

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #8/20, Friday, November 20, 2020

FROM: Richard Ubbens, Director, Parks and Culture

**RE: TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY'S 2021 PARKS AND
ATTRACTIONS MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

KEY ISSUE

Approval of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) 2021 Membership Program.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority staff be directed to enter into an agreement with Credit Valley Conservation to offer joint membership passes in 2021 and report results back to the Board of Directors in Q4 of 2021;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA's 2021 Parks and Attractions Membership Program be approved.

BACKGROUND

A review of TRCA's Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming is conducted annually, and changes are brought to the Board of Directors for approval. The fee review considers the value of TRCA programs and facilities provided to customers and current market conditions, such as comparable fees imposed by other public authorities like Ontario Parks, local Municipalities and other Conservation Authorities. Consideration is given to ensure TRCA's ecological and social practices are maintained, which include providing inclusive recreation and education experiences to diverse communities while protecting natural and cultural assets.

To begin immediate promotion and marketing, this report seeks Board of Director approval for various membership categories.

To ensure that fees and budget requirements are appropriately linked, an additional report will be brought to the January 29, 2021 Board of Directors meeting for public facility use and programming fees.

At Board of Directors Meeting #11/19, held on January 24, 2020, RES.#A226/19 was approved as follows:

THAT the 2020 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming be amended as set out in Attachment 1 and become effective February 1, 2020.

In 2019, TRCA offered multiple levels of memberships for residents to purchase for access to the Kortright Centre for Conservation (KCC), Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV) and a VIP BCPV pass, in addition to a Conservation Parks membership program including both TRCA and CVC properties.

The Conservation Parks membership program is a cooperative joint program with CVC and provides general admission access to all TRCA and CVC Parks as well as BCPV and KCC,

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including free parking at the locations, free cross-country skiing admission at Albion Hills, free general admission to special events (e.g. Maple Syrup Festival), as well as discounts for pools, Treetop Trekking, equipment rentals, camping, workshops and other various events.

RATIONALE

In order to simplify the pass program for 2021, TRCA is recommending combining all levels of memberships into one TRCA/CVC Parks and Attractions Pass, which will permit the holder entrance to all eight TRCA attractions, including TRCA's six conservation parks, KCC, and BCPV, as well as CVC's four conservation parks. Additionally, the 2021 pass offers exclusive discounts on select in-person and virtual special events and programming, camping, golf, cross country-skiing and much more.

With the ongoing pandemic related restrictions expected to continue for the duration of 2021, TRCA has a unique opportunity to significantly increase its membership base. TRCA facilities are in high demand as the public seeks new and different places to explore and enjoy time with others, in accordance with social distancing guidelines, while many local attractions have been forced to close or significantly restrict their operations. By positioning itself as a viable, cost-effective, family-friendly offering, through the promotion of active and healthy living, TRCA can reach a broader audience who are currently unaware of these attractions.

TRCA and CVC staff met recently to discuss implementing a corporate membership discount to increase market exposure for Conservation Parks associated recreational opportunities. Many companies promote active and healthy lifestyles for their employees, vendors, and other valued stakeholders. The vast network of trails and recreational opportunities that Conservation Parks offer are wonderful places to experience and become more connected to the environment. A discounted corporate membership will facilitate corporate promotion of active living and TRCA would like to offer a discount for companies that purchase 10+ passes.

Additionally, staff propose providing periodic, time-limited discounts on memberships to boost subscription and enhance overall reach. The proposed corporate and discounted memberships would be up to a maximum of 20% savings on current individual and family memberships fees and would be available for purchase on line at <https://shop.trca.ca/product-category/memberships/parks/>

Upon approval of this discounted membership proposal, TRCA will reach out to all Partners in Project Green eco-business network members and other potential stakeholders for the purpose of promoting the corporate membership program, as well as market time-limited discounts for the general public on a regular basis, as appropriate.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:
Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

The proposed pricing for the 2021 Memberships is as follows:

Regular Pricing (excl. HST)	Senior/Student	Individual	Family
TRCA/CVC Parks & Attractions Pass	\$60	\$75	\$135
Discounted Pricing (excl. HST)	Senior/Student	Individual	Family
TRCA/CVC Parks & Attractions Pass	\$48	\$60	\$108

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Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is currently unknown how many passes TRCA/CVC will sell in 2021, however total membership sales in recent years have ranged, on an annual basis, between 1,000 – 1,500 passes sold.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Following Board of Directors approval, TRCA will begin promotion of memberships throughout our network of members and partners. A further report will be brought to the Board of Directors in January 2021 regarding the remaining fees that comprise the 2021 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming.

Staff are developing a five-year strategy to support growth of the membership program, including growth targets, marketing strategies, cross-promotional opportunities and supporting technological infrastructure. The long-term growth of the membership program will better allow TRCA to leverage memberships to promote other TRCA programs and improve overall engagement of local residents in the work of TRCA.

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Date: November 5, 2020