

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #8/18, Friday, October 26, 2018

FROM: Chandra Sharma, Director, Watershed Strategies

RE: **CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER**
20th Anniversary of the Humber River

KEY ISSUE

To provide an overview and opportunities for collaboration for the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Humber River's designation as a Canadian Heritage River.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Humber River's 20th Anniversary as a Canadian Heritage River be leveraged, as appropriate, to raise awareness of rivers, watersheds and associated cultural heritage through communication, outreach and engagement activities of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and its municipal partners throughout 2019;

THAT, in recognition of its historic, cultural and ecological significance, senior levels of government be engaged to secure improved funding for the restoration, enhancement, protection and celebration of the Humber River;

THAT a copy this report be circulated to TRCA regional and local municipal partners, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Conservation Ontario, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Ministry of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Canadian Ministry of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, and Canadian Ministry of Science and Sport for their information and consideration of collaboration opportunities;

AND FURTHER THAT staff work with the Regional Watershed Alliance, interested partners and local environmental groups to plan and deliver 2019 celebration initiatives where opportunities for collaboration are identified.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the Humber River was officially designated as a Canadian Heritage River and included in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS), Canada's national river conservation program. The CHRS program is a Canadian-provincial-territorial managed program, which works with river managers across Canada to conserve and promote designated rivers in recognition that they are essential to our health, our communities, and our identity as Canadians.

The Humber River is exceptional on many accounts. From a natural environmental perspective, it drains the largest watershed in the TRCA jurisdiction and contains many of the most unique and sensitive natural spaces in the Toronto region including portions of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment. It also has a rich human history as a home for Indigenous peoples along its banks, as a vital transportation route known as the Carrying Place Trail and as the site of many of Toronto's early European settlement homes and industries.

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In receiving the Canadian Heritage River designation, the Humber River has been formally recognized for its natural, cultural and recreational value and for its fundamental contributions to the development of Canada.

Since 1999, TRCA has worked with municipal and community partners, watershed residents and Indigenous communities on several CHRS-inspired or supported initiatives that protect, restore and celebrate the Humber River. Some of the accomplishments include:

- Watershed Plan for Humber River watershed;
- Humber River Watershed Report Cards;
- Humber River Heritage Bridge Inventory;
- The Shared Path Program;
- CHRS Heritage Plaques Program;
- Designation of heritage buildings and structures such as the Wiley Bridge and McVean Barn in the Claireville Conservation Area within the City of Brampton;
- Signature watershed events such as Humber by Canoe; and
- Support of community-led heritage events throughout the watershed.

At the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) Meeting #3/18, held on September 19, 2018, staff informed Alliance members of the upcoming 20th Anniversary in 2019, and requested input and participation in the Celebration Plan. Resolution #R5/18 was approved, in part, as follows:

...THAT the RWA Watershed Forum Working Group consider adopting the Humber Heritage Theme as a priority for 2019 and acting as the 20th Anniversary Planning Committee;

THAT FURTHER THAT other interested RWA members consider participating in the 20th Anniversary planning activities as appropriate.

RATIONALE

The 20th Anniversary of the Humber River as a Canadian Heritage River poses an excellent opportunity for TRCA and its partners to celebrate this nationally significant river and to promote its historical and ongoing contribution to life in the Toronto region. It also provides a platform to communicate the accomplishments of TRCA and its partners in protecting and restoring the Humber River watershed as well as the other watersheds in its jurisdiction. The 20th Anniversary celebrations will engage TRCA's municipal and community partners, stakeholders and the communities within the Humber watershed and throughout the Toronto region.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Detailed cost estimates will be prepared as part of the development of the 20th Anniversary Celebration Plan. Depending on the scope of activities in the Plan, staff and the 20th Anniversary Planning Committee may need to secure external sponsors and pursue fundraising.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Staff has begun to develop an outline for the 20th Anniversary Celebration Plan that takes into account the ongoing engagement and communications activities and capacities of TRCA and its partners for watershed and heritage communications and engagement, and also reflects elements of anniversary celebrations from other Heritage Rivers across Canada. Some of the proposed activities being considered are:

- **20th Anniversary Visual Theme** – to be incorporated into TRCA's website, annual report and meeting, newsletters, social media accounts (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), email signatures and promotional materials.

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- **Anniversary Video** – to include accomplishments over the past 20 years, including, TRCA, partner and stakeholder testimonials.
- **Social Media Strategy** – for TRCA social media accounts to create awareness for the Humber's 20th Anniversary throughout 2019.
- **Mobile Display** – to be showcased at TRCA and partner events and facilities within the Humber watershed.
- **Indigenous Engagement** – to support Indigenous groups to host their own heritage celebration events for the Humber River.
- **Signature Event** – TRCA will host its annual Humber by Canoe Anniversary Event with a 20th Anniversary theme.
- **Watershed Community Events** – TRCA will support and participate in 2019 community events throughout the Humber watershed through materials, displays and activities that celebrate the Humber's 20th anniversary.
- **Municipal Collaboration** – TRCA will reach out to municipal heritage departments, museums and archives and other departments, as appropriate to explore 2019 partnership opportunities to engage communities to tell the story of the Humber River. Potential opportunities include: partnering on watershed celebration events, launch and promotion of CHRS Digital Story Map, participation on 20th Anniversary Planning Committee, etc.
- **Recognition of Humber Heritage Committee** – TRCA will recognize members of the original Humber Heritage Committee who championed the Humber River's CHRS designation alongside TRCA in the 1990s.
- **Launch of CHRS Digital Story Map** – launch the digital CHRS story map for the Humber River that has been developed by staff in partnership with Parks Canada.
- **CHRS Forum** – a by invitation forum to develop a strategic action plan for the next 20 years to maintain, promote and celebrate the Humber's CHRS designation.
- **CHRS Plaques** – develop a plan for maintaining and restoring the 12 existing CHRS Plaques throughout the Humber River, including the installation of new CHRS plaques as appropriate.
- **CHRS 10 – Year Monitoring Report** – preparation of the 10-Year Monitoring Report to CHRS.

Beginning in fall 2018, TRCA staff will work with the 20th Anniversary Planning Committee, municipal and community partners and stakeholders to finalize the Celebration Plan and initiate implementation of the 20th Anniversary Celebration activities in 2019.

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