

The Greenbelt Foundation and EcoSchools Canada Cultivate Greener Futures for Ontario Schools

14 schools will improve the biodiversity in Ontario's Greenbelt through greening grants.

Toronto, ON, December 15, 2023 - EcoSchools Canada and The Greenbelt Foundation are excited to announce the winners of the Greenbelt Biodiversity grant. A total of \$18,000 in funding will be given to help develop new and exciting biodiversity projects at 14 Ontario elementary and secondary schools. All of the winning schools are located in, or adjacent to, the Ontario Greenbelt and were awarded \$1,000 or \$5,000 grants to plant native plant and tree species, improve outdoor classrooms and collaborate with local partners to improve biodiversity at their schools.

Through this initiative, schools are also provided with educational resources and guidance to support their planting projects and learn about the importance of biodiversity. Last school year, 63,384 students in the Ontario Greenbelt learned about conducting plant inventories of their school grounds to better understand the role of native species, species at-risk, and their role in habitat creation. The learning and action associated with this project allows schools to earn points towards their EcoSchools certification with the aim of becoming an internationally-recognized Platinum EcoSchool.

The winner of the \$5,000 grant, Richmond Hill High School from the York Region District School Board, stood out amongst the 140+ applicants. Richmond Hill High School will put their grant money to use this spring by revitalizing and expanding a native plant garden neglected during the pandemic. Other notable winners include Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School and St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School whose projects will implement nesting sites for native birds and plant trees for shade in their outdoor classroom.

“We are pleased to continue to partner with EcoSchools to support education about biodiversity and the important benefits of the Greenbelt’s natural systems,” said Ed McDonnell, CEO of the Greenbelt Foundation. “We look forward to seeing the gardens, tree plantings and enhanced outdoor classrooms that will inspire the next generation of environmentalists.”

About EcoSchools Canada

EcoSchools Canada reaches approximately 1 million Kindergarten to Grade 12 students annually through its bilingual, environmental certification program. Participating schools track their individual and collective impact, enabling them to benchmark their progress year-over-year and compare their success across the national and international EcoSchools network. For more details visit: www.ecoschools.ca

About the Greenbelt Foundation

The Greenbelt Foundation is a charitable organization solely dedicated to ensuring the Greenbelt remains permanent, protected and prosperous. We make the right investments in its interconnected natural, agricultural and economic systems to ensure a working, thriving Greenbelt for all. Ontario's Greenbelt is one of the world's largest with over two million acres of farmland, forests, wetlands and rivers working together to provide clean air, fresh water and a reliable local food source.

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