

Section I – Items for Regional Watershed Alliance Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance
Meeting #3/18, Wednesday, November 14, 2018

FROM: Chandra Sharma, Director, Watershed Strategies Division

RE: **YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

KEY ISSUE

Confirmation and approval of Youth Council Executive members.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) has approved the framework for the Youth Council, including the structure of membership to be comprised of both “General” and “Executive” members.

AND WHEREAS the Youth Council Working Group, with staff support, has selected a final Executive membership comprised of 10 members for a term of 1 year;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the membership list for the Youth Council Executive, as appended, be confirmed and approved;

AND THAT the Youth Council Executive will meet on a monthly basis, and will provide direction to and identify priorities for the Youth Council for a one year term;

AND FURTHER THAT intake for the General membership is to remain open.

BACKGROUND

The long-term success of efforts to advance environmental protection and sustainability in the Toronto region depends on the support of the region’s youth, both now and into the future. The TRCA Community Engagement Strategy highlights the importance of engaging youth and reflecting their unique perspectives in TRCA’s priorities and programs, and identifies the creation of a Youth Council, overseen by the Regional Watershed Alliance, as an important and immediate priority. Around the world, youth councils have been created by governments, community groups and non-profit organizations as a means of providing local youth with an opportunity to gain important skills, build capacity and network, while providing the sponsoring agencies with important input and perspectives from youth stakeholders.

At RWA meeting #2/17 held on February 21, 2018, the framework for the Youth Council was approved. In this framework, two tiers of Youth Council membership were described: general and executive membership. The general membership is open to all youth in TRCA’s jurisdiction. General members will be invited to participate in Youth Council meetings and events, but participation will be voluntary. Executive members are an application-based position. Executive members will be responsible for the development of priorities for action, communication with the general Youth Council membership, organizing meetings, and the development of a work plan for a one-year term.

There are four objectives that will guide the development of program activities for the Youth council: “Build Capacity and Engage Youth,” providing youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities; “Build a Youth Network/Strengthen Existing Networks,” creating a broad network of youth in the region that is interested in environmental and sustainability issues; “Identify Youth Perspectives,” developing an understanding of youth opinion around current

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environmental issues and how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and “Create fun opportunities for youth,” providing entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

RATIONALE

Recruitment materials were developed by the RWA Youth Council Working Group in consultation with staff. Applicants for the executive membership were also asked to answer two out of the four following questions:

- 1) Why are you interested in joining the Youth Council?
- 2) What would you like to accomplish as part of the Youth Council?
- 3) What would make you a good candidate for the Youth Council Executive?
- 4) What do you think is the biggest challenge faced by your neighbourhood or region right now? What would you do to help people understand and address that challenge?

Executive applicants were also invited to attach a resume, though this step was optional. Recruitment for both tiers of the Youth Council began online in mid-September, and applications for executive membership closed on October 15, 2018 (recruitment for general membership continues to remain open). Advertisement for the recruitment was carried out on Instagram and YouTube, and was circulated communicated through relevant TRCA networks.

In total, 19 applications for executive membership were received. These applications were evaluated by the Youth Council Working Group and staff. Considerations for members included: representation from across the jurisdiction, demographic factors, and merit based on the quality of application. The final members can be found in attachment 1. 75 applications for general membership have been received from across the jurisdiction (a breakdown by postal code can be seen in attachment 2), and region-wide recruitment of general Youth Council members will continue.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- An inaugural meeting of Youth Council Executive Members is set for the month of November. At this meeting members will begin process of developing a work plan, and structure for monthly meetings.
- A meet-up for all Youth Council Members is to be set up for the month of November.

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Attachments: 2