

## The Taylor Massey Project

Now in its eight year, the Taylor Massey Project focuses on:

- Engaging local residents by coordinating local clean-ups, plantings, and educational activities;
- Articulating a watershed management approach to protecting and restoring the Creek; and
- Connecting the communities of the Creek with new trails, bridges, and street & railway crossings.

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Working with more than 40 community partners including local agencies, TMP has staged 79 events from 2003 through the spring of 2010, involving 4,362 participants who have planted 4,210 trees and shrubs and picked up more than 1,610 bags of litter.

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This document is of our 31<sup>st</sup> submission to local agencies since 2003, and is being sent to the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. All submissions can be found on our website.

Please visit our website to see information about the Creek, including detailed descriptions of each reach of the Creek, supported by geodetically accurate maps and extensive aerial photos.

***[www.TheTMP.org](http://www.TheTMP.org)***

# THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT

*Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek*

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## Three Strategic Priorities for Taylor Massey Creek



June 23, 2010

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Since 2003, the TMP has made 30 previous submissions to local agencies on protecting and regenerating Taylor Massey Creek.

For example, we asked the Government of Canada to continue efforts to develop and use the Water Quality Index as a standard measure of watercourse health across the country. We also asked the Government of Ontario to develop action plans for when local waters consistently fail to meet the Provincial Water Quality Objectives - a simple, obvious step to protect public health when samples in streams such as Taylor Massey Creek rarely meet the objectives for E. coli.

Most of our submissions, however, were made to the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). At the broadest level, we asked that the City shift to watershed management and that the City and TRCA establish regeneration priorities with implementation plans that included clearly identified ecological priorities, timelines for action, phased budgets, and meaningful opportunities for public engagement.

When the City and the TRCA took few steps to implement or indeed respond to our suggestions, we took further action. For example, we published *Reach by Reach* in 2009, Ontario's first community-led watercourse regeneration plan, which recommended that 5 areas of the Creek be regenerated over 5 years at an estimated cost of \$5,000,000.00. These recommendations are described briefly in items 3 a - e below.

Responding to our presentation on *Reach by Reach* as it was being developed, the TRCA passed a motion in July, 2008, instructing staff to consider a reach-by-reach approach to ravine regeneration. Action awaits.

When we summarized *Reach by Reach* to a City committee in January, 2009, a motion to provide the TMP with a single point of contact for multiple issues touching on water quality, the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan, ravine regeneration, trails, and other matters was ruled out of order as it was "already City policy".

Subsequent verbal and written requests to the City asking it to identify the single point of contact for us on the Creek were systematically ignored.

Throughout 2009, when the TMP sought to engage the joint TRCA/City Task Force in the development of the TRCA's new Don Plan, the City told us to talk to the TRCA and the TRCA told us to talk to the City.

Development, meanwhile, never sleeps, nor lacks for government resources. About 3,000 new homes will soon have been added around Warden Woods since about 2005, based on official plans, permits, and inspections from provincial and municipal staff. Over the same period, the TMP's simple request to the City for a plan to protect and regenerate Warden Woods Park has not been addressed, while the TRCA actually took the park out of the Warden Woods concept site in its new Don Plan.

**Given these realities, the TMP thinks that it is time to balance development with full and proper stewardship of Toronto's natural resources, and to obtain or hold local agencies to commitments to protect and regenerate our green infrastructure.**

**We share the following suggested strategic priorities for the Creek, which could be applied to any watercourse in Toronto, with our members, the City, the TRCA, and the public, along with a description of existing agency promises for the regeneration of Taylor Massey. It is time to do things differently, and we hope the list fosters more support for protecting local water quality, regenerating the Creek, enhancing trails, and connecting our communities.**

1. **Water Quality:** The TMP applauds the release of annual updates from the Storm Outfall Monitoring Program and the news that pollution from 20 of the current list of 53 priority outfalls in the Creek have been addressed. A more comprehensive approach, however, is required. First of all, local agencies should contribute to a master water quality database, including spills, and make the data available to the public on-line and in a timely manner. Secondly, we must develop protocols for action when local water samples repeatedly fail to meet the provincial water quality objectives. Thirdly, water quality testing should be a benchmark to gauge the success of infrastructure projects, such as item 2 below.
2. **Wet Weather Flow:** Originally a 25-year, \$1 B plan to address combined sewer overflows (CSOs), basement flooding, watercourse improvements, and ravine regeneration, the City's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan (WWF) is now focused on the break in the Coxwell Trunk Sewer, eliminating CSOs, and ensuring sanitary sewer capacity for 2031, at an unknown cost. The TMP understands the change in emphasis but notes that a WWF advisory committee has disappeared and that public meetings on WWF are infrequent and less-than forthcoming. Public accountability must be restored and WWF complemented with a plan to not just "clean up" our waterways but to regenerate them, as originally promised.
3. **Watercourse Regeneration Master-planning:** Both WWF and the TRCA's new Don Plan articulate numerous priorities, but without inter-relating or ranking them. Better cooperation on regeneration master-planning is imperative, as may be an advisory committee on local surface water and ravines, with broad representation from local agencies and the public. Five specific actions suggested by the TMP, each of which awaits action, are described below:
  - 3 a **The Warden Hydro Corridor and the Taylor Massey Trail:** Both the TRCA's Don Plan and the City's Natural Heritage Plan cite a desire to incorporate the Warden Hydro Corridor into a regional / municipal trail system. We encourage the fast-tracking of this effort, making a park of the Warden Hydro Corridor, as well as the provision of traffic lights, railway crossings, and pedestrian bridges to complete the construction of a trail along the whole of Creek, as we have been requesting since 2003;
  - 3 b **Terraview Willowfield:** Further to a public meeting held in 2006, the TMP awaits actions by the City to clean out the plunge pool, release reports on the effectiveness of the experimental treatment pond under the soccer field, and complete the regeneration of the Creek in the hydro corridor pursuant to plans developed in the 1990s;
  - 3 c **The Eglinton Reach – the Maida Vale, Eglinton, and Farlinger Ravines:** For about 8 years, we have been calling for two pedestrian bridges and a safe railway crossing to link these areas, as well as plans to regenerate these three beautiful ravines. Currently, WWF is considering the installation of underground detention tanks in Farlinger Ravine, but there is still no word on trails or naturalization;
  - 3 d **Underwriters:** Between 2007 and 2010, the City and TRCA promised actions to remediate the perched culverts, deal with local property standard violations, eliminate invasive species, formalize the trail system, and allow the resumption of community plantings;
  - 3 e **Warden Woods:** We are encouraged that Planning is considering the identification of the Woods as an Environmentally Significant Area, as we suggested in 2005, but find it curious that local agencies still have no plans to assess the safety of the bridge, remove the BMX area, and regenerate area wetlands. More recently, we suggested that the City's proposed expansion of the provincial greenbelt into the Humber and Don ravine systems include Taylor Massey Creek, from its junction with the Don up to the northern end of Warden Woods Park, but have been told the City has "no process" to consider our suggestion.