



**Ward 6**

City Hall, 100 Queen Street West  
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Date: November 3 2020

RE: Manual for Stewardship in Public Ravines and Natural Areas

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**Summary:**

The health of Toronto's ravines and natural areas has been declining, suffering under the pressures of invasive species, climate change, overuse by people, land development including public infrastructure, and excessive amounts of litter. Ravine health is now at an ecological tipping point.

The City and the TRCA have a number of strategy documents that commit to addressing ravine health, including:

- Toronto Ravine Strategy
- Toronto Pollinator Protection Strategy
- Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy
- TRCA Living City Report Cards

Each of these strategies calls for Toronto's citizens to have an expanded role in taking action to restore the health of our ravines and natural areas. The City, alone, is not equipped to handle the threats of invasive plants, improving biodiversity and litter. Existing Community Stewardship Programs don't have the scope to support the needed work.

Toronto City Council passed several motions on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, that addressed ravine strategy implementation. In Motion 14, City Council directed the creation of:

- a. natural-areas stewardship programs to deal with invasive species that will permit qualified volunteers to lead volunteer groups without City supervision;
- b. a user-friendly and cost-effective protocol that will support and encourage citizen volunteer engagement in both ravine clean-up and stewardship to help restore the City's ravines and other natural areas;

Additional motions were passed to address the role of schools and youth in helping Toronto's natural environment. Stewardship of Toronto's natural areas aligns well with other specific City initiatives, such as Live Green Toronto, in TORavines, Clean Toronto Together, Youth equity programs, Resilience Strategy, etc.

This manual supports the implementation of the Council motions by describing the activities that stewards will undertake (litter cleanup, invasive plant removal, native species planting, monitoring) and by defining two programs for independent stewardship (Adopt-a-Patch and Pop-Up Events).

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These programs will be led by volunteer stewards who have completed a Lead Steward training program, instructed by experts and professionals in ecological restoration.

A web enabled portal is being developed to support recruitment and registration of stewards for stewardship events. This portal will be hosted on the University of Toronto, Daniels Faculty's Forestry web site.

This stewardship initiative is premised on the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation providing a comprehensive permit to allow Lead Stewards to supervise groups of stewards in performing the activities described in the manual.

**Recommendations:**

Executive Committee recommends:

1. That City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, to review the Manual for Stewardship in Public Ravines and Natural Areas, and after consultation with Manual authors, report back to the Executive Committee in January, 2021 on how this Manual can be implemented as the template for expanding ravine and natural areas stewardship in Toronto without City supervision.

Sincerely,

James Pasternak  
Toronto City Councillor, Ward 6, York Centre  
Chair, Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
Chair, North York Community Council

Enclosure