

### Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Executive Committee  
Friday, February 7, 2025 Meeting

**FROM:** Linda Charlebois, Director, Corporate Services

**RE: Q4 COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, AND EVENTS  
REPORT SUMMARY (OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024)**

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#### **KEY ISSUE**

Information report regarding Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) corporate media communication activities during the fourth quarter of 2024 (October 1 - December 31, 2024).

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Q4 Communications, Marketing and Events Report Summary for October 1 - December 31, 2024, be received.**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Communications, Marketing and Events (CME) business unit, in collaboration with program areas across TRCA divisions, carries out corporate communication programs to provide a unified voice that aligns with TRCA's strategic priorities and identifies opportunities for improvement. Working with staff from all divisions and external program and service providers, the business units deliver communications campaigns through traditional media outlets and online social media channels. Content is typically disseminated through materials such as news releases and media advisories, direct outreach to targeted journalists, producers and editors, and responses to incoming media inquiries. Digital campaigns involve posting visual and written content on websites and distribution via social media platforms. All media activity is supported by ongoing assessment and deployment of technology tools and processes to maximize effectiveness.

#### **OVERVIEW:**

This report summarizes TRCA's communications and marketing activities from October 1 - December 31, 2024, led by CME.

### **Q4 Successes**

1. On October 3, CME developed a media campaign to mark Hurricane Hazel's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The campaign included a news release, a fact sheet, and key messaging for municipal partners to use in their social media and public relations.
2. CME collaborated with Human Resources to amplify TRCA's recognition as one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers for 2025, using tactics like news release distribution, advertorial support through Globe & Mail and social media amplification.
3. CME successfully managed TRCA's annual Pancake Breakfast, hosting over 400 colleagues to celebrate the conclusion of 2024 with a selection of food, a slideshow featuring staff from all divisions, and remarks from John MacKenzie, CEO.
4. CME developed awareness campaigns for all TRCA Holiday events, including Kortright's Magical Christmas and The Village at Black Creek's Festive Nights and Day events utilizing paid social media, paid google ads and strategically placed billboard advertising.
5. CME developed awareness campaigns for the Development and Engineering Flood team for the purpose of increasing signups for the Flood Awareness Messages utilizing paid google ads and paid social media.

### **Key Q4 Communications Metrics**

1. TRCA delivered three consolidated monthly newsletters during Q4, achieving a 50% average open rate (AOR) and a 3.9% click rate (CR). Both metrics significantly exceed non-profit industry benchmarks (25.17% AOR, 2.79% CR), highlighting strong audience engagement.
2. CME implemented a marketing strategy for Conservation Parks which resulted in: 31,175 organic social media impressions driving approximately 1,502 engagements, 294,334 paid social advertisement impressions generating 1,794 clicks to TRCA.ca, and 28,496 paid google ads impressions driving 1,137 clicks to TRCA.ca.

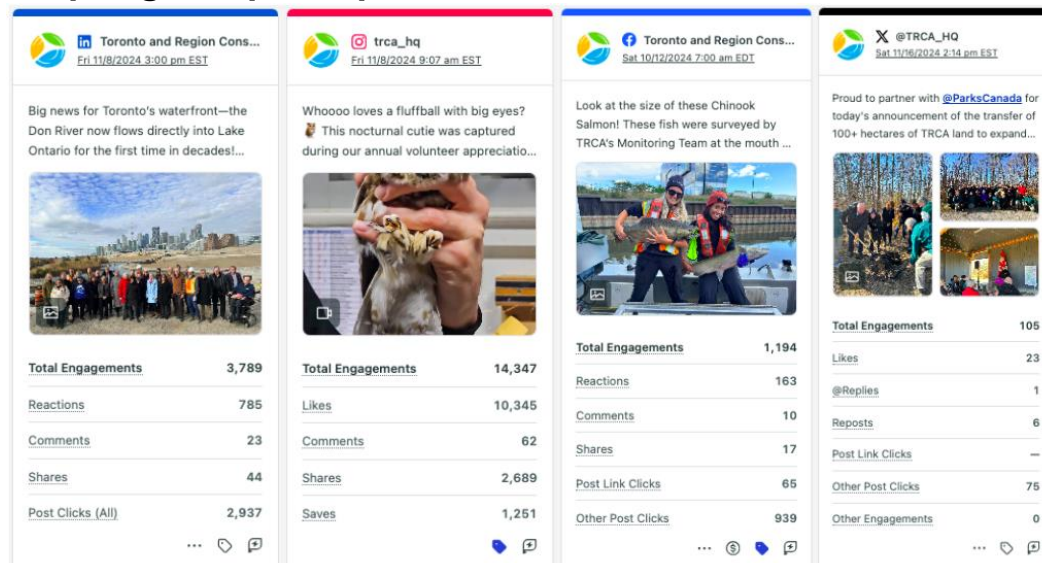
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- TRCA's ongoing Google Grant Campaign resulted in approximately 16,551 clicks to TRCA.ca, at a value of \$79,779 US dollars in free Google ads, promoting TRCA locations and activities, TRCA events calendar, flood mapping and more.

### **Q4 Social Activity**

In Q4 2024, TRCA's social media strategy highlighted a variety of seasonal and educational campaigns. We promoted holiday events at TRCA parks, including fall festivals and winter celebrations, which resonated with audiences seeking family-friendly activities. Our #FeatherFriday series returned with the fall bird migration, showcasing the unique bird species passing through Tommy Thompson Park and educating followers about the important work that happens inside the Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station. Our annual salmon migration campaign continued, encouraging community engagement by inviting users to submit their salmon sightings. Additionally, we marked the anniversary of Hurricane Hazel by spotlighting TRCA's flood risk management efforts, emphasizing the importance of preparedness and resilience. These topics showcased TRCA's commitment to environmental stewardship, education, and community involvement.

**TRCA's top organic posts per social media account were as follows:**



- On **LinkedIn**, the top-performing post celebrated the removal of the North Plug, marking a major milestone in the Don River's restoration as part of the Port Lands Flood Protection Project. This post resonated with our professional audience by highlighting TRCA's role

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in a transformative conservation effort with significant environmental and flood protection benefits. Its success can be attributed to the newsworthy nature of the achievement and its relevance to environmental professionals.

- On **Instagram**, the top-performing post was part of our #FeatherFriday series, featuring a saw-whet owl. This series continues to be a fan-favourite, driven by our audience's strong interest in bird content. Transitioning to video format for this post further boosted engagement, as did the owl's undeniable charm, which sparked enthusiastic comments. The combination of visually appealing content and the interactive nature of video made this post particularly impactful.
- On **Facebook**, the top-performing post featured two TRCA monitoring crew members holding two impressively large Chinook salmon as part of our salmon migration campaign. The striking size of the fish made the post visually captivating, immediately grabbing users' attention. Posts showcasing TRCA staff in the field consistently perform well, as they highlight the expertise and dedication behind our conservation efforts. Additionally, the mention of the Don River, a recognizable location for many Toronto residents, added a local connection that resonated with our audience.
- On **X (Twitter)**, the top-performing post announced the transfer of over 100 hectares of TRCA land to expand Rouge National Urban Park in partnership with Parks Canada. X's audience consistently responds well to announcements and conservation news, and this post highlighted a significant milestone in urban natural space protection. The focus on wildlife corridors, ecological health, and flood prevention further resonated with followers interested in environmental stewardship.

### **Q4 Events Summary**

TRCA's Events team provides strategic direction and assistance to all TRCA business units as required, to stage or participate in successful events, and takes the lead in managing signature TRCA events. The Events team coordinated with partners or implemented the following events in Q4.

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### Aquatic Habitat Toronto Executive Event

On October 2, Aquatic Habitat Toronto's (AHT) Executive Event took place. Since 2006, AHT has been instrumental in shaping the Toronto Waterfront. Coordinated by TRCA, AHT encompasses agencies across multiple jurisdictional boundaries and spans three levels of government, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada / Pêches et Océans Canada (DFO), ONresources | RichessesON (MNRF), TRCA, Waterfront Toronto, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), PortsToronto, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), and the City of Toronto.

This event highlighted many exceptional examples of AHT's innovative research, monitoring, and habitat restoration planning, resulting in significant outcomes such as the work at Gibraltar Point, Tommy Thompson Park, and the new mouth of the Don River.

John MacKenzie, CEO delivered remarks, and TRCA staff were in attendance.

### Celebration marking the removal of the north plug

On November 7, Waterfront Toronto and representatives from the Government of Canada, Province of Ontario and City of Toronto celebrated the most significant milestone in the \$1.35 billion Port Lands Flood Protection Project's history. This transformational milestone marked the completion of the new Don River and the creation of a brand-new island.

TRCA Executive Committee of the Board Member Paula Fletcher delivered remarks, alongside Mayor Olivia Chow. Senior government officials and John MacKenzie, CEO, along with TRCA staff were in attendance.

### Announcement with Parks Canada of the Transfer of Lands and Partnership Agreement for Restoration

On November 16, TRCA and Parks Canada announced the transfer of 119 hectares of TRCA land to Parks Canada for a further expansion of the Rouge National Urban Park in Pickering along with a funding agreement of close to \$950,000 for restoration work in the Park. Minister Gary Anandasangaree, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpetti, MP John McKay, Chief Claire Sault of the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation, Parks Canada officials, and CEO John MacKenzie and several TRCA Senior Management Team members were in attendance.

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### TRCA Staff Pancake Breakfast

On December 4, TRCA marked the close of a successful 2024 with the annual staff pancake breakfast at the Kortright Centre for Conservation. Staff came together to enjoy a wonderful breakfast with their colleagues. John MacKenzie, CEO addressed the staff to thank them for their dedication and commitment to TRCA.

449 staff were in attendance, along with TRCA Board Member, Laura Isidean.

### Q4 Media Coverage – Summary

Requests for information or interviews occurred from various members of the media during Q4 2024 through:

- Our Media Request Form or direct media email on our website;
- Directly to our Communications and Media Relations Specialist; and
- Contacting staff at TRCA who notified CME.

TRCA received **28** requests in Q4 through our online Media Request form and other methods listed above. Of the **28** total requests, **7** were for TV/Radio, with the remaining related to print or online.

Highlighted below is a combination of:

- Media requests to TRCA resulting in media coverage;
- Additional organic coverage where TRCA was mentioned by name or;
- TRCA’s key findings/reports were referenced; and
- Articles that resulted directly from TRCA issuing a media advisory / media release.

TRCA received over **90** media mentions in Q4 2024, including nine on TV or radio. The remaining mentions were in print or online articles.

### **October, 2024**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Media Outlet</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Link</b>
October 3, 2024	YorkRegion.com	‘Canada’s worst invasive plant’: phragmites in York region dry up wetlands and flood roads. Authorities are fighting back	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			

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An article about phragmites, which is Canada's worst invasive plant, and conservation authorities' efforts to manage it. Interview with Karen McDonald, Senior Manager, Restoration & Infrastructure at TRCA.			
October 7, 2024	Justsayincaledon	Hurricane Hazel's Legacy: 70 Years Ago, the Storm Transformed Flood Management in the Region	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			
An article commemorating Hurricane Hazel's anniversary and legacy. Features quotes from <a href="#">TRCA's Hurricane Hazel's Legacy news release</a> and John MacKenzie, CEO, TRCA.			
October 14, 2024	Durhamregion.com	Here's what made Hurricane Hazel so destructive 70 years ago — even though it wasn't really a hurricane. Could it happen again?	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			
An article highlighting the devastation caused by Hurricane Hazel. Includes a link to TRCA's <a href="#">Hurricane Hazel's Legacy news release</a> .			
October 14, 2024	Instantweatherinc	Toronto's Storm of the Century: Remembering Hurricane Hazel 70 Years Later	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			
An article exploring the history and impact of Hurricane Hazel. Refers to TRCA's <a href="#">Hurricane Hazel's Legacy news release</a> .			
October 14, 2024	YorkRegion.com	Impact of Hurricane Hazel still being felt in York Region 70 years on	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			
An article highlighting Hurricane Hazel's impacts in Mississauga and Toronto. TRCA is quoted.			
October 15, 2024	CBC Radio: Here and Now Toronto with Ramrajh Sharvendiran	Fixing Toronto's eroding shorelines	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
<b>Information</b>			

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A report on an upcoming erosion management project in Colonel Sam Smith Park in Etobicoke. Interview with Natasha Gibson, Senior Project Manager, Erosion Risk Management at TRCA.

October 16, 2024	Mississauga.com	'It can happen again.' 4 things to know about Hurricane Hazel's impacts in Mississauga and Toronto	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
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An article highlighting Hurricane Hazels impact on the GTA. David Kellershohn, Associate Director Engineering Services at TRCA is quoted.

## November, 2024

Date	Media Outlet	Title	Link
November 1, 2024	CityNews	Toronto's first tiny forest plants sustainable neighbourhood in the Pocket	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>

### Information

A report by the Green Line team who spoke with Patricia Lewis, Program Manager, Sustainable Communities at TRCA to learn how it's helping residents build a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan.

November 2, 2024	The Weather Network	How high-tech drones help conservation efforts in Canada	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
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### Information

A report about drone usage to help conservation efforts. Interview with Cody Daluz, Technologist, Environmental at TRCA.

November 6, 2024	Global News	Global News at 6 Toronto: Nov. 8, 2024: Marking a milestone on Toronto's waterfront.	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a> (Coverage starts at 8:57.)
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A report about the opening of the new mouth for the Don River. Interview with John MacKenzie, CEO at TRCA.

November 22, 2024	CityNews	Canada's only urban national park to grow	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
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A report about the expansion of Rouge National Urban Park Rouge through a TRCA land transfer. Interview with John MacKenzie, CEO at TRCA and Deanna Cheriton, Senior Manager, Conservation Lands and Parks.

### December, 2024

Date	Media Outlet	Title	Link
December 3, 2024	The Globe and Mail	'Employees find every day is unique at TRCA	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>

### Information

An article highlighting the culture and values of TRCA, as part of becoming one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers. Interview with Brynn Coey, Supervisor, Aquatic Monitoring & Management and John MacKenzie, CEO at TRCA.

December 10, 2024	Time Magazine	Big Storms Highlight Cities' Efforts to Protect Water Systems	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
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An article about how recent months have drawn public attention to how vulnerable cities and towns are often impacted by hurricanes and severe storms and what actions these cities have undertaken to protect water systems. Interview with David Kellershohn, Associate Director, Engineering Services at TRCA.

December 18, 2024	Ontario Nature	Nature's Landscape Architects	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
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An article about beavers residing at Tommy Thompson Park. Interview with Karen McDonald, Senior Manager, Restoration & Infrastructure at TRCA.

### Media Releases:

TRCA was involved with **11** Media Releases and blogs this quarter:

Date of Media List Distribution	Media Release / Blog	Link
October 1, 2024	Introducing The Village at Black Creek	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>

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October 2, 2024	The Salmon Adventure Returns to Highland Creek	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
October 3, 2024	Hurricane Hazel's Legacy	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
October 3, 2024	Celebrate Autumn with Exciting TRCA Events!	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
October 15, 2024	15 Years of Community Transformation: The Lasting Impact of SNAP	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
November 5, 2024	Welcome Winter with TRCA's Family-Friendly Events	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
November 28, 2024	Fantastic Field Finds of 2024 – Fauna	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
November 28, 2024	Get Into the Festive Spirit with TRCA	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
December 2, 2024	Fantastic Field Finds of 2024 – Flora	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
December 3, 2024	TRCA Named One of Greater Toronto's Top Employers	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>
December 10, 2024	2024 TRCA Winter Safety Statement	<a href="#">STORY LINK</a>

### Media Advisories:

TRCA was involved with **3** Media Advisories this quarter, which led to additional media coverage:

Date of Media List Distribution	Title
October 4, 2024	Celebrate Autumn with Exciting TRCA Events! Experience thrilling Halloween activities, immerse in fall foliage and meet the real Toronto Raptors!
October 30, 2024	Welcome Winter with TRCA's Exciting Family-Friendly Events This November!
November 20, 2024	Celebrate the season across the GTA with TRCA and a wide selection of family events!

### **Q4 Key Learnings**

1. Collaborating with municipal partners on milestones like Hurricane Hazel's anniversary increased regional engagement and reinforced TRCA's role as a supportive municipal partner.
2. The collaborative model of content creation developed in conjunction with TTP's Bird Monitoring station staff has proven extremely successful, consistently delivering content driving the most engagement with our audiences. CME will look to replicate this approach with other business units where appropriate.
3. CME will continue issuing monthly media advisories promoting TRCA events and programming and will pilot an approach where items are bundled by region to ensure greater relevance to media.

### **2025 Q1 Look Ahead**

Below is a list of upcoming communications activities set for Q1 2025:

1. Communication support will be provided during Q1 to promote the following:
  - Continuing communications support for TRCA's upcoming move to 5 Shoreham Drive;
  - Support TRCA's Annual General Meeting through onsite photography, and materials such as presentations, speaking notes and more;
  - Design and distribution of TRCA's 2024 Annual Report;
  - TRCA's Seasonal Hiring;
  - TRCA's March Break and Summer Camp registration; and
  - TRCA's Development and Engineering Flood Risk Management Team – promoting TRCA's work around dam maintenance.
2. Planning of communication support will begin for TRCA major events, including:
  - Official ribbon-cutting ceremony for 5 Shoreham Drive.
  - Source to Stream 2025 conference;
  - Maple Syrup Festival 2025;
  - The Village at Black Creek's major events:
    - Snowy Days – Family Day Weekend; and

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- Maple Days – March Break.

### **Relationship to TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan**

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

#### **Pillar 4 Service Excellence:**

4.3 Responsive relationships and a trusted brand with a reputation for excellence

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