



Embracing Eco Clubs

By Lorraine Roulston

This month school eco clubs emerge to continue promoting last year's passionate cause, or embrace a new environmental project. Whether they call themselves an Eco Action Team, Green Club, or Eco Avengers, these students engage their school's community with environmental projects. Educators can gather inspiration and ideas for projects from both Green Teacher and Canadian Teacher Magazine.

Green Teacher is primarily an academic journal published quarterly. It features ready-to-use activities, webinars, and resources for youth. The magazine's portal and archives are managed alongside the Outdoor Learning School & Store.

Canadian Teacher Magazine is both independent and national and is published three times a year. Besides featuring environmental information and student projects, it covers a variety of current trends, classroom management, professional and personal development, book reviews, instructional strategies and methodology, and national/international issues.

I find great joy Googling 'Our Canada Projects' when choosing a school to feature in Canadian Teacher Magazine. By clicking on schools across Canada, teachers will discover what student Eco Clubs are doing from coast to coast to coast. For over a decade, I've featured student driven enthusiasm for such issues as: creating nature gardens; recycling; using a 3D printer to transform PET bottles into useful items; studying harmful microplastics; reusing textiles; composting with red wigglers; building bike racks, greenhouses, and clotheslines; printing a book about light pollution; protecting the pollinators; creating signs to encourage parents to stop idling their vehicles; eliminating plastic water bottles; and cleaning up local waterways.

For any environmental classroom project, there are many grants available. Learning Sustainable Foundation (LSF) is one resource where I asked Samantha Gawron, Chief Strategy & Operations Officer, several questions on how LSF works:

Q: What year did LSF begin?

A: We've been around since 1991.

Q: How many schools have you funded so far?

A: We fund approximately 225 schools every year.

Q: Do you get many repeats for funding from the same school?

A: We do! For example, last year about half of our applications were from schools that received funding the year before.

Q: How does a school qualify?

A: LSF provides funding for students and teachers to engage their school and community in climate Action Projects. This includes any action that is student-led and contributes to the sustainability of your school or community - the only limit is the students' imaginations!

We work with grade K-12 students in Canada and can only fund 1 project per school - first come, first served.

Applications will open in fall 2026 at <https://lsf-lst.ca/programs/action-project-funding/> (or in French at <https://lsf-lst.ca/fr/programmes/financement-de-projets-daction/>).

Need some Action Project inspiration? Check out last year's Empowering Youth for Climate Action Award winners! new link: <https://ourcanadaproject.ca/winners-2026/>

A student driven team, working on environmental solutions, provides a cross-curricular learning activity that often enthusiastically engages their entire community to help build a healthier future.

Investing in Durham Region's Film and TV Industry

DURHAM – The Ontario government is supporting Durham Region through an investment of \$10,000 to showcase and promote the province's film and television content in international markets. Two organizations will receive \$5,000 through Ontario Creates, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. • Knights Group Media Inc. - \$5,000 • White Eagle Entertainment - \$5,000

"Our government recognizes the important role the film and TV sector plays in fostering dynamic and thriving communities across Ontario," said Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security. "This support will help Durham Region's film industry continue to expand its reach internationally and showcase Ontario's innovative screen industries on the global stage."

This grant is being awarded through the Global Market Development Fund for Film and TV. The fund provides eligible Ontario companies with funding to participate in international activities that support company growth and produce measurable business and market development results. Primary activities supported include targeted sales trips and attendance at international market events.

"For a boutique studio like ours, the barrier is rarely the work. It's getting into the rooms where international deals actually get made. This funding puts Knights Group Media in those markets, and lets us build the distributor and financing relationships that turn Ontario-developed projects into globally distributed ones. My thanks to Ontario Creates and MPP Lorne Coe for backing companies at our stage, where this kind of support goes a long way."

- Angélique Knights, Founder, Knights Group Media Inc.

Ontario Creates is an agency of the Government of Ontario that promotes, enhances and leverages investment, jobs and original content creation in the province's book publishing, film and television, interactive digital media, magazine publishing and music industries.

Ontario Taking Next Steps to Build Highway 413

Province issuing notice of procurement for eastern third of the highway and awarding contract for Highway 410 construction manager

The Ontario government has issued a notice of procurement to design and build the east section of Highway 413 as well as the Highway 427 Extension. The contract represents approximately one third of the corridor, marking a key milestone in the delivery of this priority project and in the province's plan to reduce gridlock and drive economic growth across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Once awarded, the contract is expected to be the largest infrastructure procurement ever issued by the Ministry of Transportation.

"In the face of President Trump's tariffs, we're doubling down on our plan to build so we can get people moving and keep Ontario workers on the job," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. "Highway 413 will reduce travel times across the GTA while supporting more than 6,000 jobs per year during construction and contributing more than \$1 billion to Ontario's GDP." Following the notice of procurement, a request for proposals (RFP) will be issued later this fall for the design and construction of the east section of Highway 413 from Highway 400 to west of The Gore Road. The RFP will also include the extension of Highway 427 from Major Mackenzie Drive north to Highway 413.

The Ontario government has also awarded a contract for a construction manager for the Highway 413 central contract, including the 410 Extension. The 9.1-kilometre extension from Highway 410 to Highway 413 will connect motorists to Highway 407 ETR, Highway 401 and Highway 403, unlocking access to destinations such as Burlington, Hamilton, Brantford and Woodstock. Highway 413 will have a total of 11 interchanges at municipal roads across the GTA, reducing travel times by as much as 30 minutes per trip compared to existing roads while accommodating up to 300,000 vehicles each day.

The highway will ease congestion on 400-series highways across Toronto, Halton, Peel and York Region by keeping people and goods moving while slashing travel times across the region.



Municipal elections should be about the community in front of us

By John Meloche

Taxes. Roads. Development. Public safety. Recreation. Infrastructure. Local jobs. City services. Transparency. Whether elected officials answer residents and whether taxpayers are getting value for their money

Yet as election day approaches, local politics can increasingly start to resemble the deeply polarized politics we see provincially, federally and south of the border.

A candidate attends an event. Someone discovers an old photograph. They speak with a politician from another level of government. They agree with one organization on one issue. Before long, a partisan label is attached and everything else about that candidate becomes secondary. That is where voters need to be careful.

There is ideology, and then there is what I'll jokingly call "idi-ology." Yes, the spelling is intentional.

"Idi-ology" is not about calling anyone an idiot. It describes the increasingly common habit of allowing one issue, one association, one disagreement or one political label to do all of our thinking for us. It creates the single-issue voter.

Values absolutely matter. Political philosophy matters. Someone can quite reasonably favour a small-c conservative approach that emphasizes careful spending, individual responsibility, public safety, accountability and limited government. Someone else may place greater emphasis on public investment, social programs or a different approach to government services.

Those differences deserve debate.

But municipal government rarely fits neatly into partisan boxes. Is fixing a deteriorating road Conservative or Liberal? Is improving a dangerous intersection left-wing or right-wing? Is asking whether a \$4-million project represents good value for taxpayers partisan? Is wanting to help fix the homelessness, mental health, drug use and food insecurity crisis in our cities left-wing or right-wing?

What political party owns cleaner parks, responsive City Hall, responsible development or better recreation facilities?

These are practical questions requiring judgement, research and compromise.

Our community Facebook groups and neighbourhood forums have become particularly important during local elections. They can be tremendous resources. Residents share information, challenge candidates, uncover issues and raise concerns that might otherwise receive little attention.

But those same groups can also become echo chambers.

A screenshot gets posted. A provocative headline is added. Someone makes an association between two people, then another association, and within a few comments an entire political identity has been constructed for someone who may never have said any of those things. That isn't scrutiny.

Scrutiny means examining what candidates actually believe.

Read their platforms. Look at their records. Ask them questions. See whether they provide substantive answers. Look at how they behave when someone disagrees with them. Determine whether they understand municipal government and whether their promises are actually within a councillor's authority to deliver.

And perhaps most importantly, look at the entire candidate.

If you agree with someone on nine important municipal issues but disagree strongly on a tenth, you may still decide that tenth issue is a deal-breaker. That is your right.

But make that decision consciously.

Don't allow somebody else's Facebook post, partisan label or carefully selected screenshot to make it for you.

Healthy democracy requires something increasingly rare: being willing to hear an idea without first asking which "team" it came from.

A good councillor should be capable of speaking with Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats, business owners, labour representatives, environmental advocates, developers, police, social-service organizations and residents with completely opposing opinions. Conversation is not endorsement.

Listening is not agreement. And disagreement does not require hostility.

This municipal election, challenge every candidate. Ask difficult questions. Question their numbers. Examine their judgement. Hold them accountable.

But resist reducing any candidate to a single issue or political association.

Our communities are far more complicated than that. Our vote should be too.

Support thoughtful local democracy. Read beyond the headline, participate in your community groups, ask questions directly, and ultimately vote for the person you believe has the judgement, temperament and ability to do the job.

VOTE

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