



April 14th, 2021

To Who It May Concern: re: **AA10.3 meeting**

For Consideration to deal with the Toronto Ravine Strategy Update and Developing Economic Opportunities for Indigenous Businesses.

The Toronto Ravine Strategy Update is an exciting opportunity to develop an inclusive collaborative approach to envision and to create a new and historic path forward for Toronto and its 7 watersheds with rivers and feeder streams. ACER supports the revisiting and revisioning of the Toronto Ravine Strategy and develop Economic Opportunities for Indigenous Businesses.

Supporting the Vision:

ACER – Association for Canadian Educational Resources, established in 1987, is a registered charity. Many of our projects have worked with communities to plant and to monitor trees in riparian zones and flood plains using Smithsonian and Environment Canada protocols. Part of Toronto’s ravine system has also been traditional indigenous trading waterways such as the Humber River e.g. site of ACER flood plain planting done with partners in October 2019 in Rowntree Mills Park. Trails and scout trees are illustrated on the attached map.

Feasibility:

The ravine system could host many opportunities for indigenous placemaking. Some such programs are in place at Forest Valley and Rouge Valley Centres. Carmine Stefano Community Centre along the Humber River could be established to deliver educational programs. Such Educational tours could trace the trail of the indigenous peoples linking history to the present. Archeological dig sites around the city such as in Boyd Park could provide tour and field experience for students and tourists. The Elders of the Indigenous peoples could share their knowledge and skills in workshops at specific sites in different seasons. The ROM educational programs could include such tours and workshops. These concepts are all doable.

Humber Centre for Urban Ecology, ACER’s urban international forest biodiversity plot which we established in 2002, has been the training site for many ACER interns - from Sheridan College, UT Mississauga, UT Scarborough, and Canada Summer Jobs. Day visits there by countless elementary students and summer camp students have for many years included activities indigenous studies. Humber College has an office for indigenous students. This year a new formal Humber College program has opened. See <https://humber.ca/indigenous>. These programs students could help with the visioning and implementation of placemaking in our ravine system.



Map of the Toronto Carrying-Place Trail along the

[More details](#)

Charles William Jefferys
<http://www.ourstoriesininf.ca/islandora/object/ourstories%3A%29399>

TreeCaching Trail ACER program, developed with partners on their established trails, enabled the public to identify different species of trees along the trail and uses by indigenous, pioneer and current peoples.

Another way of inclusion of indigenous history e.g. tied to the great Red Oak along the Humber River valley.

This led to our new program, soon be launched, called Tree Tracker especially for those who wish to plant their own trees and monitor their success.

The green oases of the ravine system of Toronto provide an opportunity for place-making to support indigenous peoples as they honour their history on these lands and help others learn and respect trees. ACER has proven to be flexible and meet the needs of the community, to educate, train and equip people of all ages to find their forest or plant one – and to follow growth over time, teach others to enjoy, become responsible and care for their trees in their neighbourhood. We are very interested in entering into planning discussions with like-minded representatives especially indigenous representatives, educators, foresters and decision makers.

From the earliest -The Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre along the West Don River to the latest still under program development – Carmine Stephano Community Centre – near the great Red Oak along the Humber River East to the Rouge Valley- thousands of students have outdoor learning experiences. But the ravine system in a city of millions needs many more opportunities for outdoor education with its all-inclusive approach- training educators, sharing of indigenous culture, everyday science and stewardship, learning arboriculture, undergraduate to postgraduate internships- endless list as we are facing climate crises and need to understand how we can better relate to the land.

ACER supports all efforts to enrich and broaden introductions to Toronto Ravines and evolve programs that are appropriate to the opportunities each ravine offers in each neighbourhood!

Sincerely,

Alice Casselman
Founding President ACER

Association for Canadian Educational Resources

www.acer-acre.ca

905-601-7685