

**DON WATERSHED REGENERATION COUNCIL
2010-2012**

Terms of Reference

**Toronto and Region Conservation
November 2009**



Member of Conservation Ontario

DON WATERSHED REGENERATION COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND AUTHORITY DIRECTION

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council (Council) is a formal community-based committee of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) which reports to the Authority on a regular basis. It was first established in 1995 following a recommendation of Forty Steps to a New Don (1994) to form a Don Watershed Regeneration Council to integrate implementation efforts of the watershed plan. Since then, the Council has completed five successful terms during which time members have provided exceptional support and service to TRCA.

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.

The pathway to a regenerated Don River builds on the following 3 strategic themes:

- We must build, re-build and retrofit our communities to restore water balance and improve the sustainability of the urban model.
- We must regenerate the aquatic and terrestrial landscapes.
- We must engage the attention, enthusiasm and support of the people of the Don.

1.1 Authority Direction

At Authority Meeting #9/04, held on October 28, 1994, Resolution #A224/94 was approved for the first term of the Council in part, as follows:

THAT the Goals, Membership, Organization and Terms of Reference for the Don Watershed Regeneration Council, as set out in the report, dated October 1994, be approved;...

Similar resolutions were approved by TRCA for five subsequent terms of the Don Council.

It is recommended that the Don Watershed Regeneration Council be established again starting in the winter of 2010 based on the following terms of reference.

2.0 **GOALS**

The goals of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council are to protect, regenerate and celebrate the Don watershed and more specifically to assist Toronto and Region

Conservation Authority (TRCA), The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto, TRCA partner agencies and watershed municipalities, community groups and the public to:

- achieve The Living City vision of Healthy Rivers and Shorelines, Regional Biodiversity, Sustainable Communities and Business Excellence within the Don watershed;
- implement priority recommendations of the Don River Watershed Plan, as identified in the Implementation Guide.
- implement the recommendations of the Toronto and Region Remedial Action Plan contained in *Clean Waters, Clear Choices: Recommendations for Action* (1994) and strategic directions contained in subsequent reports as they pertain to the Don watershed;
- implement strategic plans such as the *Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan* (Toronto) and the Region of York's sustainability initiatives;
- implement source water protection initiatives;
- meet the challenges of climate change through mitigation and adaptation initiatives;
- secure political support at all levels of government and foster corporate partnerships to advance TRCA's vision for The Living City.

3.0 **DON WATERSHED REGENERATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council shall consist of approximately 30 members including:

3.1 **TRCA Representative**

The Chair of the Authority or other designated Authority member as Ex-officio.

3.2 **Federal, Provincial, Regional and Local Political Representatives**

Federal and Provincial members of Parliament whose area of jurisdiction is within the Don Watershed will be invited to participate as Ex-officio members.

The regional and local municipalities will be requested by TRCA to appoint one council member from each of the "905" regional and local municipalities in the Don River watershed. These representatives will be Ex-officio members. A municipality may appoint a current Authority member. The appointed members should represent an electoral ward within the Don River watershed.

- Regional Municipality of York;
- City of Vaughan;
- Town of Richmond Hill;
- Town of Markham.

Annually, a separate meeting/forum may be held to share information on strategic planning initiatives, regeneration activities or other projects being undertaken by TRCA, municipalities or others to ensure on-going liaison with appropriate departments and partners.

Municipal staff will be invited to attend meetings of the Council as based on specific agenda items.

3.3 City of Toronto Community Council Representatives

Within the City of Toronto, the individual community councils will be requested by TRCA to appoint members of Council. The city may appoint a current Authority member. These representatives will be Ex-officio members. One Councillor is requested from each of the City of Toronto's community councils which have the Don watershed within its boundaries.

- Toronto North Community Council;
- Toronto South Community Council;
- Toronto East Community Council.

3.4 Other Public Agency Representatives

The following federal and provincial agencies which have a specific interest in the Don watershed will be requested by TRCA to appoint a representative.

- Environment Canada;
- Ontario Ministry of Environment;
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

3.5 Community Group Representatives

The following community groups which have an interest in the Don watershed will be requested by TRCA to appoint a representative to the Don Watershed Regeneration Council.

- The Task Force to Bring Back the Don, City of Toronto;

- Friends of the Don East;
- Richmond Hill Naturalists;
- Toronto Field Naturalists
- York Region Environmental Alliance
- Toronto Green Community
- Taylor Massey Project
- First Nations representative
- The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill

Others may be added throughout the term should their knowledge, skills and experience be advantageous to the work of the Council.

3.6 Watershed Residents, Business Members and Academic Institution Representatives

Applications from watershed residents, businesses and academic institutions will be solicited through announcements in newsletters, local newspapers, web sites, volunteer networks, and through press releases. A committee of three persons, comprised of one member of the Authority, a TRCA senior staff member and the Don Watershed Specialist will recommend appointments to the Don Watershed Regeneration Council. This selection will take into consideration the following:

- demonstrated interest in the watershed/community;
- willingness of the applicant to meet the potential time and work commitments;
- geographical representation within the watershed and or Lake Ontario drainage area; and
- technical/professional knowledge, skills and experience in disciplines that would assist in the implementation of assigned tasks and responsibilities.

3.6.1 Business Organization Representatives

A maximum of three members representing businesses and/or business organizations interested in corporate environmental stewardship and the economic vitality of the Region may be appointed.

3.6.2 Academic Institution representatives.

Two representatives from the university, college and public/catholic/private school systems interested in watershed management, restoration, research and integrating sustainability issues into watershed applications and curriculum may be appointed.

3.6.3 Watershed Resident Representatives

Fifteen watershed residents with demonstrated experience, knowledge, interest and skills in one of the following fields may be appointed:

- writing/communications;
- business;
- fund-raising;
- natural environment;
- planning and engineering;
- environmental policy;
- academics/education;
- social marketing;
- culture, heritage and recreation;
- youth engagement;
- sustainable technologies;
- urban agriculture.

4.0 GUESTS

Don Watershed Regeneration Council meetings are open to the public. We encourage others interested in actively giving their time and talents to the protection, regeneration and celebration of the watershed to become involved. These persons are not official members but will be acknowledged as 'guests' by the watershed council. They will not have voting privileges nor be eligible for travel expenses to and from meetings. Guests are not required to be residents of the watershed.

5.0 TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Members will be appointed for a two year term with a possible extension for one more year.

Membership will be reviewed on an annual basis. Members, excluding ex-officio members, who are unable to fulfill their commitments, will be replaced after missing three consecutive meetings (without notice). Replacements will be made by the Authority based on nominees recommended by Authority members, other Council members and TRCA staff.

Notice of resignations and recommendations for new members will be presented to the Authority on an as required basis for approval.

6.0 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Members will be required to attend regular evening meetings of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council to be held approximately 8 times annually. Meetings may be held during regular work hours depending on the preference and availability of members and staff.

Ad-hoc working committees may also be held on an as-required basis, approximately 6-8 times per year. Additional meetings may be required to deal with specific issues from time to time.

Members will contribute to the work of the watershed council and participate in at least one ad-hoc working committee.

7.0 SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the Don Watershed Regeneration Council from amongst its members. The Authority may appoint an interim Chair until such time that an election can take place. The Chair and Vice Chair will also be ex-officio members of all working committees.

8.0 REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council is considered a subcommittee of TRCA. The watershed council Chair will report on a regular basis to the Authority on projects and progress through meeting minutes of the watershed council, or brief presentations.

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council is not a formal commenting body regarding review and approval of planning applications or permits. Staff will advise the watershed council of major projects within the watershed and may ask them for comments.

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council may, on its own, provide comments or other information for the consideration of staff and the Authority.

9.0 RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE DON WATERSHED REGENERATION COUNCIL

9.1 TRCA Support

TRCA will provide staff support for the watershed council, including technical project support and community outreach, based on available funding.

Subject to available funding, the staff secretariat will include:

- Don Watershed Specialist / Senior TRCA staff member;
- Project Manager;
- Administrative Assistant (part time).

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council, and its working committees, will otherwise strive to be self-sufficient in achieving their goals. Staff support and attendance at ad-hoc working committee meetings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.2 Other Resources

Funding may be available for projects and activities of working committees based on approved work plans and available TRCA funding. Members are encouraged to secure other resources and partnerships for watershed council projects and activities, whenever possible in consultation with TRCA staff and the Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto. In-kind or other support for projects and activities will be welcome from business, industries, other government agencies, private foundations, educational institutions and others in accordance with TRCA policies. In-kind or other support will be coordinated with the assistance of The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto, where appropriate.

10.0 STRUCTURE OF THE DON WATERSHED REGENERATION COUNCIL

10.1 Chair's Committee

This subcommittee will undertake key advisory and coordinating responsibilities pertaining to the agenda, workplan and activities of the Council. The committee may also assist with advocacy actions, exchange information among project teams and watershed-wide committees, coordinate Council activities, discuss policy issues, prepare/review correspondence, coordinate outreach to political representatives, represent the Council at municipal councils, solicit strategic partnerships and seek out funding resources to meet the objectives of the Council.

The group will meet prior to the watershed council's meeting and on other occasions as needed. This committee will be made up of the Chair, Vice Chair, working committee chairs, and other key members, as well as the appropriate TRCA support staff.

10.2 Ad-hoc Working Committees and Project Teams

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council will undertake its work through the active involvement of its members on at least one ad-hoc working committee or project team. Ad-hoc working committees and project teams will be established on an informal and as required basis and will be dissolved when their work is substantially complete. New committees or teams will be struck to deal with specific issues as determined by the Don Watershed Regeneration Council and TRCA staff.

The number of working committees or project teams will generally be limited to 2 or 3 at any one time to ensure that the necessary focus and effort required, is available from the watershed council members, and staff of TRCA and other agencies. Staff attendance at working committee and project team meetings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A chair person for each ad-hoc working committee and project team will be selected from the Don Watershed Regeneration Council membership. The Chair will report to the watershed council on a regular basis.

10.3 Jurisdiction-wide Watershed Committee(s)

Members of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council will be encouraged to work with other watershed advisory committee members to collaborate on issues of common interest.

11.0 COMPENSATION OF WATERSHED COUNCIL MEMBERS

At regular Don Watershed Regeneration Council meetings, as well as working committee meetings, members will be eligible for travel expenses according to TRCA policy where these are not covered by their agency or other source. The TRCA policy on volunteers is also applicable.

12.0 RULES OF CONDUCT

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council will adhere to TRCA's Rules of Conduct as adopted by Resolution A2/08 at Authority Meeting #1/08, held on February 29, 2008, and as amended periodically. All other TRCA policies are applicable including Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Volunteer Policy.

13.0 QUORUM

A quorum will consist of one-third of the members of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council.

14.0 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council shall:

- Adhere to the basic principles of sound ecosystem management that recognizes the interrelationship between cultural heritage, physical characteristics, biological conditions and economic needs, and the integration of conservation, restoration and economic activities necessary for the health of the watershed.
- Assist with implementation of the Don River Watershed Plan, with a focus on addressing habitat regeneration, stewardship and outreach education, and monitoring projects, as outlined in the Don River Watershed Plan Implementation Guide.
- Act as the Don watershed advocate in large projects that cross municipal boundaries and support major projects advocated for by others which will protect, regenerate and celebrate the Don watershed.

- Provide advice and comments to staff on issues affecting the Don River watershed.
- Provide a forum for watershed communication by maintaining and enhancing contacts within the community regarding watershed management issues.
- Support local community groups and build capacity to deliver watershed management products and services.
- Work with TRCA, The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto and others to seek new partners and sources of funding for identified priority projects.
- Participate in efforts of Waterfront Toronto with respect to the naturalization and flood protection at the mouth of the Don and related activities.
- Work collaboratively with TRCA staff, and other watershed/waterfront advisory committees to develop The Living City Report Card which will address jurisdiction-wide issues as well as watershed specific indicators and targets.
- Work collaboratively with TRCA staff, and other watershed/waterfront advisory committees to address issues of common concern such as providing input to the Toronto Area Remedial Action Plan, source protection planning and other regional policy or planning issues.
- Assist TRCA in identifying potential public greenspace and work with owners to develop conservation easements, donations and bequests in accordance with TRCA's Greenlands Acquisition Project for 2006-2010 and subsequent activities.