



Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve

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November 16, 2020

To: Mayor John Tory and Members of City Executive Committee
Regarding Item 18.12 Manual for Stewardship

Dear Mayor Tory and Councillors,

At Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve, our action arm is our Stewardship Team that works to remove invasive species, plant native species, improve soils, report trail and other issues. Both youngsters and university age youth, individuals and community groups take responsibility in this ravine by participating in plantings, cleanups, outreach, and educational activities. We are volunteers, and we work with the Toronto Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department when expert help is needed. But our work is happening on just a tiny part of the many natural areas that need similar care and are currently degrading without help; and enduring more overuse during the Covid 19 pandemic as people seek solace and relief in nature. Although there are other Stewardship groups in Toronto it is clearly not enough. A walk through natural areas will reveal acres of spreading invasive plants like Dog Strangling Vine, Phragmites, and Common Buckthorn everywhere. Vital habitats for native wildlife are deteriorating, native plants disappearing. Our Conservation Authority experts have given the condition of our ravines a grade of D. This is unacceptable.

The Manual for Stewardship in Public Ravines and Natural Areas is one solution. It has been carefully put together by a number of people who want to see the condition of our ravines and natural areas improve over time rather than going downhill. The main idea is to expand existing models of stewardship with somewhat less supervision, so that many more acres of ravines and natural areas can have some TLC based on ecological principles, and implemented by trained leaders with their stewards. The document has some details already developed, but the idea is that best practices and knowledge would be continually updated. Now, we must all find ways to do more with less - this is a perfect example of a creative application of that axiom.

Thank you,

Paula Davies
President
Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve
Charitable # 893956572

cc. Councillor P. Fletcher

