



Ontario  
Nature 

2020-2021  
Youth Council  
Application

Hello! Thank you for your interest in joining the Ontario Nature Youth Council for the 2020-2021 school year. Below is some detailed information on what the Youth Council is about and how you can get involved. Please read through the information carefully and complete the form to indicate how you would like to be involved this year.

## Youth Council Background

The Youth Council's mission is to create a diverse provincial network of youth dedicated to inspiring, connecting, and educating our communities while protecting wild species and wild spaces.

The Youth Council was formed in November 2010, following our first-ever Youth Summit in June 2010. Its purpose is to be the youth voice for Ontario Nature, an environmental charity with a mission to protect wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. Ontario Nature believes youth play a special role in the conservation movement, and council members help guide our Nature Guardians Youth Program that connects young people with nature.

## Youth Council's Achievements

- Annual Youth Summit: One of the main roles of Youth Council members is to help plan and host our annual [Youth Summit](#). The theme, keynote speaker, workshops are set with Youth Council input. Youth Council members are given additional leadership roles throughout the course of the Summit weekend. All available council members are also invited to join a day early to help set up and have additional preparation time. As an alternative to our in-person event, 2020 was our very first Virtual Youth Summit.
- Our Special Spaces: Launched in April 2011 and is a province-wide initiative where Youth Council members work with local conservation groups and Ontario Nature staff to deliver [conservation volunteering events](#) from the spring to the fall. Youth who are interested in event planning and starting an initiative in your home community are welcome to take on an event for 2021. COVID-19 protocols and guidelines will need to be followed.
- Pollinator Campaign and Bee Cities: In February 2014, the Youth Council decided at our winter retreat to begin a [campaign to protect pollinators](#). Since then, they have delivered postcards and written letters demanding a ban on neonicotinoids, and have spread awareness to other youth about issues facing pollinators through videos, workshops and presentations. The Youth Council has also urged their municipalities, as well as their own schools to make a declaration to protect pollinators and become bee-friendly. Current Bee Cities/Bee Schools include the Regional Municipality of Halton, Whitby, Stratford, Newmarket, Anderson Collegiate Vocational Institute (Whitby), Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute (Toronto), and Stratford Secondary School (Stratford)

- Bringing on Biodiversity (BOB) campaign: As a continuation of the pollinator campaign, the BOB campaign encourages communities to follow a set of guidelines to be recognized as a "biodiverse community". Ambassadors across the province connect with local environmental groups to determine priorities and raise awareness in their communities on how to take action.
- Outreach: Youth Council members have volunteered and presented at events such as the Celebration of Nations, Happy Trails Racing's Rugged Raccoon Night Race, Jack Johnson concert, Leslieville Farmers Market & have spoken to members at Ontario Nature's annual gathering.
- Assisting with fundraising for the Nature Guardians Youth Program: Youth Council members have met with individual donors, foundations and corporations in the past to discuss funding opportunities.
- Awards: Youth Council members have been honoured for their achievements individually and collectively by Canada 150 Youth Award for Environmental Stewardship, Canada 150 Award for Outstanding Youth, Earth Day Canada's Youth Hometown Heroes Award, Starfish Canada's Top 25 Environmentalists Under 25, Canadian Museum of Nature's Nature Inspiration Awards, Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards, Loran Scholarship and TD's Scholarships for Community Leadership.

## Goals for 2020-2021

Please note that Ontario Nature will not be hosting indoor events or gatherings until further notice to keep Youth Council members, staff and volunteers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. As an organization, we will host outdoor gatherings in open spaces that allow for adequate physical distancing between participants and where proper health and safety protocols are used. You can find more details can be found on our [website](#).

- Build relationships with diverse youth across Ontario who are passionate about the environment
- Work on Bringing on Biodiversity, a campaign which brings awareness to local biodiversity through simple environmental actions
- Have a leadership retreat for council members in winter 2021 to better establish our relationships and plan council initiatives
- Continue with Youth Council's Pollinator Campaign, including engaging municipalities, schools and universities in Bee City Canada, a declaration program that raises awareness of pollinator health
- Plan Our Special Spaces events for 2021 (considering COVID-19 restrictions and to tie in with the pollinator and biodiversity campaigns)
- Plan the annual Youth Summit for 2021

Determine other priorities – **develop an online presence? Fundraise for activities? It's up to you as a group and what you'd like to accomplish!**

What you can get out of it:

- Develop strong leadership skills through active participation
- Engage in professional development opportunities (if available) and gain community service hours and references before or during post-secondary school
- Meet fellow nature nerds and passionate teens from across Ontario

Still interested? Please fill out your application and send to Christine at [christinea@ontarionature.org](mailto:christinea@ontarionature.org) when you're done!

Please thoughtfully consider your answers and plans for involvement. The information you provide in this application form will be used for Ontario Nature/Youth Council purposes only and will not be shared with the public.

## Basic Information

Any questions noted with an asterisk (\*) are required.

\*First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Majority of communications will be over email. Please use an address that you use consistently to ensure you receive all emails.*

\*Home/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*In case we need to reach you and have not received a response via email.*

\*Community: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*This will help Ontario Nature with knowing who can help out with certain events and any local opportunities that would be relevant to you.*

\*Date of Birth (Month, Day, Year): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Current Level of Education: \_\_\_\_\_

*(e.g. grade 11, first-year university, gap year, etc.)*

How did you hear about the Ontario Nature Youth Council? (You may select more than one option)

- I attended the 2020 Virtual Youth Summit for Mother Earth
- I have a friend/family member that is a current member of the Youth Council
- School/classmate
- Naturalist group/conservation authority
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Google
- Other (please specify):

## Youth Council Involvement

\*Introduce yourself to the 2020-2021 Youth Council (no more than 150 words/1,000 characters)! This will be shared with all members to get to know you better.

*Please note that your bios are for internal purposes only and will not be shared outside of Ontario Nature.*

\*Why do you want to join the Youth Council? Are there any leadership/environmental initiatives that you are currently part of?

\*Would you like to receive all the email communications that go out to the Youth Council?  
*You will be added to a Google Group to help with sending mass emails to the Youth Council.*

- Yes  
 Only when important event or campaign announcements are made

\*Please select the level of commitment you think **you'll be able to make to the Youth Council** this year.

- High - promote Youth Council in all relevant situations, participate in at least 75% of conference calls, participate in at least one Youth Council initiative, and communicate regularly with fellow Council members and Christine by email and other means.  
 Medium - ideal for those who are busy and can never be sure how much extra time they will have to offer the Youth Council. For example, participate in as many conference calls as desired, are active in Youth Council initiatives when available, and beyond that, whatever the individual desires.  
 Low - for anyone who cannot commit to being an active member and wants to support Youth Council activities and participate in events/activities as desired.

\*What would you like to be involved in during the 2020-2021 school year? Please select all that apply. If there is something you are keen to do that is not listed below, please add it in the next section.

- Attend a Youth Council retreat in winter 2021 (most likely a virtual event)
- Assist with activities such as delivery/communications associated with Bringing on Biodiversity
- Help to plan the 2021 Youth Summit
- Hear from Youth Council alumni/nature clubs/environmental experts in sharing their journey and advice on being involved in the environmental field
- Participate in informal, virtual meet-ups/social events with fellow Youth Council members (i.e. social events to get to know other members and the work they are doing in their communities)
- Plan and deliver an Our Special Spaces event related to restoring natural habitat in 2021, considering COVID-19 restrictions (i.e. pollinator planting, shoreline cleanup, invasive species removal, monitoring of past pollinator gardens)
- Contribute to our online presence (i.e. post on Facebook, Instagram)
- Contribute to Ontario Nature's** blog or our quarterly magazine, *ON Nature*
- Assist in promoting action alerts and other advocacy efforts alongside Ontario Nature staff (i.e. writing letters to government officials and decision-makers)
- Fundraise for Ontario Nature

Is there anything else you are interested in doing as a Youth Council member that would be of interest to other like-minded youth?

\*Other than the activities listed above, are there any goals you would like to add for this school year? What are hoping to get out of your involvement?

\*What gifts do you think you could bring to this diverse network of youth? This can be a skill, something you are very knowledgeable about, views from a different perspective, etc.

Being part of the Youth Council provides an opportunity to connect with like-minded youth and potential activities outdoors to enjoy nature. For any part of Youth Council activities, we strive to host inclusive, accessible events and meetings in a safe space that enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to engage fully. Are there any needs that we should be aware of to make our events and meetings as accessible as possible for you?

## Next Steps

Please send your completed application form to Christine Ambre, Conservation Education Coordinator at [christinea@ontarionature.org](mailto:christinea@ontarionature.org) by end of day, Sunday, November 22, 2020. Christine will be in touch with more information on next steps for the Youth Council.

In the meantime, follow us on social media!

- Instagram: [@on\\_youthcouncil](#), [@ontarionature](#)
- Facebook: [Ontario Nature Youth Council](#), [Ontario Nature](#)
- Twitter: [@ontarionature](#)

If you have any questions about Ontario Nature or our Nature Guardians Youth Program, please feel free to contact Christine at [christinea@ontarionature.org](mailto:christinea@ontarionature.org) or 416-444-8419 ext. 244 (toll-free 1-800-440-2366). At this time, most staff are working from home so our response may be slightly delayed.