

# MiSustainable Holland

## About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

## This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme:

**Quality of Life:** The community, through governmental, religious, business and social organizations, makes decisions that contribute to its own well-being.

## Area offers many options to get “1,000 Hours Outside”

By Maya Klanderman  
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As we adjust to the new year and set new goals for ourselves, many people have resolutions to get outside more. A new global initiative called 1,000 Hours Outside challenges individuals and families to get outside for at least three hours a day.

At the end of the year, this will total up to more than 1,000 hours of outside time, while the typical individual rarely spends more than four to six hours a week outside, let alone a day.

Nature aids our social, emotional, physical, and academic capabilities by making us more curious and helps to soothe some of the societal pressures we face day to day. The American Psychological Association found that the benefits from being out in nature can boost happiness and decrease stress to improve focus and memory.

As the 1,000 Hours Outside initiative states, “Nature holds tremendous power for each and every one of us at any age or stage.” The average American spends more than 1,200 hours in front of a screen each year. Challenging ourselves to seek outdoors time can be a healthy goal for the new year.

The winter months might offer more challenges to finding spaces to be outdoors. Here are some places in the Holland area that you can use to experience nature in different ways during the winter:

### Van Raalte Farm Park

This city park features historic buildings as well as a hilltop that is used as a sledding hill in the winter months. Well-maintained trails can be used for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

### Window on the Waterfront

A 30-acre natural area within walking distance of downtown Holland features paved walkways and bikeways along a marsh. The park is dog-friendly.

### Holland State Park

Home to “Big Red,” this state park offers beachfront access all year round and is an excellent place for bird watching or walking along the beach during the winter months.

### Saugatuck Dunes State Park

A public recreational space covering 1,000 acres along the shore of Lake Michigan, Saugatuck Dunes offers 13 miles of trails through dunes and forested areas that are open year-round for hiking or snow activities.

### DeGraaf Nature Center

This 18-acre nature preserve features a variety of habitats for visitors to explore. While the facility is under construction until early this summer, the trails are open to the public year-round. Dogs are allowed on a leash. Snowshoeing and cross country skiing is welcome to those with their own equipment.

### **Rabbit River Preserve**

A 65-acre natural area along the Rabbit River in Hamilton offers chances to explore an extensive network of trails in an ecologically diverse property home to native flora and fauna. Trails are free and open to the public year round.

- *Maya Klanderman is the Sustainability Specialist at the ODC Network.*