

**Outdoor Education Task Force Meeting #1/19 was held at Head Office, 101 Exchange Avenue, Vaughan, on October 7, 2019. The Acting Chair Darryl Gray, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.**

**PRESENT**

Melinda Chartrand	Member
Cynthia Cordova	Vice Chair Elect
Will Davies	Member
Frank Di Cosola	Member
Anu Sriskandarajah	Member
Garry Tanuan	Chair Elect
Jennifer Wigston	Member

**ABSENT**

Rowena Santos	Member
Morgan Ste. Marie	Member

The Acting Chair recited the Acknowledgement of Indigenous Territory.

**APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS**

**RES.#OETF1/19 - APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS**

Moved by: Jennifer Wigston  
Seconded by: Will Davies

**THAT Ms. Alisa Mahrova, Acting Clerk and Manager, Policy, TRCA; Ms. Nancy McGee, Senior Manager, Education and Training, TRCA; Mr. Darryl Gray, Director, Education and Training, TRCA; be appointed as scrutineers for the election of officers of Outdoor Education Task Force.**

**CARRIED**

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**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**CHAIR OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Garry Tanuan was nominated by Jennifer Wigston. Garry Tanuan indicated that he would stand for the office.

Cynthia Cordova was nominated by Melinda Chartrand. Cynthia Cordova indicated that she would stand for office.

**RES.#OETF2/19 - MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS**

Moved by: Will Davies  
Seconded by: Melinda Chartrand

**THAT nominations for the office of Chair of the Outdoor Education Task Force be closed.**  
**CARRIED**

The Acting Chair called the vote and conferred with the scrutineers to confirm the results:

3 votes in favour of Cynthia Cordova (Members Cynthia Cordova, Will Davies,  
Frank Di Cosola)

4 votes in favour of Garry Tanuan: (Members Melinda Chartrand, Anu Sriskandarajah,  
Garry Tanuan, Jennifer Wigston)

Garry Tanuan was declared elected by majority vote as Chair of the Outdoor Education Task Force.

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**VICE CHAIR OF TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Cynthia Cordova was nominated by Will Davies. Cynthia Cordova indicated that she would stand for office.

**RES.#OETF3/19 - MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS**

Moved by: Garry Tanuan  
Seconded by: Melinda Chartrand

**THAT nominations for the office of Vice Chair of the Outdoor Education Task Force be closed.**  
**CARRIED**

Cynthia Cordova was declared elected by acclamation as Vice Chair of the Outdoor Education Task Force.

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**PRESENTATIONS**

**RES.#OETF4/19 - PRESENTATION**

Moved by: Will Davies  
Seconded by: Melinda Chartrand

**THAT presentation under Agenda Item 7.1. from Darryl Gray, Director, Education and Training, TRCA, be received.**  
**CARRIED**

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# Outdoor Education Task Force

Darryl Gray  
Director, Education and Training

October 7, 2019



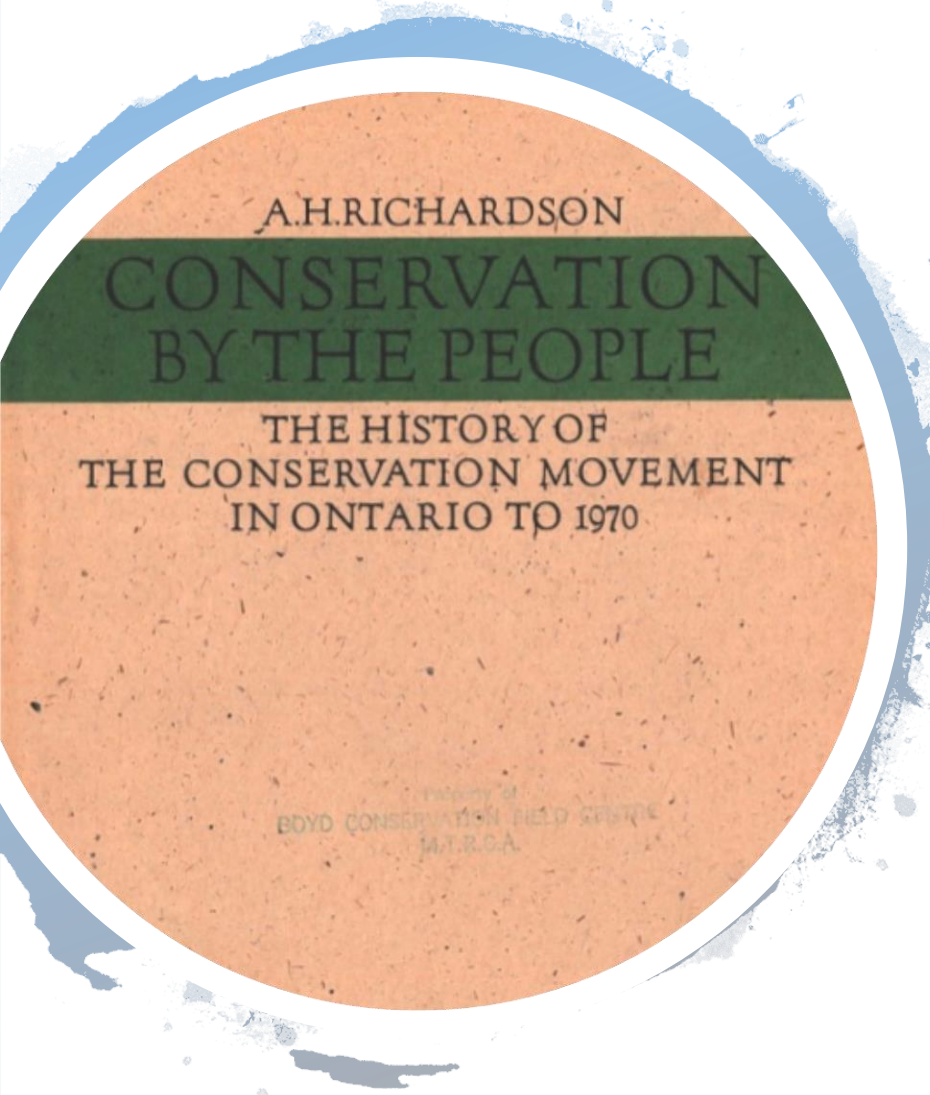
# History of Out-of-Classroom Learning

# Legislative Milestones

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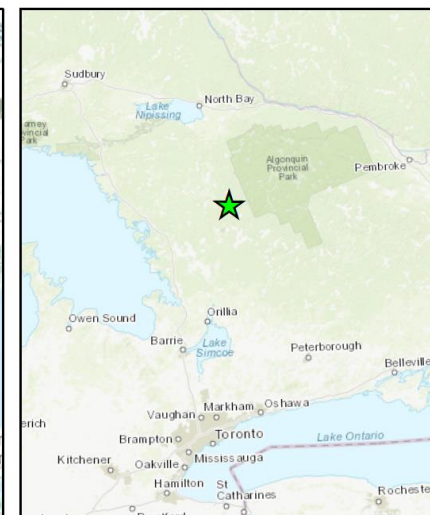
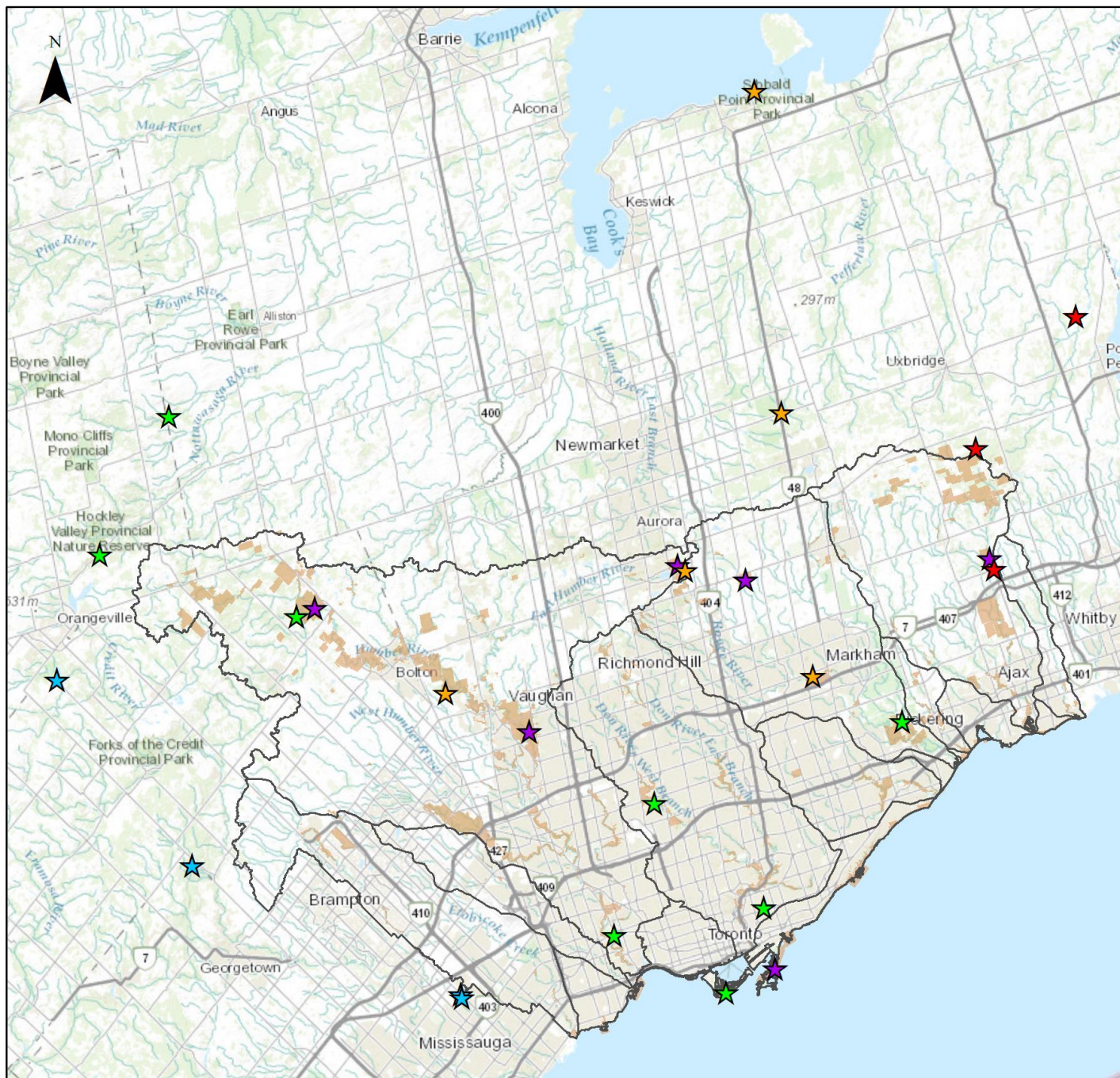
- 1954: Outdoor learning included in Ontario curriculum documents.
- 1960: School Administration Act changes allow School Boards to establish school facilities for the purpose of natural science learning.
- 1965: School Administration Act changes allow School Boards with enrollment greater than 10,000 students to purchase property in any municipality for the purposes of establishing a natural science school.
- 1965: School Boards enabled to conduct programs at natural science schools in co-operation with conservation authorities.
- 1974: School Boards can pay student board and lodging for natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom learning.
- 1980: School Boards can enter into agreements with conservation authorities for the provision of lands, facilities and programs related to natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom learning program.
- 2012: \$20M allocated to Outdoor Education in EPO grant.





# Key System Milestones

- 1944: London Conference on Conservation includes resolution related to education.
- 1953: York Memorial Collegiate and Humber Valley Conservation Authority deliver first Camp School.
- 1960: Island Natural Science School opens.
- 1963: Albion Hills Field School opens.
- 1967: TDSB purchases property that will become the Boyne River Natural Science School.
- 1967 – 1969: Forest Valley (TDSB), Jack Smythe (PDSB) and Burlington (YRDSB) Outdoor Education Centres open.
- 1974: Boyd Field Centre opens under a multi-stakeholder partnerships: TRCA, TDSB, TCDSB and YRDSB.
- 1982: Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre opens at Albion Hills Conservation Area.
- 2016: Swan Lake Outdoor Education Centre opens.



## Centres Operated By

★ DDSB

★ PDSB

★ TDSB

★ YRDSB

★ TRCA

□ TRCA Jurisdiction

■ TRCA Property

**Day Centres: 19**

**Overnight Centres: 9**



# Outdoor Education Task Force



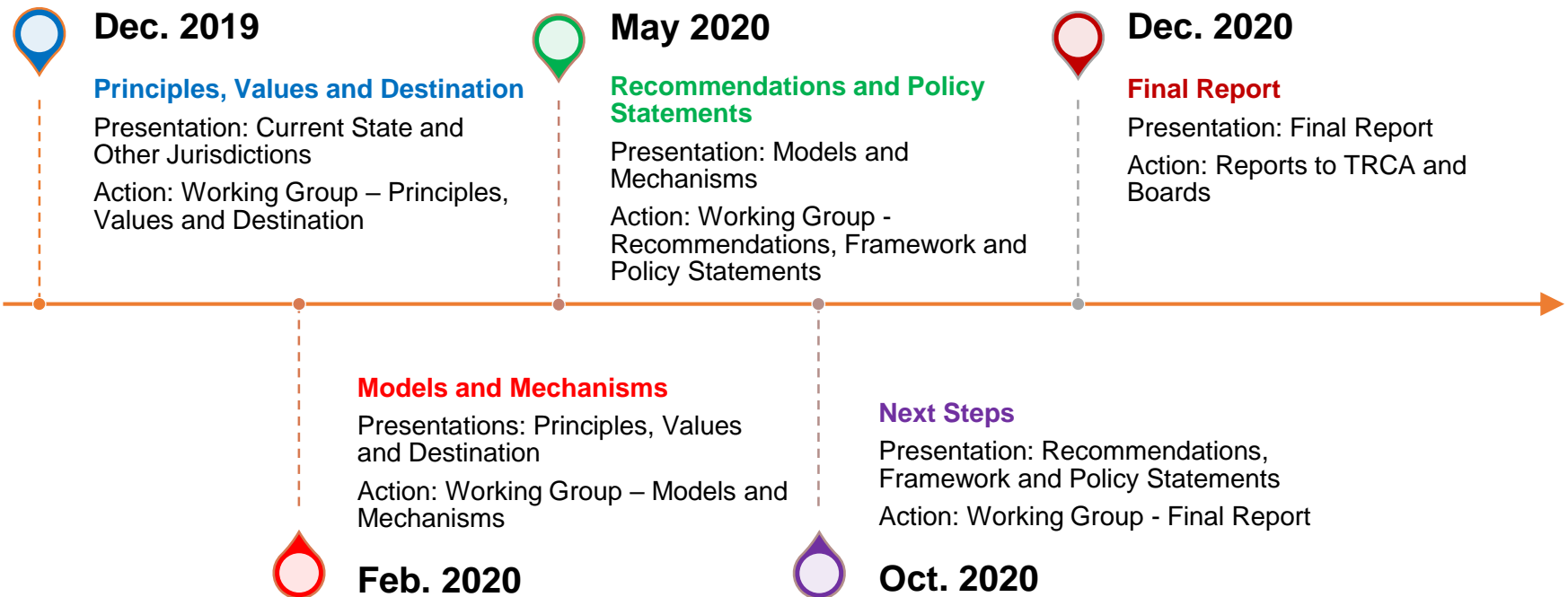
# Mandate

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- Develop a framework for the long-term provision out-of-classroom natural science, conservation and environmental learning to the year 2040.
- Provide recommendations to strengthen and enable partnerships that maximize the value of public assets and learning infrastructure.
- Provide expertise and recommendations that strengthen student learning connections between urban and natural environments.
- Provide recommendations related to long-term sustainable financial models and mechanisms, including but not limited to:
  - Government funding programs;
  - Private grants, fundraising and endowments;
  - Alternative business models (co-operatives, social enterprises, etc.);
  - Other funding models.



# Milestones and Deliverables





# Overview of Activities

## Principles, Values and Destination

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Facilitated session to develop a shared set of principles and values, along with an initial vision for the desired system to support student out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment.

## Models and Mechanisms

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Facilitated session on various models and mechanism may exist or could be developed for the purposes of optimizing and delivering out-of-classroom learning experiences. This may include shared ownership models, shared service delivery models, enterprise development, or others.

## Recommendations, Framework and Policy Statement

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Facilitated discussion on overall recommendations, framework for funding and a shared policy statement or objective.

## Final Report

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Delivery of Final Report to TRCA Board of Directors and Boards of Trustees.

# Secretariat and Staff Support

- Provide clerk and secretariat support for the activities of the Task Force.
- Liaise with Board staff in bringing together reports for Task Force.
- Facilitate the Task Force working groups and provide necessary background materials for synthesizing of recommendations.
- Compile and draft reports on behalf of working groups.
- Prepare final report and present findings to TRCA Board of Directors and Boards of Trustees.





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## **Items for the Action of the Outdoor Education Task Force**

### **RES.#OETF5/19 - OVERVIEW OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Overview of the mandate, objectives, workplan and timelines of the Outdoor Education Task Force.

Moved by: Will Davies  
Seconded by: Jennifer Wigston

**WHEREAS** at its Meeting #16/18 held on July 20, 2018, TRCA's Board of Directors approved the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Outdoor Education Task Force comprised of elected officials from local school boards and TRCA's Board of Directors;

**AND WHEREAS** as its Meeting #5/19 held on May 24, 2019, representatives from area school board Boards of Trustees and TRCA's Board of Directors have been duly appointed;

**AND WHEREAS** on May 6, 2019 the Province of Ontario passed Bill 108: *More Homes, More Choices Act*, which outlines changes to the Conservation Authorities Act;

**AND WHEREAS** it is anticipated that the Province of Ontario will release further Regulations or Policy Statements related to Bill 108 and the programs and services of conservation authorities, including outdoor education activities;

**AND WHEREAS** the Outdoor Education Task Force has been convened to study, develop and recommend strategic future directions related to natural science, conservation and environmental out-of-classroom learning in the Toronto region;

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT** the following Mandate, Objectives and Timelines of the Outdoor Education Task Force be endorsed;

**AND THAT** the Outdoor Education Task Force Work Plan and Timelines as outlined in this report be approved.

**CARRIED**

### **BACKGROUND**

At Authority Meeting #6/18, held on July 20, 2018, Resolution #A141/18 was approved, in part, as follows:

*...THAT creation of the multi-stakeholder Toronto and Region Outdoor Education Task Force ... be approved, with an initial term of 18 months;*

At Board of Directors Meeting #5/19, held on May 24, 2019, Resolution #A81/19 was approved, in part, as follows:

*...THAT the following School Board Trustees be appointed to the Outdoor Education Task Force for the eighteen (18) month period commencing September 2019 to February 2021.*

- *Durham Catholic District School Board: Trustee Morgan Ste. Marie*
- *York Region District School Board: Trustee Cynthia Cordova*

- *York Catholic District School Board: Trustee Jennifer Wigston*
- *Peel District School Board: Trustee Will Davies*
- *Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board: Trustee Frank Di Cosola*
- *Toronto District School Board: Trustee Anu Sriskandarajah*
- *Toronto Catholic District School Board: Trustee Garry Tanuan*
- *Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir: Chair Melinda Chartrand*

At the same Board of Directors meeting, City of Brampton Regional Councillor Rowena Santos was appointed the as TRCA Board of Directors representative on the Outdoor Education Task Force (Task Force).

The Durham District School Board and Conseil scolaire Viamonde have not to date provided nominations for appointment to the Task Force. TRCA staff will continue to engage these Boards to secure a nomination to the Task Force and will recommend appointment of members of these Boards to TRCA's Board of Directors upon receiving a nomination by their Board of Trustees

With an eighteen (18) month mandate, the Task Force is comprised of Trustees from local school boards and TRCA's Board of Directors to study, develop, and recommend strategic future directions related to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment in the Toronto region.

As outlined in *Appendix A - Toronto and Region Outdoor Education Task Force Terms of Reference*, approved at Authority Meeting #6/18, held on July 20, 2018, Resolution #A141/18, the objectives of the Task Force are to:

- Develop a framework for the long-term provision of out-of-classroom learning experiences related to natural science and the environment that meets the needs of the student population to the year 2040;
- Provide recommendations to strengthen and enable partnerships and collaboration between public sector agencies that maximize the use and value of public assets and infrastructure;
- Provide expertise and recommendations on strengthening experiential connections between the urban and natural environments, with consideration for the impact of urban intensity on student access to greenspace and natural systems;
- Provide recommendations related to long-term financial sustainability, including, but not limited to:
  - Government funding programs;
  - Private grants, fundraising and endowments;
  - Alternative business models (co-operatives, social enterprises, etc.);
  - Other funding models.

## **RATIONALE**

Under S.197 of the Education Act (RSO 1990), school boards are enabled to enter into agreements with conservation authorities for the use of lands, buildings and personnel for the purposes of providing natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom programs. Additionally, S.197 also contains provisions for two or more school boards to enter into agreements for the shared use and delivery of natural science programs and other out-of-classroom learning programs. It is through this legislation that the current system of natural

science schools, outdoor education centres, environmental education centres and conservation field centres that facilitate student out-of-classroom learning has developed.

The Task Force has been convened in order to establish a strategic planning framework for the long-term provision of out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation or the environment that serve students of the Toronto region while maximizing the use and value of public assets and infrastructure. The workplan below outlines the activities of the Task Force and associated timelines.

### **Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

**Strategy 3 – Rethink greenspace to maximize its value**

**Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship**

**Strategy 6 – Tell the story of the Toronto region**

**Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models**

### **DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE**

With the Task Force being convened for 18 months, TRCA staff have prepared a draft fourteen (14) month work plan and meetings schedule that outlines key milestones and deliverables, including timelines and a schedule for reporting to TRCA's Board of Directors and participating Boards of Trustees.

#### **October 2019**

- Overview
  - Introductions
    - Attendees
    - Role of TRCA
  - Background
  - Goals and Objectives
- Election of Chair
- Staff Presentation and Report: Overview of Outdoor Education Task Force
- Staff Presentation and Report: Overview of Current Outdoor Education System
- Roundtable/Open Forum Discussion

*Minutes to TRCA Board of Directors and participating Boards of Trustees: November 2019*

#### **December 2019 or January 2020**

- Staff Presentation and Report: Current State
- Staff Presentation and Report: Other Jurisdictions
- Facilitated Visioning Session Part One: Principles, Values and Destination
- Establishment of Working Group:
  - Principles, Values and Destination

*Minutes to TRCA Board of Directors and Participating Boards of Trustees: February 2020*

#### **February 2020**

- Working Group Presentation and Report: Visioning Session Part One – Principles, Values and Destination
- Facilitated Visioning Session Part Two: Models and Mechanisms

- Establishment of Working Group:
  - Models and Mechanisms

*Minutes to TRCA Board of Directors and participating Boards of Trustees: April 2020*

#### **May 2020**

- Working Group Presentation and Report: Visioning Session Part Two – Models and Mechanisms
- Discussion: Recommendations and Policy Statements
- Establishment of Working Group:
  - Recommendations, Framework and Policy Statements

*Minutes to TRCA Board of Directors and participating Boards of Trustees: June 2020*

#### **October 2020**

- Working Group Presentation and Report: Recommendations, Framework and Policy Statements
- Discussion: Next Steps

*Minutes to TRCA Board of Directors and participating Boards of Trustees: November 2020*

#### **December 2020**

- Final Report

*Final report and presentations to TRCA Board of Directors and Boards of Trustees: January - March 2021*

TRCA staff will provide secretariat functions, general coordination and staff support, and liaise with Task Force members and school board staff as needed.

**Report prepared by: Darryl Gray, extension 5881**

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**For Information contact: Darryl Gray, extension 5881**

**Emails: [darryl.gray@trca.ca](mailto:darryl.gray@trca.ca)**

**Date: September 19, 2019**

**Attachments: 1**

**Attachment 1: Appendix – Toronto and Region Outdoor Education Task Force Terms of Reference**

## **Appendix – Toronto and Region Outdoor Education Task Force Terms of Reference**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1.** Establishment of a multi-stakeholder task force to develop and recommend strategic future directions related to out-of-class learning in the Toronto region.
- 1.2.** Meet the future needs of the student population in the Toronto region as it relates to outdoor education, and ensure equity of access to programs and services.

### **2. Objectives**

- 2.1.** Develop and identify strategic priorities and make recommendations related to the long-term provision of out-of-class learning experiences that meet the needs of student populations in the Toronto region to the year 2040.
- 2.2.** Provide recommendations to strengthen and enable partnerships and collaboration between public sector agencies that maximize the use and value of public assets and infrastructure.
- 2.3.** Provide expertise and recommendations on strengthening experiential connections between the urban and natural environments, with consideration for the impact of urban intensity on student access to greenspace and natural systems.
- 2.4.** Provide recommendations related to long-term financial sustainability, including, but not limited to:
  - 2.4.1.** Government funding programs;
  - 2.4.2.** Private grants, fundraising and endowments;
  - 2.4.3.** Alternative business models (co-operatives, social enterprises, etc.);
  - 2.4.4.** Other funding models.

### **3. Authority and Boundaries**

- 3.1.** To study and make recommendations to the TRCA Board of Directors on improvements and future needs related to outdoor education in the Toronto region.
- 3.2.** The minutes of the Task Force will be received by the Board of Directors.
- 3.3.** The work of the Task Force is to meet needs located wholly or partially within the school boards of TRCA's municipalities.

### **4. Composition and Elections**

- 4.1.** Membership to consist of:
  - 4.1.1** School Board Trustee from each of the area school boards (11);
  - 4.1.2** Board Member representing each participating municipality (five).
- 4.2.** Term of appointment is 18 months.
- 4.3.** The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from amongst its Members for the term of the Task Force. The Board of Directors may appoint an interim Chair until such time as an election can take place. The voting procedures used will be that outlined in the Board of Directors Administration By-law.
- 4.4.** Establish subcommittees/working groups or standing committees as needed.

## **5. Resources and support**

- 5.1** TRCA staff to act as Clerk, arranging meeting logistics, preparing the agenda, maintaining meeting minutes, tracking and delegating action items, with support from the Clerk's Office.
- 5.2** Director, Education and Training to provide general support in regards to the activities and actions of the Task Force.
- 5.3** At regular Task Force meetings, Members will be eligible for travel expenses and any other expenses approved in advance by TRCA's Director, Education and Training, according to TRCA policy, where these are not covered by their agency or other source. Members shall not receive a per diem or honorarium for attendance at meetings and functions.

## **6. Expectations of each member**

- 6.1** Work collaboratively with Task Force Members to study and develop recommendations related to the mandate.
- 6.2** Represent their school board;
- 6.3** Board Members to represent the interest of TRCA and/or those of their participating municipality;
- 6.4** Attend meetings to be held bi-monthly, or more frequently as required;
- 6.5** Act as a resource to TRCA, TRCA's municipal partners and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation by providing advice on matters of community interest;
- 6.6** Collaborate with other conservation authorities and lower tier municipalities on opportunities that transcend TRCA jurisdictional boundaries;
- 6.7** Maximize the collective impact of the Task Force through resource and data sharing, measuring, and reporting on regional priorities;
- 6.8** Report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

## **7. Roles of specific members**

- 7.1** The Chair will have the following additional responsibilities:
  - 7.1.1** Presiding over Task Force meetings, setting the agenda and generally ensuring the effectiveness of meetings;
  - 7.2.1** In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will perform the above functions.

## **8. Governance**

- 8.1** Chair to set agenda for meetings.

**8.2** Quorum to consist of one-half of the Members. If there is no quorum within one half hour after the time appointed for the meeting, the Chair for the meeting shall declare the meeting adjourned due to a lack of a quorum, or shall recess until quorum arrives, and the Clerk shall record the names of the Members present and absent. If during a meeting a quorum is lost, then the Chair shall declare that the meeting shall stand recessed or adjourned, until the date of the next regular meeting or other meeting called in accordance with the provisions of the Board of Directors Administrative By-law. Agenda items may be covered and presented and issues discussed, but no formal recommendation may be made by the remaining Members which do not constitute a quorum.

**8.3** Task Force is an advisory board of the Board of Directors and as such does not have decision-making power, but shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

## **9. Communication**

**9.1** The Task Force makes recommendations to the Board of Directors.

**9.2** Each member reports back to their appointing agency as required.

## **Items for the Information of the Outdoor Education Task Force**

### **RES.#OETF6/19 - SUMMARY REPORT ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRES**

Overview and history of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and local school board operated natural science and conservation out-of-classroom learning centres.

Moved by: Cynthia Cordova  
Seconded by: Will Davies

**WHEREAS at its Meeting #7/18 TRCA Authority approved the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Outdoor Education Task Force for an eighteen (18) month term comprised of elected officials from local school boards and TRCA's Board of Directors;**

**AND WHEREAS the Outdoor Education Task Force has been convened to study, develop and recommend strategic future directions related to out-of-classroom learning within the areas of jurisdiction of TRCA and participating school boards;**

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the following information report on the history and current state of conservation authority and school board outdoor education centres be received.**

**CARRIED**

### **BACKGROUND**

Commonly referred to as *outdoor education*, the learning programs of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and local school boards that occur in the out-of-doors are rooted in the philosophy that education about conservation, the environment and natural science is strengthened and enhanced through out-of-classroom learning. In many cases "outdoor education centres" are referred to as natural science schools, environmental education centres, conservation field centres or nature centres, however, they all share one trait in common: they provide curriculum-linked natural-science based out-of-classroom learning opportunities.

### **History of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Out-Of-Class Learning Programs**

Conservation education has been viewed as an integral part of the work of conservation authorities since the inception of the conservation authority movement in Ontario. At the London Conference in 1944, delegates from across Ontario, which included representatives and officials from municipalities, federal and provincial governments, the education system, the agricultural sector, and representatives of naturalist and conservation organizations, convened to study and propose a response to a range of pressing issues related to natural resource management.

In addition to resolutions related to land acquisition, flood control and conservation projects, delegates at the 1944 London Conference identified the need to improve the engagement of students throughout the educational system in Ontario, specifically:

- R.1 (g) Fostering the direction of adequate attention to all phases of the conservation of natural resources in all the educational work of the province of Ontario.

In 1953, in partnership with York Memorial Collegiate Institute, the then Humber Valley Conservation Authority delivered the first "camp school", a three-day excursion to Camp Kneale

in the community of Bolton to learn about weather patterns, wildlife, natural systems, agriculture and soils conservation, and the local environment. Following the success of the camp school which had continued annually under the stewardship of York Memorial Collegiate Institute and Humber Valley Conservation Authority staff, planning by the newly formed Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) for a permanent education school began in 1958, with Albion Hills Conservation Area being selected as the preferred site. At the groundbreaking ceremony for the Albion Hills Conservation School in 1962, The Honourable William G. David, at the time the Minister of Education, noted that “conservation is more than a subject, be it taught in or out-of-doors”. It is this philosophy that has guided the work of conservation authorities in delivering out-of-classroom learning in the fifty-five years since.

Throughout TRCA's history, conservation education programs at TRCA have been developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners, including school boards, municipalities, federal and provincial governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), social service agencies and others. These programs are designed to not only develop environmental knowledge but provide opportunities for students to translate this learning into conservation action at home and in the school, community and workplace. These learning programs are responsive to an evolving curriculum within the formal education system, as well as shifts in industry, immigration and demographic trends and are grounded in the Conservation Authorities Act, which enables conservation authorities to provide for “the delivery of watershed-based programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources”. Today, TRCA's education activities reach over 150,000 learners annually and are delivered at TRCA's education sites, conservation areas and in the school.

Since the inaugural camp school in 1953, TRCA has continued to develop new and innovative education programs and facilities across the region's watersheds through both formal and informal partnerships with area school boards. These include formal land leases for the operation of school board outdoor education centres, the joint construction and operation of shared education facilities, or service delivery partnerships for the provision of natural science out-of-classroom learning.

### History of School Board Out-Of-Class Learning Programs

At the same time the then MTRCA was delivering camp schools, and subsequently planning for a new conservation school at Albion Hills, the Schools Administration Act was being updated to reflect an emerging interest in educating students in and about natural systems and the environment. In 1954, the Ontario Department of Education included in curriculum documents that direct exposure to the local natural environment be given to students through outdoor learning to facilitate lessons related to conservation and natural science. Further amendments in 1960 to the Schools Administration Act enabled school boards to establish school facilities for the purpose of natural science or conservation learning, or to fund opportunities for students to participate in similar programs at a natural science school. Changes again to the School Administration Act in 1965 further enabled school boards with enrollment of 10,000 students to purchase land (not to exceed 200 acres) in any municipality and operate a natural science school.

Throughout the 1960s, the Ontario Department of Education, through enabling regulations, continued to encourage school boards to develop outdoor education centres with the belief that natural science-based out-of-classroom learning and conservation education was an effective response to the pressing environmental concerns of the era. This movement in support of

outdoor learning was reinforced through recommendations contained within the 1968 Department of Education report *Living and Learning: The Report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario*, known as the Hall-Dennis Report, which encouraged school boards, conservation authorities and others to cooperate in providing “natural science schools for outdoor education and the development of conservation principles”. Further facilitating the growth of the outdoor education movement in Ontario was the relative economic prosperity of the period. School boards were experiencing significant growth through this period and had available resources for the establishment of outdoor education centres.

It was with these changes to the School Administration Act and pedagogical approaches to educating students that local school boards began to develop natural science schools both locally and on properties outside of the Greater Toronto Area. The first school-board operated centre to open was the Island Natural Science School on the Toronto Islands in 1960, which provided, and continues to provide, multi-day learning experiences for Toronto students. In 1967, the Toronto Board of Education purchased property north of Orangeville that would become the Boyne River Natural Science School. This was followed by a number of day-use education centres, including the Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre (Toronto Board of Education, 1967) in North York, the Burlington Outdoor Resource Centre (York Board of Education, 1968) in Vaughan and the Jack Smythe Field Centre (Peel Board of Education, 1969) in Terra Cotta.

Central to the development of school board-operated centres in this era was the perspective that students developed a stronger understanding and appreciation of nature and natural environments through the direct exposure to, and experience within, diverse ecosystems, and thus could better contribute to the goals of conservation. From a curricular perspective, the learning programs delivered to students at outdoor education centres focused on providing access to the natural environment, while also developing skills related to natural resource management. There was also a further recognition at the time that students from a then urbanizing city-region faced an increasing disconnect from their natural environment and outdoor education centres sought to create opportunities for urban students to experience nature.

While school board outdoor education programs continued to develop through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Provincial budget constraints in the late 1980s and 1990s slowed development of new natural science schools operated by school boards. By the early 2000s, further constraint led to the closure of one TRCA overnight centre (Boyd Field Centre), operated under a partnership agreement with local school boards, in 2001, followed by three Toronto District School Board overnight centres (Pine River Outdoor Education Centre, Noisy River Outdoor Education Centre and Boyne River Natural Science School) in 2003. However, during this time the York Region District School Board established the Sibbald Point Outdoor Education Centre within Sibbald Point Provincial Park in Georgina in 2004 and the Swan Lake Outdoor Education Centre in Richmond Hill in 2016 in partnership with TRCA.

#### Inventory of Conservation Authority and School Board-Operated Outdoor Education Centres

The following is an inventory education centres operated by TRCA and local school boards. Centres in *italics* are either located on, or adjacent to, TRCA-owned greenspace.

<b>Outdoor Education Centre</b>	<b>Operated By</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Opened</b>
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School Board Operated Centres				
<i>Duffins Creek Environmental Education Centre</i>	DDSB	Claremont	Day	1989
Nonquon Environmental Education Centre	DDSB	Greenbank	Day	1977
Durham Forest Environmental Education Centre	DDSB	Goodwood	Overnight	1978
Old Britannia School House	PDSB	Mississauga	Day (Seasonal)	1982
Brittania Farm Field Centre	PDSB	Mississauga	Day (Seasonal)	1988
GW Finlayson Field Centre	PDSB	Orangeville	Day	1975
Jack Smythe Field Centre	PDSB	Terra Cotta	Day	1969
<i>Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre</i>	TDSB	Toronto	Day	1967
<i>Hillside Outdoor Education School</i>	TDSB	Toronto	Day	1975
Toronto Urban Studies Centre	TDSB	Toronto	Day	1978
Warren Park Outdoor Education Centre	TDSB	Toronto	Day	1972
<i>Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre</i>	TDSB	Caledon	Overnight	1982
Island Natural Science Centre	TDSB	Toronto	Overnight	1960
Mono Cliffs Outdoor Education Centre	TDSB	Orangeville	Overnight	1986
Scarborough Outdoor Education School	TDSB	Kearny	Overnight	1978
Sheldon Centre for Outdoor Education	TDSB	Alliston	Overnight	1982
<i>Swan Lake Outdoor Education Centre</i>	YRDSB	Richmond Hill	Day	2016
<i>Milne Outdoor Education Centre</i>	YRDSB	Markham	Day	1990
Sibbald Point Outdoor Education Centre	YRDSB	Sutton	Day	2004
<i>Burlington Outdoor Education Centre</i>	YRDSB	Kleinburg	Day	1968
Vivian Outdoor Education Centre	YRDSB	Ballantrae	Day	1972

Conservation Authority Operated Centres				
<i>Kortright Centre for Conservation</i>	TRCA	Vaughan	Day	1979
<i>Tommy Thompson Park Education Programs</i>	TRCA	Toronto	Day (Seasonal)	2004
<i>Bruce's Mill Maple Syrup Programs</i>	TRCA	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Day (Seasonal)	1968
<i>Claremont Nature Centre</i>	TRCA	Claremont	Overnight	1970
<i>Albion Hills Field Centre</i>	TRCA	Caledon	Overnight	1963
<i>Lake St. George Field Centre</i>	TRCA	Richmond Hill	Overnight	1979

## **RATIONALE**

Under S.197 of the Education Act (RSO 1990), conservation authorities and school boards are enabled to enter into an agreement for the use of lands, buildings and personnel for the purposes of providing natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom programs. The following sections of the Education Act outline the various mechanisms available to school boards for the provision of out-of-classroom programs.

### *OUT-OF-CLASSROOM PROGRAMS*

#### *Dealings with land for out-of-classroom programs*

**197** (1) *Where a board acquires a school site under subsection 195 (1), (2) or (3) for the purpose of conducting thereon a natural science program and other out-of-classroom programs, the board shall obtain the approval of the Minister before it erects, adds to or alters buildings on or makes other improvements to the school site for such purpose. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (1).*

#### *Idem*

(3) *A board may, with the approval of the Minister, acquire by purchase or lease for the purpose of conducting a natural science program and other out-of-classroom programs a school site in Ontario that it does not have the authority to acquire under section 195, and the board shall obtain the approval of the Minister before it erects, adds to or alters buildings on or makes other improvements to the school site for such purpose. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (3).*

#### *Agreement between boards*

(5) *Two or more boards may enter into an agreement for a period specified therein for the shared use of a school site in Ontario for conducting natural science programs and other out-of-classroom programs but, where under such agreement one of the boards may acquire or is to acquire by purchase or lease a school site for such purpose or is to erect, add to or alter a building on or make other improvements to such site, the agreement is not effective until it is approved by the Minister, and a school site situate outside the jurisdiction of the boards that are parties to the agreement shall not be acquired without the prior approval of the Minister. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (5).*

#### *Agreements with conservation authorities, etc.*

(7) *A board may enter into an agreement with a conservation or other appropriate authority under which the board may, with the approval of the Minister, construct and maintain on lands owned by the authority the necessary facilities for the purpose of conducting a natural science program or other out-of-classroom program. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (7).*

#### *Idem*

(8) *A board that conducts a natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom program may enter into an agreement with a conservation or other appropriate authority for the use of the facilities and personnel of such authority for the purpose of conducting such a program as directed by the board. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (8).*

*Idem*

*(9) One or more boards may enter into an agreement with a conservation or other appropriate authority to provide for the construction, furnishing and equipping by the authority on lands owned by the authority of facilities for the purposes of conducting a natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom program as directed by the board or one or more of the boards and, where under the agreement a board is required to pay all or part of the cost of the facilities, the construction of the facilities shall be first approved by the Minister, and the amount paid therefor by the board shall be deemed to be an expenditure made by the board for a permanent improvement. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (9).*

*Board and lodging for courses in conservation*

*(10) A board may provide or pay for board and lodging for a pupil for a period not exceeding two weeks in any year while the pupil participates, with the consent of his or her parent or guardian and with the permission of the board, in a natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom program. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 197 (10).*

It is through the above enabling legislation that much of the conservation authority and school board operated outdoor education system has developed to respond to student needs related to learning in the out-of-doors. The above clauses specific to conservation authorities and school boards recognize of the value of partnerships as a model for delivering outdoor education, and provide mechanisms for efficient and effective future collaborations that maximize the potential of public assets while enhancing access for students to natural science, conservation and environmental learning opportunities in the out-of-doors.

### **Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

**Strategy 3 – Rethink greenspace to maximize its value**

**Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship**

**Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models**

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**Date: September 17, 2019**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm, on October 7, 2019.

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Garry Tanuan  
Chair

/sp