

## Item for the Information of the Regional Watershed Alliance

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance  
Wednesday, March 22, 2023 Meeting

**FROM:** John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

**RE: INTRODUCTION TO TRCA AND THE REGIONAL WATERSHED ALLIANCE**

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### KEY ISSUE

To introduce new Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) members to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), including jurisdiction, governance, organizational structure, and programs.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT the Introduction to TRCA and the Regional Watershed Alliance, be received for information.**

### BACKGROUND

#### Regional Watershed Alliance

RWA was established in 2017 based on recommendations from TRCA's Community Engagement Strategy (2017), which called for more broader, inclusive, and deeper citizen engagement across TRCA's nine watersheds and waterfront.

Prior to the RWA, TRCA administered watershed committees which focused on watershed specific initiatives (i.e., Don Watershed Regeneration Council, Etobicoke Mimico Watersheds Coalition, Humber Watershed Alliance). The Community Engagement Strategy proposed a new citizen governance model which included the RWA, a jurisdiction-wide advisory committee of the Board of Directors, as well as a TRCA Youth Council. Specifically, at Board of Directors Meeting #1/17, held on June 23, 2017, RES.#A102/17 was approved as follows:

THAT TRCA staff be directed to initiate implementation of key immediate priorities namely: the proposed Citizen Governance Model (as outlined in Attachment 2), including the terms of reference and recruitment of members for the Regional Watershed Council...;

The RWA collaborates with TRCA staff, municipal partners, and stakeholders to advance the following goals:

- Achieve The Living City Vision of Healthy Rivers and Shorelines, Regional Biodiversity, and Sustainable Communities across TRCA's nine watersheds/waterfront and Lake Ontario;
- Advocate on regional and local environmental policy issues;

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- Act as a resource to TRCA, TRCA's municipal partners and the Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation by providing advice on matters of community interest;
- Provide a platform for alignment on cross-jurisdictional priorities;
- Garner public support on environmental priorities across TRCA's nine watersheds/waterfront and Lake Ontario;
- Mobilize and empower networks of local communities;
- Secure political support at all levels of government; and
- Maximize impact through resource and data sharing, measuring, and reporting on regional priorities.

Originally, RWA membership was composed of 45 voting members representing TRCA watershed residents, sector experts and organizations, municipal, provincial, and federal governments, and TRCA's Board of Directors. More recently, the RWA membership was updated to be both more inclusive and administratively streamlined. Specifically, at Board Meeting #6/22 held on September 23, 2022, RES. #A112/22 approved the following membership structure for the RWA:

- Youth Council Representatives: 2
- Indigenous Representative: 1
- Board of Director Representatives: 2
- Watershed Residents: Up to 12
  - Toronto: 2 representatives
  - Peel: 2 representatives
  - York: 2 representatives
  - Durham: 2 representatives
  - The remaining 4 spots will be flexible and can be utilized for Mono, Adjala-Tosorontio and/or additional representatives from the municipalities above. During the selection process, efforts will be made to ensure there is representation from across TRCA's watersheds.
- Sector Experts and Organizations: Up to 6
  - All representatives for this category must be located in and/or undertake work within TRCA's jurisdiction. Representation will be sought from both experts/organizations with impact and/or jurisdiction that spans TRCA's jurisdiction and local/community-focused experts/organizations, with efforts made to include membership representation from across TRCA municipalities.
- Municipal Representatives: Up to 5
  - There will be a minimum of 1 representative each from Toronto, Peel and local municipalities, York and local municipalities, and Durham and local municipalities (4 total).
  - The remaining additional spot can be allocated to one of the municipalities above or to Mono/Adjala-Tosorontio
  - Municipal representatives may be Council members or staff
- Provincial Representative: 1
- Federal Representative: 1

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The Regional Watershed is currently in its third term and the contributions of the RWA to advance the above goals are reflected in the following accomplishments from the previous term of the RWA. This included:

- Providing input to various TRCA-led or supported initiatives, such as the TRCA Forest Management Strategy, The Meadoway, and the Carruthers Creek, Etobicoke Creek, and Humber River Watershed Plans.
- Providing input to partner-led projects or initiatives from municipalities or other external partners, such as the City of Brampton's Riverwalk Urban Design Master Plan, the City of Vaughan's Black Creek Renewal, and Friends of the Carrying Place Trail efforts to recognize and protect the Carrying Place Trail.
- Keeping informed on TRCA policy responses through circulation of reports outlining TRCA submissions to the Province on proposed policies or regulations.

### **TRCA Overview**

TRCA was created in response to the catastrophic Hurricane Hazel, which hit Toronto and communities north of the city in 1954. This hurricane resulted in serious flooding throughout Toronto, but particularly in the Humber River. The newly formed the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA), which later was renamed TRCA, became responsible for flood management and environmental protection throughout the Toronto Region at the watershed scale.

Since 1957, TRCA, as enabled through the provincial *Conservation Authorities Act*, has taken action to enhance our region's natural environment and protect our land, water and communities from the impacts of flooding and increasingly extreme weather events, which are Ontario's leading cause of public emergencies.

TRCA's jurisdiction includes nine watersheds: Carruthers Creek, Don River, Duffins Creek, Etobicoke Creek, Highland Creek, Humber River, Mimico River, Petticoat Creek, Rouge River, and their Lake Ontario shorelines, spanning one single tier, five upper-tier and fifteen lower-tier municipalities. The jurisdiction includes the entirety of the City of Toronto as well as significant portions in the Regions of Durham, Peel and York, and includes almost five million people, which is approximately 12% of Canada's population. TRCA's Board of Directors is made up of 28 members appointed by the respective Councils of participating member municipalities.

As the region's first line of defence against natural hazards, TRCA maintains vital flood infrastructure and provides programs and services that promote public health and safety and protects people and property. TRCA mobilizes a science-based approach to provide sound policy advice, leveraging its position as a not-for-profit operating in the broader public sector to achieve collective impacts within our communities and across all levels of government.

### **TRCA's Strategic Plan**

The work of the RWA also aligns with various the various pillars and goals of TRCA's Strategic Plan. [TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan](#) (Plan) is built around a 12-year timeframe, divided into three 4-year phases, reflecting partner municipalities' terms of

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Council. It is a living document guided by the evolving needs of TRCA and its stakeholders, allowing the organization to adapt to changes in the external operating environment, while guiding the organization towards its desired outcomes.

The framework starts with TRCA's vision, mission and core values, which will shape the future state that all priorities and actions across the organization are working towards achieving. These are as follows:

**TRCA Vision:** The achievement of safe and resilient communities.

**TRCA Mission:** The provincial leaders in conserving, restoring, and managing natural resources to advance safe and sustainable development.

**TRCA Core Values:** Working with Government and the communities we serve to achieve collective impact and advance shared goals.

The Plan is structured according to four strategic pillars designed to group associated outcomes within the Plan. The pillars provide a clear alignment and defined links that reflect how TRCA works towards supporting the efforts of our primary stakeholders and our partner municipalities. These pillars include, 1. Environmental Protection and Hazard Management, 2. Knowledge Economy, 3. Community Prosperity, 4. Service Excellence.

### **TRCA's Divisions**

The following section provides a high-level overview of the various divisions at TRCA whose work may intersect with the RWA. Throughout the RWA's term, there will be opportunities to learn more about the work and provide input to specific initiatives undertaken by each of these divisions.

#### **CEO's Office**

The CEO's Office represents and guides TRCA. This division strives to strengthen relationships between TRCA, partners, and stakeholders by working closely with all levels of government, community, and environmental organizations, improving client service, and successfully delivering programs and projects. The CEO's Office also represents TRCA on several intergovernmental and inter-agency committees to advance TRCA's mandate which includes, or has included, the Wider Waterfront Committee, Port Lands Executive Steering Committee, Toronto's Emergency Management Program Committee, the Lake Ontario Partnership, Greenbelt Golden Horseshoe Conservation Authorities Collaborative, Peel Climate Change Partnership, and the Province's Conservation Authorities Working Group to provide advice on regulatory changes and guidance documents.

#### **Corporate Services**

Corporate Services has the mandate of providing timely and seamless support for fundamental business operations, including marketing and communication, events, information technology and records management, and property, assets and risk management. The division takes proactive leadership to address standard operating procedures, opportunities for organizational improvements and results that are both financially and strategically sustainable. This division is also responsible for developing and administering the budget processes with municipal partners, as well as overall financial management of TRCA.

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### **Human Resources**

The Human Resources (HR) Division provides strategic advice, guidance and leadership in all HR areas, including the formulation, implementation and administration of strategic human resources initiatives. Some of the functions of HR include employee relations, identifying learning and development opportunities for staff, in addition to health and safety administration.

### **Education and Training**

The Education and Training Division provides learning and engagement opportunities for various audiences throughout TRCA's jurisdiction. These initiatives include school programs, educational outreach, stewardship, youth employment and mentorship, professional training for new Canadians and industry practitioners, residential outreach, sustainable technology performance evaluation, and TRCA's accessibility program. TRCA provides leadership in education and training through the redevelopment of TRCA education facilities and programs in community learning with an emphasis on building partnerships to improve health, learning and economic outcomes through an environmental and sustainability lens in the communities we serve.

### **Restoration and Infrastructure**

The Restoration and Infrastructure Division is comprised of a multi-disciplinary team focused on building climate resilient infrastructure and restoring natural habitats, which help realize the vision of The Living City. The team has expertise in construction project delivery, erosion risk management, restoration, and enabling professional services that include soils, archaeology, design, and surveying. TRCA is uniquely positioned to provide high quality and cost-effective end-to-end capital works, in addition to longer-term partnership programs that mitigate risk and improve ecological health throughout our jurisdiction. Often, the public can be involved in some of this work through community stewardship events, such as tree plantings and community clean ups.

### **Development and Engineering Services**

The Development and Engineering Services Division at TRCA is an integrated team of engineers, planners and scientists who lead watershed management planning and inform municipal planning to protect communities from natural hazards (flooding and erosion), safeguard water resources and create complete communities that integrate nature and the built environment. The division also administers TRCA's flood management and mitigation program, including monitoring and managing TRCA's flood infrastructure, issuing flood warnings, and undertaking relevant studies. This division is also responsible for both infrastructure and development planning and permitting pursuant to TRCA's regulation and policies.

### **Conservation Parks and Lands**

The Conservation Parks and Lands Division operates and manages TRCA's Conservation Parks, other lands, campgrounds, and Bathurst Glen Golf Course. Management, protection, and sustainability of parks, trails, and activities for the purposes of excellent recreational and learning opportunities for area residents and tourists to the region are some of the primary focus areas of this division. The team is integral in purposing green space for community enjoyment and integrating recreational activity with nature and learning that encompasses storytelling from pre-settlement days to present day. This division also leads parks and greenspace master and management

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planning processes. Recognizing the incredible value that nature and learning bring to societal wellbeing and health, this team cares for the resources we manage and the communities who visit and use them.

### **Policy Planning**

The Policy Planning Division ensures that TRCA's policy development, input and review functions are informed by the latest watershed research, and by the strategic objectives of managing water resources, natural heritage systems and natural hazards, in order to create complete communities, and facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability to support TRCA's Living City vision. TRCA's Enforcement team, who ensures that relevant regulations and permits are complied with, are also part of this division.

### **TRCA 2023 Preliminary Community Events Summary**

TRCA offers many larger scale community events over the course of the year which provide access to greenspace, and create opportunities for public education, outreach and celebration related to various environmental and cultural themes. The following table summarizes the main TRCA-led community events planned for 2023. These events are generally well attended and in the past RWA members have contributed to the success of these events through attendance and various roles. Updates related to community events and a more complete list will be provided to the RWA at a future meeting. RWA members are encouraged to attend and participate in these events throughout the year.

<b>Community Event</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival</b>	The Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival has come to be an annual tradition for many families over the last forty years. This ticketed event for all ages actively engages visitors who will explore the maple syrup trails and interact with education specialists who will perform demonstrations of the old fashion and modern ways of producing syrup. Attendees also get the opportunity to take part in outdoor activities, enjoy an assortment of maple syrup inspired food and visit our retail stores where maple syrup products are available for purchase.	Saturday, March 4 to Saturday, April 1	Bruce's Mill Conservation Park and Kortright Centre for Conservation
<b>Bike the Creek</b>	Bike the Creek is a free community cycling event for all ages that raises awareness on the benefits of	Saturday, June 10	Jim Archdekin Recreation

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	cycling and how active transportation is essential to building a healthy and sustainable community while highlighting the incredible trail system in the Region of Peel.		Centre, Brampton
<b>TRCA Celebrate the Humber</b>	TRCA Celebrate the Humber is a free event for all ages that tells the story of the Humber River, how it came to be designated as a Canadian Heritage River, and the importance of the Carrying Place Trail. Participants will visit interactive stations along the Humber River Recreation Trail in Toronto, view historic landmarks such as the bridge at Etienne Brule Park, and will also get the opportunity to canoe part of the Humber River.	Sunday, August 27	Etienne Brulé Park & King's Mill Park, Toronto
<b>TRCA Adventures of Salmon</b>	TRCA Adventures of Salmon is a free event for all ages that brings together community members from across the region to view the annual Salmon migration from Lake Ontario, up Highland Creek, through Morningside Park. This event highlights the interesting features of our natural areas in the Highland Creek watershed and educates participants about the importance of protecting these areas to ensure water quality and habitats are safe for Salmon to maintain their life cycle.	Sunday, September 24	Morningside Park, Scarborough

### RATIONALE

This report is intended to provide a high-level overview of TRCA and the functions of the RWA to new RWA members.

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## **Relationship to TRCA's 2022-2034 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following Pillars and Outcomes set forth in TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan:

### **Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:**

2.2 Collaboration to advance a green transition

### **Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:**

3.3 Informed citizens are conservation champions

### **Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:**

3.4 Inspired communities take environmental action

## **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

Administration of the RWA is through the TRCA Clerk's Office with support from Government and community Relations team. Accounts 101-03 and 012-03 support the administration of the RWA.

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

RWA meetings for the remainder of 2023 will be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, May 31, 2023
- Wednesday, September 20, 2023
- Wednesday, November 15, 2023

Additional optional site visits or tours may also take place. Meeting dates for 2024 will be brought forward at the RWA meeting on November 15, 2023.

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