

Wonderful Watershed Moments!

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER



LOCATION:
Highland Creek Watershed

DATE:
August and September 2018

REGION/MUNICIPALITY:
City of Toronto, Scarborough

PARTNERS:
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and City of Toronto



Highland Creek , Invasive Dog Strangling Vine Removal and Watershed Wide Cleanup

A team of TRCA staff prepared a site in Highland Creek for upcoming community based restorations along a recently restored section of the creek. This area is heavily impacted by illegal dumping and invasive species.

Staff removed 28 large bags of garbage weighing over 640 pounds and an additional 450 pounds of construction debris. Household garbage included; multiple plastic garbage bags, bottles, cans, numerous plastic straws, cutlery, cups, wrappers, fast food trays, wedding decorations and children's toys. Construction debris included; carpet, vinyl flooring, roofing shingles, wood with nails, buckets of driveway sealant, bags of concrete and yard waste.

Staff also removed approximately 3,750 square meters of invasive dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) from the site. Dog-strangling vine is an invasive perennial herb and member of the milkweed family. It arrived in Canada with European settlers approximately 120 years ago and spread rapidly as a consequence of its easily dispersed seeds. Once established, it displaces native plants and negatively impacts wildlife that rely on those plants for habitat. For example, monarch butterflies, a species at risk in Canada, rely on native milkweed species as their only food source when they are caterpillars. Caterpillars that hatch on dog-strangling vine instead of native milkweed species cannot survive.

Removing dog-strangling vine should be done during flowering (image of flower right) before seedpods open (image top right) to limit dispersal. Seedpods should be removed and placed in a black garbage bag before disposal. If feasible, with small population sizes, roots should be dug out and disposed in a place where they can be smothered. Regardless of population size, intensive multi-year efforts are required to control dog-strangling vine.



Positive Environmental Impacts

Type of Invasive Species Removed	Invasive removed (sq.m.)	# of Bags of Garbage Collected	Weight of Garbage Collected (lbs)	Area Prepared for Planting (sq.m.)	# of Staff	Staff Hours
Dog-Strangling Vine	~3,750	28	~1,094	~5,000	8	185
Total	~3,750	28	~1,094	~5,000	8	185