

### 2.0 Guiding Framework

To help meet our vision for the Don, a set of three guiding principles and 26 objectives were developed. This guiding framework builds on the principles and steps presented in *Forty Steps to a New Don* (MTRCA, 1994), which were updated for this plan to reflect new information and issues, and current approaches to management strategies.

### 2.1 Vision

The quality of life on Earth is being determined in the rapidly expanding city regions. We envision the future Don as a revitalized urban river, flowing with life-sustaining water through regenerated natural habitats and sustainable human communities, from its headwater tributaries to the mouth of the Don River and into the receiving waters of Lake Ontario. We envision the watershed as an integral contributor to The Living City, where human settlement can flourish forever as part of nature's beauty and diversity.

### 2.2 Principles

We must take advantage of all opportunities to protect, regenerate and enhance the Don, from the valleys to the tablelands, and from the natural areas to the urban communities. The following regeneration principles, based on those laid out in *Forty Steps to a New Don*, should serve to guide future regeneration of the Don River watershed.

#### Principle #1: Protect and sustain what is healthy

- Protect the natural sources of the Don River: its headwaters, groundwaters, creeks and tributaries.
- Protect the natural linkages that still exist in the Don, its diverse habitats, and the wild life in them.

#### Principle #2: Regenerate what is degraded

- Restore the river and its tributaries through actions that re-establish or mimic the natural patterns of the water-course.
- Restore clean, life-sustaining water to the river and its tributaries.
- Nurture degraded habitats backs to health, and reconnect them to each other and to nearby human communities.
- Restore important reminders of the Don's historical past and encourage activities that reflect our cultural diversity.
- Require all projects to improve the health of the natural system.

#### Principle #3: Take responsibility for the Don

- Be a steward and contribute to a healthy, sustainable natural environment in all daily activities.
- Help neighbours, governments, and businesses work together to regenerate the Don.
- Visit the Don and share our enjoyment with others.



Charles Sauriol Reserve in Toronto  
(Photography: John Wilson)

## **2.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this plan are grouped under four headings: Caring for Water, Caring for Nature, Caring for Community, and Getting it Done. Associated with the objectives for water, nature and community are indicators and targets for watershed conditions (see Chapter 3).

### **Caring for Water**

1. Protect and restore the quantity and quality of groundwater.
2. Protect and restore the natural variability of annual and seasonal stream flow.
3. Maintain and restore natural levels of baseflow.
4. Eliminate or minimize risks to human life and property due to flooding.
5. Manage stormwater to protect people and health of streams and rivers.
6. Protect and restore surface water quality with respect to toxic contaminants and other pollutants, such as sediment, nutrients, bacteria and road salt.
7. Protect and regenerate the natural form and function of the Don's valley and stream corridors.

### **Caring for Nature**

8. Reduce air pollution to levels that protect human health and natural ecosystems, and do not exacerbate global climate change.
9. Protect, regenerate and enhance the health and diversity of native aquatic habitats, communities and species.
10. Protect and expand the Terrestrial Natural Heritage System and improve connectivity among the watershed's forests, meadows, and wetlands.
11. Regenerate the health of natural areas, and the whole urban landscape, to improve their quality, biodiversity, and ecological function.
12. Manage the impact of human activities and neighbouring land uses in the watershed.

### **Caring for Community**

13. Improve sustainability in urban form at community and building site scales.
14. Practice sustainable resource use by individuals, households, businesses, institutions and governments.
15. Connect people and places in the Don River watershed.
16. Protect and regenerate natural areas and greenspaces for nature-based experiences.
17. Celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the Don River watershed.
18. Identify, document, protect and celebrate the cultural and heritage resources of the watershed.

### Getting it Done

19. Use the Subwatershed Regeneration Plans to integrate and coordinate local regeneration efforts.
20. Encourage grassroots regeneration groups throughout the watershed.
21. Encourage staff at agencies and municipalities to take responsibility for the Don.
22. Fund the Don's regeneration through existing and new sources.
23. Research the effectiveness of different technologies and approaches for regenerating urban watersheds.
24. Undertake demonstration projects throughout the watershed.
25. Make changes in our personal lifestyles and government actions that will help protect and regenerate the Don and the larger ecosystems of which it is a part.
26. Use education, awareness, stewardship and social marketing tools to accelerate regeneration of the Don.