

Managing long term water safety

You've heard it before: Canada's water is under threat due to changing climate, growing human demands on limited renewable resources, water-borne complex chemicals and lack of mitigation efforts. We've been faced with Walkerton and felt the effects of climate change through unsettled weather occurrences like Hurricane Hazel that damaged property and took lives. We are also seeing dryer summers with drops in water flows.

The challenges are plenty but TRCA has been taking its work managing long term water safety seriously since its inception more than 55 years ago. In 2012 we have worked on strategies to help guide our work in flood management, we've moved beyond the box looking at new technologies that help to reduce stormwater run-off and we've developed updated watershed plans.

Building sustainable communities

TRCA's vision of The Living City is deeply rooted in a solid foundation of healthy rivers and shorelines, regional biodiversity, sustainable communities and business excellence. The Living City is a vibrant, nature-friendly community where the natural and human elements interact and thrive. It's also a resilient, adaptive community designed to mitigate the slow progression of a changing climate and withstand its inevitable consequences.

One of our greatest achievements of 2012 was the completion of the Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project, which now safeguards 210 hectares of downtown Toronto, including much of the financial district, against the risk of future flooding. The project also permits construction on the West Don Lands, including the athlete's village for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

A sustainable community is not just a place to live. The concept of 'community' also connotes a common purpose, a sense of affinity with nature, and a collective obligation to protect and preserve our environmental heritage.

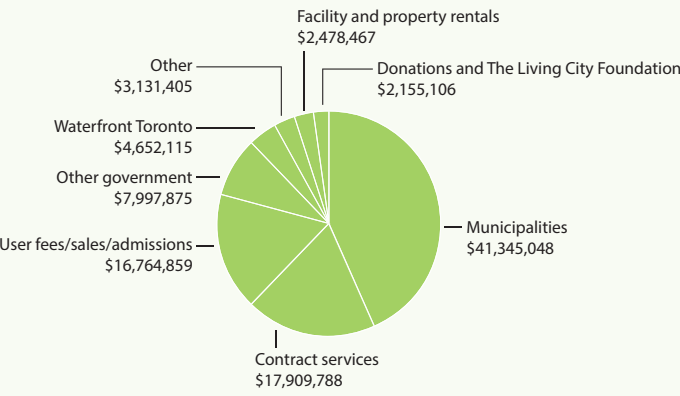


"The completion of the Flood Infrastructure State of Repair Report marks an important first step toward creating a long term capital asset management plan for TRCA's flood control infrastructure." Laurian Farrell, Senior Manager, Flood Risk Management and Infrastructure, Ecology Division.



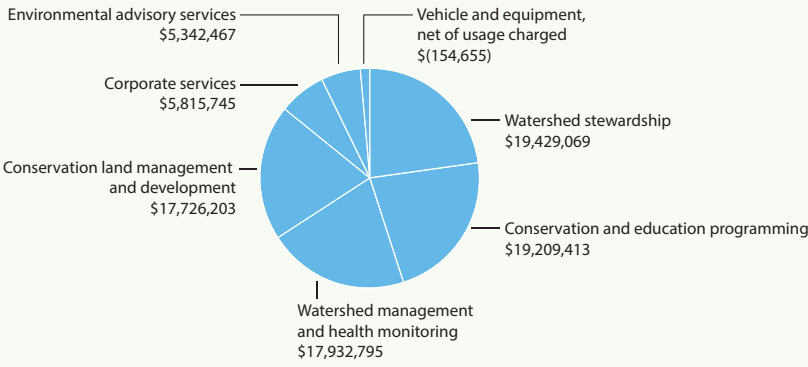
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority - Statement of Operations Year ended December 31, 2012.

REVENUE



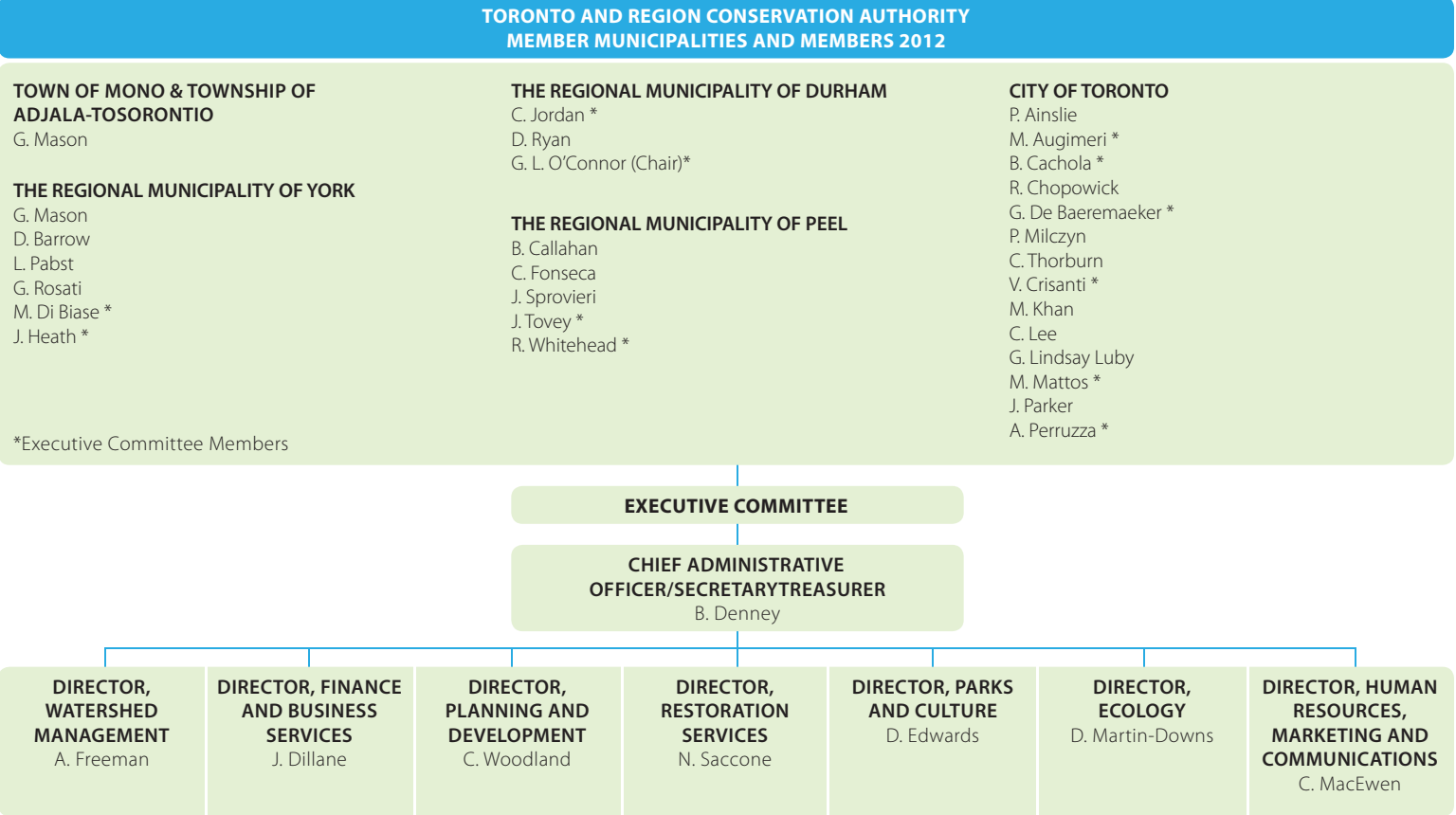
TOTAL = \$96,434,663

EXPENDITURES



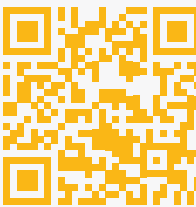
TOTAL = \$85,301,037

Not reflected above are TRCA's expenditures on tangible capital assets, which amounted to \$12,677,687 in 2012. Please refer to TRCA's audited financial statements which are available online

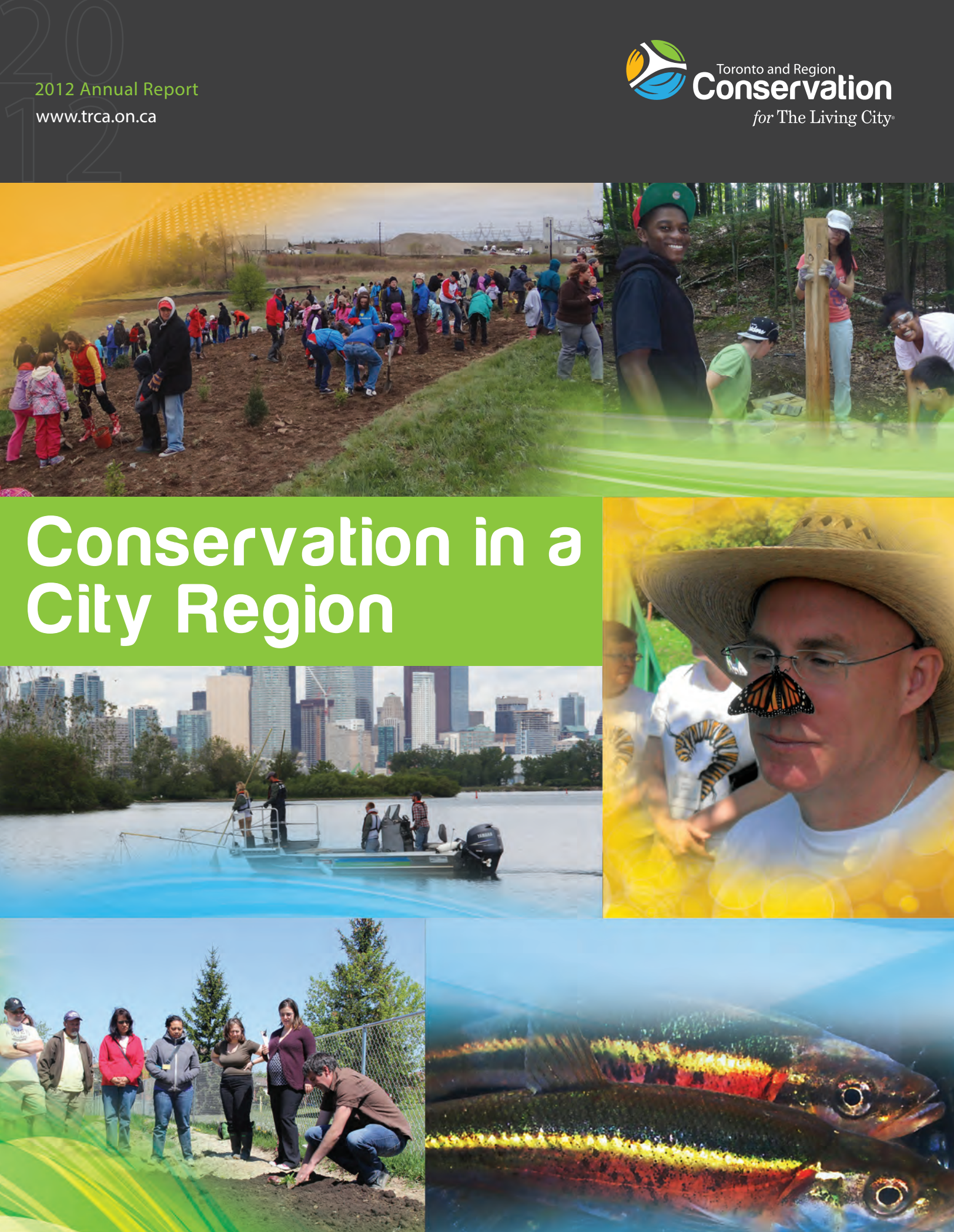


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FROM THE CHAIR & CEO



Gerri Lynn O'Connor,
Chair

Conservation in a city region is something we have been part of for the past six decades. In this year's annual report we highlight some of the stories of that important work.

As the population grows in the GTA, demands on our natural resources also increase. One of the greatest challenges of our time is to find ways by which cities can grow and thrive but do it in a way that maintains the health of the natural systems upon which we all depend. TRCA, working alongside its partners, focuses on work that will improve the quality of life for the residents of the GTA.

From improving access to our conservation areas, to building new sections to create a continuous Waterfront Trail, to managing the risks of flooding and erosion, TRCA works to make a difference in the backyards of the GTA residents.

At TRCA we recognize that the work that goes into protecting and enhancing our natural environment also has a huge impact on people's health and well-being.

Over the years, TRCA has increasingly been involved in engaging diverse groups of residents and community groups to take ownership of the environment where they live, work and play. Our stewardship programs, volunteers and community projects are the gateway to enhancing our neighbourhoods and building a more sustainable city region.

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Board, to congratulate our terrific staff for another great year of progress. I also extend my sincere thanks to the hundreds of partners and supporters who make our work possible. In particular, I acknowledge the commitment of our member municipalities to provide so much technical and financial support to the work of TRCA.



Brian Denney,
Chief Executive Officer

Again in 2012, the staff team at TRCA enjoyed exceptional support and inspiration from the members of our Board. As a result, we have another year of terrific accomplishments to add to the rich legacy of this organization. We trust that the stories and illustrations presented in this report convey some of the urgency that we feel for the importance of our work, as the region continues to grow at an incredible pace.

2012 was a big year for TRCA's corporate identity. We announced our new logo and wordmark that show how TRCA's work is watershed based, takes a global perspective, and seeks to balance water, greenspace and community needs. The evolution embraces and respects our heritage while acknowledging our progressive approach.

As in previous years our partnerships with our municipalities in our regions stand strong and help us achieve our goals.

Whether it is the support our education group receives from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and the TD Friends of the Environment Fund, or commitments from Waterfront Toronto, The City of Toronto on the flood protection of the West Don Lands, or projects we lead with the Province, the regional and area municipalities across our jurisdiction, TRCA's work is enabled and strengthened by working with our partners.

Conservation in a city region also speaks to how knowledge and expertise is shared among the residents of the GTA. TRCA, through its work in renewable energy, flood management, PAIE and M2P, and research and monitoring training is contributing to expanding the knowledge base of GTA residents as well as deepening the connection to the natural environment.

I encourage you to explore this report, become familiar with our projects and get to know some of our amazing staff. Most of all I encourage you to find ways to become involved in sustainable city building. Human life on the planet depends upon our ability to build better cities.

OUR NEW LOGO



In 2012, TRCA announced its new logo and wordmark. The new logo is designed to convey not only our name, but also who we are today, and what we are working towards – The Living City®. Though it can be interpreted in many ways, the round icon representing connection and continuity has been designed to reflect the on-going and ever-changing, interdependence of all TRCA aspires to – healthy rivers and shorelines, greenspace and biodiversity, and sustainable communities.

Educating the next generation of sustainable champions

These days, we are acutely aware that our environmental footprint is deep and indelible. We know the decisions we make each day – the food we purchase, the way we commute to work, the energy we use – has a direct impact on our environment. And we have learned the importance of instilling a deeper environmental awareness within our own children if a sustainable future is to remain within their grasp.

TRCA has become a trailblazer in the field of environmental education. Since 1954, we have been delivering innovative learning programs in our field centres and in classrooms across the region. In 2012, TRCA's Education Division continued to chalk up success stories. More education centres were designated as EcoCentres, more educators learned about endangered species, and more students were given the opportunity to participate in outdoor education programs across Ontario.



"They say it takes a village to raise a child. When the village is as big as North America, perhaps it takes a butterfly – a monarch butterfly – to bring the village together."

Brian Hayes, assistant director, Educational Information and Research Center

Making the connection: The social, health and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation

In today's demanding digital environment, our primary connection to the real world – and each other – is, more often than not, through our electronic devices. But nothing compares to time actually spent outdoors. Whether it's a 10-minute stroll in the park, a couple of hours biking the local trails, visit to a historic setting or a full day hike into a conservation area, nature calms the mind, recharges our energy levels and reconnects us to our surroundings. It is more important than ever to embrace the many social, mental and physical health benefits, as well as environmental benefits of making nature a part of our daily lives.

In 2012 TRCA redesigned trail systems, created different access points, improved accessibility to conservation areas, Black Creek Pioneer Village and the waterfront, and worked to break down accessibility barriers to reconnect people with the landscape. By doing this we are also strengthening our ties to the natural environment, to our heritage and to our communities.



Archaeology at work in 2012: discovering, protecting and educating

Ontario archaeologists have an important role in protecting and promoting the cultural history and heritage of Ontario. TRCA is the only conservation authority in Ontario that has its own Archaeology Resource Management Services Department. Approximately 1.2 million artifacts have been uncovered from sites dating as far back as 12,000 - 10,000 years ago, by the department's archaeologists.

"One of the most enjoyable experiences I ever had; presents a fun, engaging, learning environment while having fun in the outdoors in nature and gives you a true appreciation for not only yourself but all the elements around you."

Student-Boyd Field School

"Preserving our cultural heritage is an important aspect of TRCA's vision for The Living City," said Brian Denney, CEO, TRCA. "The history of the Toronto region is, in many ways, defined by the relationship early residents had with the land and the water that was the lifeblood of the communities they developed. To understand our present issues of conservation and resource management, we need to look to the past and see how early settlers used the lands before the use of fossil fuels or how they used water. We need to look beyond the walls in order to rediscover the way we lived with the land."

In 2012 exciting developments took place for TRCA's Archaeology Unit including strengthening relationships with Aboriginal communities, discovering new sites and encouraging youth to take an active interest in local and regional history.



"For people who don't own cottages, who can't escape the city on weekends and holidays, the waterfront is their year-round recreation and relaxation destination. By improving access to the waterfront, we are improving both the quality of life and the economic vitality of neighbourhoods along the lakeshore."

Connie Pinto, Senior Project Manager, Waterfront

Bringing the 'wild' back into the city

You can't separate the health of the environment, the viability of the species that live within it and our own well-being. We all share this earth and we all are connected in a myriad of ways. At TRCA, our restoration and monitoring staff work in the background to study, re-establish and improve the habitat of native species. As we better understand the often precarious state of the environment, we can plan accordingly for the future.

Our restoration team is especially proud of three major success stories in 2012: fish tracking along the lakeshore is guiding our waterfront rehabilitation work; coastal wetland restoration projects across the region are providing new homes for fish and wildlife, and the banding of migrating birds in Tommy Thompson Park is providing new insight on fluctuating bird populations.



"We are not only re-establishing balanced, self-sustaining ecological communities, we are also changing the nature of our parks and lakeshore areas. Recreational fishing is really on the upswing. Making these areas more desirable to fish, makes them more attractive to the whole community."

Gord MacPherson, Senior Manager, Restoration Services



Citizens as sustainability agents

TRCA not only works to protect, conserve and restore natural habitats, it also helps people understand, enjoy and look after the natural environment. To grow its ideal of a Living City, the concept of developing citizens as sustainability agents is taken very seriously as they are a critical component to changing the way people think about a green lifestyle.

By deepening the individual's connection to nature, it is hoped that they will become ambassadors to spread the ideal that being an eco-conscious citizen is actually quite easy, and requires only a shift in the way we think and desire to protect our natural environment.

TRCA sustainability agents are exploring new ways to live a green lifestyle, they are protecting what's in their backyard, they are being given the opportunity to work the land by growing and selling organic vegetables and contributing to the growth of urban agriculture, and they are being involved through volunteer and stewardship opportunities.

"This Green Home Makeover has been a learning experience from day one. It is refreshing to work with people who share a common desire to reduce our impact on the environment. Since the completion of the suggested retrofits, we have noticed improved comfort in our home and a substantial decrease in energy and water consumption."

Paul Gay, Homeowner, SNAP County Court, Green Home Makeover