

THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT

Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek

November 26, 2008

Release of Regeneration Plan for Taylor Massey Creek

The Taylor Massey Project has today released its regeneration plan for Taylor Massey Creek, a major tributary to the Don River, and will be seeking public comment until early 2009.

Reach by Reach, a 49-page report prepared by volunteers, provides both strategic recommendations to four levels of government and details on regenerating the Taylor Massey sub-watershed to the fullest extent possible, suggesting that \$4,275,000 be spent on the top five priorities over 5 years.

Reach by Reach is offered as a companion document to the new Don Watershed Plan, being developed by staff at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and its advisory committee, the Don Watershed Regeneration Council.

“The current draft of the Don Plan provides an inspiring, high-level vision of the watershed, urging smart growth, municipal-conservation authority cooperation, the adoption of green technologies ranging from expanded mass transit to energy-efficient buildings, and six regeneration concept sites for the Don watershed”, according to principal author Andrew McCammon. “Nonetheless, it falls short on implementation details and would not result in the full regeneration of any of the Don’s three main tributaries, let alone the whole watershed.”

“In contrast to the new Don Plan” states TMP Chair Nancy Penny, “*Reach by Reach* shines a light on how to implement the regeneration of a full sub-watershed, augmenting the six concept sites being proposed in the new Don Plan with a systematic plan for the regeneration of Taylor Massey Creek: protecting water quality, remediating our ravines, linking our neighbourhoods, and facilitating the transition to sustainable development through enhanced community stewardship initiatives.”

Reach by Reach is based on four principles of watershed regeneration, and contains four sections the Don Plan does not:

- A detailed summary of sub-watershed current conditions;
- A vision for a revitalized creek;
- Suggestions for improved agency performance on watershed management; and,
- Specific suggestions to protect water quality, regenerate the creek, and establish trail throughout the sub-watershed, supported by a draft budget to implement the top priorities.

Public consultations on the new Don Plan will be coordinated by the TRCA in early 2009, and the TMP will receive comments and suggestions on *Reach by Reach* over the same period while articulating its goals in the public consultations on the Don Plan. At the end of the public consultations on the Don Plan, the TMP will submit the final version of *Reach by Reach* to our members, the public, and appropriate local agencies.

Digital copies of the full 49-page document are available on the TMP's website, www.theTMP.org or can be requested via e-mail to eco@theTMP.org.

The executive summary of *Reach by Reach*, a note about the Taylor Massey Project, and the section summarizing implementation priorities are provided below.

For further Information, please contact Andrew McCammon at 416 231 9484 or via email.

Executive Summary

Taylor Massey Creek is the most polluted and degraded tributary of the Don River, the most polluted river in Ontario. Regardless, many of the people who live along its banks love the potential of this little creek and its accompanying ravines, forests, and meadows, and have a vision for its regeneration.

We urge local agencies with a role in watershed management to embrace our vision of a regenerated sub-watershed: protecting water quality, remediating our ravines, linking our neighbourhoods, and facilitating the transition to sustainable development through enhanced community stewardship initiatives.

In particular, we urge the City of Toronto and the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority, with support from the federal and provincial governments as required, to:

- Implement the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan in an appropriate watershed management framework that includes targets with measurable outcomes, restores the creek to natural conditions where possible, and engages the community;
- Complete the Storm Outfall Monitoring Program while transitioning it to become a comprehensive surface water quality monitoring program, with spills and aquatic test results from all levels of government posted to the internet for public access; and,
- Budget \$4,275,000.00 to implement the key regeneration priorities for Taylor Massey Creek, as detailed on pages 47-48, over the next five years.

About the Taylor Massey Project

Established in 2003, the Taylor Massey Project focuses on:

- Engaging local residents by coordinating local clean-ups, plantings, and educational activities;
- Articulating a watershed management approach to protecting and restoring the Creek; and,
- Connecting the communities of the Creek with new trails, bridges, and street & railway crossings.

Working with more than 20 partner organizations, the TMP has staged 66 events involving 3,425 participants who have planted 3,550 trees and shrubs and picked up more than 1,300 bags of litter over the last 6 years.

During this period, we have also made 21 submissions to local agencies.

A final version of *Reach by Reach* will be released in 2009.

6. Prioritization and Estimated Costs of Regenerating TMC

6.1 Institutional Leadership

- A. The **City of Toronto** should implement the 25-year, \$1B Wet Weather Flow Master Plan in an appropriate watershed management framework that includes targets with measurable outcomes, restores the creek to natural conditions where possible, and engages the community. The City should also transition the Storm Outfall Monitoring Program to become a comprehensive surface water quality monitoring program making with data from all levels of government available on the internet.

Cost: Wet Weather Flow is already budgeted. Combining existing monitoring with the continuation of the SOMP should not present increased costs above current budgets.

- B. The **TRCA** should balance its recent efforts on regional sustainability with renewed commitment to water quality, leaking landfills on lands it owns, run-off from snow dumps, and the Remedial Action Plan. It should also move from watershed management to sub-watershed management, including standardized indicators and regeneration targets that can be assessed in report cards, and a larger role for reach stewardship groups on advisory councils for each watershed or sub-watershed.

Cost: Minimal new costs for increased monitoring, but no other additional costs;

- C. The **Provincial Government** should commit to cleaning up and protecting the Great Lakes and implement an adequacy assessment of current provincial water quality objectives, including the issuance of advisories and action plans when the objectives are exceeded.

Cost: These are policy initiatives with minimal costs. Program costs to be identified but fall within currently stated provincial goals.

- D. The **Federal Government** should pursue a new national water strategy, a commitment to de-listing Great Lakes Areas of Concern, and increased transparency and accountability for the Toronto Remedial Action Plan.

Cost: These are policy initiatives with minimal costs. Program costs are committed on paper, but require a new policy agenda to be implemented.

Joint Responsibility for Water Quality

The TMP encourages better cooperation and more publicly-available reporting from all agencies involved in aquatic monitoring, including the Water Quality Index and Beneficial Use Impairments, spills and exceedances under Certificates of Approval, and monitoring for e-coli, benthic invertebrates, the health of fish populations, and leachate from abandoned landfills.

We suggest the best way forward may be to transition the resources used in the Storm Outfall Monitoring Program, as described on page 16, to create a comprehensive surface water quality monitoring program, with spills and aquatic test results from all levels of government posted to the internet for public access.

6.2 Reach by Reach Implementation

Priority	Description	Costs *
Top Priorities, as identified in sections 4 and 5, requiring capital budget expenditures		
1	<p>A: The Warden Hydro Trail: The strongest message that can be sent on managing TMC as a watershed is a commitment by the City of Toronto to acquire responsibility for the corridor and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct separate pedestrian and cycling paths, with associated berms and swales; • Install one traffic light, a bridge over the railway south of Ellesmere, and directional signage to link the Warden Hydro Trail to the Creek-side Trail and • Plant 10,000 trees and shrubs per year for 20 years. <p>See page 45.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,500,000 • \$350,000 <p>10,000 trees/yr for 20 years - from existing budgets</p>
	<p>B. The Creek-side Trail: Costs for infrastructure for the Creek-side Trail are included in the reach budgets below.</p>	
2	<p>Terraview-Willowfield: Implementing Phase III of the plan from 1994 while remediating the plunge pool and underground storm-water pond should be possible in short order. A leash-free dog area against the 401, a proposed butterfly garden, and dual pedestrian and cycling trails can be added, along with a safe street crossing at Ellesmere. See page 23.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750,000
3	<p>The Eglinton Reach – The Maide Vale, Eglinton, and Farlinger Ravines: The three ravines need both extensive natural regeneration and significant infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive creek-bank remediation, with trail and tree plantings; • A pedestrian bridge in Maida Vale; • A pedestrian bridge in Eglinton Flats; • Regeneration of flood plain south of Eglinton; and, • A railway crossing south of Eglinton <p>See page 28.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250,000 • \$ 75,000 • \$ 50,000 • \$ 50,000 • \$250,000
4	<p>The Underwriters' Reach: Regeneration plans for this reach should be jointly developed by the TRCA and the City of Toronto's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remediation of perched culverts • The installation of oil and grit separators where needed; • Formalized trail surface; and, • The possible installation of underground storm-flow storage facilities. <p>The reach should also become a model for the development of a Corporate Stewardship Initiative. See page 26.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ 50,000 • \$100,000 • \$100,000 • Included in WWF • \$50,000

Priority	Description	Costs *
5	Warden Woods: WW should be designated an Environmentally Significant Area. The development of plans to protect and regenerate the woods and the creek should be led by a Community Stewardship Initiative, tentatively called the Friends of Warden Woods, to be coordinated by the City but with a citizen-led Board including the TMP, local neighbourhood and other community organizations, and property owners abutting the park. See page 33.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 / yr for 3 years to create the Friends of Warden Woods; \$50,000 to develop a regeneration plan; and \$500,000 to implement

Secondary Priorities with operating but no capital budget expenditures

6	Pine Hills: The TMP hopes to work with Pine Hills Cemetery, the TRCA and the City to develop a model environmental stewardship initiative for cemeteries in Toronto. See page 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
7, 8, 9	Manhattan and the Ferris and Curity Ravines: The City and TRCA, in cooperation with the TMP, local neighbourhood associations, and other organizations working in the community, should develop a Stewardship Protocol for all private properties abutting the Creek along these reaches. The Protocol could protect against the discharge of water, litter, and the seeds from non-native species from private property into the ravine. See pages 25, 39, 40.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in outreach budget for WFF.

Longer-term priorities with costs to be determined

10 - 14	St Clair, Dentonia, the Goulding Estate, and Taylor Creek Park: Work on these reaches, which we have not costed, can proceed after the priorities above. Regeneration goals mentioned in section 4 could be included in Wet Weather Flow, a capital budget other than WWF, or incorporated into park operating budgets.	TBD
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Total Estimated Costs for the top five priorities: \$4,275,000

This investment would:

- Regenerate four reaches;
- Establish the Taylor Massey Trail; and,
- Create three community-based stewardship initiatives.

* Costs are best estimates from the TMP and need to be refined.