered bats throughout the region!





# Project Updates: Riparian Restoration



Through the OPG Regional Biodiversity Fund, Land Care Niagara will be completing two riparian buffer restoration projects in 2022 with the help of our volunteers and landowners. In 2021, LCN partnered with Oceanbridge to complete the first half of one of these projects, planting close to 500 trees, 400 shrubs & 800 wildflowers at two sites along the Welland River Watershed.

## ***WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?***

The term "riparian buffer" refers to the vegetated area found along a stream bank that offers valuable protection to the watercourse.

## ***WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE?***

This area is referred to as a "buffer" because it helps to reduce or prevent pollutants, including nutrients and pesticides, from reaching a watercourse via runoff. Riparian buffers can also help to control erosion along stream banks, reduce flood damage, and provide valuable wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, development has caused the degradation of many riparian zones.



# Announcements - Events - Updates

## LCN T-Shirts Available!

Check out our new Land Care Niagara Online Shop!

Visit [landcareniagara.bigcartel.com](https://landcareniagara.bigcartel.com) to purchase our 2021 T-shirts or handmade wildlife structures. Proceeds from T-shirts sales will be used as a fundraising initiative, with all funds being used to support the continued delivery of our programs.

