

### Items for the Information of the Regional Watershed Alliance

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance  
Meeting #4/19, Wednesday, November 13, 2019

**FROM:** Chandra Sharma, Director, Community Engagement and Outreach

**RE:** **YOUTH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP (2019-2020)**

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#### KEY ISSUE

To update the RWA on the first term (2018-2019) of Youth Council accomplishments and seek approval of Youth Council Executive membership for second one-year term beginning in November 2019.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**WHEREAS** TRCA's Youth Council completed a successful one-year term in the Fall of 2019 and a new cohort of youth for Council Executive has been selected through a selection process in November 2019;

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED THAT** the Regional Watershed Alliance receive the appended report summarizing the work completed and evaluation of the Youth Council's first term activities and outcomes;

**THAT** the outgoing members be thanked for their contributions to the work of TRCA;

**THAT** the terms of four returning Youth Council Executive members, as indicated in the report, extend their terms for an additional year to November 30<sup>th</sup> 2020;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the membership list for the new Youth Council Executive, as appended, be approved;

#### BACKGROUND

Youth Councils are being deployed around the world as a means to engage and inspire youth. TRCA's 2017 Community Engagement Strategy recommended the development of a youth council. The program framework of the Youth Council was developed by TRCA staff and Regional Watershed Alliance members. The ultimate goal of the Youth Council is to build healthy communities. This will be achieved through four program objectives:

- a) Build capacity and engage youth by providing youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities;
- b) Build a youth network/strengthen existing networks through creation of a broad network of youth in the region that is interested in environmental and sustainability issues;

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- c) Identify youth perspectives by developing an understanding of youth opinion around current environmental issues and how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and
- d) Create fun opportunities for youth through entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

The framework for the Youth Council was approved by the RWA in February 2018 (RES.#R11/17). Recruitment for the first year of the Youth Council began during the fall of 2018. Participants could sign up as a general member or apply to be on the Youth Council Executive. Executive members serve as the guiding body for the Council for a one-year term and are responsible for the development of program activities and priorities that fit within the objects defined in the program framework.

### **RATIONALE**

#### **Key Outcomes from the 2018/2019 Youth Council Executive**

Overall the 2018/19 Youth Council Executive made progress towards achieving program objectives through the delivery of multiple initiatives:

- A comprehensive survey on youth perspectives
- Developing a newsletter and engagement through yoursay.ca
- A guided walk (9 Executive members and 10 general Youth Council members participating)
- An Earth Day Clean-up (9 participants and 271 pounds of litter collected)
- A free documentary movie night (Over 140 participants)
- Direction on building youth capacity in the environmental sector

Overall, the Youth Council Executive built strong partnerships with Evergreen Brickworks, Patagonia and Swim Drink Fish, and continue to engage the general membership through a series of newsletters. Recommendations to improve program delivery next year include: extending the term for up to four executives to ensure program continuity; booking meetings further in advance; defining clear roles for executives; expanding work with the general membership; and exploring how to leverage the Youth Council network to promote key messages and actions related to TRCA work. A more detailed evaluation of Youth Council activities is in the attached report (Attachment 1).

#### **Youth Council Executive Membership Process**

Four Executive Members were asked if they would be interested in extending their term by an additional year. A year term was initially selected because youth in the age 16-30 cohort are more likely to be in transitional years between the professional world and school, and less likely to commit to a term longer than one year. It is, however, vital to have some continuity in leadership across years to maintain the relationships and continue to build momentum in youth engagement. For this reason, it has been recommended that four spaces (out of ten) should be

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made available to executive members interested in continuing their term. Recruitment for new executives launched on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and remained open until October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Applicants were evaluated by TRCA staff and the RWA Youth Council working group. Six new members (see Attachment 2) were selected based on experience and their responses to questions, bearing in mind age differences. Furthermore, an attempt was made to select a diverse group in terms of interests, age, and representation of TRCA's entire jurisdiction.

### **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 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship**

**Strategy 8 – Gather and share the best sustainability knowledge**

### **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

Funds are available in TRCA Community Engagement & Outreach program accounts for watershed engagement and community projects to support the recruitment, convening and ongoing activities of the Youth Council. Staff will work with the Regional Watershed Alliance Youth Council working group and with the Youth Council itself to ensure that the scope of work reflects available budget and staff support

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

- A meet-up for all Youth Council Members is to be set up for the month of November, likely in the format of a voluntary guided walk at Evergreen Brickworks, or a movie night at Patagonia. Staff and the Youth Council Working Group will work with the Youth Council Executive to plan that event.
- A retreat for Youth Council Executive member will take place in early 2020 to begin detailed work planning.

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**Date: October 25, 2019**

**Attachments: 2**

Attachment 1: **TRCA Youth Council 2018/2019 Report**

Attachment 2: **Youth Council Executive 2020 Membership**