

3 Rethink greenspace to maximize its value



The extensive ravine network and greenspace system of the Toronto region, which provides linkages through communities and nature experiences within minutes of Toronto’s downtown and Urban Growth Centres throughout the jurisdiction, is key to the region’s appeal and prosperity. Evidence from around the world increasingly demonstrates a clear connection between greenspace and the health and well-being of communities. As the population of the region continues to grow rapidly, TRCA needs to sustain, improve, expand, and program the system of protected greenspace in order to meet the needs of communities while protecting natural heritage.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. TRCA watershed communities benefit from a well-connected network of accessible greenspace including regional connections from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment via the Humber, Duffins, Don, Etobicoke, Rouge and the little Rouge River corridors.
2. The region’s natural heritage system is protected to support, maintain, and enhance existing biodiversity and ecological functions.
3. A larger total area of protected greenspace is achieved throughout the jurisdiction.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACHIEVED (2013 – 2017)

- Completed major environmental assessments and studies such as the Scarborough Waterfront EA, Richmond Hill Corridor Conservation Reserve Master Plan, and Goodwood Tract Trail Plan to set the stage for infrastructure investment including flood protection and erosion works, the development of trails, accessible community spaces and newly restored habitats.
- Supported municipalities in incorporating updated natural heritage system mapping and policies into their Official Plans, and, as part of their asset management, helped them assess the state of their urban forests and develop long-term plans to maintain them.
- Improved public access to greenspace by acquiring almost 700 acres of new public greenspace and partnered with government agencies, municipalities and NGOs to formalize over 800 kilometres of the regional trail system throughout the jurisdiction.
- Worked with municipal social services departments to develop nature-based therapy programs to introduce diverse groups of users to TRCA owned greenspace.

PROJECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2018 – 2022)

- Achieve the most appropriate use of TRCA's inventory of lands and facilities while respecting cultural heritage and environmental values.
- Invest in aging infrastructure across TRCA's Conservation Areas and public spaces in order to provide safe, accessible, and functional facilities to the public.
- Secure, restore, and where appropriate, provide more accessible greenspace as part of the technical review of proposed projects and plans.
- Update TRCA's Terrestrial Natural Heritage System Strategy, the Regional Trail System Strategy, TRCA's Living City Policies and their associated technical guidelines to inform reviews of projects and the timely execution of projects.
- Advance priority greenspace and community initiatives of Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation (TRCF), member municipalities and partners on priority projects such as The Meadoway, Tommy Thompson Park, Bolton Camp Redevelopment, and Black Creek Pioneer Village revitalization.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

In measuring progress towards the desired outcomes for this strategy, the Regional Watershed Monitoring Program will continue to provide the information needed to assess the biodiversity and ecological function of regional greenspace and water resources. TRCA will use GIS databases to inventory the existing extent of publicly owned and protected greenspace in the region and measure the amount of newly acquired greenspace. Through the preparation of various plans and strategies, TRCA will track how communities engage with greenspace. To understand how watershed community citizens are using greenspace the organization will engage them through surveys and other feedback tools.