

Another busy year...

It was another busy year in the Etobicoke and Mimico Watersheds with the community members being engaged in stewardship and planting activities taking place from the headwaters in Caledon and Brampton down to the shores of Lake Ontario. Over 8,000 volunteers and community residents participated in 59 projects and events across Etobicoke and Mimico watersheds. Approximately 9,000 trees and shrubs were planted and 49,000 square meters of watershed were restored.

Several government and private sector partnerships were realized to implement unique partnership projects in the watershed. These partners ranged from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), Ministry of Environment (MOE), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), Region of Peel, City of Toronto, and cities of Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon.

Partners in Project Green: A Pearson Eco-Business Zone received overwhelming support of local businesses and government to achieve the goal of creating North America's largest eco-business park surrounding Pearson International Airport.

In a unique partnership with the Peel Aboriginal Network, a traditional Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Garden was created at Heart Lake Conservation Area. Planted with native plants with medicinal value, the space has been transformed into an area of healing, celebration and peace.

Naturalization of concrete channels is an important goal to achieve habitat regeneration in the Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks Watersheds. An important milestone in 2009 was the completion of approximately 2 km of Upper Mimico Creek channel restoration project and shoreline restoration at Heart Lake Conservation Area.

To increase public recreation opportunities, over 10 km of Etobicoke Creek trail construction has been initiated along Etobicoke Creek in the cities of Brampton, Mississauga, and Toronto.

The 37 member Etobicoke- Mimico Watersheds Coalition (Coalition) completed their second term in 2009. We look forward to an exciting start of the third term of the Coalition in 2010 with new energy and new projects.



Heart Lake Conservation Area Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Garden.

Circle of Life

by Jason Matthews

Boozhoo Aaniin, (Greetings) as the Anishnaabek (Objiwe) would say, I feel very fortunate to be sharing with you a privileged and wonderful opportunity. A few months ago I met a group of passionate people who were working alongside the Aboriginal community on a special project to give back to the earth and to help others. This was the start of a beautiful Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Garden located at Heart Lake Conservation Area in Brampton. This Medicine Wheel Garden has been made possible through a wonderful partnership between the Peel Aboriginal Network, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), the Heart Lake Community Action Group, the Region of Peel, the City of Brampton and tremendous volunteer support from the local community.

What is a Medicine Wheel Garden? It is the creation of a sacred space for healing, celebration and peace. It honours Mother Earth's seasonal cycles and, as the garden changes, the circle of life continues. The concept of the Medicine Wheel Garden originated with the Sacred Medicine Wheel. It honours the four sacred cardinal directions, four sacred medicines (sage, sweetgrass, tobacco and cedar), the four sacred colours (yellow, red, black and white), the four seasons and the cycles of life.

The teachings are vast and my descriptions humbly represent a small fragment of their wholeness. The medicine circle shows respect to the four cardinal directions, Mother Earth, Father Sky, Grandmother Moon and the Star People. The four directions have teachings and sub teachings designed to guide and ease our life's struggles, to heal and direct us on how to tread lightly on Mother Earth and show respect for all that is living. By creating a wheel, you are symbolically creating a universe (microcosm) within the universe (macrocosm) and creating a sacred place of healing. To quote an Ojibwe Elder, "Just bring in the presence of a wheel, people will heal. Of course, healing can be interpreted in several different ways and it can simply be an epiphany that

emancipates you from a state of suffering. The Anishnaabek (Objiwe) often referred to the medicine wheel as the circle of life symbolizing the natural cycles such as birth, growth, death, regeneration, times of day, seasons and sacred medicinal herbs. The architecture of the wheel is created using a numerical system featuring the numbers 7 and 4. The number 7 represents the seven sacred directions; they are Father Sky which is blue, Mother Earth which is green, purple which is the Creator and the 4 cardinal directions. There are also the seven grandfather teachings which are honesty, respect, humility, love, wisdom, truth and courage. These teachings represent the characteristics that exist in all of us and are important for us to cultivate in order to find happiness in ourselves and to assist others. They are also needed to "connect" for guidance along the journey of life, and to help others heal.

The number 4 represents the colors Yellow, Red, Black, and White which are used to refer to the four colors of man as well as the animal archetypes eagle, turtle, buffalo and bear which are part of the teachings of the four sacred or cardinal directions. It also represents the four phases of life which are birth, adolescence, adulthood and elder. These are part of, and not separate from the 4 sacred directions: East Eagle (yellow), South Turtle (red), West Buffalo (black), North Bear (white).

The center of the circle, when the four colors come together, is purple which represents the Creator. This color represents prayer and reflection which is nurtured in our everyday lives. We can relate to this through our everyday experiences and decide whether we respond like a blazing inferno or reflect on what we have learned so we do not harm others.

In the East, the directional color is yellow which represents new beginnings, new day, the beginning of the seasons (spring) and the beginning of life for humans. The animal for this direction is the eagle which flies closest to the Creator and is a messenger between the creator and people. There is a story of an eagle asking the Creator not to destroy the earth because the Anishnaabek had

been straying from the old ways of living in harmony with the earth. The eagle promised to find the people who knew how to live this way. So the eagle flew out each morning until he found a small group of Anishnaabek people living in the traditional way. This is why the Aboriginal people have a sunrise ceremony to show respect for a new day and for all of creation. They do this by offering tobacco which is the sacred medicine of the east. The smoke from the tobacco carries the prayers to the spirit world, the great realm of those that give us guidance. The lessons of the east are honesty, sharing, being kind, open minded, innocence, joy, fullness, hope, guidance and leadership.

In the south, the color is red. Red represents the middle of the day, the summer and the time of adolescence in our lives. This direction reminds us to look after our spirits and when you are in balance with yourself, the spirits will guide and tell you "don't go in that direction, go in this direction" - we sometimes refer to this as a "gut feeling". The animal of this direction is Grandmother Turtle which represents truth because it is one of the oldest animals on our planet, and deliberate in its approach to life. The turtle is courageous because it only progresses when it sticks its neck out. It moves forward patiently and steadily progresses in order to achieve the desired results. The medicinal herb that is sacred in this direction is cedar. In the story about the Grandmother Cedar, she is asked by the Creator "to walk with the people and provide assistance and medicine when they are off balance or hurting". Grandmother Cedar accepts this request and this is why she is considered sacred. The medical properties of cedar are vast. Cedar is high in Vitamin C and is often associated with the easing of arthritic pain and tissue healing, assisting with chest colds and allergies, and the creation of bile salts in order to help with proper digestion.

In the west, the color is black, it represents sunset, autumn, a time of harvest, and it also represents adulthood. By this time, we have experienced death and loss and we learn about impermanence and that everything is governed by time. The west is the doorway to the spirit world. This door is guarded by

Continue on next page

The Living City

The urban reality of our watersheds is brought into sharp focus by the enormous growth, both greenfield and infill, expected to occur within and around these watersheds over the next 25 years. Promoting a balanced and integrated pursuit of social, economic and environmental objectives, The Living City® embraces the ecosystem concept as the foundation for the city region and strives towards achieving:

- Healthy rivers and shorelines
- Regional biodiversity
- Sustainable communities

the buffalo which is sacred because of all it has done for humans to survive such as providing a source of food, clothing, shelter and tools. The lessons that we learn from the buffalo include: honour, sharing and being generous with others. The herb that is sacred in this direction is sage which is a medicine of the women. Sage can be used as a tea and the smoke can be used for cleansing ceremonies, used to cleanse our spirit. Sage is also used to help us hear, see, smell and taste things in a good way.

At the top of the wheel is the north direction which represents the night time and the winter season. It also represents the period in life when you become an elder. It is a time of peace, a time to reflect on how you have helped great mother earth and all her children and how you have inspired others and all the wonderful experiences you have had. It is also a place where you disconnect from the physical body. The elders are the pipe carriers (a sign of respect to be shown) and lodge keepers. They provide us with teachings of the medicine wheel, which help us make peace with ourselves. The elders are cared for, they are the first to feast and they are never made to line up or wait for anything. Even in passing, we give respect to the elders by way of thoughts, memories and physical offerings. Usually a spirit plate is offered with tobacco at the fire or the north direction and the following words spoken: "Grandfathers, Grandmothers, Ancient ones and all our relations, we are here now, have pity on us. We have forgotten to feed you. You have lived a long time without food, and now we are here to honour you. Please come feast with us." The sacred animal for this direction is the bear. Bear medicine teaches us how to face danger, fear, or changes with confidence, it also teaches courage and the importance of fasting because the bear hibernates and doesn't eat until spring. The lessons that we learn in the north include strength and truth, and how to speak from a voice of wisdom to help the younger generation who need guidance. The sacred herb of this direction is sweet grass, the hair of great mother earth because it was the first plant to grow on earth. The grass is braided as it was mother's hair and the smoke of sweet grass is used for cleansing. It offers protection, and is also used when fasting to relieve hunger.

Now we have gone full circle and you can see the elegance and beauty of this system. Looking at the world through my new eyes, I have a greater love for the earth and truly see the symbiotic relationship we share with her. I think that if we can broaden our perspectives, factor in these teachings into our consciousness, we can truly make a difference with environmental concerns and inspire our youth, for they are the ones that will help us through the time of great healing to come. Miiigwech. (Thank you)

The Aboriginal Medicine Wheel is located at the Pineview Picnic site in the Heart Lake Conservation Area (10818 Heart Lake Rd., Brampton, Ontario). The park is open from April 18th to October 12th and park admission is required during operational hours.

Article written by Jason Matthews, an area resident who has dedicated a tremendous amount of time towards the construction and maintenance of the Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Garden at Heart Lake CA.

Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition:

Since the formation of the first Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition in 2002, there have been significant efforts that have contributed towards clean, green and sustainable watersheds. The Coalition is a volunteer, watershed-wide advisory committee established by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) to help realize The Living City vision of healthy rivers and shorelines, regional biodiversity and sustainable communities.

As the Coalition embarks upon its third term, let's take a look at just a few of the success stories from 2007-2009:

- Established Partners in Project Green – Pearson Eco-Business Zone: North America's largest eco-business zone, encompassing 12,000 hectares of industrial and commercial land surrounding Toronto Pearson International Airport, was launched in 2008 and with over 120 businesses in attendance.
- Received a commitment of over \$2 million in financial support to Partners in Project Green from the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), a long term Coalition member.
- Partnered with Ontario Food Terminal, University of Toronto, and the City of Toronto to complete buffer planting and construction of 120 metres of bio-swale for improved stormwater management.
- Completed over 450 metres of shoreline work to improve aquatic habitat and water quality and to complement the solar powered "lake lung" that was installed in Heart Lake to monitor and manage algae blooms and help sustain the warm-water fish community.
- Reached out to over 10,000 members of the community and students at the Peel Children's Water Festival. This annual event is hosted by the Region of Peel at Heart Lake Conservation Area.
- Markland Wood Golf Club significantly invested in improving the water quantity and quality conditions through the Renforth Creek revitalization project. Markland is the first (privately-owned) golf club in the watershed to achieve Audubon Certification in Environmental Planning and Water Conservation.



Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition Member Chris McGlynn lends a hand with a wildflower planting.

Measure your Carbon Footprint!

TRCA to Launch the "Living City Carbon Footprint Calculator"

As of April 22, 2010, watershed residents and communities will have access to the Toronto and Region Conservation's (TRCA) "Living City Carbon Footprint Calculator". This proactive tool will create public awareness on climate change and identify ways to reduce harmful carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

By using this tool, individuals can accurately measure their carbon emissions based on their consumption and lifestyle. Once the calculation is completed, the calculator provides valuable tips and methods which one can easily apply to reduce their carbon footprint.

"One of the greatest features about the calculator is that it's simple and quick. In about 15 minutes, users can measure their carbon footprint. They can also communicate with like-minded people, and compare their carbon footprint with others" says Chandra Sharma, Etobicoke-Mimico Watershed Specialist, at TRCA.

So, go ahead and measure your Carbon Footprint! It's an informative and fun way to do your part in addressing climate change. Be sure to visit trca.zerofootprint.net.

For any questions or inquiries, please contact Jinho Lee, Project Manager - Carbon Calculator at 416-661-6600 extension 5280" or jlee@trca.on.ca

Markland Wood Golf Club Receives Honour Roll Award

Congratulations to Markland Wood Golf Club – recipient of the Toronto and Region Conservation Honour Roll Award.

Since 1974, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) has presented Honour Roll Awards to individuals, corporations and community groups who have made significant contributions to our aims and objectives. Each year approximately five worthy recipients are chosen.

Markland Wood Golf Club was chosen for their leadership in adopting sustainable golf course management practices; for their investment in restoring the health of Etobicoke and Renforth Creeks; and for becoming the first privately-owned golf course in the Etobicoke Creek watershed to achieve Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program Certification.



Owen Russell (left), Course Superintendent receiving award on behalf of Markland Wood Golf Club from Derek Edwards (right), Director, Parks and Culture, TRCA

This newsletter reports on our past activities to engage the community, raise awareness, plant trees and restore habitats. We are looking forward to another busy year in 2010 and hope you will join us by becoming a watershed champion: sign up to receive information, participate in local projects, and contribute your own green stories for future editions of the newsletter.

Together, we can make a difference!

Suzanne Barrett
Chair, Etobicoke - Mimico Watersheds Coalition

Partners in Project Green: A Transformational Year

Located in the heart of Etobicoke & Mimico Creeks watersheds, the 12,000 ha of Industrial Commercial Institutional (ICI) sector land is now known as Pearson Eco-Business Zone

Partners in Project Green: A Pearson Eco-Business Zone is the first large scale effort by organizations, businesses, and governments in the GTA to address climate change by pooling resources together to transform the employment lands surrounding Toronto Pearson International Airport into an internationally recognized eco-business zone.

Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) has been leading the implementation of Partners in Project Green and set some ambitious goals at the beginning of 2009 and, with the dedication of our municipal and business community partners, we are well on our way to achieving those goals. In 2009 alone, through partnerships with Enersource Hydro Mississauga, Hydro One Brampton, Toronto Hydro, Enbridge, the Guelph Food Technology Centre, the Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement, and Natural Resources Canada, Partners in Project Green was able to engage 2,525 businesses in energy reduction activities realizing 5.4 mw of electricity and 3.6 million m³ of natural gas in savings. When it came to water savings, through efforts by the Region of Peel and City of Toronto, 51 companies in the Pearson Eco-Business Zone were engaged in water conservation activities that realized 1,103 m³ perday in savings.

Thanks to this innovative approach of leveraging resources to drive business improvement, the Pearson Eco-Business Zone has seen reductions in energy and water use, and companies have improved their bottom line while improving their environmental sustainability. With the increased profile of the project and the various programs available through the Partners in Project Green, more and more businesses are walking the talk of sustainability and realizing the savings.

Pratt & Whitney looks to green their parking lot

Utilizing the Green Parking Lot Program open to businesses in the Pearson Eco-Business Zone, Pratt & Whitney Canada partnered with Partners in Project Green and the University of Toronto to explore ways to green their site in Mississauga. The Green Parking Lot Program helps businesses re-design their parking areas to incorporate green elements that can reduce costs, enhance safety and improve local water quality. Through consultation with the businesses, the University of Toronto's Centre for Landscape Research helps companies assess opportunities on-site and develop realistic plans for improving their parking and landscaping. At the end of the process, businesses have a concrete path forward and construction reading drawings that can be implemented wholesale, or overtime as parking lot maintenance is required.

Toronto Pearson wins new award for Partners in Project Green

The Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) was honoured by the Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) with an award for Partners in Project Green. Toronto Pearson is the first airport to win in the new Special/Innovation Projects category of the ACI-NA Environmental Achievement Awards.

Launched in October 2008, Partners in Project Green is the culmination of a partnership between Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) and the GTAA that seeks to deliver programming to help



Toronto Pearson International Airport Terminal 1

The dedication and commitment to results of our TRCA's partners has been evident in the spirited contributions at project team meetings, the overwhelming response to training sessions, and the innovative and impressive projects undertaken in the region. Partners in Project Green owes its success to the engagement of the business community, and TRCA thanks them for their contributions.

Moving forward, Partners in Project Green will continue to enhance its programs, with the aim of continued environmental and economic performance. The hope is to reach an ever growing number of businesses, helping them to achieve the successes that many have already realized. To learn more and get involved, visit www.partnersinprojectgreen.com



Enjoying the hospitality of Molson on the Partners in Project Green sustainable business tour.



A concept plan for greening Pratt & Whitney's Mississauga site.

businesses reduce resource costs, uncover new business opportunities and address everyday operation challenges in a green and cost-effective manner.

In their release announcing the award, ACI-NA commends the GTAA for "showing significant leadership in moving this project forward. A council spokeswoman said Toronto Pearson had gone "above and beyond" regulatory compliance standards to protect the environment with Partners in Project Green.

The goal of Partners in Project Green is to allow the GTAA and other businesses within the Pearson Eco-Business Zone the possibility of implementing projects and business initiatives that turn challenging environmental goals into practical, sustainable business opportunities. The project will transform the 12,000 hectares of industrial and commercial land surrounding Toronto Pearson into North America's largest eco-business zone.

Every year, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) and the Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition implements community projects with partners from across the watersheds. Here are just a few of our 2009 accomplishments:

New life for Shelby Woods

In 2009, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) worked closely with the City of Mississauga and local high schools to restore a woodland near the intersection of Cawthra Rd. and Rathburn Rd. that had fallen victim to disease and infection in recent years. The original woodland within Shelby Park consisted of American elm and Red ash trees. Dutch elm disease, environmental issues and an infection called “Ash yellows” caused the majority of the trees to die or become greatly stressed. In 2007, the dead trees within the woodland were removed allowing the City of Mississauga to engage in a woodland restoration program.

As part of this restoration effort, the site was divided into three 20m x 20m plots to incorporate a study design which would monitor tree and shrub health and survival rates under different site preparation conditions. Each plot was planted with equal numbers and species. The first plot was the control plot and planted under existing conditions, the second plot was planted using a natural fertilizer, and the third plot was tilled with compost.

The objectives of this study were to engage students in the project beyond the planting, allowing them to better understand the value of naturalized spaces in an urban setting. This will be accomplished by having the same high school groups return to Shelby Park on a bi-annual basis (over a 3 to 5 year period) to monitor and record tree health and survival. The second objective is to better understand which preparation activities will yield a higher plant survival rate, and improve overall tree health.



Volunteers planting trees.



Students from Dunrankin Drive Public School planting trees and shrubs along the Malton Greenway.

Malton Environmental Stewardship Project Update

It was an exciting year in Malton! Many residents made 2009 the year they made a positive impact on their local environment. The Malton Trail Stewards led monthly litter clean-ups beside Mimico Creek that removed over 150 bags of garbage and recycling. This not only made the trail look a whole lot better, but also made it safer for the animals that call it home.

The community also came together on Malton Stewardship Day to plant 200 trees along the Malton Greenway Trail south of Goreway Drive. Not to be outdone, over 100 students in grades 3 and 4 from Dunrankin Drive Public School braved heavy rains to show their passion for the environment by planting trees on the trail south of Etude Drive.

This year promises to be just as exciting! Malton Stewardship Day will take place on April 24th, and all participants will get to plant a tree, join a litter clean-up and take part in environmentally-themed games. Thanks to support from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Malton will also have its first annual Wildwood Park invasive species pull. This event will take place on May 8th, and will include a wildflower planting to replace the plants that are removed. So be prepared to have fun, get dirty and make the Malton Greenway Trail better than ever.

To learn about events and register to join us, visit <http://www.trcastewardshipevents.ca/>.



County Court Neighbourhood

County Court Neighbourhood Action Plan

The City of Brampton, Region of Peel and Toronto and Region Conservation are leading the development of an innovative action plan to make a Brampton neighbourhood more environmentally-sustainable. This means helping homeowners, businesses and landowners save money and the environment by getting involved in energy and water conservation, outdoor rain water management and eco-friendly landscaping.

The Neighbourhood action plan is the first of its kind and is part of a larger pilot project aimed at preparing older neighbourhoods for climate change and transforming them to become more environmentally friendly.

The process of creating the action plan has just begun and we will be looking for community input this spring. The team is working with the County Court neighbourhood to identify possible actions for private and public property to address environmental objectives and benefits to landowners.

To help us get to know the residents and businesses in the neighbourhood and learn more about potential environmental actions, we are set to deliver lots of fun and exciting events.

For upcoming events please see back of this newsletter.

If you would like to learn more, or sign up for an upcoming event, please contact: Clifton Coppolino at 416-661-6600 ext.5748, or email ccoppolino@trca.on.ca.

Trails

A network of well-connected trails has been identified as an important public open space requirement in “Turning Over a New Leaf: The Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks Watershed Report Card 2006”. With significant municipal investment, construction of over 10 km of trail has begun to achieve this goal.

Etobicoke Creek Trail – City of Toronto
This project focuses on constructing a 0.7 kilometre (approx.) section of trail in the Etobicoke Creek Valley within the City of Toronto. This new section of trail will be built in the area between Sherway Drive and a connection immediately south of the QEW and will connect the City of Toronto with the City of Mississauga. In addition to the trail alignment, this project will also focus on identifying and implementing restoration opportunities within the project area, including possible wetland creation, riparian enhancements, and habitat works.

The trail alignment concept plan has been approved and construction of the trail will begin in the late summer – early fall of 2010.

Kennedy Valley Trail – City of Brampton
The four corners of HWYS 407 and 410 encompass a considerable area of greenspace including a branch of the Etobicoke Creek. Regular illegal off-road trail riding activity (four wheel drive vehicles, ATV’s, motorcycles, and snowmobiles during the winter months) takes place on these lands causing significant damage to the creek, and surrounding flora and fauna.

The Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) has serious concerns about the damage to the natural environment in this area. As a result, a great deal of revitalization work is in the planning stages for the West Etobicoke Creek corridor. The TRCA is working with the City of Brampton and other business partners/stakeholders in the immediate area, and also the area just to the south of Advance Blvd.(south of Steeles& Dixie area), to explore options and methods of eliminating the illegal off-road trail riding activity and the on-going damage to the flora and fauna in the surrounding area. The TRCA has also been working with the City of Brampton and the City of Mississauga to finalize plans for the expansion of the Etobicoke Creek Recreation Trail (which currently ends at the south-easterly boundary of Kennedy Valley Park) into the City of Mississauga linking with recreational trails in Mississauga creating a continuous recreational trail all the way to Lake Ontario. However, the illegal use of this area needs to be resolved before the revitalization of the area and the Pathways Master Plan can be fully implemented.

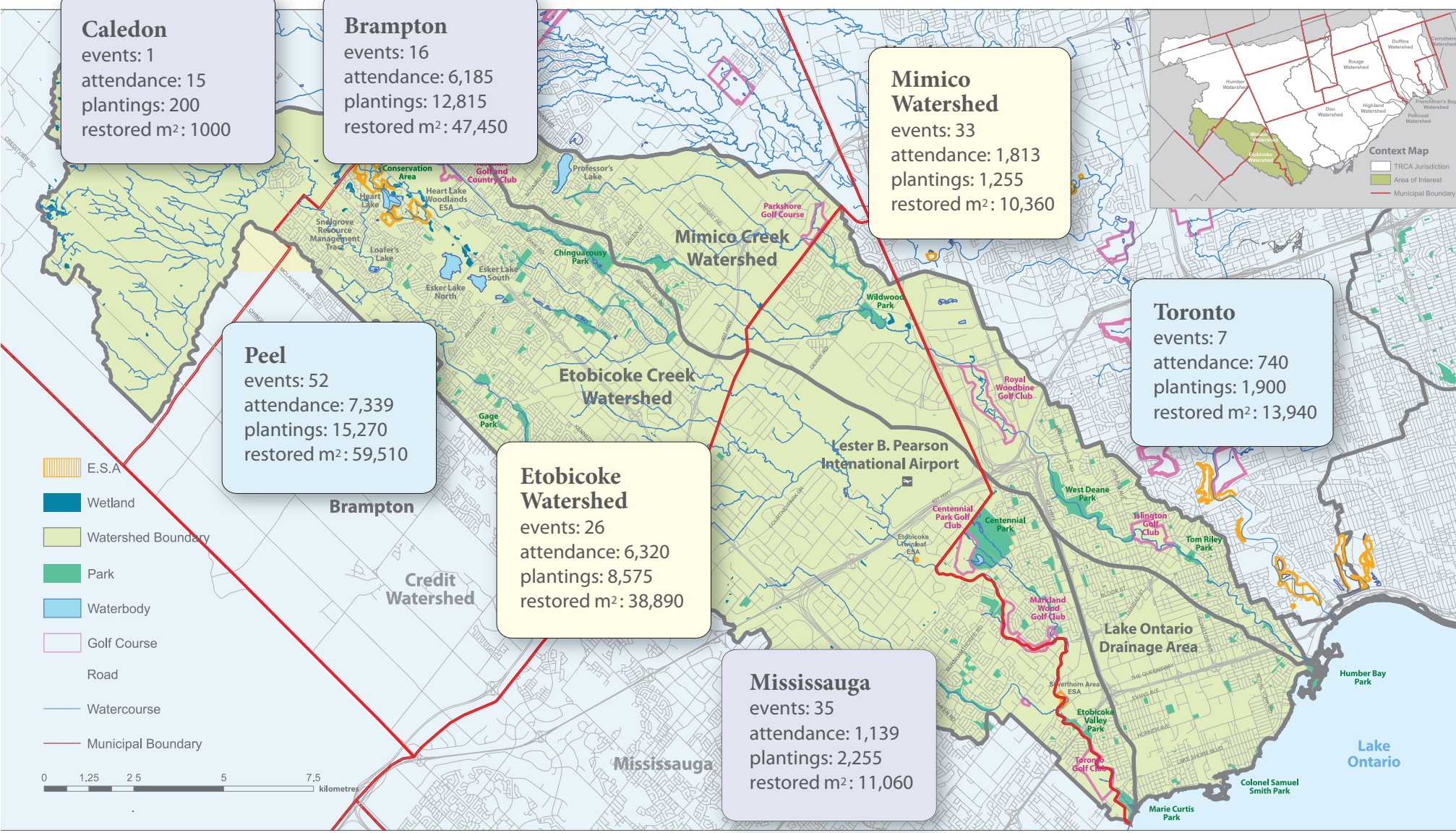
To date, a trail alignment and concept plan has been prepared. Currently TRCA is working with Brampton staff and regulatory agencies to obtain all necessary permits and approvals. The date to begin construction is still to be determined.

Etobicoke Creek Trail – City of Mississauga
This project is taking place within the City of Mississauga and focuses on constructing a 5.2 kilometre section of trail in the Etobicoke Creek Valley between the present terminus of the trail at Matheson Blvd. E., and extending northwest to Dixie Road at Midway Blvd. This project is being led by the City of Mississauga in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation. A significant portion of this project is focussed within the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) lands which extend from Highway 401 to Courtney Park Drive.

Currently, implementation is underway led by the City of Mississauga. The project will feature the construction of a permeable parking lot at the Britannia Road access. Work is proposed for the Summer of 2010.

2009 Accomplishments Map

In 2009 Toronto and Region Conservation and its partners hosted 59 community events resulting in the following accomplishments:



Trail Steward Project continues in Valleybrook and Wexford Park communities of Brampton

2009 proved to be a fantastic first year along the Etobicoke Creek trail in Brampton. Over 500 community volunteers, Scouts, Guides and students from Heart Lake Secondary School and St. Maria Goretti Catholic elementary school helped to plant 2,000 trees and shrubs along the trail. Our inaugural TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup from Sandalwood to Williams Parkway was another success story. A total of 60 community volunteers helped to remove shopping carts, steel drums, couches and futons from the creek, not to mention 65 bags of garbage and recycling.

Our monthly Tuesdays on the Trail nature walk series is a great way for residents in the community to get out and learn about their local environment. View birds singing from the treetops or learn about the many different species of trees along the trail, Tuesdays on the Trail is an enjoyable night out.

What's coming in 2010?
Thanks to the generosity of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, a number of FREE educational events and activities are planned for the upcoming year.

- Winter Energy Bill Savings Workshop
- Etobicoke Creek trail map meetings
- Inexpensive Environmental Landscaping Workshop

- Wildflower Planting Event
- Outdoor Photography Family Nature Event
- Yellow Fish Road: Neighbourhood Storm Drain Education Event
- Evening Nature Hikes
- TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup Event
- Tree Planting Event
- Hoot 'n Howl Family Nature Event

If you would like to learn more about upcoming events in the Valleybrook / Wexford Park neighbourhoods in Brampton, please contact Cliff Coppolino at 416-661-6600 ext.5748, or email ccoppolino@trca.on.ca.

Big Restoration Plans for West Deane Park

In 2009, TRCA initiated a five year restoration plan for West Deane Park, in partnership with the City of Toronto. The primary focus of the plan is to improve water quality, to engage the community and to restore the park to a more natural state while maintaining a high level of safety for park users.

The plan was launched with the first annual South Mimico Earth Day Celebration last April in cooperation with Trees Ontario and the City of Toronto. Over a 100 participated in the event by planting 400 trees, helping to clean up the park, and exploring the water quality of Mimico Creek through interactive displays and workshops.

For more information, please see the event list located on the back page of this newsletter.



Volunteers remove steel drum from Etobicoke Creek.



A volunteer carrying mulch for newly planted trees at West Deane Park.

Heart Lake Waves

Hit the Heart Lake Trails

Heart Lake Conservation Area is a beautiful place to go for a hike. A visitor to Heart Lake can catch a glimpse of a great blue heron while strolling along the shoreline on the Heart Lake Trail. One can also hike through a wonderful mixed forest while hiking on the Terry Fox Forest Trail. And if wetlands and wildlife are your thing, a hike along the Esker Trail will take visitors past some fabulous wetland habitat.

In 2006, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) completed the Heart Lake Conservation Area Master Plan. One of the major components of the master plan document was the development of a detailed trail plan, which laid out a number of steps needed to improve the existing trail network at Heart Lake, and enhance the experience of visitors.

Under the direction of the master plan, a number of trail improvement projects have been implemented at Heart Lake over the last two years. Some of these completed projects include the construction of a new shoreline trail along the south end of Heart Lake, the construction of several footbridge crossings, the rerouting of hundreds of meters of wet or eroding trail, the closing of numerous informal trails, and the removal of dozens of hazardous standing dead trees.

In 2010, look for improvements along the trails to continue. The main focus for the upcoming year will be the installation of trailhead mapping and way-finding signage to allow users to better navigate the trails throughout the property. Work will also continue to be stepped up to improve and reroute unsustainable trails, and construct additional bridge structures.

For those who hike the trails at Heart Lake, we hope the trail improvements made thus far have enhanced your experience when visiting the park. For those who have not yet had a chance to visit Heart Lake and hike around the park, there is a wonderful trail system waiting for you to discover.

TRCA staff building a new footbridge. (right image)

One of the new footbridges completed at Heart Lake CA. (Below image)



Heart Lake Welcomes a New Addition

For 53 years, the Heart Lake Conservation Area has been a popular destination for residents of Peel Region and beyond. In 2009 a new splash pad facility was introduced, Wild Wetland Splash, which is open for the 2010 season.

Over five million visitors have enjoyed the beautiful grounds and recreation activities including public swimming at Heart Lake (did you know that the lake is named "Heart Lake" because the spring-fed kettle lake is actually shaped like a heart). In 2011, the park will offer even more exciting experiences for our visitors as we welcome the addition of a new outdoor pool facility. The sizeable pool (60'x150') will accommodate 500 people and is not just an ordinary pool! The pool will have a beach entry and will slope gradually from 0' to 8' in depth. Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) is committed to providing barrier-free public entry opportunities for all park visitors. The new facility will allow for continued safe, accessible, recreation and active lifestyle opportunities for the public.

This project received funding from the Recreation Infrastructure in Canada (RinC) program and Peel Region.

Toronto and Region Conservation is also committed to achieving the Leadership and Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification wherever possible (including the construction of our retrofit and new facilities).

The Heart Lake Pool project will help to improve:

- sustainability (utilizing recycled materials, implementation of a state-of-the-art water dispersal system for water generated through maintenance procedures, and UV sanitation system;



A Snapshot of History Unearthed at Heart Lake

Over 200 stone artifacts have been recovered from this Gitigaan Mashkiki site. Most of these artifacts are stone flakes or debris caused by manufacturing stone tools. Other artifacts are unfinished tools still in the early stages of the manufacturing process. The stone is called chert, a type of flint and it is the most common material for making stone tools in this area. The chert at the Gitigaan Mashkiki site comes from the north shore of Lake Erie and the Collingwood area. Several features were also identified at the site. Features are stains in the soil that indicate past human activity. These findings suggest that the site likely served as a camp for people hunting, fishing and gathering and may date to as far back as 12,000 years ago.

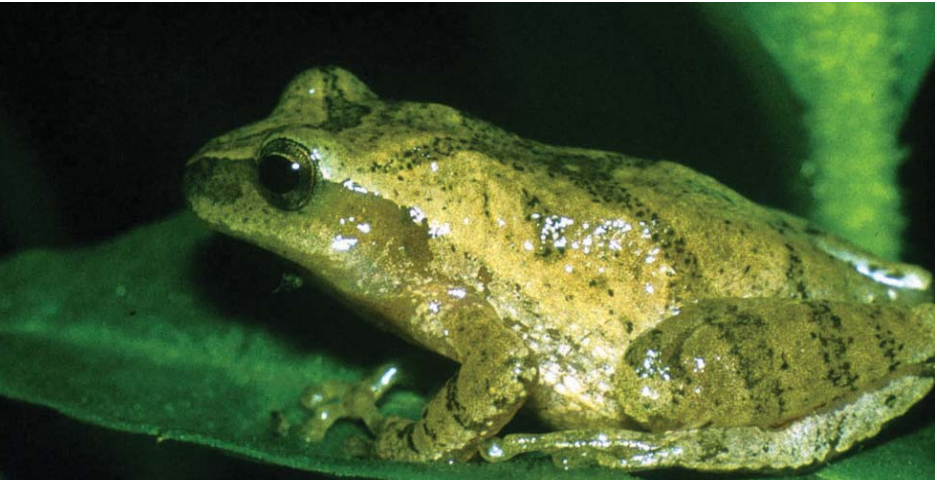
Several other archaeological sites that were occupied before European contact have been identified around Heart Lake. This suggests that people were regularly setting up camps

and activity areas throughout the headwaters of Etobicoke Creek. These people would have found the area rich in resources supplied by the various kettle lakes and bogs, as well as Heart Lake itself. The area would have provided a home for game, fish and waterfowl, and would have served as an excellent location for temporary settlement for peoples engaged in their seasonal rounds.



Stone tools & flakes from the knapping process recovered from the site.

Identifying Communities and Species of Conservation Concern



Spring Peeper



Michigan Lily



Blackburnian Warbler

An integral part of the Terrestrial Natural Heritage (TNH) program at Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) is the identification of vegetation communities and species of conservation concern. By ranking the species, it enables us to identify those species or communities that deserve the most consideration for conservation action.

The following are just a few examples of species in the Etobicoke and Mimico watersheds that have received a ranking between L1 and L3 and are considered to be "of local conservation concern".

L2: **Spring Peeper** (*Pseudacris crucifer*)
Heart Lake Conservation Area, in particular, holds a huge population of this otherwise very rural frog. Fragments of forest containing small wetlands dotted across the farmland in the headwater areas of the Etobicoke watershed are alive with the ringing choruses of these tiny grogs throughout April and May. This species is quickly disappearing as urbanization moves in.

L3: **Michigan Lily** (*Lilium michigens*)
This attractive native flower of moist floodplains is considered particularly sensitive to urban development since it suffers from casual picking by hikers and local residents.

L3: **Blackburnian warbler** (*Dendroica fusca*)
One of many migrant songbird species that utilize corridors of natural cover running through the Etobicoke and Mimico watersheds in their north- and south-bound journeys. This species may only need to travel as far north as Caledon to find breeding opportunities – but will winter as far south as Ecuador.

Re-Naturalization of Channelized Creeks: Another Milestone...

On October 22, 2009, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), along with partners: Region of Peel, City of Brampton, TD Friends of the Environment, Sythe Global, Canadian Tire and students from local high schools, celebrated the completion of the Upper Mimico Creek Aquatic Habitat Restoration project. The Upper Mimico Creek is located in a highly urbanized industrial area between Steeles Avenue and Queen St. in the City of Brampton.

Fifty-nine per cent of the Mimico Creek is either lined with concrete or altered through straightening and contains very few trees or shrub species. A portion of the creek contains structures that prevent fish from migrating to traditional spawning areas and the site had poor water quality.

As part of an ongoing effort to revitalize and restore natural eco-systems, TRCA re-naturalized a 2 kilometer stretch of the Mimico Creek. The project enhanced wildlife habitat, restored aquatic and terrestrial

ecosystems, improved water quality and helped mitigate potential flood events. Over the course of four years and an approximate \$400,000 investment, more than 580 metres of hard engineered structures were removed and replaced with a natural corridor design, three wetlands were constructed, 900 metres of riparian zone were planted and numerous essential habitat structures were created. The area surrounding the restored creek was planted with a total of 1,800 trees and shrubs providing greater habitat cover for bird, mammal and amphibian species within the area.

"Thanks to the support of our partners, and specifically the Region of Peel, we are able to continue our ongoing effort to transform our watercourses back to their natural state - for a healthier, more productive eco-system," said Chandra Sharma, Etobicoke Mimico Watershed Specialist, Toronto and Region Conservation.



Project partners lending a hand at the unveiling of Upper Mimico Creek resoration project.

Give monthly and help support the Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks

Your donation
will help...

Plant trees.
Educate kids.
Clean rivers.

Build homes for local
birds and animals.

Interpret
history.

Reduce
greenhouse gases.

Help families connect
with nature.

Clean the air.
Monitor the
water quality.

Initiate green projects like
**Partners in
Project Green.**

To donate, call Linda
at 416-667-6279
or visit [www.trca.
on.ca/foundation](http://www.trca.on.ca/foundation)

And if you are already a
donor we thank you!



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Wildlife Sightings

If you have photos, paintings, sketches, or stories of wildlife that you've seen in your backyard, at your school, business, or your travels within Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks watersheds, please contact:

Joanna Parsons

(416) 661-6600, ext:5575.

Submissions will be considered for future Creek Time issues.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Etobicoke Creek and Mimico Creek Watersheds

SPRING 2010



Join TRCA and partners at our FREE community events to protect and enhance the Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Watersheds.

Thank you to those that participated and volunteered at our spring events.
Provided below are the list of our upcoming events.

Tuesdays on the Trail

Monthly Nature Walk Series
(Two different Locations)

First Tuesday of May, July and August - 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

County Court Park - behind County Court house, Brampton
(First Tuesday of May, July and August.)

Last Tuesday of May, June, July, August and September - 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Etobicoke Creek Trail - behind Heart Lake Secondary School
(Last Tuesday of May, June, July, August, September.)

Malton Garlic Mustard Pull and Planting Event

Saturday, May 8, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Wildwood Park
3430 Derry Road East, Malton

Outdoor Kitchen Gardening Workshop

Thursday, May 13, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

South Fletcher's Sportsplex
500 Ray Lawson Blvd, Brampton

Invasives Species Pull Event

Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Etobicoke Valley Park - Westhead Road and Savona Drive, Etobicoke

Peel Children's Water Festival

Saturday, May 29, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Heart Lake Conservation Area - 10818 Heart Lake Road, Brampton

Valleybrook Wildflower Planting Event

Saturday, June 5, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Etobicoke Creek Trail - where it crosses Wexford Rd., near Sunforest Drive and Wexford Road in Brampton.

Bird and Butterfly Gardening Workshop

Wednesday, June 9, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

South Fletcher's Sportsplex
500 Ray Lawson Blvd., Brampton

Bird and Butterfly Gardening Workshop

Thursday, June 10, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

South Fletcher's Sportsplex
500 Ray Lawson Blvd., Brampton

Outdoor Photography Family Nature Event

Saturday, June 12, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Loafer's Lake Recreation Center
30 Loafer's Lake Lane, Brampton

Family Fishing Day

Saturday, July 10, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Heart Lake Conservation Area
10818 Heart Lake Road, Brampton

Evening Nature Hikes

First Tuesday of June, July and August, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

County Court Park - Brampton

Some of our events have limited spaces available. Be sure to register early to avoid disappointment!

Register for events at: www.trcastewardshipecvents.ca

Visit our website for Fall 2010 events at www.trca.on.ca