

SERVING COMMUNITIES, SAFEGUARDING FUTURES: TRCA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the lands we are situated on are Traditional Territories and Treaty Lands, in particular those of the Mississaugas of the Credit, as well as the Anishinaabe of the Williams Treaty First Nations, the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and are now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) appreciates and respects the history and diversity of the land and is grateful to have the opportunity to work and meet in this territory.

TRCA'S VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

VISION

The achievement of safe and resilient communities.

MISSION

The provincial leader in conserving, restoring and managing natural resources to advance safe and sustainable development.

CORE VALUES

Working with government and the communities we serve to achieve collective impact and advance shared goals.

• Integrity • Collaboration • Accountability • Respect • Excellence •

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) 2024 Annual Report highlights the many ways TRCA is serving its communities and safeguarding the futures of the people, businesses, and other stakeholders across TRCA's jurisdiction.

TRCA's talented and dedicated staff continued to drive progress on goals through a combination of science, advocacy, and action needed to make a difference in this region.

The storm events of July 16 and August 17-18 offered a stark reminder of the power of nature and the critical importance of TRCA's mission to protect our communities from the increasingly severe effects of extreme weather, including flooding, erosion, and other natural hazards.

In response to these recent events, we have strengthened our commitment to safeguarding our communities through robust flood warning systems, resilient natural hazard mitigation

infrastructure, and programs designed to build and enhance sustainable, climate-ready communities.

Sustainable communities also require greenspaces for a variety of reasons. TRCA's jurisdiction includes some of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, with a population of over five million living within its managed watersheds. With **81.3%** or **4.1M** people in our jurisdiction living within **2 km** of TRCA owned and managed public land, and **81%** of TRCA lands offering public access, TRCA's greenspaces play a vital role, not only ecologically, but also in providing recreation, respite, and public enjoyment.

The lands TRCA has acquired and managed since its inception represent an important combination of environmental hazard protection right alongside health and wellbeing benefits.

This year, TRCA leveraged our historic landholdings to support the expansion of the Rouge National Urban Park and the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park ensuring their long-term protection and management.

This year marks 70 years since Hurricane Hazel impacted our region, and recent climate change-fueled storms are reminders of TRCA's safeguarding role.

TRCA recognizes the importance of informed decision-making across its business areas. When municipalities, residents, and businesses have access to up-to-date information on flood risk and mitigation strategies, they are better able to safeguard themselves and their properties. Similarly, when communities are engaged in knowledge-sharing on the impacts of climate change, they can actively participate in the development of strategies and collective action to build future climate resilience.

This year's report highlights advancements on several significant projects, including significant shoreline restoration initiatives on Lake Ontario, including Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area and Ashbridges Bay, as well as improvements to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail across TRCA's jurisdiction, which have included significant aquatic and terrestrial habitat improvements.

This report showcases vital infrastructure protection work in valleys, including at E.T. Seton and Beverley Acres parks, and climate change proofing projects that will shape the health of tomorrow's communities, like the re-naturalization of the Lower Don River and the Toronto Island Park Flood and Erosion Mitigation Project, among others.

None of TRCA's work would be possible without the support of our communities, partners, and stakeholders. TRCA extends its gratitude to all who contribute to its mission of serving communities and safeguarding the future across its jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

Paul Ainslie

Chair, TRCA Board of Directors

Dave Barton

Vice-Chair, TRCA Board of Directors

John MacKenzie

Chief Executive Officer

EXPLORE THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) 2024 Annual Report is organized around four strategic pillars, reflecting the structure of our 2023-2034 Strategic Plan (<https://trca.ca/about/governance-reports/strategic-plan/>). Select the pillars below and the numbered performance measurements associated with each to view TRCA's progress towards its goals in 2024.

PILLAR 1 | Environmental Protection and Hazard Management

1.1 Deliver provincially mandated services pertaining to natural hazards including flood and erosion

1.2 Leadership in greenspace conservation

1.3 Maintain healthy and resilient watershed ecosystems in the face of a changing climate

PILLAR 2 | Knowledge Economy

2.1 Research and development that drives innovation and climate-based solutions

2.2 Collaboration to advance a green transition

2.3 Advocacy and adaptability in the face of policy pressures

1.4 Balance development and growth to protect the natural environment ensuring safe sustainable development

2.4 Integrate environmental considerations and science into decision making

PILLAR 3 | Community Prosperity

3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

3.2 A culture of diversity, equity and inclusion contributing to community wellbeing

3.3 Informed citizens are conservation champions

3.4 Inspired communities take environmental action

PILLAR 4 | Service Excellence

4.1 A strong and skilled workforce

4.2 Provide and manage an efficient and adaptable organization

4.3 Responsive relationships and a trusted brand with a reputation for excellence

4.4 Transparent decision making and accountable results

GOAL: Mitigating hazard risks to communities and protecting the natural environment

Flood Risk Management

Flood waters blocking the Don Valley Parkway in Toronto, on July 16 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Arlyn McAdorey

This year, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) region experienced record setting precipitation and temperatures, alongside an unprecedented frequency of extreme weather events, including **torrential downpours that led to significant flooding**

(<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/rain-thunderstorm-warning-gta-1.7264873>).

While extraordinary, these can no longer be considered isolated events.

Flooding at Queen Frederica Drive, Mississauga – July 16, 2024

The year's weather has prompted TRCA to re-examine its approach to flood mitigation and emergency response.

TRCA's industry-leading **Flood Forecasting and Warning Program**

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/flood-risk-management/flood-forecasting-warning/>) already exceeds provincial requirements by providing effective and reliable emergency communications. However, efforts are underway to further increase its reach and impact, ensuring that residents receive timely alerts to take informed action to safeguard themselves and their properties against extreme weather events, including potential flooding.

As always, TRCA is committed to exceeding expectations to enhance public awareness and enable informed decision-making by its stakeholders.

In 2025, TRCA will work closely with municipal partners to implement updated and robust emergency plans and procedures that address the growing frequency of unprecedented and unpredictable extreme weather events.

Efforts will focus on reaching a broader segment of the public and ensuring that property owners are prepared to make informed decisions to protect themselves from the effects of flooding events.

By expanding flood warning systems and enhancing public education, TRCA and its partners aim to further reduce the impacts of flood events in 2025. These measures will equip

residents, businesses, and stakeholders to respond effectively to extreme weather events.

Canada's densest communities are kept safe from localized torrential storms thanks to TRCA's monitoring, forecasting, and communications capabilities.

1.1 Deliver provincially mandated services pertaining to natural hazards including flood and erosion

TRCA provides provincially mandated services pertaining to natural hazards including flood and erosion monitoring and risk management.

Inspections and Warnings: Key Highlights

Ashbridges Bay Advancements

The creation of Toronto's newest waterfront lands advanced significantly in 2024. A collaboration between TRCA and the City of Toronto, the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Landform Project provides a land base for the City's wet weather flow treatment facility expansion, while also addressing longstanding shoreline erosion issues and sedimentation challenges that impact safe navigation.

Initiated in 2013, the project provides shoreline protection, improves water quality, and supports water treatment infrastructure. Additionally, it enhances aquatic habitats and creates

new publicly accessible natural spaces, including trail connections to Tommy Thompson Park.

In 2024, several key milestones were achieved, including the completion of the final headland, **3** cobble shorelines, maintenance roads, construction of a shoreline naturalization area, installation of aquatic plantings, construction of aquatic habitat shoals, and topsoil placement.

Construction on the Central Breakwater is expected to be substantially completed by the end of 2024.

Additionally, a public drop-in session engaged community members on the restoration and trail plans for the new public natural areas.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT.

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/infrastructure-projects/ashbridges-bay-erosion-sediment-control-project/>)

(<https://trcaca.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2024/12/10154603/ar-2024-pillar1-ashbridges-MAP.jpg>)

Existing and new public space areas include parcels with varied ownership (City of Toronto, TRCA, and CreateTO) that will be operated jointly as part of Tommy Thompson Park.

Flood Infrastructure

TRCA operates and maintains **12** dams, **6** dikes, and **9** channels. **11** dams have current safety reviews, and all dams have current operation, maintenance, and surveillance manuals. All **7** of the high or very high hazard dams have current emergency preparedness and response plans.

TRCA's Claireville Dam

Reducing Flood Risk

The removal of vegetation and sediment operations along **3.2 km** of TRCA's channels maximized

the flow of water to reduce the risk of flooding. **88%** of flood control channels have optimal conveyance to ensure the effective flow of water.

During the high volume, short duration storms experienced this summer, regular maintenance represented a critical need. To address this need, ongoing work at Mimico Channel and other sites is scheduled for completion in 2025.

Erosion Risk Management

Work this year has included **3.76 linear km** of valley and shoreline stabilization at **31** priority sites. **87.5%** of erosion control structures are in acceptable condition throughout the jurisdiction.

Flood Early Warning System

TRCA's [flood forecasting and warning program](https://trca.ca/conservation/flood-risk-management/flood-forecasting-warning/)

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/flood-risk-management/flood-forecasting-warning/>) got a big boost through the implementation of the [Deltares Flood Early Warning System \(FEWS\)](https://oss.deltares.nl/web/delft-fews/) (<https://oss.deltares.nl/web/delft-fews/>) in June 2023.

In 2024, the first full year of its implementation, this modern tool was used by TRCA Flood Duty Officers to provide high resolution gridded weather forecast data that is geographically accurate to TRCA's watersheds. The system uses computational power to process forecasted rainfall data and calculate runoff estimations.

Leaving behind manual data entry from various sources, automated efficiencies unlocked resources for improved decision-making and timely flood messages to municipal partners and the public.

Future phases of the system implementation include incorporating hydrologic models and integrating telemetry data from surrounding areas within the GTA to further enhance situational awareness and responsiveness.

Broadview and Eastern Flood Protection Project Update

The Eastern Avenue Bridge demolition has been completed ahead of schedule. Detailed design

work is **90%** complete, with anticipated completion in early 2025.

TRCA continues to support the City of Toronto and the Province through technical permit reviews. This includes work on the future East Harbour Development and major transit investment to enable safe and sustainable communities in the City of Toronto.

Flood Risk Knowledge

30 rain gauges, **25** monthly-inspected stream gauges, and, with a new location added in 2024, **11** locations now have video coverage, enabling a continuous flow of timely data.

TRCA rain gauges

Hydrologic modelling is current for **100%** of the jurisdiction supported by **333** flood line maps, which are shared with jurisdictional stakeholders.

Flood Communications

TRCA effectively informed key agencies, including Metrolinx, Mississauga Emergency Services, Toronto Emergency Management, and Toronto Transportation Services on anticipated localized flood risks.

The timely transfer of knowledge enabled successful externally-driven decisions during the summer's critical storms to evacuate buildings, adjust Metrolinx bus and train operations, and close affected roads, minimizing impacts and better safeguarding people and property.

Humber River flooding, July 2024.

Flood Risk Warning Workshops: Advancing Knowledge, Training, and Province-Wide Excellence

In February, TRCA hosted the annual municipally-focused Flood Risk Workshop. **80** attendees representing all partner municipalities came together to ensure emergency preparedness.

In October, with Conservation Ontario, TRCA co-hosted the Provincial Flood Forecasting and

Warning Workshop(<https://trca.ca/conservation/flood-risk-management/ontario-workshop/>) organized by the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Committee (PFFWC). This annual event brings together agencies responsible for flood forecasting and warning, emergency management, flow measurement, and data collection, as well as other partners, to address policy and implementation needs and issues and to facilitate training.

The Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop, October 2024.

Safe Slope at Kilgour Road

TRCA partnered with the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital to address an imminent risk to public lands and privately-owned infrastructure at Kilgour Road. Acting swiftly under an Emergency Works Declaration, TRCA revitalized the slope to ensure the safety of the surrounding community.

The project involved expert assessment, expedited permits and approvals, and oversight of the design-build contract, delivering results on time and within budget. Key improvements included the installation of **40 m** of stormwater pipes, new access points, and a stable outlet to Burke Brook, reinforced with **9K m³** of stone for walls and bank protection.

3.4K trees and shrubs were planted to restore and beautify the ravine adjacent to the hospital property. This greenery not only enhances the landscape but also protects staff, patients, and visitors from erosion hazards.

Funding for this initiative was secured by the hospital under the Province of Ontario's Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund. Close collaboration with the City of Toronto on overlapping City initiatives unlocked additional benefits, including stream rehabilitation, trail improvement, and sewer protection enhancements.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT.

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/erosion-risk-management/completed-projects/150-kilgour-road-stormwater-outfall-remediation-project/>)

The Kilgour Road project site, before and after TRCA stormwater sewer infrastructure rehabilitation and slope stabilization works.

1.2 Leadership in greenspace conservation

TRCA protects and manages natural heritage systems throughout its jurisdiction by ensuring safe operation and access, site protection and maintenance, ecosystem protection, and unmatched visitor experiences.

Input and Collaboration Advances Conservation Area Strategy

As the GTA's largest landowner, with a wide breadth of land types and uses, TRCA engaged stakeholders this year to advance the **Conservation Area Strategy** (<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#conservation-area>).

The consultation process included municipal partners, First Nations communities and Indigenous peoples, the Regional Watershed Alliance, and the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) Working Group. Public input, gathered through online surveys, also played a key role in shaping the strategy.

This collaborative approach ensures all partners are informed and engaged, empowering TRCA to lead in the protection and enhancement of critical conservation areas and greenspaces.

Management partnerships, primarily with municipalities, enable the efficient prioritization of environmental protection, hazard management, and community prosperity. A total of **5.1K ha** or **32%** of TRCA's landholdings are managed by others.

Additionally, TRCA manages **719 ha** of land owned by others when such arrangements benefit both parties and advance conservation efforts. TRCA has agreements with the Province of Ontario (Infrastructure Ontario) and the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Growing Ontario's Greenspaces in Partnership

To protect greenspaces from large-scale growth and development pressures, TRCA conveyed **1,546 ha** of land to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), nearly tripling the size of Ontario's newest year-round day use provincial park: Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park (UUPP).

The Partners Network played a key role in identifying the park's full recreational and protection potential. Their input helped to shape the development of a management plan for the existing park properties and identified connections to TRCA programs and services.

TRCA facilitated consensus on the appropriate lands for the park through discussions with many stakeholders including MECP, Parks Canada, the Regional Municipality of Durham, and the Township of Uxbridge. The engagement process also prioritized youth involvement by collaborating with the Environment Specialist High School Major Program at Uxbridge Secondary School to ensure the perspectives of future generations were included in the planning process.

Right Lands, Right Place

The Greenlands Acquisition Project is a strategic initiative guiding the acquisition of land to advance environmental conservation and green infrastructure needs. Each year, dynamic partnerships and innovative mechanisms drive new opportunities and adaptations.

In 2024, TRCA acquired **43.9 ha** across **12** parcels, including a **32.8 ha** parcel in Vaughan.

Contributions to Rouge National Urban Park Expansion

Rouge National Urban Park, Canada's first urban park, serves as an innovative model for future sustainability.

In the last decade alone, TRCA has collaborated with farmers, municipalities, schools, volunteers, Indigenous partners, and Parks Canada to safeguard the ecological integrity of this gem at Toronto's doorstep.

137 individual projects have restored more than **200 ha** of wetland, forest, and meadow habitats through the planting of more than **300K** trees and shrubs.

Collaboration continues to drive significant results. In 2024, TRCA announced the future transfer of **119 ha** to Parks Canada for inclusion in this federal park.

Additionally, a federal investment of **\$950K** was secured to enhance habitat quality and improve landscape connectivity within the Rouge River and West Duffins Creek watersheds. These long-term restoration efforts provide vital nature-based solutions to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate flooding, and address future climate change challenges.

Managing Newly Established Meadows

Meadows are part of grassland ecosystems, relying on periodic "disturbances" to maintain and encourage the growth of native grasses and wildflowers.

2024 marks the second year of advancing TRCA's in-house expertise using fire management as a leading-edge restoration technique. **2** successful and separate controlled burns occurred at meadow restoration sites at Albion Hills this year, with benefits to species at risk.

Foundational Forests

From the long-standing 24-year partnership with York Region to more recent ones with NGOs like Trees for Life, TRCA and partners are improving the resilience and ecological function of the landscape:

- **83K** trees and shrubs planted in York Region, including through **13** private landowner projects and the **Grow Your Legacy**(<https://growyourlegacy.ca/>) program.
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- **89K** trees and shrubs planted in Durham Region, through initiatives such as the **Durham 5 TREES**(<https://www.durhamtrees.org/>) partnership, which is modeled after York Region's successful approach. Celebrating a **3rd** planting season in 2024, this program is administrated through co-ordinated efforts across **5** conservation authorities, supported by a diverse range of funding sources. This collaboration enables significant restoration efforts and underscores the power of partnership-driven environmental action.
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Wonderful Wetlands

TRCA, in collaboration with the Town of Ajax, is restoring wetlands in the Carruthers Creek watershed through MECP's Wetland Conservation Partner Program. As part of this initiative, **12K** trees and shrubs will be planted, expanding wetlands by **3 ha**.

This upcoming work is part of a larger **6 ha** wetland and **1.5 ha** forest initiative in Durham, which last year saw the completion of the Kerrison wetland restoration project and includes ongoing invasives management work.

The restoration work is being achieved through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited and the Town of Ajax, combining multiple sources of funding to maximize outcomes.

The City of Brampton's Ecopark Strategy advanced significantly with the completion of Jefferson, Jordan, and Jayfield Parks in 2023, Eastbourne Park in 2024, and plans to restore Fallingdale Park in 2025.

At Eastbourne Park, natural channel design was implemented to address erosion, increase flood resilience, and improve aquatic and riverside habitat. Restoration efforts included **900 m** of stream restoration, the planting of **8.4K** trees and shrubs, and the installation of **8K** live stakes.

As part of these efforts, a fall event through TRCA's Sustainable Neighbourhoods Action Program (SNAP) engaged **80** local residents and volunteers to plant **350** native trees and shrubs, forming Brampton's first Tiny Forest.

Beyond the City of Brampton's commitment to advancing these important urban initiatives, this work was further facilitated thanks to support by ECCC Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund via a Conservation Ontario umbrella project.

Restoration at Albion Hills

Restoration efforts progressed on a newly acquired **36 ha** parcel of land at Albion Hills, strategically positioned to enhance connectivity and ecological resilience.

This year's efforts resulted in the restoration of **1.9 ha** of wetlands, **6.4 ha** of forest, and **12.5 ha** of meadows, achieved through an integrated site-wide focus.

TRCA's hallmark restoration strategy combines funding and resources from various mechanisms,

including compensation agreements, municipal contributions, grants, and private donations, ensuring maximum impact.

Enhancing Caledon's ecological landscape at Albion Hills is a forward-looking investment given the anticipated pressures of the future, including wet weather years along with increased impermeability from development in downstream areas.

The wetlands, forests, and meadows are now better connected and on track to full restoration; in return the abundant "gifts" of water absorption and retention, clean air and water, and habitat opportunities for numerous species at risk are just a few of the listed benefits.

The trails and recreational amenities that meander through the Albion Hills restoration sites also encourage visitors from near and far to marvel at nature's beauty and bounty up close, restoring our human connections to our land in the process.

1.3 Maintain healthy and resilient watershed ecosystems in the face of a changing climate

TRCA implements effective, targeted programs that improve watershed health and resilience through ongoing monitoring and assessment of natural resources within its jurisdiction.

Restoration Key Highlights

TRCA Implemented 376 restoration, resource management and stewardship projects across the jurisdiction:

Timing Matters for Restoration Evaluation

Successful restoration takes time, which is why monitoring and follow-up are essential components of a multi-year process.

In 2024, nearly half of the **80** restoration sites assessed were evaluated after just one year – the most critical and high-risk phase. Of these, **56%** required minimal maintenance, while the remaining sites necessitated additional follow-up. These locations will be reassessed during years three and five to ensure progress and address any challenges.

Years with lower than anticipated restoration trajectories are opportunities to examine contributing factors, including severe weather and climate-change impacts, that influence the ability of natural environments to regenerate and provide restorative benefits.

Watershed Plan Updates

The 2024-2034 Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/etobicoke-creek-watershed-plan/>) was fully approved and endorsed by all partner municipalities.

This collaborative effort also included guidance by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, additional First Nations and Indigenous communities, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, residents, watershed stakeholders, and members of the public.

The plan and associated **62** datasets will guide various TRCA and municipal initiatives, such as land use and infrastructure planning, ecosystem restoration, and climate adaptation. Next steps include the formation of an Implementation Steering Committee to initiate action.

Progress on the Humber River Watershed Plan

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/humber-river-watershed-plan/>) advanced this year with the completion of the Future Scenario Analysis by technical experts.

A total of **9** Technical Scenario Analysis Reports were produced by TRCA subject matter experts and consolidated into a Future Scenario Analysis Report for the watershed plan with guidance from

the Steering Committee. There were **3** partnerships with academic institutions and scientific programs to advance assessments of water quality, erosion risk, and groundwater.

A total of **57** datasets were prepared during this process to inform decision-making internally and by partner municipalities.

Preparations are underway to launch the Rouge River Watershed Plan in 2025, while implementation tracking for the **Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan** (<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/carruthers-creek/watershed-plan/>) continued this year.

Celebrating 60 Years of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network

Since 2002, TRCA has been collecting water quality (<https://trca.ca/conservation/aquatic-ecosystems/surface-water-quality/>) samples from **13** locations across its jurisdiction as part of the **Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-provincial-stream-water-quality-monitoring-network>).

These sites complement an additional **34** locations that TRCA collects as part of the Regional Watershed Monitoring Program (RWMP), for a total of **47** locations.

TRCA's collaboration with the Province ensures that this work contributes to a comprehensive provincial dataset, supporting water quality improvements across Ontario.

With six decades of data collection, the PWQMN highlights TRCA's ongoing commitment to safeguarding water quality and advancing a cleaner, healthier environment.

TRCA water quality sampling.

Protecting Biodiversity

Invasive species are the second biggest driver of biodiversity loss worldwide, and left unchecked can significantly harm ecological function and climate change resilience.

With support from Peel Region, in 2024 TRCA completed its third year of invasive plant management at three major Conservation Parks in Peel: Heart Lake, Albion Hills, and Claireville.

Efforts have focused on management of woody invasive species such as European buckthorn and invasive honeysuckles along trails (which act as pathways for invasive species spread). Targeted plant species such as Phragmites and invasive thistles were also managed at restoration sites.

Approximately **75 ha** of invasive plants were managed in TRCA's Peel parks last year, improving the ability of forests, meadows, and wetlands to support biodiversity and withstand climate change stressors.

Yellow Creek's Collaborative Gains

Yellow Creek, a tributary of the Don River in midtown Toronto, benefited from TRCA's Erosion Valley Hazards work, which serves multiple agency objectives, while protecting private residential properties through slope-supportive channel stabilization works.

Additionally, collaboration with the City of Toronto ensures the protection of critical infrastructure, including watermains and storm outfalls. These efforts were supported by geomorphic and hydraulic analyses to guide effective solutions.

Stabilizing the watercourse at this location creates a further opportunity for the City of Toronto to advance trail planning work to improve trail and greenspace access, resulting in significant community wellbeing benefits.

Before

In Progress

Coordinated Commitment for Waterfront Restoration

Since 2006, **Aquatic Habitat Toronto (AHT)**(<https://torontorap.ca/aquatic-habitat-toronto/>) has been instrumental in shaping the Toronto waterfront through its consensus-based partnership building. Coordinated by TRCA, AHT encompasses agencies across multiple jurisdictional boundaries and spans three levels of government.

This working group has become a model for innovative research, monitoring, and habitat restoration planning. By following and implementing the recommendations of the Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (TWAHRS) over the past 15+ years, AHT has achieved significant outcomes, such as the work at Gibraltar Point, Tommy Thompson Park, and the new mouth of the Don River.

In 2024, a half-day event at the revitalized Port Lands celebrated AHT's collaborative efforts. Participants included representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources, TRCA, Waterfront Toronto, Environment and Climate Change Canada, PortsToronto, and the City of Toronto.

The event highlighted AHT's collective achievements, and each agency had the opportunity to share their contributions to the development of the Toronto Waterfront, with a particular focus on the Port Lands Flood Protection Project (PLFPP), which served as the event location.

Regional Watershed Monitoring Program

Annual sampling ensures robust datasets to inform planning and provide insights for data-backed decisions across TRCA's initiatives.

Highlights from 2024 monitoring activities include:

- **47** water quality sites sampled monthly, including **13** Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) sites.
- **132** benthic invertebrate samples collected across TRCA's jurisdiction.
- Completion of the **8th** set of fish community data collected, with **49** fish community samples in Carruthers Creek, Duffins Creek, and the Rouge River.
- Continuous stream flow data at **36** sites and baseflow measurements at **126** sites.
- West Nile Virus Mosquito Larvae Monitoring Program sampling at **46** sites.

- Water level at **21** groundwater wells monitored quarterly as part of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN), **13** wells also sampled for water quality.
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- Terrestrial regional monitoring data collected at **143** locations, including at **24** forest plots, **23** wetland plots, **29** forest bird sites, **24** wetland bird sites, **20** meadow bird sites and **23** frog sites.
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Etobicoke Creek Wetlands Enhancement Project

Loafer's Lake, a high-priority restoration site with significant water quality challenges, experienced transformative improvements in 2024 thanks to collaborative efforts and key stakeholder involvement.

The Heart Lake Turtle Troopers raised awareness about shoreline restoration needs, which sparked momentum among decision-makers. Guided by TRCA's expertise in design, funding, implementation, and outreach, the City of Brampton successfully completed a comprehensive restoration of the site.

A **\$2.5M** grant from Ontario's Wetlands Conservation Partner Program funded the restoration of four sites within the Etobicoke Creek Watershed. The project restored **5 ha**, planted **6.5K** trees and shrubs, removed **1 ha** of invasive species, and added turtle habitat features.

New amenities, including the realigned Etobicoke Creek Trail, bioswale, and scenic lookouts, enrich the community while supporting conservation goals such as improved water quality, flood mitigation, and ecosystem connectivity.

Community engagement played a vital role in the project's success. Local residents continue to participate through volunteering and educational events, fostering a deeper appreciation for conservation efforts. Initiatives like this highlight the power of knowledge, partnerships, and collaboration in creating sustainable communities.

1.4 Balance development and growth to protect the natural environment ensuring safe sustainable development

TRCA ensures safe and sustainable development throughout its jurisdiction to protect communities and the natural environment to minimize impacts to greenspace and infrastructure, ensure flood protection and remediation and maximize benefits for communities

The Business of Safeguarding Communities

TRCA's Development Planning and Permits and Infrastructure Planning and Permits business units play a vital role in protecting life, property, and natural features. Through comprehensive planning policies and regulatory oversight, they ensure that new developments, redevelopments, and infrastructure projects are safeguarded against flooding and erosion risks.

In 2024, TRCA reviewed thousands of planning and infrastructure projects, and issued **1,280** permits. These efforts prevented or mitigated construction in flood or erosion-prone areas and ensured the proper protection of wetlands.

This proactive approach eliminates or reduces the risk of property damage and enhances public safety by mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events and changes to the watersheds.

In addition to protecting developed areas, TRCA plays a critical role in restoring and enhancing natural ecosystems. Through land use planning, TRCA's planners integrate natural heritage restoration into urban development, ensuring that wetlands and river valleys are preserved or, where possible, rehabilitated.

These efforts not only contribute to flood mitigation by absorbing excess water but also support biodiversity and improve the resilience of the region's natural landscapes. By balancing development with ecological stewardship, TRCA promotes sustainable growth while maintaining

essential environmental protections.

Review Role

Among legislative, regulatory, and policy consultations, TRCA reviewed and commented on **51** municipal planning documents, **25** Environmental Registry of Ontario) postings, and **3** federal initiatives.

Through its implementation experience and scientific expertise, TRCA helped reconcile conflicts and achieve shared objectives for fulfilling TRCA's mandated responsibilities and advocating to safeguard watersheds and watershed residents.

Enforcement and Compliance

TRCA plays an important role in valley and stream corridor management, regulating impacts of development and activities in hazardous land (such as floodplains, shorelines, or wetlands) under the *Conservation Authorities Act* (*Conservation Authorities Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.27 | ontario.ca).

Scarborough Waterfront

TRCA, in partnership with the City of Toronto, continues to advance their vision for improving public access and connectivity along the Lake Ontario shoreline in Scarborough.

As part of the approved Scarborough Waterfront Project Environmental Assessment (Bluffer's Park east to Highland Creek), detailed design of the West Segment is nearing completion. In addition, shoreline work is underway at Bluffers Park and construction of the Brimley Road South Multi-use Trail is set to begin in 2025.

For the shoreline from Bluffer's Park to the Eastern Beaches (Silver Birch Avenue), TRCA launched a Comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Scarborough Bluffs West Revitalization Study. The Study will explore opportunities for equitable public access to and along the waterfront,

as well as opportunities to minimize erosion risk and enhance sensitive shoreline and natural areas.

Stakeholders, including the general public, agencies, Indigenous rights holders, and urban Indigenous communities, will continue to be consulted as the EA progresses in 2025.

Ajax Shoreline Erosion Mitigation Project

TRCA completed the Environmental Assessment for a **6 km** stretch of Ajax's shoreline, considering **12** sites through efficient prioritization. Supported by **\$1.6M** in funding from the Canada Water Agency, the project will advance to final designs, permits, and remedial work over the next three years.

The first kilometre of shoreline will be protected with new cobble and boulder beaches. This action, paired with ongoing monitoring, sets the stage for addressing the remaining needs of this vital lakefront area.

Aerial view of the Waterfront Trail in Ajax.

Toronto Island Park Flood Mitigation: Environmental Assessment Complete

With a goal to permanently protect the park from shoreline flooding and erosion for the long-term, the **Toronto Island Park Flood and Erosion Mitigation Project**

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/infrastructure-projects/toronto-island-park-flood-mitigation-project/>)

Class Environmental Assessment Environmental Study Report was completed this year.

Together with the City of Toronto, initiating design-related work in 2025 will advance the implementation of recommendations triggered by record-breaking lake water levels and flooding in 2019 that closed the park for three months.

Emergency works at Toronto Island in response to 2019 flooding.

- **1,280** permits issued, more than **85%** of which met or exceeded minimum mandated timelines

- **790** planning and concept applications received

- **45** new *Environmental Assessment and Planning Act* applications received

- **25** Voluntary Project Review letters issued

By integrating and leveraging input from a team of professional technical experts, TRCA has effectively influenced numerous initiatives, including:

- Tracked **20** Ministerial Zoning Orders and completed major MZO implementation permit agreements.

- Involved in **30** Ontario Land Tribunal cases, **9** more than 2023, with **11** of those appeals settled or withdrawn following negotiations. In addition, **11** new appeals requiring TRCA participation were received in 2024.

- **655** Solicitor Realtor Inquiries were responded to, providing clients with timely information to support land-based decisions in the Toronto region.

Planned, Piloted: PARES Now Implemented

TRCA's Planning Application and Enforcement System (PARES) program launched this year, enabling fully digital workflows following two years of collaborative preparations.

This year staff prepared extensively for the planned public launch in 2025, a change impacting more than **2K** anticipated files.

This transformative, highly interactive, web-based platform is set to provide online services to TRCA's residential, commercial and municipal customers through a citizen portal, enabling

automation to advance application screening, technical review, and circulation to commenting stakeholders.

Modules with specific geographic and permit tracking functions allow for real-time monitoring resulting in maximized efficiencies, meeting and exceeding regulatory timelines and leading the first innovative system across Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

Don River – Waterfront

The largest flood protection and restoration public works project in Canadian history, the **Port Lands Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure Project**

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/infrastructure-projects/don-mouth-naturalization-port-lands-flood-protection-project/>)

, reached a significant milestone this year: the Don River now flows directly into Lake Ontario for the first time in decades.

With the final “north plug” removed, the river now follows its restored path designed to protect surrounding neighbourhoods from flooding and create new natural spaces. This transformation includes new wetlands, floodplains, and a new island, paving the way for a future community and a vibrant, reimagined waterfront.

Celebrating the removal of the Don River north plug.

TRCA has proudly worked alongside community and Indigenous leaders, partners at Waterfront Toronto, and all levels of government on this transformational project, which has returned an important part of Toronto’s waterfront into a beautiful restored and more natural space, leaving a legacy that will serve the region for generations to come.

From Monitoring to Protective Implementation at E.T. Seton Park

Southwest of Don Mills and Eglinton is a section of the West Don River that flows through Ernest Thompson Seton Park. In 2020, monitoring through TRCA’s longstanding Valley Erosion Hazards Program revealed the need to address control structures for ongoing infrastructure, park and trail protection.

Instead of treating each of the **18** structures independently, TRCA pursued a comprehensive

solution that considered the broader area's needs.

Following a Class Environmental Assessment that included public consultation, this year implementation work continued to the second of three identified priority sites, with activities including channel realignment and grade controls. By collaborating with Toronto Water and ensuring the concurrent protection of their assets during the course of this project, both agencies benefitted greatly.

Work on the remaining site (Area 1) is scheduled for 2025. Upon completion, the park's trail and river system will offer residents and visitors enhanced safety, aesthetic improvements, and protected infrastructure.

Beverley Acres German Mills Creek Erosion Control Project in Richmond Hill

This year, TRCA completed the Schedule B Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. The design phase for this project is anticipated for completion by end of 2025, with construction slated for 2026/2027. Funding of **\$1.8M** through Canada's Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund is enabling this extensive project to protect infrastructure in Richmond Hill.

**GOAL: Contributing to environmental targets through
knowledge advancement**

Supporting Action Through Sector Expertise

TRCA plays a pivotal role in helping municipalities integrate green infrastructure into their

communities.

Initially focused on reacting to erosion and flooding, TRCA now addresses root causes by promoting proactive, evidence-based decision-making.

In cases of information gaps, direct research, at the appropriate scale, has been required. This has led TRCA to conduct in-depth studies to develop the insights required for implementation.

Watershed planning has been the most important mechanism to advance resource management to address flood and erosion risks and safeguard the region from natural hazards.

Proven, cost-effective solutions such as increasing permeable cover through low-impact development approaches (permeable pavements, rain gardens, urban forests, and meadows), help communities mitigate challenging wet-weather years, while enhancing ecological resilience.

TRCA also assists municipalities in maintaining and optimizing green infrastructure systems through informed asset management frameworks.

Natural assets like wetlands and riparian zones are inventoried, monitored, and effectively managed to maximize both environmental and economic benefits.

As climate science advances, TRCA continues to lead by implementing forward-looking projects and fostering collaborative research focused on actionable strategies.

These efforts ensure TRCA and its partners can protect communities against climate risks.

TRCA also advances green infrastructure through hands-on restoration projects, rehabilitating degraded areas with native vegetation, naturalized waterways, and erosion control techniques.

By demonstrating success in both urban and natural settings, TRCA provides municipalities with scalable, proven models for enhancing stormwater management, boosting biodiversity, and building healthier, more resilient communities.

2.1 Research and development that drives innovation and climate-based solutions

TRCA demonstrates leadership in sustainability efforts by identifying and developing best-practice and policy for climate change.

Collaborative Research and Knowledge Sharing

- **39** collaborative research initiatives were successfully initiated and executed with diverse partners.
- **21** completed research projects filled priority knowledge gaps.
- **17** scientific publications authored by TRCA staff or referencing TRCA work added to the body of specialized knowledge through coverage in respected journals, including the International Association for Great Lakes Research.
- **200** knowledge-sharing or training events included TRCA participation, engaging or training over **100** organizations and over **1K** participants.
- **100K** videos and documents accessed, providing guidance on sustainable technologies.

TRCA's Nature-Based Climate Solutions (NBCS) Siting Tool

(<https://trca.ca/nature-based-climate-solutions-siting-tool/>) is a high-level screening tool that can help identify strategic locations to focus efforts to protect, restore, and enhance natural features and areas within our jurisdiction.

By bringing together a wide range of ecological and socio-economic considerations, this tool can help TRCA and its partners prioritize areas and direct investments towards maximizing the benefits for people, plants, and animals.

The tool was developed by TRCA and partners with grant funding from the Government of Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund

(<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/programs/nature-smart-climate-solutions-fund.html>)

(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/8ada4edf4a464b89acbe9865f77b4754?item=4>)

Screenshot of the online map viewer for the Nature-Based Climate Solutions Siting Tool.

Proving Savings with Innovative New Green Technology Pilots

- Nearly **500** homes participated in Enbridge's Clean Home Heating Initiative (CHHI), in which smart-switching hybrid heating systems were piloted across select Ontario communities. Analysis of energy consumption data revealed that these systems reduced carbon emissions and lowered operating costs, showcasing their potential for greener, more affordable heating.
- Advanced data monitoring and analysis were applied to optimize a large air-to-water heat pump in a Toronto multi-unit residential building (MURB). This groundbreaking Canadian pilot demonstrated the promise of this innovative technology for decarbonizing MURBs.
- In Peel Region, a pilot project including **6** homes showed that replacing aging air conditioners with air-source heat pumps delivers comfort, lower risks, potentially lower costs, and a reduced environmental impact, highlighting their benefits as the smarter choice for homeowners with aging air conditioners that need replacement.

Winter road salt often contaminates soils and waterways, creating persistent pollution. Research by Lauren Nawroth (Queen's University), Dr. Lyndsay Cartwright (TRCA), and Dr. Barb Zeeb (Royal Military College) explores using native plants that can tolerate and remove salt from soils to address this issue.

Field trials show that certain native grasses, like switchgrass and prairie cordgrass, can effectively remediate salt-affected soils in under three years. This method is less invasive than traditional salt-remediation techniques, and offers additional ecosystem benefits.

Visit the Partners in Project Green [Sustainable Salt Management Resource Hub](https://partnersinprojectgreen.com/resources/sustainable-salt-management-resource-hub/) (https://partnersinprojectgreen.com/resources/sustainable-salt-management-resource-hub/) to learn more.

2.2 Collaboration to advance a green transition

TRCA works with business and industry partners to inform sustainability initiatives that drive the adoption of green technologies through engagement.

Driving Sector Leadership Through Partners in Project Green

Partners in Project Green (PPG)(https://partnersinprojectgreen.com/), a community of more than **75** business leaders driving sustainability, hosted two sessions with Diversity in Sustainability, sparking meaningful conversations with **33** sector leaders on supporting BIPOC professionals in the sustainability field.

At PPG's Futureproof Your Fleet events, **166** medium and heavy-duty fleet operators learned

how to transition fleets to low and zero carbon fuels.

Partners in Project Green Futureproof Your Fleet workshop.

Together with partners, PPG also supported **6** foodservice businesses in reducing single use plastics in their operations, successfully preventing the disposal of over **884** single-use cups and lids and **208** single use containers over a three-month period.

In addition, PPG convened nearly **300** participants to explore reducing salt contamination through phytoremediation, with experts from TRCA, academia, and government, inspiring projects across the GTA.

Source to Stream

The **Source to Stream Conference**(<https://sourcetostream.com/>) showcases the important role that TRCA and its Conservation Authority partners play in uniting key stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The event fosters knowledge sharing and global perspectives on watershed-based interventions to address the complexities of climate change, particularly in urban environments.

Over two days, Source to Stream 2024 hosted **768** delegates, held close to **40** sessions featuring more than **50** speakers, and showcased **71** exhibitors.

Presenters at the 2024 Source to Stream Conference.

Pre-conference training featured course options for practitioners interested in low impact development (LID) construction or stream restoration practices.

Attendees, including key municipal partners, praised the event's format, relevant content, and diverse vendor participation, as well as the professionalism of TRCA staff.

Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area

The Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area project area: before (November 2016) and after (August 2024).

Mississauga's newest conservation area is nearing completion, thanks to a strong partnership between TRCA, Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), the City of Mississauga, and the Region of Peel.

TRCA expertise in executing landform features such as berms, offshore islands, and channel-related works made this project possible.

- **39K** trees and shrubs and **76K** plants contributed to **5.6 ha** of new forest, **5.3 ha** of new meadow, and **6.1 ha** of new wetlands.

-
- This project showcases aquatic and terrestrial shoreline habitat restoration and will be a significant improvement to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.
 - The combined **900 m** that make up Serson and Applewood Creeks are host to **4** new native species that have already been identified, beyond the **9** targeted native fish species.

-
- This award-winning brownfield redevelopment project has reused **1.8M m³** of fill and **350K m³** of construction rubble to create a **64 acre** public greenspace that will connect more than **9 km** of waterfront trail.

2.3 Advocacy and adaptability in the face of policy pressures

TRCA remains committed to providing stakeholders with the best available science-based information to inform and guide external policy initiatives.

Key Highlights

1,463 new and updated data layers generated: Products included **16** maps prepared for Region of Peel Flood Vulnerable Road & Crossing Hydraulic Capacity Assessment, and updated City of Toronto Climate Projections for the 2015-2040 period.

TRCA-generated knowledge and technical support shared through 39 partnerships and collaborations with partner municipalities: Safe and resilient development practices and policies were advanced through TRCA's engagement in **47** planning policy or regulatory related workshops that helped deepen partner relationships and better inform programs and projects, consistent with TRCA's legislated roles and responsibilities.

New Hub a Hive of Interactive Knowledge

TRCA's newly launched **Watershed Planning Hub** (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/4cad0199ca2a46e7af3ef1d3b757ce4f>) is an interactive destination for learning more about watershed planning and current watershed plans. Explore the Hub via TRCA's **watershed management** (<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/>) web page to learn how TRCA, in collaboration with groups across the region, is greening the Toronto region's future and safeguarding the health, safety, and resiliency of its watersheds, ecosystems, and communities.

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/#planning>)

TRCA's new Watershed Planning Hub.

Updated Strategies Meet Legislative Requirements

To ensure the strategic work of TRCA programs and plans is consolidated, documented, and matches the requirements of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the following Strategies and Plans were reviewed this year: the **Watershed Strategy**

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#watershed-based-resource-management>)

, **Conservation Area Land Strategy**

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#conservation-area>), **Ice**

Management Plan

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#ice-management>), **Land Inventory**

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#land-inventory>), **Flood and Erosion**

Asset Management Plan

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#flood-erosion-asset-management>),

and **Flood and Erosion Infrastructure Operational Plan**

(<https://trca.ca/about/conservation-authorities-act-strategies/#flood-erosion-operational>).

The opportunity to consult externally on several of these reviews helped to deepen the collaboration with members of the public and key stakeholders to advance the goal of creating safe, climate-resilient communities.

Bisected Biodiversity

An estimated **1.2M** wildlife mortalities occur annually on regional roads within TRCA's jurisdiction. To address this, TRCA's road ecology program works to reduce these impacts with road closures, fencing, crossings, and habitat creation.

Collaborating with partners such as York Region, Peel Region, the City of Toronto, the City of Brampton, the City of Richmond Hill, and King Township, TRCA works to protect endangered species such as salamanders and turtles. These efforts support their safe migration between wintering habitats and summer breeding and nesting grounds, ensuring the ongoing protection of local biodiversity.

Seasonal Salamander Crossing Protection

Together with York Region and the City of Richmond Hill, TRCA work supports the endangered Jefferson Salamander

(<https://www.facebook.com/TorontoConservation/posts/pfbid0VmSaQaTjF4E7Ca993g2uFh17UB3D5DmBEeAMoZAM5ZcCT5UJ3HUwu6jzD6mzjWayl>) as they leave their summer breeding grounds and head to their winter habitat, crossing Stouffville Road in the process.

Intermittent overnight road closures on Stouffville Road between Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street were implemented during rainy October nights in 2024 to ensure their safe passage.

Species Feature

The presence of various species within a region can serve as critical indicators of environmental health. In 2024, two species made notable appearances, reflecting significant ecological milestones.

Torontonians celebrated the first bald eagle nest

(<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/10/bald-eagles-nesting-toronto-first-time-history>)

documented in the region in 100 years. Once on the brink of extinction, the bald eagle has only recently been removed from the list of species at risk. This historic moment signals a positive species recovery strategy in action, strengthened through TRCA's restoration efforts to conserve and enhance desirable habitat.

Photo: John Nishikawa

Another remarkable discovery occurred during aquatic monitoring: a Spotted Gar, an endangered native fish species, was recorded for the first time in 30 years. Known for its long snout and spotted body, this ancient predator is unique in its ability to breathe air when surfacing. This discovery underscores the need to continue to monitor and understand the biodiversity of local lands and waters to make informed decisions.

Spotted Gar

The discovery of a regionally rare kettle bog vegetation community within the Oak Ridges Moraine adds to the region's ecological richness. These acidic, nutrient-poor bogs support specialized species that thrive in harsh conditions, such as the pitcher plant and bog laurel, both Regional Species of Conservation Concern.

Pitcher plant

Bog laurel

The Harvester, North America's only carnivorous butterfly, adds a unique twist to local biodiversity: their caterpillars feed on native Woolly Aphids. The Harvester's presence along the Etobicoke Creek Trail in Brampton is notable, especially since it is the only recorded sighting in this municipality outside of Heart Lake Conservation Park.

- **[Read about TRCA's 2024 fauna finds.](https://trca.ca/news/environmental-monitoring-field-finds-2024-fauna/)**
(<https://trca.ca/news/environmental-monitoring-field-finds-2024-fauna/>)
 - **[Read about TRCA's 2024 flora finds.](https://trca.ca/news/environmental-monitoring-field-finds-2024-flora/)**
(<https://trca.ca/news/environmental-monitoring-field-finds-2024-flora/>)
-

Regulated Area Map Tool

(<https://trca.ca/planning-permits/regulated-area-search-v3/>)

TRCA's Regulated Area Search Tool. [Click to open](https://trca.ca/planning-permits/regulated-area-search-v3/)(<https://trca.ca/planning-permits/regulated-area-search-v3/>).

TRCA's **[Regulated Area Search Tool](https://trca.ca/planning-permits/regulated-area-search-v3/)**(<https://trca.ca/planning-permits/regulated-area-search-v3/>) empowers home and property owners to determine whether their property falls within a TRCA-regulated area. This feature continues to gain popularity, accounting for **40.7%** of all Planning and Development webpage views, with **56K** in 2024.

2.4 Integrate environmental considerations and science into decision making

TRCA provides partner municipalities with industry-leading science.

Land to Lake Initiative

The **Land to Lake Initiative**(<https://trca.ca/land-to-lake/>) envisions a future in which governments and resource managers along Western Lake Ontario (WLO) actively collaborate and take strategic, coordinated actions towards improving water quality and ecosystem health.

Since December 2022, TRCA has partnered with federal and provincial governments to lead the coordination of the WLO municipalities and conservation authorities to achieve this vision.

6 municipalities, **7** conservation authorities, and the federal and provincial governments have been actively involved as Advisory Committee members to chart the path forward for the L2L Initiative. In 2024, **2** Advisory Committee meetings were held.

In 2024, the L2L Initiative was successful in securing funding for its continuation for one more year through a Canada-Ontario Agreement grant.

1 workshop was organized to engage approximately **80** partners across the broader WLO basin. This workshop will advance coordinated actions in the watersheds to benefit Lake Ontario health and wellbeing of the communities that depend on it.

The following **3** projects were initiated in collaboration with WLO partners and federal and provincial governments to achieve the collective objectives of improving water quality and ecosystem health across watersheds and Lake Ontario:

Natural Asset Management

Credit Valley Conservation | Project leads: Kyle Vander Linden and Tatiana Kovesnikova, CVC

This course focuses on enhancing the capacity of municipalities and organizations to manage

natural assets and the ecosystem services they provide. It covers topics such as natural infrastructure, measuring service levels, assessing the value of these services, and understanding life cycle costs for effective management and restoration. This course will be delivered in 2025 with funding from COA 2025-2026.

Updating and Reporting Tributary Nutrient Loads

Canada Water Agency | Project lead: Daniel Rokitnicki, CWA/ECCC

This project aims to compile and update phosphorus load data for tributaries and point sources in WLO to address information gaps and to fulfill commitments at various governmental levels. It represents a potential outcome of the L2L initiative, demonstrating the group's capacity for coordination and collaboration on ecological and water quality measures. Additionally, the project will facilitate ongoing collaboration through regular reporting and monitoring of changes over time at both local and regional levels. This project was completed in 2024 through ECCC funds.

Brampton Water Quality Strategy: Catch Basin Inserts

City of Brampton | Project lead: Cassie Schembri, Brampton

The City of Brampton is addressing the lack of water quality treatment for stormwater in approximately 60% of its neighborhoods by planning a pilot project for large-scale implementation of catch basin inserts. With over 22,000 catch basins in underserved areas, the estimated cost for installation and maintenance over two years is over \$29 million. The project's goal is to reduce effective impervious surfaces to below 25% in each subwatershed, thereby improving aquatic habitat health. The City of Brampton will be working with L2L partners to look for funding opportunities to complement Brampton's investment.

Natural Asset Management

TRCA and the Greenbelt Foundation co-hosted a webinar which provided an overview of the initial steps and existing resources for municipalities to begin planning for natural assets in their asset

management plans.

Green Infrastructure Knowledge

The Region of Peel has partnered with TRCA and **Credit Valley Conservation**(<https://cvc.ca/>) to complete a green natural infrastructure inventory and condition assessment.

This year, a dedicated field team re-inspected a selection of individual trees and tree and shrub clusters within the regional road rights-of-way. They captured detailed information on tree species, size, and health, as well as tracking invasive plants, pests, and tree diseases.

The collected data will play a crucial role in supporting regional asset management planning, and advancing forest monitoring and maintenance goals.

Stormwater Pond Inspection and Maintenance Training

Stormwater ponds, essential components of urban water management infrastructure, require consistent monitoring and maintenance to ensure optimal functionality.

Recognizing this need, TRCA conducted a series of coordinated training sessions, including two in-field classes and one virtual session. TRCA's leadership in this area was further underscored by an invitation to provide inaugural training for Eastern Ontario audiences in Ottawa.

In total, **266** attendees representing **58** distinct municipalities and **10** conservation authorities benefited from this leadership. Representatives from the MECP, as well as funding support through a Canada-Ontario Agreement grant greatly assisted these efforts.

A new **training hub webpage**

(<https://sustainabletechnologies.ca/stormwater-management-inspection-maintenance-training-project/>)

with nearly **500** unique users is also available, through TRCA's **Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP)**(<https://sustainabletechnologies.ca/>), for on-demand learning and development.

Stormwater Treatment Technology at The Bentway

The Bentway(<https://thebentway.ca/>), an initiative to reimagine the space beneath the Gardiner Expressway, exemplifies how urban infrastructure can be transformed to foster a healthier and more connected city.

Within the Bentway Staging Grounds, TRCA monitors stormwater treatment technologies designed to manage runoff from the Gardiner Expressway.

These technologies consist of planters designed with two chambers: the first to dissipate the energy of the water and capture/filter sediment and other debris; the second is the planter itself, filled with planting soil and herbaceous plants.

Monitoring consists of evaluating the effectiveness of the planters in improving water quality and reducing runoff, assessing the level of maintenance required, and providing insights into design improvements to promote enhanced system function.

The colourful exhibit is hard to miss and easily engages users to reflect on how water flows through our communities and what it takes to manage this resource effectively.

**GOAL: Building communities that drive local action and
improve wellbeing**

**Evolving for a New Era: Rebranding The
Village**

Community prosperity hinges on adapting to the challenges of the day as a way to future-proof against emerging risks.

In 2024, Black Creek Pioneer Village underwent a bold transformation, rebranding as **The Village at Black Creek**(<https://blackcreek.ca/>). This change reflects a commitment to more inclusive storytelling, broadening the narrative to recognize the diverse communities that have shaped this land, including the Indigenous peoples who have lived here for millennia.

The journey to this transformation began in 2017, guided by five First Nations and enriched through collaboration with Indigenous scholars, artists, elders, and community members. Their direction has been instrumental in “restorying” the site to move beyond its traditional focus on settlers of European descent.

Partnerships with diverse equity-deserving artists, scholars, and communities have enriched The Village’s narratives, enabling visitors to experience stories shared from many perspectives through authentic voices.

The rebrand introduced a new logo and visual language, complemented by updated signage, a refreshed website, and a staff guide to align internal and external communications.

These elements, alongside a new positioning strategy, ensure that The Village at Black Creek resonates with modern audiences while honouring its roots as a cherished living history museum.

As a “learning campus”, The Village has recently opened its doors to local businesses creating unique experiences ranging from ghost walks to concerts, and large-scale events to escape games.

Today, The Village offers something for everyone, from scenic grounds and hidden stories of real people to engaging creative programming.

This rebrand marks an important milestone in creating a space that is inclusive, reflective, and welcoming for all.

With the revitalization effort underway, the focus now shifts to building strategic partnerships that amplify awareness and boost attendance, shaping the next chapter in the story of The Village at Black Creek: a one-of-a-kind Toronto destination.

READ MORE.

(<https://trca.ca/news/introducing-the-village-at-black-creek/>)

3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

TRCA ensures that the public has access to accessible outdoor recreation and programming.

Communities and Greenspace Key Highlights

750K visitors enjoyed TRCA greenspaces in 2024, benefitting from the physical and mental wellbeing impacts of outdoor natural spaces.

Tracking Trail Users

Trails unlock opportunities for communities to enjoy hobbies, exercise, travel, and connect with nature. In 2024, trail usage increased by **16%** across **8** benchmarked TRCA sites.

TRCA's counter program recorded **760K** visitors at TRCA and City of Toronto sites, where activities such as birdwatching, cycling, jogging, and enjoying the outdoors contributed to physical and mental wellbeing.

Advancing a Regional Trail Strategy

TRCA is leading efforts to connect communities to nature, culture, and each other through the ongoing advancement of the **Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region** (<https://trca.ca/conservation/lands/trail-strategy/>).

This strategy envisions a comprehensive regional trail system within green spaces, along the Lake Ontario shoreline, and through the Greenbelt, providing ample opportunities for active transportation and outdoor recreation.

Creating Connections

7 trail and amenity capital projects progressed through planning, design, and construction phases in collaboration with partner municipalities.

Among these developments, **1.16 km** of trails were constructed, including improvements at Bruce Handscomb Park in Pickering, enhancements to The Meadoway multiuse trail, and upgraded access to Rouge National Urban Park in Stouffville.

East Don Trail

A new bridge crossing a rail line now graces the **East Don Trail** (<https://trca.ca/conservation/infrastructure-projects/east-don-trail-project/>). Two sections of the trail in Phase 1 are now connected, with tunnel work scheduled for the summer of 2025.

Once the tunnel is complete, the remaining portions of trail from Taylor Massey Creek to the tunnel will be finished by October 2025, so that Torontonians and visitors alike can enjoy the new connectivity that links nature and sustainable travel options in the heart of the city.

Design of the final section of trail from the new bridge crossing up to Eglinton Avenue East is also underway, with construction tentatively scheduled to start in late 2025, pending funding commitments.

Bolton Camp's Grand Entrance

A new entrance into **Bolton Camp**(<https://trca.ca/learning/bolton-camp-project/>) is now safe and secure thanks to **\$3M** worth of work completed this year. With support from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, it was possible to address poor sightlines and provide ample space for emergency vehicle access. This initiative unlocks future programming potential for this exciting property nestled in the heart of Caledon.

Construction of the new entrance to Bolton Camp

Waterfront Wanderings

Several Waterfront locations re-opened in 2024, much to the delight of trail users.

At Bruce Handscomb Memorial Park in Pickering, the revitalized Waterfront Trail features a fully accessible asphalt path, retaining walls, enhanced lighting, and features for the visually impaired. This transformation, achieved through contributions from the City of Pickering and Trans Canada Trail | Sentier Transcanadien, underscores TRCA's commitment to trail safety and conservation.

Reopening of the revitalized Waterfront Trail at Bruce Handscomb Memorial Park in Pickering.

In Scarborough, marked improvements to the Waterfront Trail included raising the trail above the high-water mark, adding a stepped armourstone beach curb to mitigate wave action, and integrating beach access stairs. These efforts balanced erosion protection with public access, ensuring safe and enjoyable experiences.

Opening of the Waterfront Trail west of Highland Creek

Urban Wilderness at Tommy Thompson Park

This year, **240K** visitors set foot on the unique landform that makes up **Tommy Thompson Park** (<https://tommythompsonpark.ca/>), also known as Toronto's Urban Wilderness destination.

This passive recreation location, an international birding hotspot and home to TRCA's bird research station, has some of the best Toronto views, surrounded by the serenity of nature steps from Canada's busiest city.

Ongoing restoration efforts ensure that the unique habitats that have been created here continue to thrive year-over-year as the long-term buildout of the Master Plan proceeds for this notable spot.

Park Infrastructure Upgrades to Keep Visitors Visiting

TRCA significantly advanced a long-held commitment to improving visitor experience through upgrades across **6** key TRCA destinations: **[Albion Hills](https://trca.ca/parks/albion-hills-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/albion-hills-conservation-area/>), **[Boyd](https://trca.ca/parks/boyd-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/boyd-conservation-area/>), **[Bruce's Mill](https://trca.ca/parks/bruces-mill-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/bruces-mill-conservation-area/>), **[Claireville](https://trca.ca/parks/clairville-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/clairville-conservation-area/>), **[Heart Lake](https://trca.ca/parks/heart-lake-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/heart-lake-conservation-area/>), and **[Petticoat Creek](https://trca.ca/parks/petticoat-creek-conservation-area/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/petticoat-creek-conservation-area/>).

Outdoor enthusiasts have new and upgraded buildings and amenities to experience enjoyable stays: new picnic shelters, a new campground electrical system, a deck / fire pit / gazebo combo, washrooms, and more.

These are in addition to a new boardwalk and other trail repairs and access improvements at several sites, including **[Bolton Resource Management Tract](https://trca.ca/parks/bolton-resource-management-tract/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/bolton-resource-management-tract/>) and **[East Duffins Headwaters](https://trca.ca/parks/east-duffins-headwaters/)** (<https://trca.ca/parks/east-duffins-headwaters/>).

These infrastructure investments are key to helping connect communities to greenspace, so visitors come more often, stay longer, and create lasting memories and nature habits to last a lifetime.

**The Meadoway Continues to Connect
Communities and Nature**

With generous support from the **Weston Family Foundation**(<https://westonfoundation.ca/>) and collaborations with the City of Toronto, Parks Canada and others, TRCA continues to make a significant impact across **The Meadoway**(<https://themeadoway.ca/>), connecting communities in Scarborough to nature.

The meadow restoration team completed adaptive management across **151 ha** of meadow and mown buffer areas. These restored meadows flourished with pollinators and wildlife, increasing biodiversity and enhancing species richness.

TRCA also celebrated the completion of a new segment of multi-use trail between Military Trail and Morningside Avenue.

Officially open to the public, this milestone enhances active transportation linkages for the community and improves connectivity along The Meadoway corridor.

Education remained a cornerstone of outreach efforts. The Meadoway's curriculum-linked education program engaged more than **1K** students and teachers through hands-on activities, field trips, and conservation work. Students were involved in native plant cultivation, meadow planting, and invasive species management, fostering a deeper understanding of local ecosystems.

3.2 A culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion contributing to community wellbeing

TRCA demonstrates that innovative land management leads to more accessible and inclusive communities.

Reflecting, Learning, Honouring, and Building Indigenous Relations

In partnership with True North Aid, TRCA hosted **2** events at The Village at Black Creek to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

These events, one for staff and one open to the public, offered an opportunity to reflect, learn, and honour this significant day.

Both events began with an Indigenous ceremony led by Four Colours Drum Circle, with more than **500** people in attendance at the public and staff day events.

TRCA also partnered with Four Colours Drum Circle to hold an event to commemorate the children of residential schools at the Medicine Wheel Garden at Heart Lake.

Strategic Investments Enable Great Parks Experiences for All

Thanks to support from the Region of Peel and the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, TRCA breathed new life into **Albion Hills Conservation Park** (<https://trca.ca/news/albion-hills-workshop-chalet/>).

A new workshop building for staff includes heat pump heating and provisions for future EV car charging, exemplifying TRCA's commitment to sustainable design. Upgrades to the chalet include roof and insulation replacement, new concrete walkways, and a revamped interior, as well as a new deck and gazebo offering picturesque views.

Paired with roadway and parking lot enhancements, the park also introduced two new cabins, which achieved an impressive **87%** occupancy rate. These upgrades continue to enhance the park's appeal, offering visitors immersive nature-based experiences.

Milestone at Morningside Park

An interpretive trail was advanced featuring **5** gathering places that restore Indigenous presence and perspectives at Morningside Park. The Morningside Legacy Project brings together Williams Treaty First Nations, the City of Toronto Indigenous Affairs Office and 4 Directions Conservation Consulting.

All five stations are currently being designed, with the full design completion of Station 1 celebrated this year. Secured funding through the TD Ready Commitment program ensures that project implementation is scheduled for early 2025.

Professional Pathways for Newcomers

Newcomer programs(<https://trca.ca/get-involved/new-canadians/>) at TRCA deliver support to new Canadians through **3** initiatives:

- The Multicultural Connections Program (MCP)

(<https://trca.ca/get-involved/multicultural-connections/>) engaged **3.6K** people through presentations, cultural events, and outdoor programming.

- The Newcomer Youth Green Economy Project (NYGEP)

(<https://trca.ca/get-involved/newcomer-youth-green-economy-project/>) supported **80** newcomer youth in green sector employment readiness, providing in-class learning, coaching, and field trips.

- The Professional Access Into Employment (PAIE)(<https://paietraining.ca/>) program had **74** people complete the program, obtaining **51** positions in their fields, successfully launching their careers in Ontario through the mentorship of **66** industry professionals.

Backed by municipal, provincial, and federal support, these programs empower newcomers to connect with their communities and local environments while advancing green sector opportunities.

PAIE participants tour a TRCA shoreline erosion control infrastructure project site.

Disc Golf

After three years of preparation, **2 new disc golf courses**

(<https://trca.ca/news/disc-golf-albion-hills/>) launched at Albion Hills Conservation Park in 2024.

These courses, designed using best practices that align recreation with conservation, include 9 and 18-hole layouts.

The courses debuted to widespread acclaim, with the Albion Hills Albatross ranking **#5** on UDisc's Top Wishlisted Courses in Canada (<https://udisc.com/blog/post/disc-golf-courses-people-most-want-to-play-canada>).

Exploring Accessibility at Bruce's Mill

The Nature Centre at Bruce's Mill focused on expanding accessibility and inclusion by collaborating with York University's C4 Capstone classes.

Through this partnership, students collaborated with TRCA and community partners to create a vision for the Nature Centre that addresses the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas shaped actionable plans to make outdoor experiences more accessible. In 2025 some of these ideas will be implemented through a provincially funded initiative, "Able to Explore," to ensure that nature experiences are accessible to all.

3.3 Informed citizens are conservation champions

TRCA collaborates with communities on environmental initiatives.

Learn to Fish

The provincial Learn to Fish (<https://trca.ca/get-involved/learn-to-fish/>) program welcomed **3K** participants to **224** separate events at Heart Lake Conservation Park and Tommy Thompson Park, introducing the possibility of a new nature-loving hobby for future conservation-minded anglers.

Bike The Creek

Bike the Creek

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/etobicoke-mimico-creek/bike-the-creek/>), an annual event that brings together hundreds of cyclists and connects the cities of Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga, marked its milestone **10th anniversary** (<https://trca.ca/news/bike-the-creek-2024/>) this year.

Bike the Creek offers **5** routes ranging from 5 to 71km in celebration of the region's scenic landscapes and active transportation, and exemplifying sustainable communities in action.

Monarch Teacher Network of Canada

The Monarch Teacher Network of Canada

(<https://trca.ca/learning/professional-development/monarch-teacher-network-canada/>) is composed of educators and nature enthusiasts that inspire people to connect with nature through hands-on training and adult learning workshops.

Since 2009, TRCA has served as the Canadian administrator for the program, with generous support from the **Weston Family Foundation**(<https://westonfoundation.ca/>).

In 2024, the program coordinated volunteer teams to identify and document plant and animal species in parks and natural spaces as part of The Big Year Eco-Challenge. This initiative fostered a deeper understanding of species distribution, habitat needs, and the interconnected relationships within ecosystems.

These lessons, while integral to the survival of the iconic Monarch butterfly, also serve as universal principles for fostering conservation ethics.

Peel Ecoschools

For 15 years the **Peel EcoSchools**(<https://trca.ca/peel-ecoschools/>) program has been nurturing sustainability and stewardship through the dedicated school board staff and students who are at the heart of this program.

In order to achieve EcoSchool certification status, schools undertake a suite of customized climate, water, and waste actions that encourage behaviour change and operational shifts for environmental impact.

In Peel, more than half of all schools are now EcoSchools, and half of these certified schools reached gold or platinum levels, the highest levels of achievement possible.

The program has also trained nearly **3K** teachers and has been key in leveraging **276** grants worth **\$70K** for implementation projects such as pollinator and food gardens and Eco-fairs.

To celebrate the program's **15th** anniversary, more than **120** students, educators, and school board staff gathered at Claireville Outdoor Education Centre on May 14 to plant **400** trees and shrubs, symbolizing one for every school in the region. This milestone event was supported by TD Friends of the Environment.

Learning through School and Community Programs

- **103K** school kids engaged through educational programs totalling **612K** learning hours. This occurred across **8 TRCA sites**(<https://trca.ca/learning/education-centres/>) throughout the jurisdiction.
- TRCA collaborated with a broad range of accessibility advocates through many partnerships, including Autism Ontario and regional chapters of The Alzheimer's Society of Canada, Canadian Council for the Blind, Community Living Ontario, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.
- Camps, festivals, special events, and TRCA destinations welcomed over **140K** learners, including at **438** events delivered in local communities.

Two New Nature Schools: Toronto Zoo and Claremont Nature Centre

Surrounded by captivating nature and wildlife, TRCA's newest Nature Schools launched this summer at the **Toronto Zoo**(<https://trca.ca/learning/the-nature-school/#toronto-zoo>) and **Claremont Nature Centre**(<https://trca.ca/learning/the-nature-school/#claremont>).

Senior kindergarten to Grade 3 students can now enjoy unique, hands-on outdoor educational experiences that foster the conservation stewards of tomorrow in all four corners of TRCA's jurisdiction: Peel, York, Durham Region, and the City of Toronto.

Inclusive Programming at The Village at Black Creek

Two new offerings at The Village at Black Creek made this year extra special:

The launch of the **First Saturdays**

(<https://blackcreek.ca/things-to-do/first-saturdays-through-their-eyes/>) program brought Indigenous and equity-deserving artists to the site. In the first year of the program visitors interacted with **19** visual and performing artists. Through their art, they invited visitors to consider the history of the GTA region through their eyes.

In partnership with Indigenous historians and guided by five First Nations, The Village introduced **Changing the Narrative**(<https://blackcreek.ca/about/changing-the-narrative/>), the first phase in a larger exhibit plan to incorporate the history of Indigenous and equity-deserving communities into the site. Sharing Indigenous voices and perspective while creating a quiet space for reflection, the exhibit was visited by more than **75K** people.

Changing the Narrative exhibit at The Village at Black Creek.

Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow

This year, Claremont Nature Centre and Albion Hills Field Centre hosted **25** classes and **753** students from Grades 6 and 7 as part of the **Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow** (<https://enviroleaders.ca/>) program.

This award-winning curriculum-based program is in its **18th** year and has supported over **26K** at-risk students from vulnerable communities in and around Toronto who might not otherwise have access to these experiences.

This has been made possible through various funders, including the instrumental support of the Weston Family Foundation. The overnight component of the program includes activities that showcase sustainability and the power of collective impact to advance sustainability in practice.

Students come away having gained knowledge and skills in ecological literacy and conservation, but likely retain their memories of a special trip the most – and that emotional connectivity is key for tomorrow's eco leaders.

3.4 Inspired communities take environmental action

TRCA enables communities to protect their natural environment with their own hands.

Volunteer Labour of Love

5.9K volunteers invested **21.6K** hours of personal time through different events contributing towards restoration and stewardship projects across the jurisdiction.

156 events included planting **20K** trees, shrubs, and wildflowers and removing **2K** kg of garbage, as well as the removal of **3.6 ha** of invasive species to maintain **30 ha** and beautifully restore another **38 ha** of local greenspace.

SNAP Celebrates 15 Years

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP)

(<https://trca.ca/conservation/sustainable-neighbourhoods/celebrating-15-years/>) proudly celebrated **15** years of transforming GTA communities into vibrant, resilient, and sustainable places.

Over its history, SNAP has planted nearly **16K** trees and shrubs, supported **3,092** flood prevention and home retrofit actions, and implemented **401** green infrastructure and urban agriculture projects. A standout achievement in 2024 was supporting **9** urban agriculture groups in Rexdale, equipping residents with training and resources to boost local food production.

These initiatives have enhanced public spaces, promoted environmental stewardship, and strengthened community connections.

(https://trcaca.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2024/09/25143044/SNAP-15-YEARS-INFOGRAPHIC-FINAL_sept25-24_rsz.jpg)

Girls Can Too

TRCA's **Girls Can Too** (<https://trca.ca/learning/bolton-camp-project/girls-can-too/>) program welcomed **52** young women in Grades 7 through 12 to TRCA Conservation Parks, where they gained hands-on experience in construction and environmental projects that benefit visitors.

Participants completed custom seating installations and built a new cabin, inspiring potential careers in the construction and environmental sectors.

Additionally, a mother-daughter build event attracted **31** participants, fostering family engagement, empowerment, and connection through shared efforts.

Camp News: Canoe Adventures

The launch of the new “Back Country Canoe Adventure” camp at **Lake St. George Field Centre** (<https://trca.ca/lake-st-george-field-centre/>) marked an exciting addition to TRCA's waterfront recreation programs.

Campers earned their Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association (ORCKA) certificate while gaining essential wilderness skills, including camp setup, non-digital map navigation, and fire-making.

This initiative, part of TRCA's effort to reinvigorate waterfront programming at this unique kettle lake property on the Oak Ridges Moraine, complements a suite of programs that served **2,287** participants this year.

Nature for Wellness

TRCA **partnered with PaRx**(<https://trca.ca/news/parx-prescription/>), Canada's national nature prescription program, which connects people to nature for their health via nature prescriptions.

Through discounted Conservation Parks Membership Passes, the call of the great outdoors is more accessible for patients to enjoy the mental and physical benefits of being in natural spaces.

Rural Revival in Peel

TRCA celebrated **20** years of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program together with local farmers, partners, and officials through a special Peel Farm Tour at various sites, including Spirit Tree Estate Cidery.

The event highlighted innovative agri-environmental projects that support soil health, water quality, reduced carbon footprints, and wildlife habitats. This collaboration underscores TRCA's commitment to sustainable agricultural practices.

Celebrating Our Region's Natural Wonders Together

TRCA engaged **34K** visitors through **6** key festivals and events in 2024.

The **Maple Syrup festival**(<https://trca.ca/activities/maple-syrup-festival/>) at Kortright Centre for Conservation and Bruce's Mill Conservation Park drew over **30K** attendees, thanks to premier sponsorship from 407 ETR.

Visitors enjoy TRCA's annual Maple Syrup Festival.

At Tommy Thompson Park (TTP), participants witnessed a total solar eclipse, and celebrated biodiversity during TTP's Bird, Butterfly, and Salmon festivals



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A post shared by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (@trca_hq)

([https://www.instagram.com/reel/DCHPTO-OuDC/?](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DCHPTO-OuDC/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)
[utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DCHPTO-OuDC/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading))

These events exemplify TRCA's dedication to connecting communities to the natural world through engaging and inclusive experiences.

Celebrate the Humber

A designated Canadian Heritage River, the Humber River is rich in history and ecological significance, and is befitting of an annual celebration. This year's **Celebrate the Humber**

(<https://trca.ca/news/celebrate-the-humber-2024/>) event began with Elder Garry Sault, an Elder of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, delivering a traditional ceremony.

The **800** participants in attendance engaged in activities and opportunities to learn about the Humber River and the Carrying Place Trail along which Indigenous peoples built their homes and which also served as an ancient transportation route and post-European settlement for homes and industries. Future generations will depend on the ongoing stewardship of this nationally significant waterway.

Release, Monitor, Citizen Science: Salmon Spark Nature Connections

When deforestation, contamination, overfishing, and in-stream barriers affect native fish populations, fostering a new generation of conservationists needs to be part of the answer. This year, a cohort of students released **87** native salmon fry into Duffins Creek at Claremont Nature Centre in partnership with Ontario Fish and Wildlife – just one part of TRCA's ongoing mission to restore native GTA fish populations through connections and foundational memories.

Regional Watershed Alliance

The Regional Watershed Alliance, a diverse advisory committee to TRCA's Board of Directors, provided input on **12** initiatives in 2024, including Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park, the Youth Greenspace Employment Program, and the Spills Response Program.

Colleague and friend Michael White was commemorated with a tree planting event at Phyllis Rawlinson Park this year. Michael was a member of TRCA's Regional Watershed Alliance, co-chair of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don, president of the Richmond Hill Naturalists, and a passionate environmental advocate who involved countless students and young people in tree planting and conservation.

GOAL: Customer service excellence for efficient service delivery to adapt to a changing environment

COR Certification Achieved

Central to TRCA's ability to serve communities and safeguard collective futures is its unwavering commitment to safety.

In 2024, TRCA achieved the prestigious **Certificate of Recognition (COR) Certification** (<https://www.ihsa.ca/cor-home>) from the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA). This national accreditation verifies TRCA's successful implementation of a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety Management System and highlights its adherence to the highest health and safety standards in Ontario and across Canada.

The COR certification process evaluates compliance with legislative requirements and best practices through rigorous document reviews, interviews, and site observations.

Maintaining this certification requires continuous diligence, including internal and external audits.

TRCA's next internal audit is scheduled for 2025, followed by an external audit in 2027. These processes ensure that TRCA continues to meet and exceed the standards required to uphold certification.

This accomplishment underscores TRCA's dedication to fostering a safe and secure workplace while meeting the expectations of public and private sector partners who recognize COR as a benchmark of safety excellence.

Achieving COR Certification reflects the collective efforts of TRCA's Health and Safety team, the COR cross-divisional working group, and all employees who contributed to meeting these rigorous standards. It demonstrates leadership in promoting health and safety excellence throughout all operations.

With COR Certification in place, TRCA is well-positioned to protect communities and meet the challenges of the future.

Recognition as a 2025 Greater Toronto Top Employer

On December 3, 2024, TRCA was recognized as one of **Greater Toronto's Top Employers** (<https://trca.ca/news/greater-toronto-top-employers/>), a distinction that highlights the organization's dedication to fostering an exceptional workplace.

This recognition reflects TRCA's commitment to prioritizing innovation, inclusivity, and employee wellbeing, enabling its team to thrive and deliver meaningful outcomes for communities across the region.

The evaluation for this recognition considered key criteria, including workplace culture, employee benefits, professional development opportunities, and community involvement.

TRCA's focus on flexible work arrangements, comprehensive learning programs, and a collaborative, inclusive atmosphere distinguished it among other organizations.

This achievement underscores the expertise and dedication of TRCA employees, whose contributions play a critical role in advancing the organization's mission to build safe, resilient, and thriving communities. Their efforts demonstrate the impact of a workplace that supports and empowers its workforce.

Looking ahead, TRCA remains focused on fostering a culture that reflects its values and promotes continuous improvement, reinforcing its position as an employer of choice and a leader in driving positive change across the region.

4.1 A strong and skilled workforce

TRCA's workforce is its most important resource, and the organization will remain competitive in the employment market through its commitment to talent retention and investment.

Staff Engagement

- **81%** of staff participated in the annual staff engagement survey, which is reflective of employees' commitment to TRCA's engagement journey.
- An increase of **30.9** points of the Net Promoter Score was achieved, which is an industry-leading metric used to help assess overall employee satisfaction. This shift is a substantial improvement and reflects the effects of implemented changes to enhance a positive work environment.
- All **15** priority areas targeted for engagement showed positive progress, increasing by **5-17%**.

Ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Progress

2024 saw continued commitment and delivery of TRCA's playbook initiatives, with **86%** of initiatives in the plan being completed or almost complete.

This year TRCA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) working group expanded to a renewed DEI

Implementation Committee framework. The group comprises management and employee representation across all TRCA divisions and, with a strong mandate, ensures TRCA is able to continue to build inclusive programs and services that are reflective of the diverse communities it serves.

Roots of Recruitment

- Hired **513** seasonal staff in 2024 and attended **9** career fairs and **3** speaking engagements with institutions and agencies, including a career-focused presentation to TRCA's Youth Council.
-
- **96%** of seasonal staff stated they would return for a future opportunity, signalling a successful recruitment strategy.
-
- **92%** of seasonal staff are likely to refer a friend to apply for a seasonal role.

TRCA summer camp staff.

Supported Summer Jobs, Future Careers

TRCA was pleased to host six Members of Parliament on site visits to witness the positive impacts of the Government of Canada's Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy program. This vital funding supports TRCA's capacity during its busiest months.

In 2024, **106** participants gained valuable learning and employment experiences across various fields in the Greater Toronto Area, underscoring TRCA's commitment to nurturing future careers and fostering professional growth.

MP Ruby Sahota visits Heart Lake Conservation Park to meet TRCA's federally-funded Canada Summer Jobs staff

Committed Staff Celebrated

In September, TRCA recognized the contributions of **112** employees celebrating milestones

ranging from five to 30 years of service at a ceremony held at The Village at Black Creek.

Additional staff appreciation events, such as the annual Pancake Breakfast and Summer BBQ, provided more opportunities for colleagues to connect and celebrate collective achievements.

TRCA's annual Pancake Breakfast

Ravine Youth Team

Now in its **5th** year, the **Ravine Youth Team**(<https://trca.ca/learning/ravine-youth-team/>), initiated as a pilot program in partnership with the City of Toronto, continues to offer meaningful employment opportunities for post-secondary students and recent graduates in environmental studies.

Various TRCA divisions work collaboratively to offer post-secondary youth enrolled or recently graduated from environmental sector education programs paid employment in a summer contract position, as well as enhanced career building opportunities such as certifications, workshops, lunch and learn events, and panel discussions.

This program supports the initiatives of the Toronto Ravine Strategy, unlocking opportunities to explore a diversity of environmental sector employment, broadening choices for future employment in the environmental field.

Flexible Work, Performance Development

- **99%** of employees in required positions have Performance Development Program goals.
-
- **54%** of staff have a Flexible Work Arrangement in place.
-
- Compressed Work Week Arrangement options were formally adopted, following a successful pilot in 2023.
-

4.2 Provide and manage an efficient and adaptable organization

TRCA enhances the sustainability of its business model for generations to come by strengthening relationships with our partner municipalities and securing long-term partner support.

Sustainable Head Office Construction

This year, TRCA completed the final touches on its new **Administrative Head Office** (<https://trca.ca/about/trca-administrative-office-project/>), which includes rain gardens, solar chimneys/waterwalls, preheat glazing assemblies, open loop geothermal HVAC, and solar thermal panel arrays.

The office, set to open in 2025, highlights TRCA's leadership in sustainable urban construction and collaboration across sectors.

The award-winning mass timber building integrates unique technologies, underscoring TRCA's commitment to protecting the Toronto bioregion while fostering partnerships and gaining valuable insights.

Nature is Priceless

247% revenue growth over 2023 marks TRCA's second-highest grossing year to date from film revenues by hosting Peacock, Netflix, Sony Pictures, and others.

TRCA's exceptional adaptability, operational efficiency, and experience working with the film industry allowed TRCA to turn opportunities into major successes following recent industry labour disruptions.

These **filming partnerships**(<https://trca.ca/film-productions/>) are always executed using best practices to support program investments that continue to pay dividends. Look out for TRCA greenspaces on your big screen!

Grants: Key Highlights

New Asset Management Plan

Endorsement of TRCA's first comprehensive Asset Management Plan occurred this year. The new Asset Management Plan in its accessible digital format ensures that users can now quickly glean insights on their portfolios and plan capital projects. Building Condition Assessments for The Village at Black Creek North Lands, a collection of **5** heritage buildings, were also completed, facilitating internal and external conversations to advance the protection of the historic buildings.

Employee Engagement for Conservation

TRCA's **Look After Where You Live**(<https://foundation.trca.ca/look-after-where-you-live/>) program saw enthusiastic participation from **37** organizations spanning diverse sectors, including banking, manufacturing, food and beverage, and entertainment.

1.5K individuals laced up their boots at **19** locations and donned gloves to restore greenspaces by removing **1.7K** kg of litter and invasive species, and planting **1.7K** trees/shrubs and **1K** flowers.

These actions do more than just beautify and take care of our natural spaces. Look After Where You Live offers a chance to connect with, learn about, and foster a deeper appreciation for the role of our natural world.

New Times, New Technology

TRCA embraced advanced technologies in 2024 to enhance its operations and improve decision-making.

- **High accuracy global navigation satellite system (GNSS) receivers and a geospatial mapping application** were deployed to collect inspection data for **Erosion Risk Management**(<https://trca.ca/conservation/erosion-risk-management/>) work. The location and elevation accuracy of below 30 cm (in many cases 5-10 cm accuracy) means erosion hazards and erosion control asset deficiencies are being delineated almost exactly as they occur on site. Closing the gap on data inaccuracies results in improved decisions through reduced costs and improved forecasting.
-

- **30** new **acoustic recorders** were installed at long-term wetland monitoring stations, enabling TRCA to identify the calling periods of individual frog species, critical indicators of wetland health. These tools will also help assess climate change impacts, such as earlier-than-usual frog calls in spring.
-

- **Drone technology** assisted in creating photogrammetry and 3D modeling of the Tradesman Cottage site in Pickering, a first for the Archaeology team achieved through strong internal collaboration.
-

- The implementation of **Electronic Fund Transfers** for vendor payments increases speed, improves security, ensures a lighter environmental footprint and efficiency gains.
-

Supporting Projects, Regional Knowledge and a Respectful Reputation

TRCA licensed archaeologists conducted **44** assessments on **35 ha** in support of legislated internal and partner project needs, respecting the rich heritage value of Anishnaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat nations roots in our jurisdiction.

4.3 Responsive relationships and a trusted brand with a reputation for excellence

TRCA builds on past successes to deepen existing relationships and reach new audiences.

Heart Lake Medicine Wheel Garden's Ongoing Legacy

14 years ago TRCA embarked on a journey of honouring and reconciling with the region's history in one simple way: by collaborating with Indigenous partners more deeply.

One such collaboration led to the development and implementation of a **Medicine Wheel Garden** (https://trca.ca/parks/heart-lake-conservation-area/#park_title_760_13) at Heart Lake Conservation Park.

Designed collaboratively as a space to honour seasonal cycles, it features **30** species representing the four cardinal directions, sacred medicines, colours, animals, and cycles of life.

This sacred place provides an opportunity for reflection at events both large and small. In 2024, public and private groups gathered here to commemorate the children of residential schools.

The presence of this special garden serves as a reminder to all visitors of the connectivity and shared history of TRCA's communities.

TRCA Youth Council: Tomorrow's Leaders in Action Today

Tomorrow's generation of change makers, **TRCA's Youth Council** (<https://trca.ca/conservation/watershed-management/regional-watershed-alliance/youth-council/>), grew to **665** members this year.

Building healthy communities through nature connection advanced with their leadership this year

in hosting notable events including: TurtleFest at Heart Lake Conservation Park together with the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre; the first in-person town hall with other youth organizations attending including York Region Youth Food Committee and the Toronto Environmental Youth Council; and presenting the youth perspective at the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust Annual General Meeting.

In addition, members participated in retreats, litter cleanups, plantings, volunteer efforts, and other activities that build capacity for a sustainable future.

TRCA Youth Council Turtlefest at Heart Lake Conservation Park.

Respected Reputation

Ontario Field Ornithologists

TRCA staff were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Ontario Field Ornithologists “for designing, seeking expert opinion, and implementing a science-based plan to protect the first pair of nesting Bald Eagles in the City of Toronto amid the demand and desire for control of co-nesting Double-crested Cormorants”.

Canadian HR Awards

TRCA was nominated for two **2 Canadian HR Awards**(<https://hrawards.ca/>), an industry-wide recognition.

TRCA's excellence and innovation in virtual and remote work programs and practices garnered a nomination for the **Best Remote Work Strategy** award.

TRCA was also recognized for the **University Of Waterloo Award For Next-Generation Employment Innovation**, which celebrates Human Resources teams that have implemented an innovative initiative in the last 12 months to provide employment opportunities for young people/graduates. With youth representing a large proportion of TRCA's seasonal staff, this award nomination is a great honour!

High Line Symposium

A presentation at the October 10, 2024, High Line Symposium on The Meadowway in the “Cultivating Communities with Nature” session was made along with participation in a panel discussion (pictured below).

The bi-annual Symposium brings together Network members and supporters from across North America to share insights and best practices.

Valuable connections made during the event will support the development of The Meadowway’s corporate sponsorship program.

4.4 Transparent decision making and accountable results

TRCA measures and evaluates performance to inform outcome-based decision making.

Annual Audit

The 2023 Audited Financial Statements were issued with an unqualified auditor’s report, demonstrating transparency and compliance with financial reporting standards.

Optimizing Processes and Procedures

Maintaining up-to-date policies ensures alignment with current laws and standards, mitigates risks, and supports continuous improvement.

This year, **67%** of all corporate policies were reviewed, and **41** new and updated policies and

guidelines were approved and went into effect. A total of **163** staff were trained in the internal meeting management platform eScribe for efficiency and transparency gains.

Accountability Through Information Sharing

Freedom of Information requests provide a vital tool for the public to access information held by organizations, ensuring openness and transparency in decision-making and activities.

In 2024, work was undertaken on **59** requests. **52** new requests were received and **23** were closed, signaling TRCA's commitment to transparency, accountability, and trust-building.

Advancing Safe and Secure Properties

In addition to attending to repairs and maintenance requirements as they occur, **81%** of planned and budgeted priority repairs or replacements were completed, ensuring property portfolio implementation needs advance each year through State of Good Repair capital plan execution.

Collaboration Pays Off

With support from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario's Canada Community Revitalization Fund, TRCA was able to complete **\$7.3M** in vital infrastructure repairs and replacements between 2022 and 2024, including paving work at **4** conservation parks and construction of new accessible restrooms, outdoor picnic shelters, wayfinding signage, and more across TRCA's jurisdiction.

Newly paved roadway at Albion Hills Conservation Park

TRCA was awarded **\$750K** through the MECP Wetlands Conservation Partner Program to restore and enhance wetland habitats across the Region of Peel, improving habitat for native species and enhancing local flood resilience.

TRCA also collaborated with its partner municipalities, including the City of Brampton and the Town of Ajax, to complete wetland restoration and enhancement projects, which were

supported with over **\$3M** in funding from the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program.

Green Fleet Transition

TRCA officially adopted a Fleet Decarbonization Policy in January of 2023. Since then, significant progress has been made toward decarbonization of TRCA fleet vehicles.

Notably, almost **44%** of TRCA's on-highway passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks are either fully electric, plug-in hybrid vehicles, or hybrid gas-electric vehicles. This includes **3** battery electric trucks, underscoring TRCA's commitment to adopting advanced, sustainable transportation solutions.

Further progress was achieved with the purchase of battery electric zero-turn mowers for use in Conservation Parks, as well as the repowering of a solar pontoon boat at Lake St. George Field Centre with modern electrically powered outboard marine engines.

For diesel-powered vehicles that have not yet been replaced with electric alternatives, TRCA introduced renewable diesel in 2024, significantly reducing emissions during this transitional period.

25 charging stalls across various TRCA sites support Green Fleet transition as TRCA continues to right-size, hybridize, and electrify operations.

A Legacy of Circularity and Material Diversion

For decades, TRCA has embraced the principle of re-use in its restoration operations, a concept now widely recognized as circularity.

Effective resource management is essential not only for financial stewardship, but also for minimizing environmental impacts, particularly the emissions generated by the re-use, supply, and transportation of goods.

Materials like unwanted aggregates, root wads, root clusters, and boulders, often discarded by developers, play a critical role in **90%** of TRCA's restoration projects.

When used correctly, these materials provide vital habitat features in streams, wetlands, and terrestrial environments, sometimes becoming a signature element of TRCA's restoration approach.

By reclaiming these materials from nearby development sites, TRCA restoration crews have reduced both costs and TRCA's carbon footprint.

In 2024, TRCA also sourced soils from nearby municipal and private projects to advance numerous priorities, including works at Etobicoke Centennial Park, Ashbridges Bay Landform, and the future Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area.

These outcomes demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits that arise from mutually beneficial partnerships between the conservation and construction/development sectors.

TRCA SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

As of December 31, 2024

Chief Executive Officer

John MacKenzie

Corporate Services

Linda Charlebois, Director

Conservation Parks and Lands

Richard Ubbens, Director

***Development and Engineering
Services***

Sameer Dhalla, Director

Education and Training

Darryl Gray, Director

Legislative and Property Services

Kathryn Lockyer, Director

Policy Planning

Laurie Nelson, Director

Restoration and Infrastructure

Anil Wijesooriya, Director

Human Resources

Natalie Blake, Chief Human Resources Officer

TRCA JURISDICTION & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(<https://trca.ca/app/uploads/2025/01/ar-2024-jurisdiction-map-BOD-updated-jan16-2025.pdf>)

TRCA ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

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**PARTNERS IN PROJECT GREEN EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – Click
+ to View**

+ NATURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NSEC) – Click to View