



Etobicoke and Mimico
Creeks

CreekTime

The newsletter of the Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Watersheds

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PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL COMES BACK TO HEART LAKE!



The six-day festival will involve over 5,000 grades 2-5 students from Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon, as well as over 1,000 adult chaperones, 1,000 members of the public, and over 500 high-school volunteers. Children, adults and volunteers learn about water issues through a variety of outdoor activities. The activities are grouped into five themes that reflect curriculum requirements: water conservation, health, intervention, human cycle, and natural cycle. In addition to exercising their brains, students will also directly contribute to water quality and biodiversity improvements at Heart Lake. They will plant 2,500 upland trees and shrubs around a woodland pond providing habitat for amphibians, small mammals, and birds. They will plant 2,500 aquatic plants to help restore biodiversity to Heart Lake's shoreline.

Last year, the "unplanned" educational activities included catching sight of red-tailed hawks, breeding sunfish, snapping turtles, female crayfish with eggs, and other serendipitous "time-out, we've got something interesting over here..." types of learning experiences. This year the festival runs from May 29th - June 4th for the students, and the general public is invited to "Public Day" on Saturday, May 31st from 12-3 p.m. Make it a family fun day! Admission is FREE and includes entertainment and music, a water conservation garden give-away, a sand dune garden planting event, and a rainbow trout release. The TRCA would like to thank the Region of Peel for hosting the festival at Heart Lake Conservation Area.



▲ Last year children planted bulrushes for water quality, erosion, and habitat improvements. This year they will help restore biodiversity to the shoreline by planting rare and uncommon aquatic plants.

TEACH THE WORLD TO SING: PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL IN A SONG

Last year, the Festival opened with a special song, "Save the Rain," performed with rain sticks by 130 grades 1-3 students from Robert J. Lee East Public School in Castlemore. Craig Perkin, a teacher at the school, managed to capture every theme of the festival in his short, catchy tune including water bodies, wildlife,

drinking water, conservation, biology, pollution, responsibility, health, and even international and inter-generational issues of sustainable development if you really read into the lyrics!

The Robert J. Lee rain sticks were made by using mailing tubes with plastic caps, chicken wire, a cup or two of rice, some duct tape, and some iron oxide primer paint for that antique look. Adults should do the cutting of the chicken wire with tin snips, while kids can pour in the rice and paint the sticks.

Save the Rain — Written by Mr. Craig Perkin, March 2002 Performed by grades 1-3 students of Robert J. Lee East Public School

(Rain sticks create a soundscape of "rain," and will fade out as the music begins)

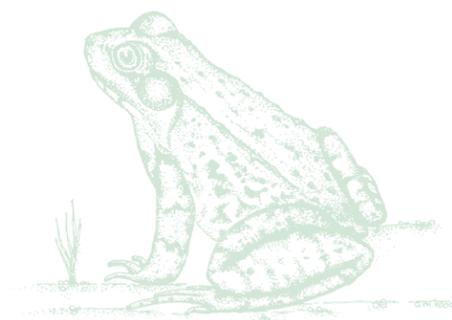
Earth needs water everywhere - let's save the rain
Ponds, rivers, oceans, lakes and streams - let's save the rain
Let's save the rain, let's save the rain
The fish need a home that's safe and clean - let's save the rain
The animals need something safe to drink - let's save the rain
It's the lifeblood of every living thing
So the least that we can do is save the rain
Save the rain
Help prevent all water pollution - save the rain
Turn off the tap for conservation - save the rain
Let's save the rain, let's save the rain
Keep it flowing throughout the nations - save the rain
Make sure it's safe for all generations - save the rain
Water brings life to our environment
Let's show the Earth our love and save the rain
Save the rain
How could we ever survive
If water stopped flowing so free
Let's keep our planet alive
Reduce what you use, keep it clean!

(Rain sticks start up again and continue after the music stops)

Let's save the rain...let's save the rain...let's save the rain...let's save the rain



▲ Peel Children's Water Festival, 2002.



Photography by Rosemary Hasner © Toronto and Region Conservation (unless otherwise noted).

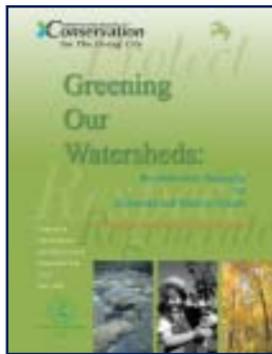


ACROSS THE WATERSHEDS

GREENING OUR WATERSHEDS NOW ON THE WEB SITE!

Greening Our Watersheds is the culmination of two years of work by a multi-stakeholder task force. Get your copy from the TRCA Web site at www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/strategies/etobicoke/, or for a paper copy send a \$25 cheque to TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, 5 Shoreham Drive, Downsview, Ontario, M3N 1S4 Attention: Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks Watershed Specialist.

Greening Our Watersheds also presents the Report Card for the creeks. Ten strategy areas outline the actions needed to reach the targets. The table below shows the 10 strategies, our goals for 2025 and the indicators we'll use to measure progress toward our targets.



NEW WATERSHED ON WHEELS TRUCK

If you see a giant frog one early morning don't panic, it's just the new Watershed On Wheels (WOW) truck speeding off to a school near you to engage students in active environmental programs. WOW provides exciting conservation programs that come directly to your door. A WOW instructor travels to you with all the necessary equipment. Programs can be conducted within a classroom setting, as well as a local park, school yard, or a nearby natural area.

To make a booking for the 2003/2004 school year call 416-661-6600 ext. 5376 or for more information you can call 416-661-6600 ext. 5389 or email aodriscoll@trca.on.ca.



ETOBICOKE & MIMICO CREEKS STRATEGIES, TARGETS, AND INDICATORS		
STRATEGY	TARGET	INDICATOR
Terrestrial Natural Heritage	Forest and wetland habitats are preserved, regenerated and created, ensuring the healthiest possible conditions, and the greatest possible representation of native plant and animal communities and species	Quantity Matrix Influence Distribution Size and Shape Connectivity Diversity
Aquatic	Aquatic ecosystems are diverse, balanced and self-sustaining	Fish Communities Benthic Invertebrate Communities Riparian Zone
Water Quality	Water in the creeks is safe for people, fish and wildlife	Water Contact Recreation Conventional Pollutants and Unnatural Debris Heavy Metals and Organic Contaminants
Water Quantity	The creeks are restored to a more natural flow pattern	Stream Flow
City and Countryside	Adaptive and sustainable land management tools are used in the planning of urban growth and development, and rural land uses	Form and Limits Infrastructure Stormwater Management Sustainability Practices
Recreation	Outdoor recreational facilities are planned and managed in a manner that integrates ecological health with social benefits	Publicly Accessible Open Space Trails Golf Courses
Heritage	Community connections to the watersheds are improved through the recognition, preservation and celebration of heritage features and resources	Human Heritage Features and Resources Sense of Identity
Outreach	Enhanced hands-on public learning opportunities are offered within, and about, the Etobicoke and Mimico Creek watersheds	Communication Awareness Education
Funding	Funds are raised for environmental regeneration, protection, education and awareness initiatives in the watersheds	Resident and Small Business Community and Government Corporate
Stewardship	People choose lifestyles that are sustainable and ecologically-sound	Backyard Practices Community Action Watersheds Coalition

GET IN ON THE ACTION! COMMUNITY ACTION AREAS REPORT

HEART LAKE COMMUNITY ACTION AREA



▲ Helping to establish the sand dune ecosystem.

CONSERVE WATER THROUGH NATIVE PLANTS

The Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Coalition will be kicking off a water conservation gardening project by inviting you to take part in the "Front Lawn Challenge" on Saturday, May 31st, 12-3 p.m., as part of the Peel Children's Water Festival Public Day at Heart Lake Conservation Area.

Do you ever wonder why we have water shortages and sometimes lawn-watering bans in the summer? Did you know that 50% of your water use in the summer goes to your lawn and garden? Conserve water and add some beautiful low-maintenance native plants to your front lawn this spring...and the Coalition and

Region of Peel want to get you started! The Coalition will be giving away Black-eyed Susans while the region will give away its "Wise Water Use Gardening Book" as well as selling rain barrels at discounted prices.

Save water, save money, get your front lawn off to a great start this summer and then show your neighbours how to conserve water while your Black-eyed Susans are in bloom next year!



Photo: C. Kingsley

MALTON COMMUNITY ACTION AREA

Russ Pooley of the City of Mississauga Community Services Department organized a round table of schools, businesses, churches, community groups and residents interested in making Malton a better place to live through grassroots environmental projects. EcoSource, Longo's, the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Renovators Council, Punjabi Health Centre, Peel Region Police, Canadian Institute for Environmental Research and Development (CIERAD), Girl Guides, Lincoln Alexander Secondary School, Ridgewood and Brandon Gate Public Schools, the 7th Day Adventist Church and others met to celebrate successes of the past and dream about future projects. The Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Watersheds Coalition salutes Russ for getting everyone together. To discuss partnership possibilities in Malton call Eugene Furguele, City of Mississauga at 905-615-3736 or Paul Willms, TRCA at 416-661-6600, ext. 5316.

SOUTH MIMICO COMMUNITY ACTION AREA

Lots of events are happening down at the mouth of Mimico creek at Humber Bay Parks including Amphibians and Marsh Monitoring (May 13th), Butterflies and Insects at the new Butterfly Habitat (June 22nd), Electrofishing demonstration (June 29th), and Winter Waterfowl Watch (December 6th)...check the 2003 Events listings on the back page for more information.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

BACKYARD HABITAT — A LABOUR OF LOVE

by Christina Sharma, Mimico watershed and Etobicoke resident

These (see box to the right) are only some of the incredible experiences I have had since I created habitat for wildlife in my backyard three years ago. As you can see by the images below, the personal rewards are tremendous and go far beyond that of a regular backyard.

What may seem like too small a space for habitat can actually contribute significantly to meeting the survival needs of both local and migrating wildlife. Food, water, shelter and space are what must be provided in order for wildlife to survive and possibly even take up residence in your yard.

My backyard wildlife habitat is the first certified in Canada through the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF). Motivated by a deep concern over the loss of wildlife and a passion for conservation, I have become a voluntary CWF habitat steward. I would be pleased to give guided tours. I would also bring my backyard habitat to you in a presentation on everything you need to get started. Certify your habitat and proudly post the CWF certification sign for others to see! For more information you can contact me at 416-236-7234 or visit the Canadian Wildlife Federation Web site at www.wildaboutgardening.org.



▲ BEFORE: the backyard habitat in its early stages with a roughed in foot path and pond.

BACKYARD HABITAT "JOURNAL" — RECENT EXPERIENCES...

- Downy Woodpecker parents feed their young from a suet feeder.
- A Chickadee landing on a branch opposite me and furiously scolding me for having accidentally cleaned out seed it had begun storing in a bird house.
- A Sharp Shinned Hawk careening down and killing a pigeon at the edge of the woodland garden.
- A Robin scooping up mouthfuls of mud from the edge of the pond and then rubbing its tummy in it as it forms the smooth inner wall of its nest.
- Meeting a fox at dusk exiting a brush pile.
- Finding two frogs in my pond only two months after its creation.

Wildlife conservation is dependent on the efforts of every one of us.



▲ AFTER: the backyard habitat after several years. Note the lush vegetation and ground cover around the pond.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

MIMICO CREEK - DAIMLERCHRYSLER, BRAMPTON ASSEMBLY PLANT

DaimlerChrysler's Brampton Assembly Plant Environment Committee received the 2002 Environmental Leadership Award for their Internal Environmental Communication Program. The Environmental Leadership Award is a DaimlerChrysler internal program to promote corporate wide (international) recognition of outstanding environmental achievements of employees and external partners. The Internal Environmental Communication Program featured Earth Day events, displays by various organizations, and a native species planting. The Internal Communication Program is part of the company's ISO 14001 registration process for environmental excellence in its operations.



▲ Paul Willms of TRCA accepts a certificate from Maria Ng (Facilities and Engineering, Brampton Assembly Plant) for participating in DaimlerChrysler's 2002 Earth Day communications and events. Ms. Ng holds the DaimlerChrysler Environmental Leadership award.

BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES BUS TOUR

Want to improve your corporate image, contribute to a cleaner environment, and improve the bottom line? TRCA is planning a bus tour to highlight business best practices such as green roofs, office naturalization projects, business association greenway trails, on-site stormwater improvements, and other environmental projects. In addition, we'll explore employee volunteerism and partnership possibilities with agencies and funders. If you're interested in attending, or starting a project with your business or colleagues, call Paul Willms at 416-661-6600, ext. 5316.

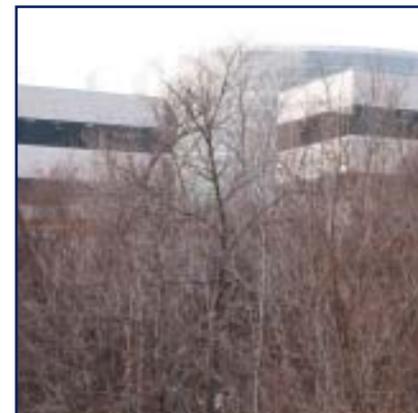
ETOBICOKE CREEK — GENERAL MILLS CANADA

General Mills Canada has recently moved into a new building adjacent to Etobicoke Creek. Development of the property involved planting native species on-site and naturalizing and bioengineering a small tributary of Etobicoke Creek.

But the real story is the General Mills Environment Team. Almost 30 people showed up for the inaugural meeting. They broke up into small teams to address indoor, on-site, and valleyland issues and potential projects. The team is currently examining office operations and making suggestions to improve the environment as well as the bottom line. They are also planning a kick-off event this spring to highlight their new special location and the environment team's efforts. The City of Mississauga and TRCA encourage General Mills to continue their stewardship efforts and look forward to partnership and project opportunities in the future.



▲ Sensitivity to the natural environment during construction also included making special efforts to spare trees when putting up the perimeter fencing.



▲ The new head office of General Mills Canada from the Etobicoke Creek valley.

HAPPENINGS

WHERE (AND WHEN) IN THE WATERSHED IS IT?

Lakeshore Road Bridge over Mimico Creek, circa 1907, in Etobicoke looking toward the future skyline of Toronto (Courtesy of the Archives of Toronto, William James Collection, Fonds 1244, Item 206).



WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS!

A great horned owl was spotted behind Westwood Mall along the Malton Greenway. An Atlantic Salmon was found just below the Gardiner Expressway concrete channel on Mimico Creek; the drop structure and concrete channel are the first barrier to fish movement up the Mimico from Lake Ontario.



A large snapping turtle was digging around the sand dune ecosystem on the beach at Heart Lake Conservation Area. It had a shell length of 44 centimeters and must have weighed over 20 pounds (10 kg)!

NEW WATERSHED SIGNS

Heart Lake is getting a new interpretive sign that will be placed near the boardwalk along the beach.



FUNDING SOURCES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Are you interested in starting an ecological restoration project? Here are 15 organizations, their resources, and their Web sites that could help turn your plan into action!

- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation: www.fef.ca
- Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund: www.glahabitat.org
- Environment Canada's Eco-Action: www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction/index_e.htm
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Community Wildlife and Fisheries Involvement Program: www.mnr.gov.on.ca/fishing/cfwip.html
- Environment Canada's Great Lakes Sustainability Fund: <http://sustainabilityfund.gc.ca>
- Tree Canada Foundation: www.treecanada.ca
- Evergreen Foundation: www.evergreen.ca
- Canadian Tire - Community Environmental Awards Program: www2.canadiantire.ca/CTenglish/coin_ceap.html
- Mountain Equipment Co-op Endowment Fund for the Environment: www.mec.ca
- Shell Canada Environmental Fund: www.shell.ca/code/values/environment/sef.html
- The Laidlaw Foundation: www.laidlawfdn.org
- Trillium Foundation: www.trilliumfoundation.org
- Wetland Habitat Fund: www.wetlandhabitatfund.com
- Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton community foundations: www.community-fdn.ca/who_we_are/list.cfm?id=6
- Charity Village: www.charityvillage.com

2003 EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES GET OUTSIDE AND RESPECT, PROTECT, AND REGENERATE!

May 12 - Amphibians and Marsh Monitoring

Participants will receive training in the Canadian Wildlife Service "Marsh Monitoring Program". May 12, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., Humber Bay Park West, Etobicoke Yacht Club. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660 for details.

May 19 - Celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday at Montgomery's Inn, Etobicoke

Enjoy live music, demonstrations of open hearth cooking, heritage gardening, historic basket making, a human heritage bird review from Victorian times to the present, and a walk along Mimico creek. May 19, 1 to 5 p.m. Adults \$3, students/seniors \$2, children \$1. For more information please call Montgomery's Inn museum at 416-394-8113.

May 24 - A Bird in the Hand

Migrating songbird banding demonstration by Friends of Bartley Smith Greenway. Presenters will also discuss species identification and habitat enhancement for birds in your neighbourhood. May 24, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Langstaff EcoPark. To register call Greg Sadowski, 416-661-6600, ext. 5668.

May 24 - Don't Step on the Flowers

Enjoy a guided walk with Milne Park Conservation Association and TRCA staff to learn about local spring wildflowers — where to find them, how to identify them, and why we protect them. May 24, 1 - 3 p.m., Milne Park, Markham. Located on the east side of McCowan Road, south of Highway #7, meet in the parking lot.

May 31 - Peel Children's Water Festival Public Day

Over 50 fun-filled activities: shoreline restoration with aquatic plants, trout release, Franklin the Turtle, entertainment, music and more! May 31, 12 - 3 p.m., Heart Lake Conservation Area, Brampton. For more information call Paul Willms at 416-661-6600, ext. 5316.

May 31 - Woodlot Owners Workshop

Best Management Practices for your "back-40." Join York Environmental Stewardship Council and TRCA for a series of talks and walks on woodlot management. May 31st, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., Bruce's Mill Conservation Area, Stouffville. To register call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660.

June 8 - Canadian Rivers Day

Canadian Rivers Day provides the opportunity to bring Canada's river communities closer together on tangible projects for conservation, interpretation, and enjoyment. Visit our Web site for celebration listings www.trca.on.ca or call Connie Pinto at 416-661-6600, ext. 5291.

June 22 - Butterflies and Insects (In Partnership with the City of Toronto's Butterfly Festival)

Time to be confirmed. Find out about butterflies and other insects, their habitats and habits. Humber Bay Park Butterfly Habitat, Humber Bay Park East. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660 for more details.

June 25 - Insectmania

Wanted: Budding entomologists for a hike through the wetlands and meadows of the Don Valley Brickworks. Search for, identify, and learn about insect life. Bring a net if you have one! June 25, 7 - 9 p.m., Don Valley Brick Works, Toronto. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660 for more information.

July 5 - Heart Lake Fishing Festival

Trophies for the biggest fish, prize draw! Help increase fish habitat when you bring your used fishing line and Berkely-Trilene boxes to our new recycling station. Bring your lead weights and lures and exchange them for environmentally-friendly tackle. July 5, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Weigh-in station / registration on the beach. Call Paul Willms 416-661-6600 ext. 5316 for more info.

July 12-20 - Glen Haffy Fishing Derby

Catch a tagged rainbow trout and win a prize! Glen Haffy Conservation Area in Caledon. For more info call (905) 584-2922.

July 15 - Fish Check-Up

Come out for an electrofishing demonstration to identify the fish communities living along Toronto's waterfront. TRCA staff will capture fish, identify, measure, tag and release them back into the water (weather permitting). July 15, 6 - 8 p.m. Meet at the Boardwalk Gazebo, Grand Harbour, Humber Bay Park West, Etobicoke. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660 for more information.

Autumn Events...I can hardly wait for summer to be over!

- Hawk Watch, Sept. 13, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., Petticoat Creek Conservation Area
- Dragon Boat Race, Sept. 20, Heart Lake Conservation Area
- Bird Hike, Sept. 21, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., Greenwood Conservation Area
- Bird in the Hand, October 4, 9 a.m. - 11 p.m. Tommy Thompson Park
- Winter Waterfowl Watch, December 6, 1 - 3 p.m., Humber Bay Park West