

WELCOME

Vale of Avoca Improvement Project Drop-In Public Open House #1 October 7, 2026



Help Us Create A Respectful Space **Welcome!**

To create a respectful space, please:

- Approach conversations with curiosity
- Keep an open mind
- Treat others with respect and kindness
- Critique ideas, not people
- Abide by the City of Toronto's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/
Discrimination Policy and Hate Activity Policy

Participants are not required to share their identity, lived experience, or other personal information in order to participate.

As a project team, we hold ourselves to the same respectful engagement guidelines and will offer reminders, as needed, about these expectations.

If discriminatory, aggressive, or threatening language or behaviours are witnessed, and efforts are not made towards meaningful repair, those causing harm may be asked to leave.

If you have accessibility needs that are not being met, or if accommodations can be made in order to enable your full participation, please let a member of the project team know.

Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

About the Study

What is the Project?

The Vale of Avoca is a beloved trail system, important natural area, and valued public asset. The City of Toronto, in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and in collaboration with the Midtown Ravines Group is engaging the community on ways to improve the ravine. The study will recommend ways to improve how people access, move through and experience the ravine, while reducing the impacts of storms and erosion, and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

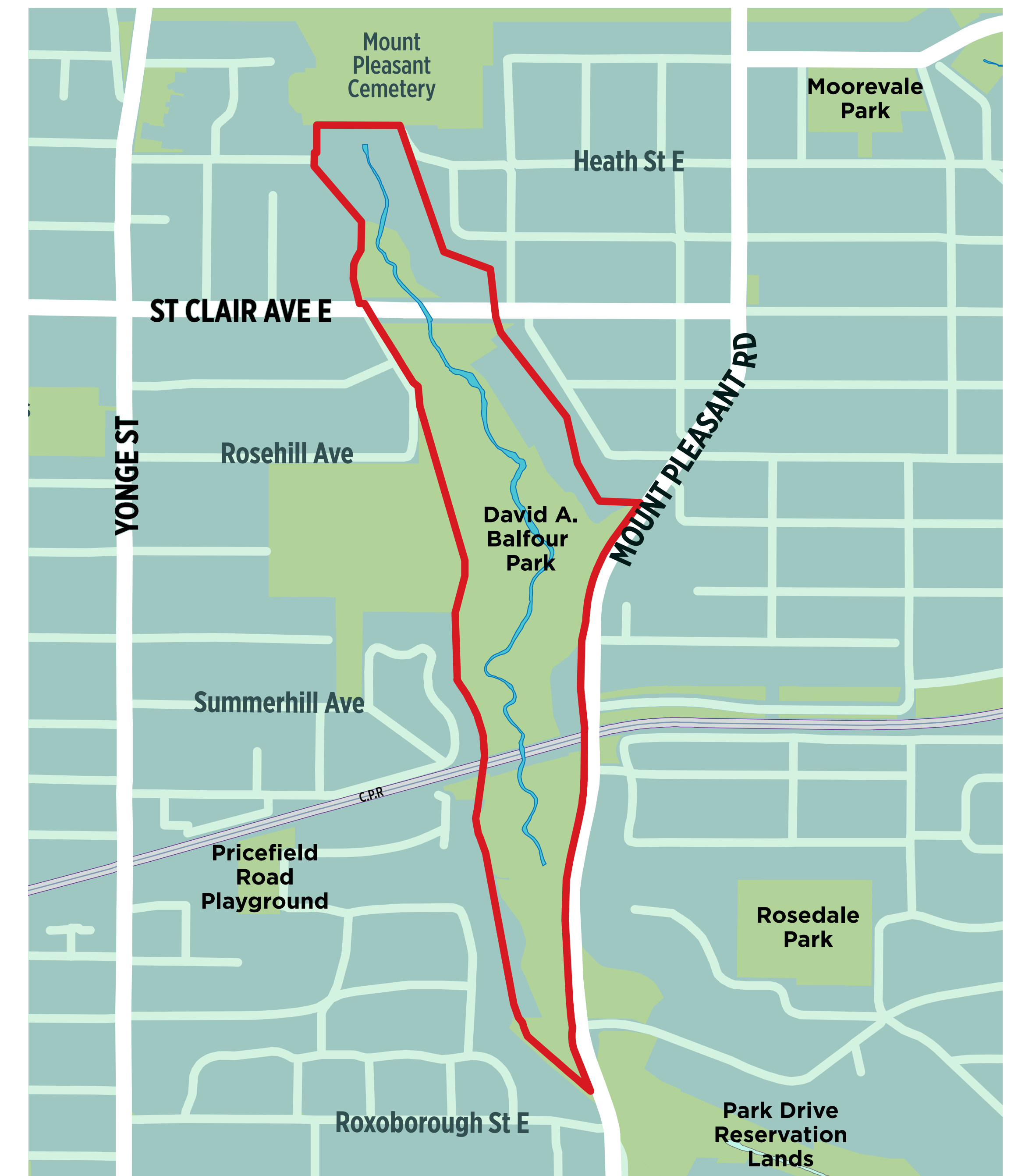
What is the Purpose of this Round of Engagement?

The project team is sharing information about the study process, project objectives, site conditions, challenges and opportunities. This is to support hearing your feedback on how you use the Vale of Avoca and your priorities for improving it. This input will inform the development of design concepts to be presented in the second round of engagement.

Where is the Vale of Avoca?

The Vale of Avoca ravine is approximately 17 hectares along a 1.5 km length of Yellow Creek. It runs south from Mount Pleasant Cemetery to Roxborough Drive between Yonge Street and Mount Pleasant Road.

Study Area



Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

Project Background



Study Drivers

The Vale of Avoca is a valued natural area and a key link in the city’s trail network. As the surrounding neighbourhood grows, more residents are relying on it for recreation and access to nature. Increased use, erosion, invasive plants and aging infrastructure have led to degraded creek banks, slopes, trails and stairs.

In 2025 City Council directed staff (items 2025.MM32.15 and 2025.MM32.22) to develop a plan to reduce erosion, renew the natural environment and create a connected trail network for the growing community.



Guiding Principles

This study will be guided by the City’s Ravine Strategy which supports developing a natural, connected sanctuary essential for the health and well-being of the city, where use and enjoyment support protection, education and stewardship.

Past and Ongoing Initiatives

The Vale of Avoca Improvement Project will also build upon these past and ongoing initiatives:

Yellow Creek Geomorphic Systems Masterplan Study

In 2025 the City finished a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) which recommended and prioritized work needed to protect sewer and watermain infrastructure within Yellow Creek from erosion caused by severe storms and snow melt. The project team will consider and incorporate these recommendations in the design and phasing of the ravine improvement project.

Yellow Creek below Summerhill Gardens Channel Repairs

In 2019 TRCA initiated emergency construction to decrease the risk of slope failure. Later, in 2024 TRCA completed a full reconstruction of the channel to create a long-term protection from erosion and enable restoration.

Yellow Creek near Heath St Slope Stabilization and Staircase Reconstruction

In 2022 TRCA completed a Conservation Class Environmental Assessment for slope stability solutions and in 2025 began developing detailed designs for slope stabilization and Heath Crescent staircase reconstruction. Construction is anticipated to start in early 2027.

Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

Improvements Being Considered



Accessing the Ravine

Trail entrance features, stairs, sloped paths and connections.



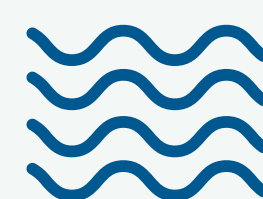
Moving Through the Ravines

Trail routes, slopes, surfaces, widths, drainage and creek crossings.



Experiencing the Ravine

Wayfinding, signage, seating or viewing areas, interpretive or heritage features, and safety and accessibility elements (handrails/guardrails).



Impacts of Storms and Erosion in the Ravine:

Reducing the impacts of erosion and stormwater run-off, repairing and protecting damaged storm outfalls and public infrastructure.



Protecting and Enhancing Natural Features In the Ravine:

Reducing invasive species, protecting key features, and adding native plantings, habitat features and ecological restoration.

What's Not Being Considered

Toronto's Ravine Strategy puts ecological protection first. This project will focus on trails, safe access to nature, and protecting public assets from erosion and storms. Active recreation facilities disturb wildlife, habitat and sensitive natural areas, so improvements like lighting, playgrounds, sports facilities, washrooms and drinking fountains are not being considered.

The following are also outside the project scope:

- Improvements outside the study area.
- Top-of-slope erosion works for direct protection of private properties.

Constraints

The Vale of Avoca is a TRCA regulated area made up of valley slopes, a watercourse and its flood plain. TRCA permits are needed to ensure improvements do not increase erosion or flooding hazards. The area is also subject to the Ravine and Natural Features Protection Bylaw which safeguards the ravine's trees, slopes, and natural landscape. The by-law regulates activities like tree removal and grading so the ravine stays stable, supports wildlife, and remains a healthy green space for the community.

Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

Who's Involved

The City of Toronto is leading this study and all engagement activities in partnership with Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) and in collaboration with the Midtown Ravines Group (MRG).

Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA)

TRCA, as enabled through the provincial Conservation Authorities Act, takes action to enhance our region's natural environment and protect our land, water and communities from the impacts of flooding, erosion, and increasingly extreme weather events — Ontario's leading cause of public emergencies. TRCA has been engaged by the City to lead the technical team through site investigations and design recommendations.

The Midtown Ravine Group (MRG)

MRG is a registered charity created by ten local residents' associations, formed to raise consciousness about the state of midtown ravines, raise funds for improvements, and mobilize community participation in ravine stewardship. MRG plans to fundraise and contribute funds to the Vale of Avoca Improvement Project.

Under direction from City Council (2025.MM32.15 and 2025.MM32.22), the City is collaborating closely with MRG on ravine priorities and recommended designs through the Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project Working Group.

This Project Working Group, comprised of representatives from MRG, TRCA, and City staff will provide feedback, guidance, and advice to the project team at key milestones during the design and community engagement process.

City staff will also work with MRG to develop agreements (2026.MM43.23) to enable fundraising and donations in support of City approved and delivered projects focused on improving ravine health, resiliency and trail user experience.

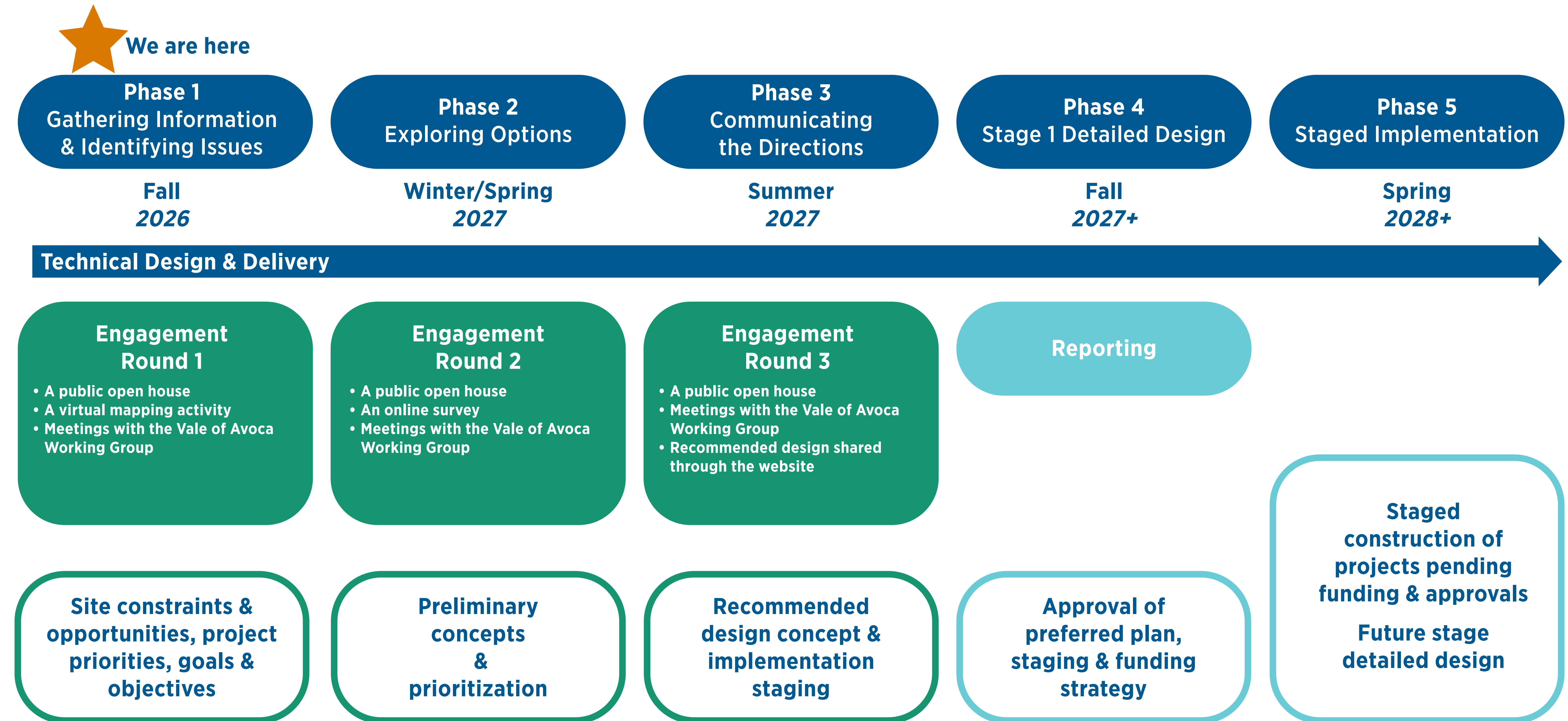
More About Donations

Parks and Recreation regularly works to deliver projects funded through donations. The Donations to the City for Community Benefit Policy provides City staff with a guiding framework for considering donations:

- Donations are voluntary gifts, either cash or in-kind, made without expectation of commercial benefit.
- Donations only advance if they are aligned to City goals and objectives.
- Donations cannot be connected to any ongoing City approvals, permits or contracts.
- Maintenance funding may be required to support the long-term care of donated assets.
- Donations become the property of the City.
- City Council approval is required for large or complex donations (typically over \$50,000).

Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

Project Timeline and Engagement



Erosion and Storm Impacts:

Yellow Creek and its erosion control infrastructure are in poor condition with widespread bank erosion, failing stabilization works and damaged outfalls.

Moving Through:

There is a diverse network of trails and informal footpaths that have developed over time. From narrow, natural dirt trails to wider routes, these pathways support different ways of moving through the ravine.

Natural Features:

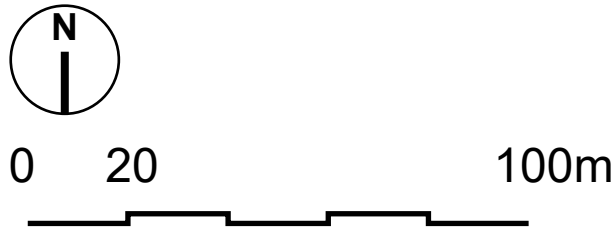
The Vale of Avoca is a City-designated Environmentally Significant Area, subject to the City's Ravine and Natural Features Protection By-law and TRCA regulatory requirements.

Experiencing:

The ravine has varied trails, slopes with vistas, mature trees and a winding creek. There are currently no signs, seating, viewpoints or information about the ravine.

Access:

There are a network of entrances connecting surrounding neighbourhoods to the ravine. Heath Street East and St. Clair Avenue access points are currently closed, while Avoca Avenue, Roxborough Drive, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, and Heath Street West are the most frequently used entrances.



- LEGEND**
- YELLOW CREEK
 - PRIMARY TRAIL - ASPHALT
 - PRIMARY TRAIL - GRAVEL
 - PRIMARY TRAIL - UNPAVED
 - SECONDARY TRAIL - UNPAVED
 - SECONDARY TRAIL - UNCONFIRMED
 - TRAIL - OFFSITE
 - TRAIL ACCESS
 - PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
 - STAIRS - METAL / WOODEN
 - WOOD BOARDWALK

Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Accessing the Ravine

Twelve access points connect the surrounding neighbourhoods to the ravine. The busiest are David A. Balfour Park Trail at Avoca Avenue and Mount Pleasant Road at Roxborough Drive Mount Pleasant Cemetery and the Heath Street East stairs behind Deer Park School are also popular. The Heath Crescent staircase and St. Clair Avenue East connections are closed because of poor conditions.

Challenges

- St. Clair Avenue sits high above the creek, so routes up to the neighbourhoods are long and steep.
- Steep paths erode faster and are harder to use. Gentler paths need more space.
- Some access points are hard to find or poorly connected to the trail system.
- Rebuilding steep stairs and trails is costly and disruptive to the environment and trail users.
- Some stairs and trails are aging, eroding and in poor condition.

Opportunities

- Improve entrance markers, signage and wayfinding.
- Reduce erosion and improve drainage.
- Improve the condition of access routes.
- Expand inclusive access where feasible.
- Strengthen connections to nature and the ravine network.
- Expand inclusive access where feasible.
- Adjust routes or access types to suit site conditions.

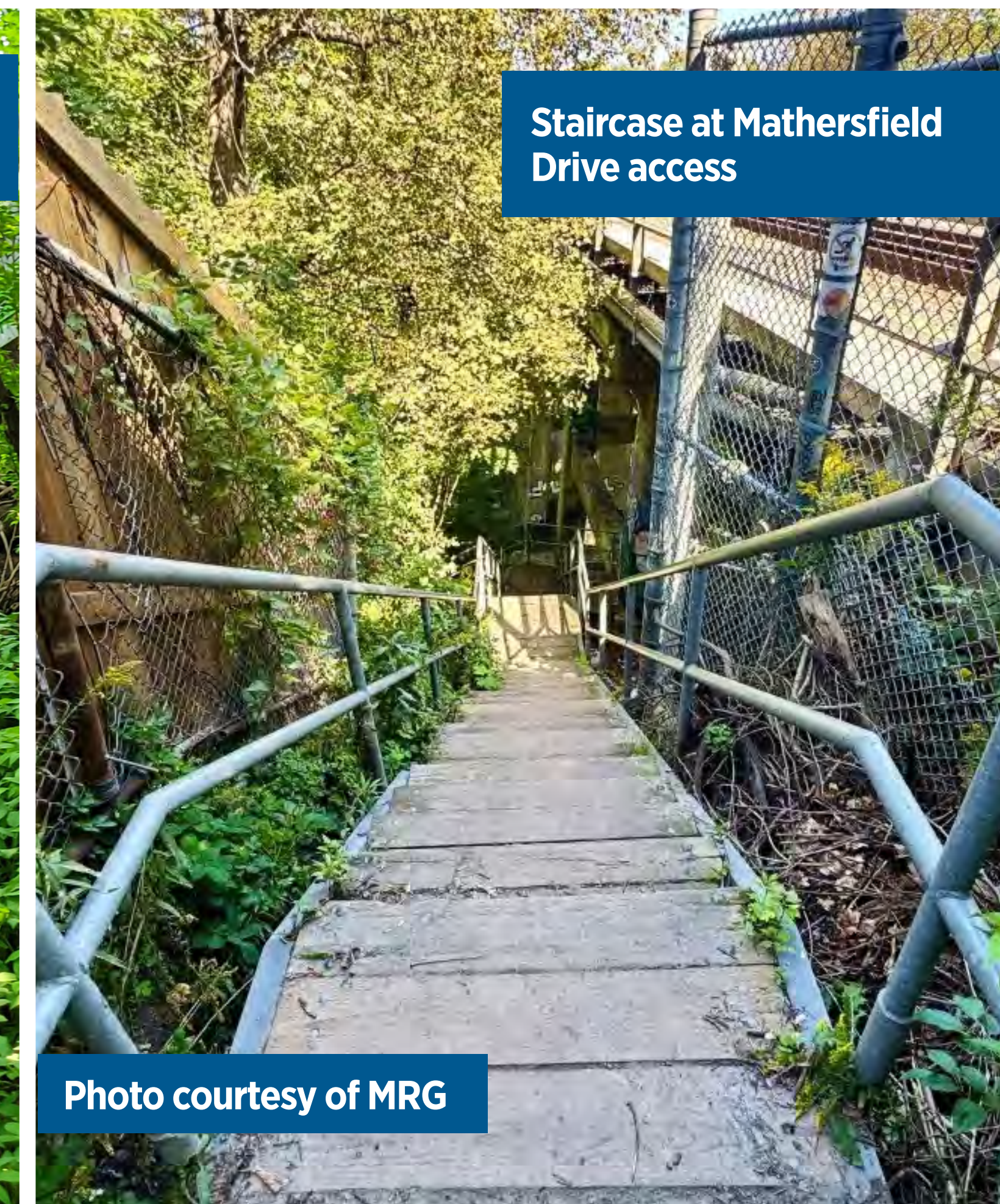
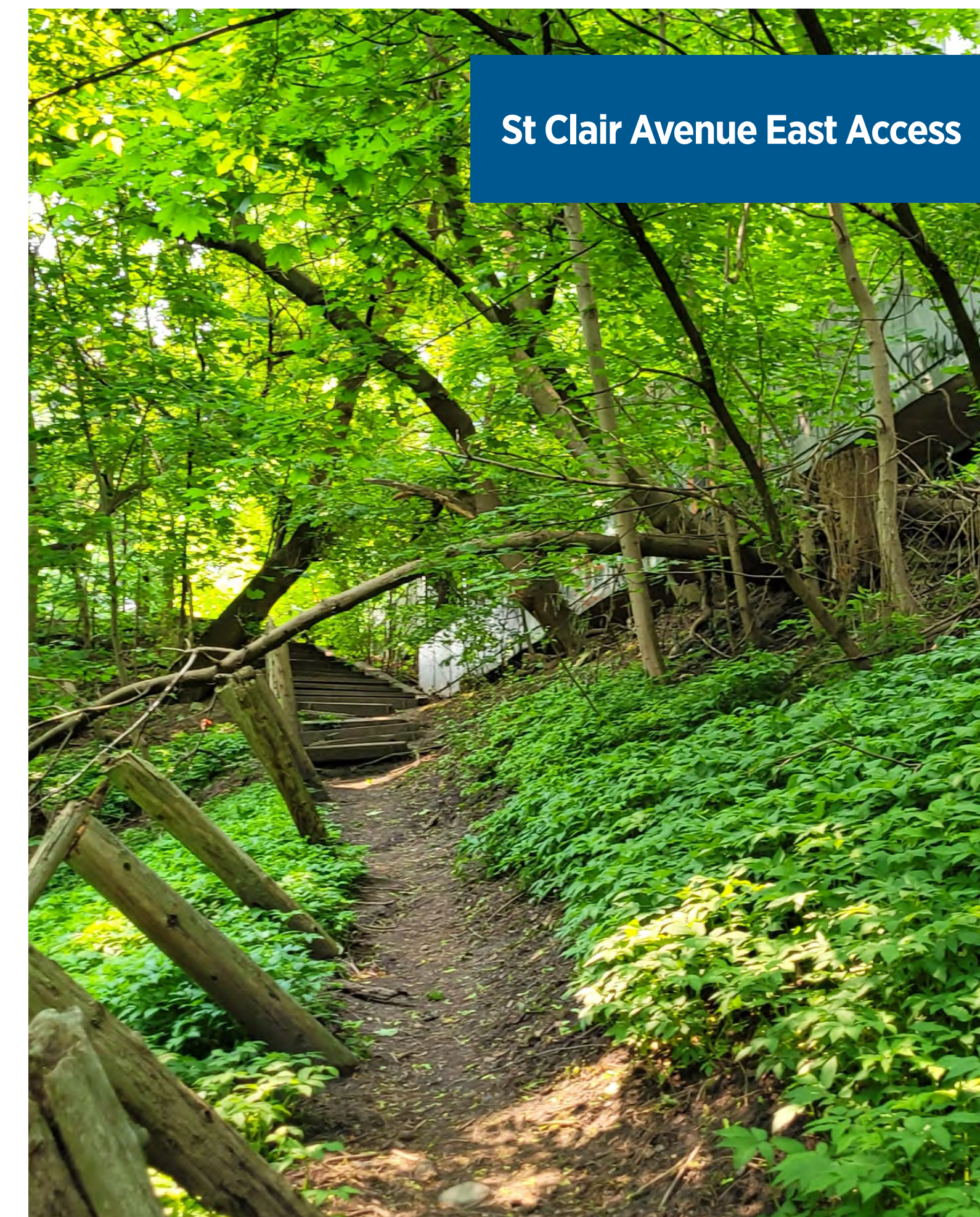


Photo courtesy of MRG

Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Moving Through the Ravine

The Vale of Avoca has wide formal trails and narrow informal dirt paths. The network grew through use, not planning. A trail strategy can address the whole system and its links to the broader network.

Challenges

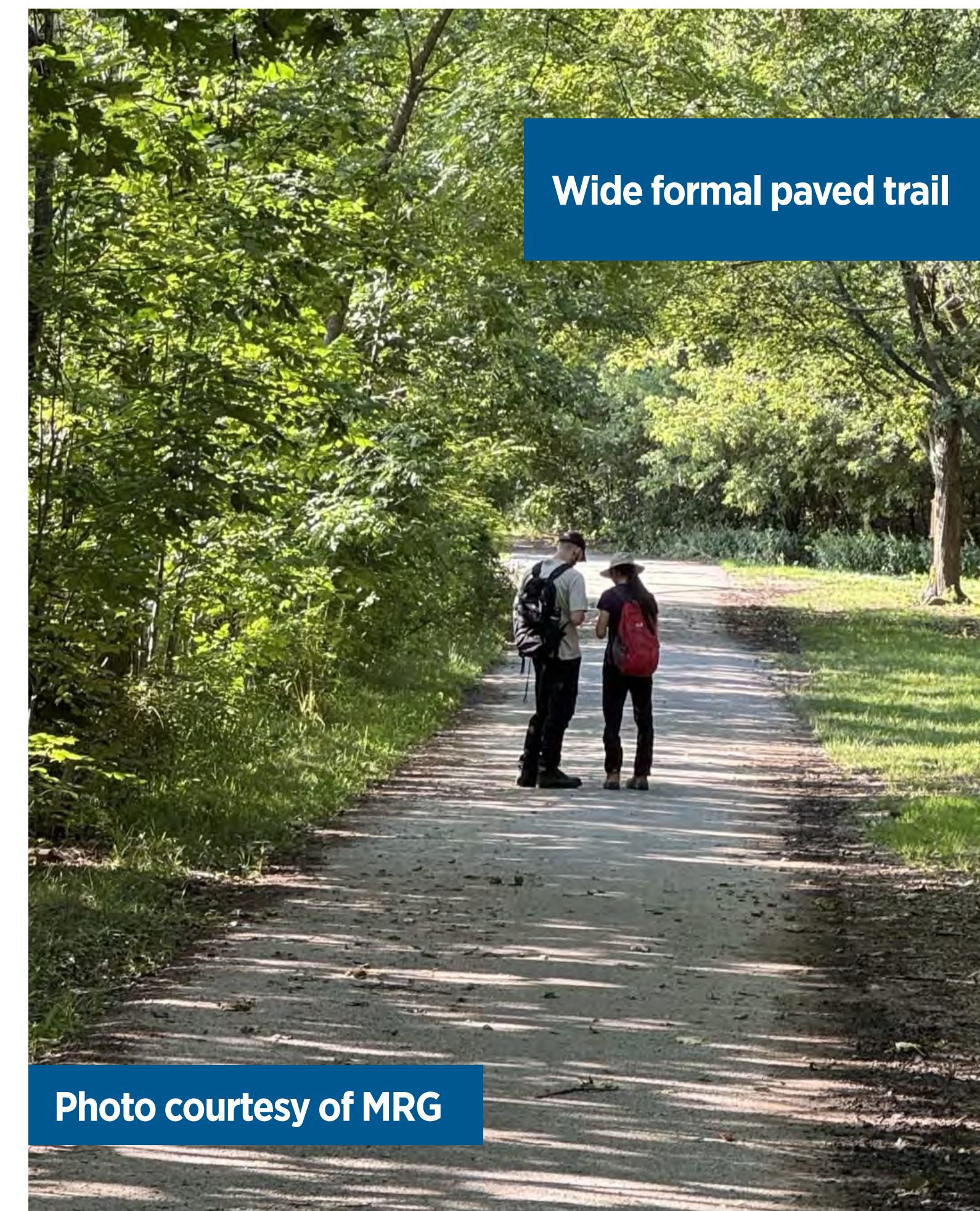
- Erosion and runoff are causing hazards, gaps and wet areas.
- Trails were not laid out to follow the land's natural slopes and drainage.
- Steep slopes and narrow creek banks limit where trails can go.
- Access for construction is difficult.
- Creek crossings are limited.
- Some trails are redundant.
- Formal trails have greater impacts and are harder to build.

Opportunities

- Plan a connected network with a clear hierarchy of trails.
- Reroute trails for stability and to protect natural features.
- Improve drainage and durability.
- Protect sensitive habitats.
- Build resilience to erosion and extreme weather.
- Improve or increase creek crossings.

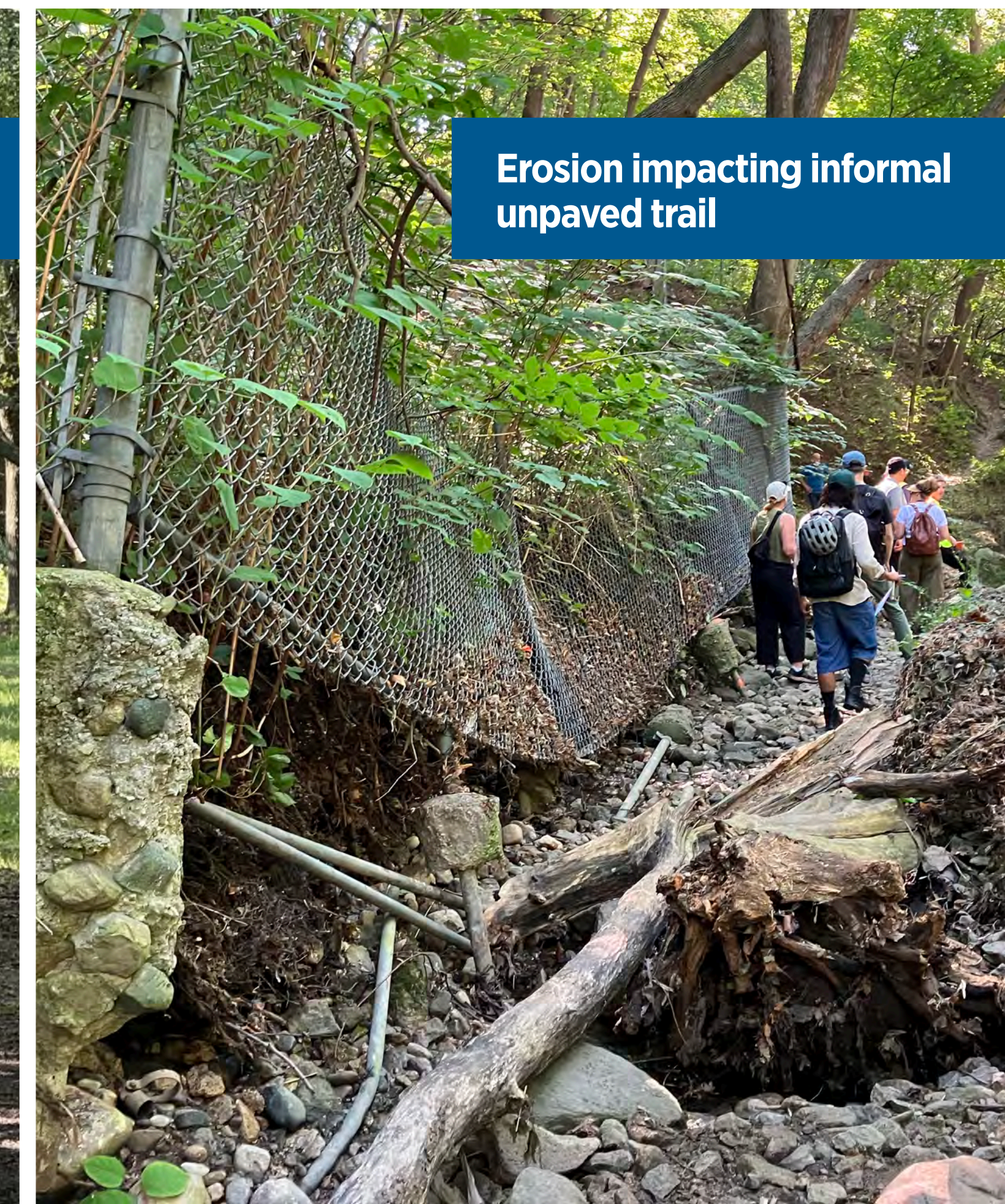


Aging dirt path at risk of erosion



Wide formal paved trail

Photo courtesy of MRG



Erosion impacting informal unpaved trail

Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Experiencing the Ravine

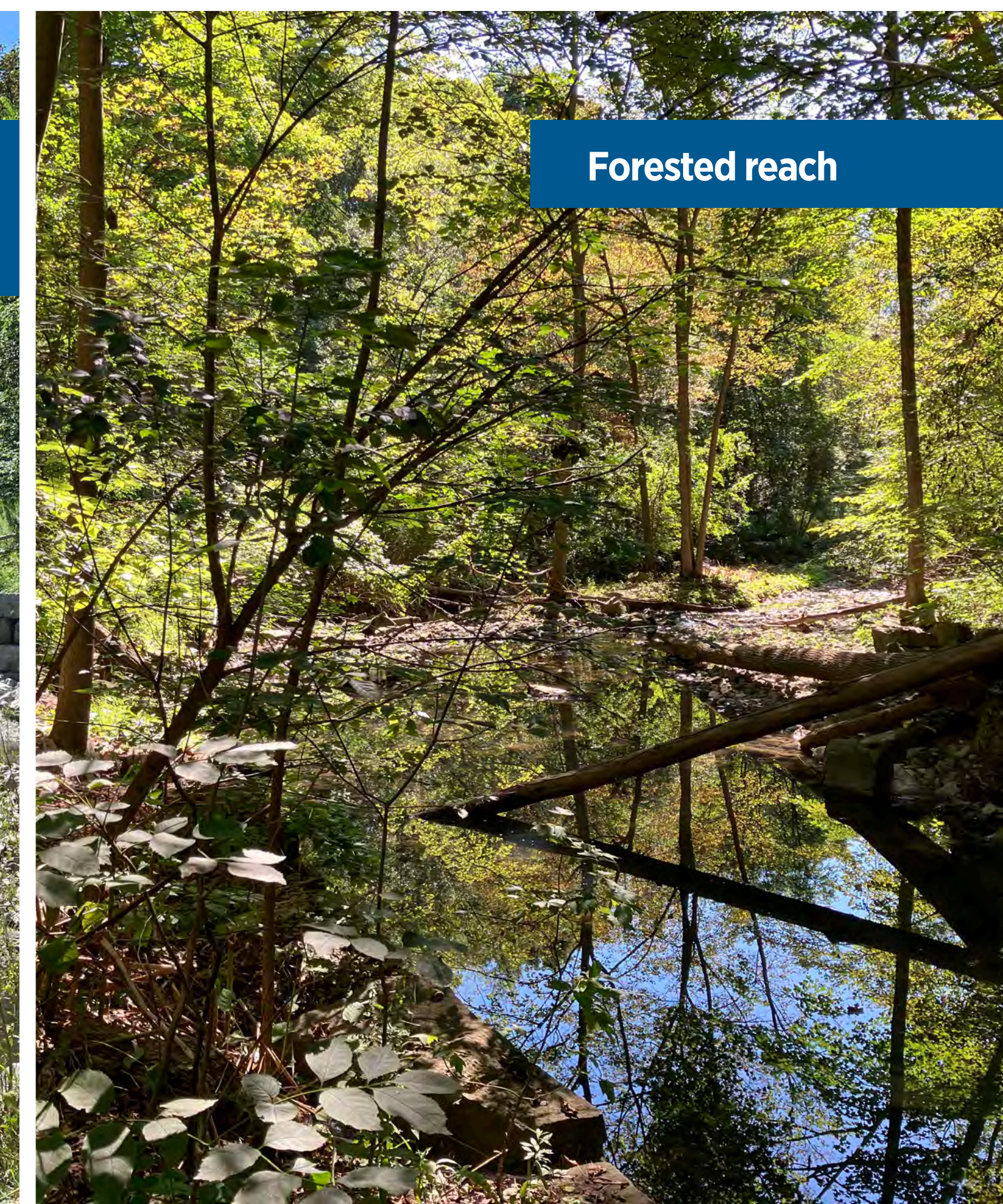
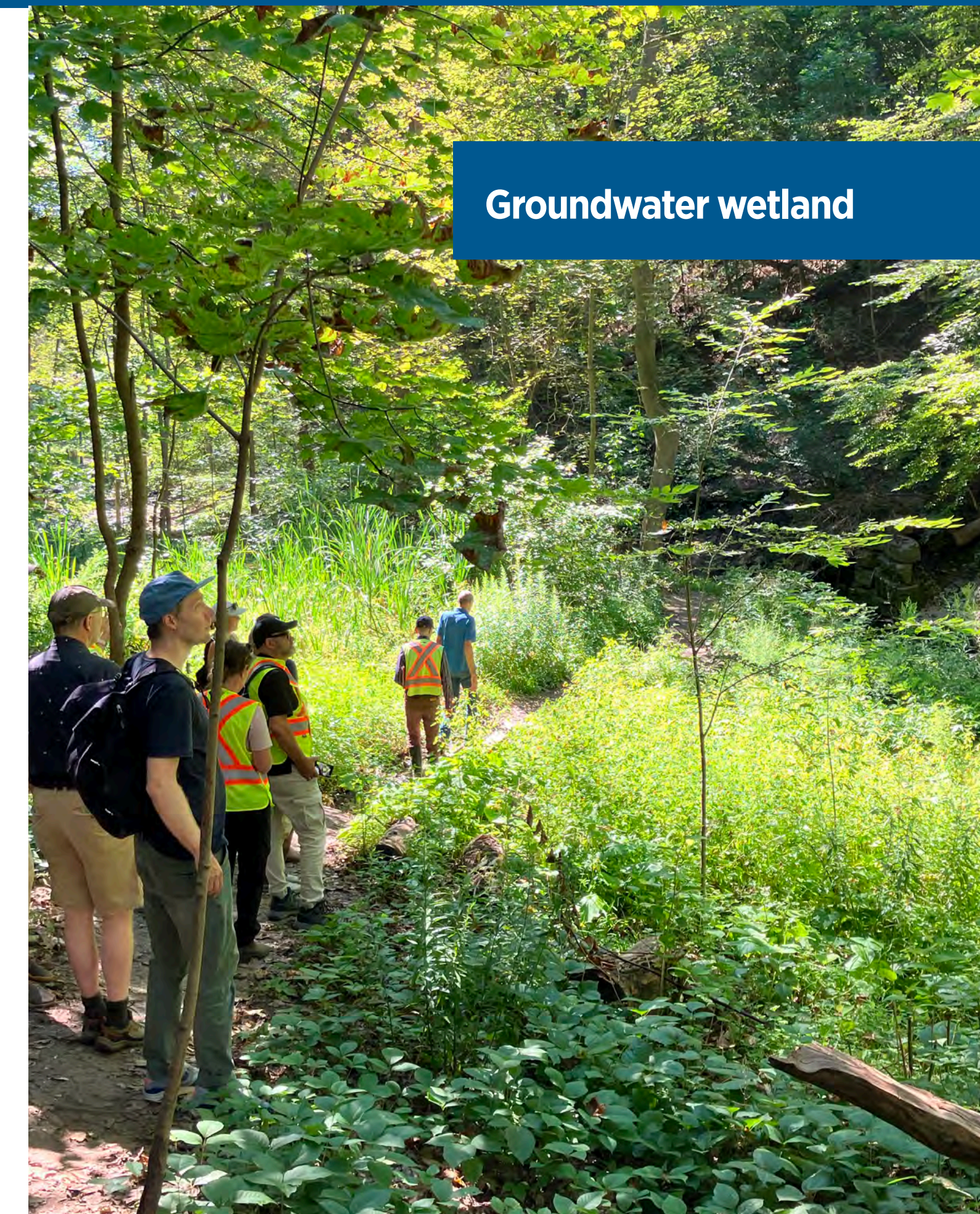
The ravine has varied trails, slopes with vistas, mature trees and a winding creek. There are currently no signs, seating, viewpoints or information about the ravine.

Challenges

- The ravine's stories and features are not well known.
- There are no places to rest or take in the views.
- Signs and wayfinding are limited.
- Steep slopes, a narrow creek and sensitive areas limit where new features can go.
- New or improved features can affect sensitive areas.
- More visitors put more pressure on the ravine.

Opportunities

- Share the ravine's stories and features.
- Improve signs and trail information.
- Add places to rest and enjoy the ravine.
- Highlight key natural features and viewpoints.
- Build a stronger sense of place and community connection.



Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Erosion and Storm Impacts

Yellow Creek and the valley slopes are in poor condition. Its banks are eroding, older erosion-control structures are failing and stormwater outlets are damaged.

Challenges

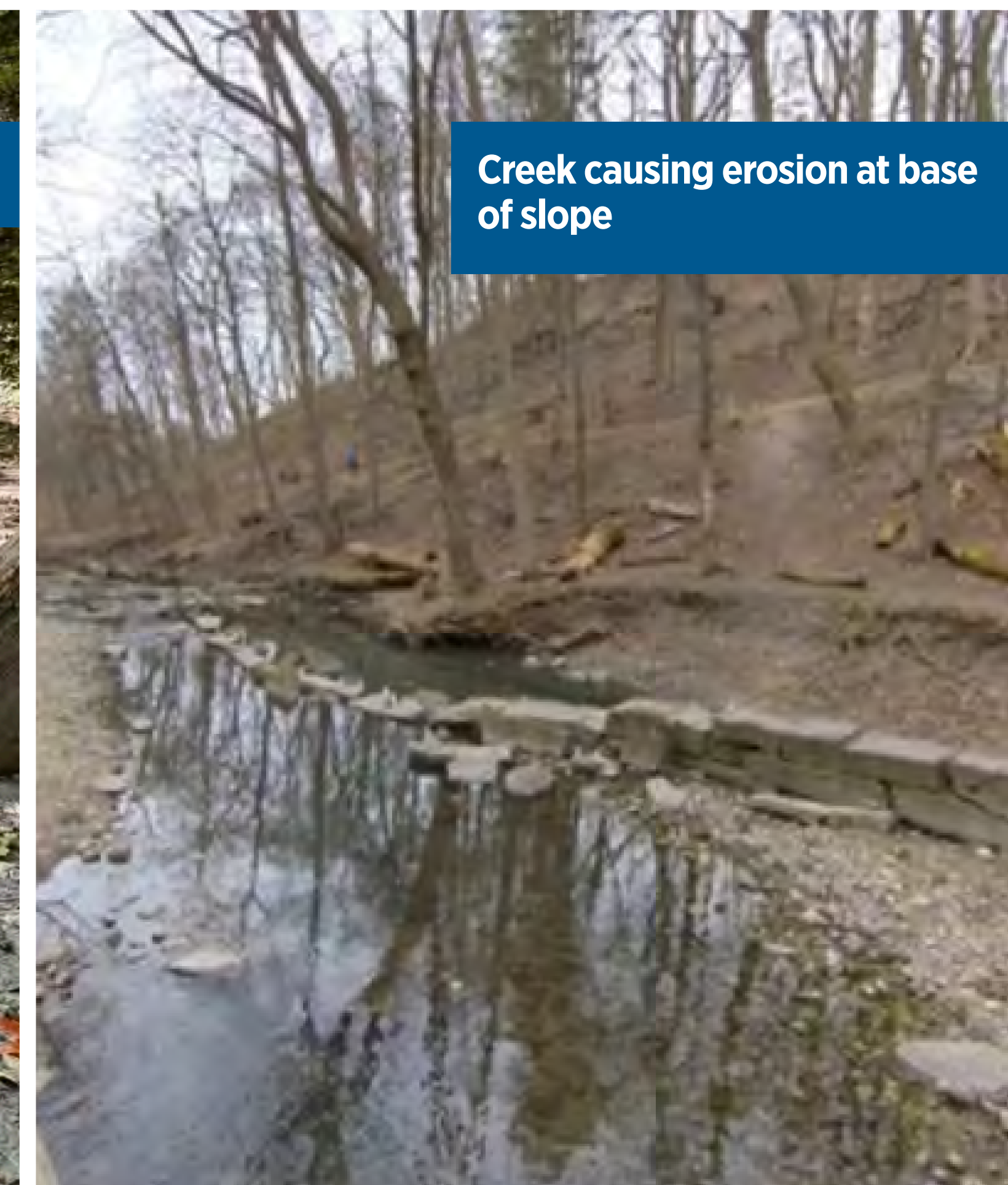
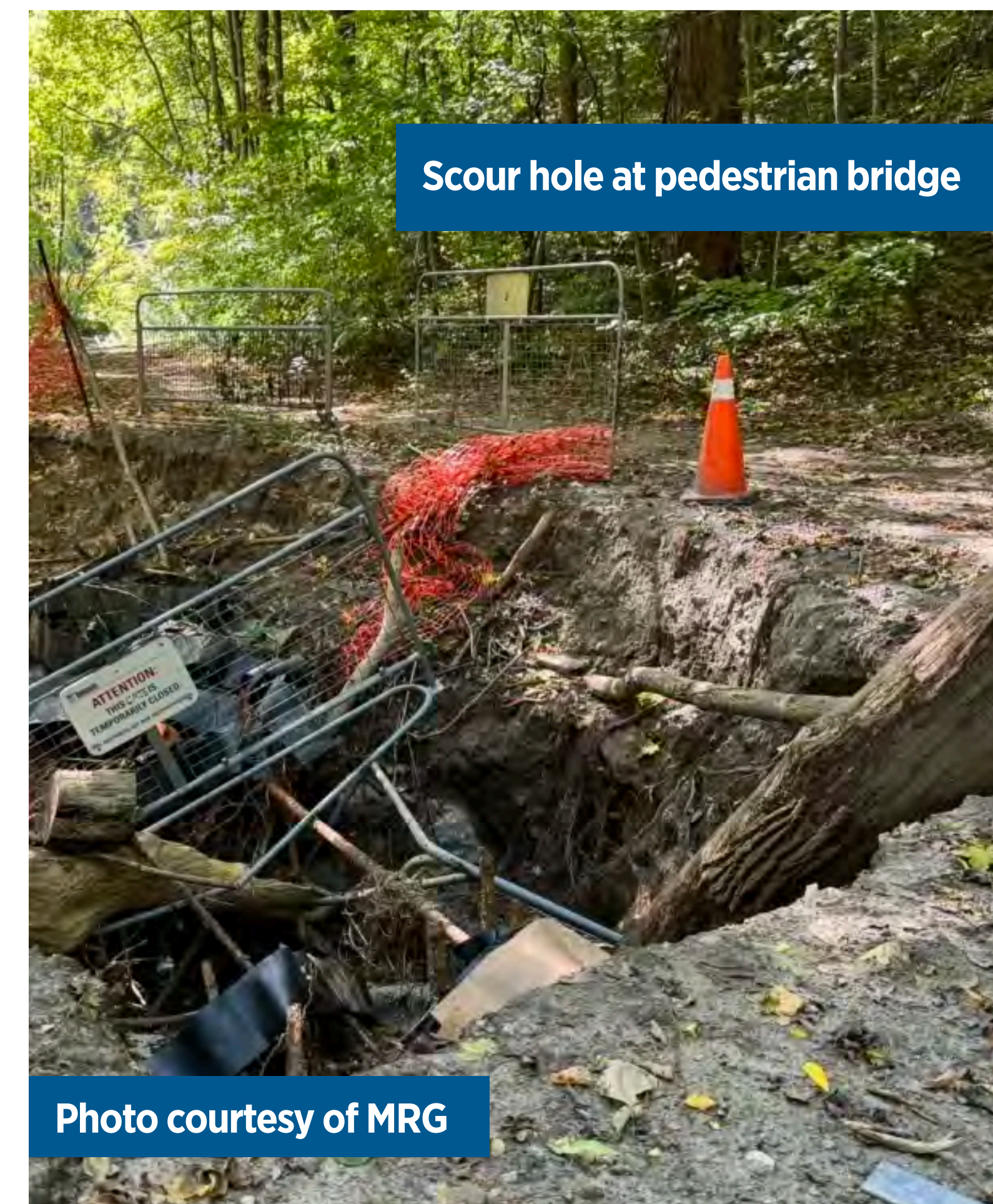
- More stormwater runoff and more frequent heavy storms.
- Aging erosion-control structures.
- Eroding creek banks and unstable slopes.
- Damage to trails and public infrastructure in the ravine.

Opportunities

Several engineered options will be considered to stabilize the creek:

- Vortex rock weirs: rock structures that direct water away from the banks.
- Vegetated rock buttresses: rock and plantings that support the banks.
- Pools and riffles: creek features that slow the water.
- Armourstone walls and drop structures: stone walls and steps that protect banks and control water speed.

This project will focus on reducing erosion in the ravine by stabilizing the creek banks and the base of valley slopes. The goal is to protect public infrastructure, improve safety and support the long-term health of the ravine. Slopes are being studied throughout the ravine, but the project is not intended to directly protect private property.



Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Natural Features of the Ravine

The Vale of Avoca is a City-designated Environmentally Significant Area, subject to the City's Ravine and Natural Features Protection By-law and TRCA regulatory requirements.

Challenges

Species at Risk that may occur within the study area and will be considered during design and construction include:

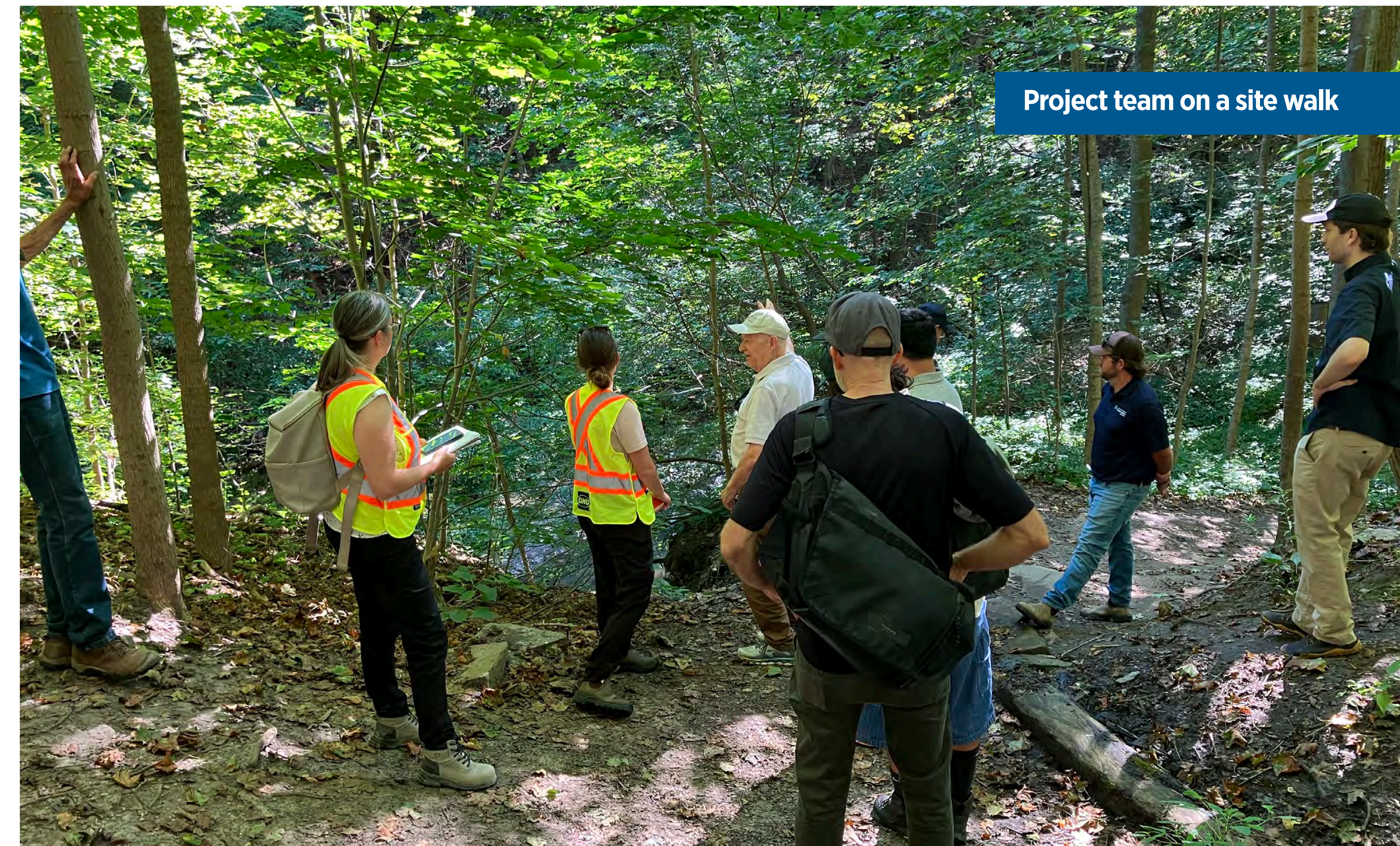
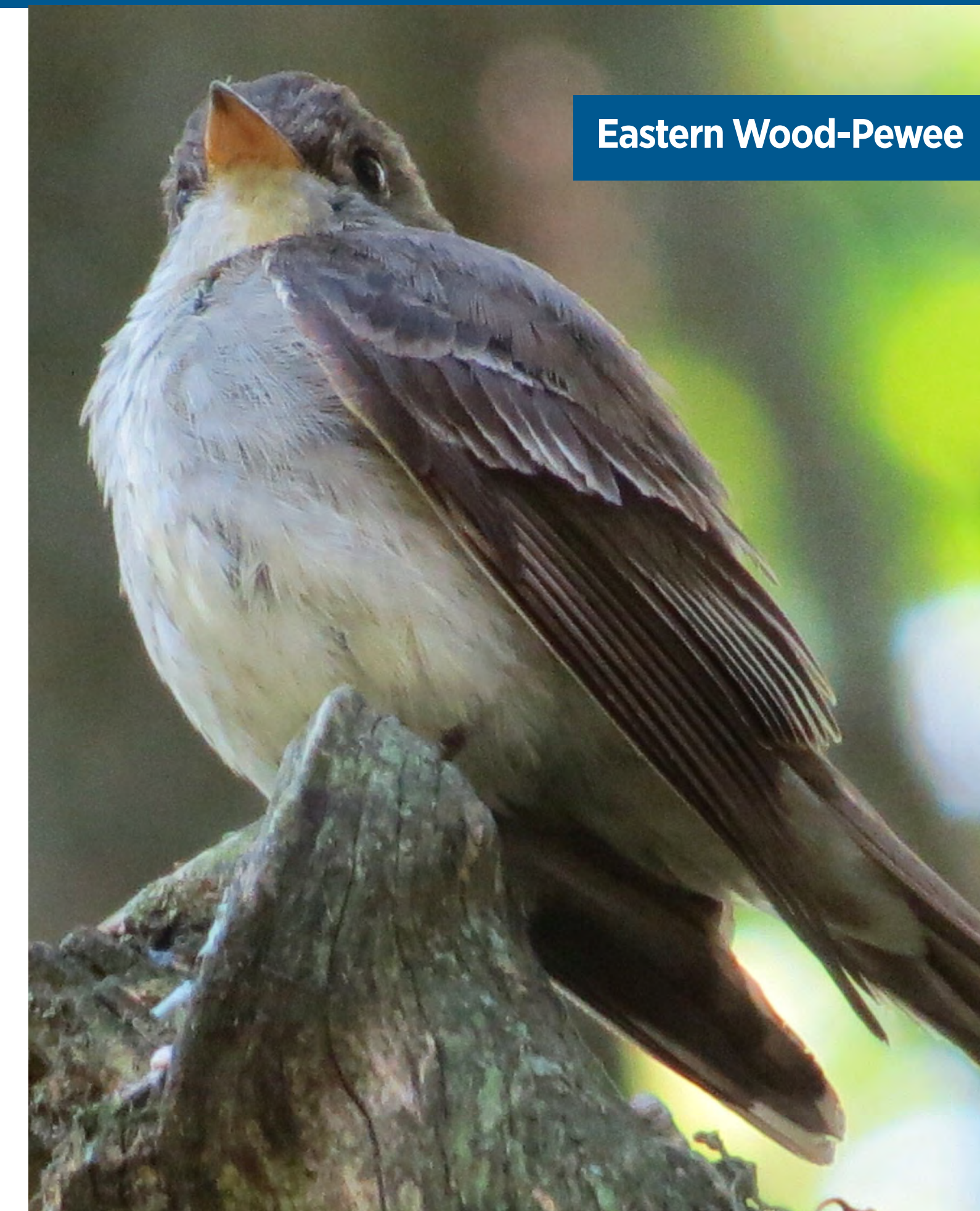
- Butternut Trees
- Chimney Swift
- Eastern Wood-pewee
- Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee
- Several endangered bat species

The ravine contains four distinct vegetation communities and is significantly impacted by invasive species such as:

- Japanese Knotweed
- Norway Maple
- Garlic Mustard

Opportunities

As part of Phase 1, the existing ecological and tree inventory will be updated. The study area also exhibits archaeological potential, and some locations will require a Stage 2 archaeological assessment.



Vale of Avoca Ravine Improvement Project

Yellow Creek Slope Stabilization and Heath Crescent Stair Reconstruction

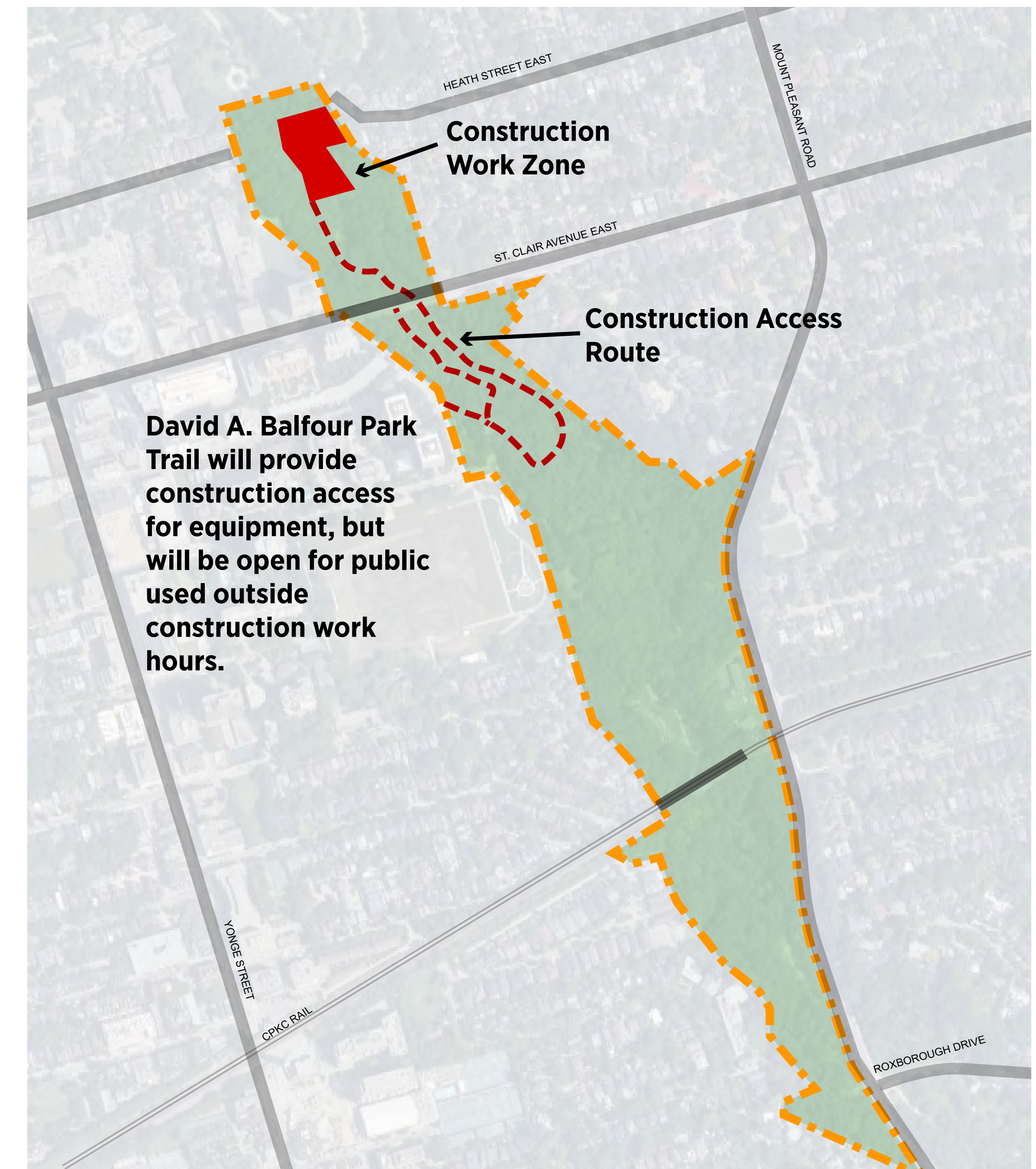
What to expect on site this fall and winter:

Over the fall you may see crews on site gathering technical data. In early 2027 TRCA plans to begin construction of slope stabilization, stair replacement and channel works at Heath Crescent. This is expected to be completed by Summer 2028.

Some areas of the ravine will be closed to the public during construction.

- Construction will be staged where possible to minimize closures.
- Crews will need to construct an access road, remove trees and cross the creek to complete the works.
- All works will be carried out in a ways to minimize impacts to trail users, significant trees, the creek, and habitat areas.
- Work will be completed in alignment with TRCA and Urban Forestry permits and policies.
- Restoration Tree and Shrub planting will take place once construction is complete.

Construction Work Area and Access



Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Next Steps

	Fall 2026	Winter/Spring 2027	Summer 2027	2028 Onwards
Community Engagement	- Phase 1 community engagement. - Project team analyzes results and reports back on the project web page and email list. - Engagement results inform development of design options.	- Phase 2 community engagement begins. - Survey and public open house will share design options and collect feedback to move towards a preferred design.	- Phase 3 community engagement begins. - Preferred design shared through an open house, on the project web page and email list.	
On Site Activity	You may see crews on site gathering technical data.	Construction of slope stabilization, stair replacement and channel works at Heath Crescent.		Construction (pending funding.)

Vale of Avoca Improvement Project

Stay Involved!

**Visit the project website to stay involved
and sign up for project updates**

www.toronto.ca/ValeofAvoca

Contact Us

Lindsay Stephens

Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

416-392-0989

Lindsay.Stephens@toronto.ca

We want to hear from you! What would you like the project team to consider and prioritize when designing improvements?



**Fill out our survey to tell
us how you experience the
Vale of Avoca and share your
experiences and ideas about
improvements**

Survey open until October 22, 2026