

## **Membership on the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Natural Science and Education Committee**

**From:** Denise Joseph-Dowers, Senior Manager, Governance and Board Services

The Chair of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has provided correspondence (see attached) inviting a member of the Board to participate on the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Natural Science and Education Committee for a one-year term beginning in November 2021.

On October 22, 2021, the Board of Directors of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority will approve membership on the Committee. It is anticipated that the Committee will meet four times over the term.

For the full background report on the establishment of the Education Task Force, please see the following link regarding Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Outdoor Education Task Force recommendation: [https://trcaca.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2021/06/08123731/Report-Package-Board-of-Directors\\_May28\\_2021.pdf#page=7](https://trcaca.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2021/06/08123731/Report-Package-Board-of-Directors_May28_2021.pdf#page=7)

**IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Board nominate a trustee to serve on the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Natural Science and Education Committee for a term ending November 2022.**

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### Nominations

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Office of the Chair



June 29, 2021

Alexander Brown  
Chair, Toronto District School Board

SENT VIA EMAIL  
[Alexander.Brown@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Alexander.Brown@tdsb.on.ca)

Dear Chair Brown,

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) would like to invite a Member of the Board of Trustees from the Toronto District School Board to participate on the Natural Science and Education Committee (the Committee), which is a subcommittee of TRCA's Board of Directors.

Governed by the *Conservation Authorities Act*, TRCA is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario with a mandate to conserve, restore and manage the natural resources within the nine watersheds and Lake Ontario Waterfront of the Greater Toronto region (including City of Toronto and portions of York, Peel and Durham Regions and the municipalities of Adjala-Tosorontio and Mono).

Conservation authorities are named in Section 197 of the *Education Act* as agencies which school boards may enter into agreements with for the provision of out-of-class learning. Currently TRCA owns over 16,000 hectares (40,000 acres) of greenspace within the Greater Toronto region and provides outdoor education programs for more than 150,000 students from thirteen school boards annually at five outdoor education centres and seven conservation areas, along with providing student access to natural spaces through land leases for six school board operated outdoor education centres.

In 2019, TRCA's Board of Directors convened the Outdoor Education Task Force for an eighteen (18) month term with a mandate to study, develop, and recommend strategic future directions related to out-of-classroom learning as it pertains to natural science, conservation and the environment in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), specifically including Peel, York and Durham Regions and the City of Toronto.

TRCA's Board of Directors, at its meeting held on February 26, 2021, adopted the final recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force through Resolution #A17/21, which we provide enclosed. The Board of Directors report and resolutions have been circulated to participating area school boards for further consideration and adoption of the recommendations by Boards of Trustees.

A key recommendation of the Outdoor Education Task Force was the establishment of a Natural Science and Education Committee as an advisory committee of TRCA's Board of Directors, which was approved at the May 28, 2021 meeting. Comprised of trustees from area school boards, members of TRCA's Board of Directors, representatives from the Ministry of Education, indigenous and youth representatives, the Natural Science and Education Committee will serve as a collaborative table through which to achieve the ambitious goals developed by the Outdoor Education Task Force. Central to this is the transformation of the publicly-owned out-of-classroom

learning network into an efficient, effective system that supports equitable access for all students to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment.

This letter is to formally request that you select a representative from your Boards of Trustees to represent your Board's interest on the Natural Science and Education Committee. We expect to convene the Natural Science and Education Committee in November 2021 but need to confirm final committee composition by late September to achieve this timeline taking into account TRCA Board of Directors reporting timeframes. Active involvement from your Board will be essential to the long-term success of any collaborative framework involving school boards, conservation authorities and other key public sector education stakeholders. Enclosed please find the February 26, 2021 Board of Directors resolution, Terms of Reference for the Natural Science and Education Committee, as well as a Letter of Acceptance.

Membership is subject to approval by TRCA Board of Directors on October 22, 2021 and will be for a one (1) year term beginning in November 2021. It is anticipated that the Committee will meet four times per year, either in person or via videoconference, and regularly report to participating school boards, municipalities and the Ontario Ministry of Education on progress, actions and recommendations. TRCA will provide staff support and secretariat function for the Committee.

To confirm Trustee participation in the Natural Science and Education Committee, please complete the attached Letter of Acceptance and email it to at the Clerk's Office at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority at [clerks@trca.ca](mailto:clerks@trca.ca) by September 17, 2021. For more information on the Outdoor Education Task Force, the Natural Science and Education Committee or TRCA's education and training programs, please feel free to visit the [TRCA website](http://trca.ca) or contact Darryl Gray, Director of Education and Training at [darryl.gray@trca.ca](mailto:darryl.gray@trca.ca) or at (416) 791-0327.

Sincerely,

*Signed version on file in the Clerk's Office*

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Jennifer Innis  
Chair, Board of Directors, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

cc: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, TRCA

Attachment 1: February 26, 2021 Board of Directors Resolution  
Attachment 2: Natural Science and Education Committee Terms of Reference  
Attachment 3: Letter of Acceptance

**Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action**

**RES.#A107/21 - NATURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
Establishment of Natural Science and Education Committee, as per recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force and TRCA Board of Directors.

Moved by: Joanne Dies  
Seconded by: Paul Ainslie

**WHEREAS** at its Meeting #6/18 held on July 20, 2018, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Authority approved the establishment of an Outdoor Education Task Force comprised of elected officials from local school boards and TRCA's Authority;

**AND WHEREAS** at its Meeting held on February 26, 2021, TRCA's Board of Directors endorsed the Final Report and Recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force, including the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Natural Science and Education Committee as a sub-committee of TRCA's Board of Directors;

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT** the Natural Science and Education Committee be established as outlined in Attachment 1: Natural Science and Education Committee Terms of Reference;

**THAT** a formal request for representation on the Natural Science and Education Committee be made to member organizations, as per Attachment 1: Natural Science and Education Committee Terms of Reference;

**AND FURTHER THAT** staff report on proposed appointments to the Natural Science and Education Committee for Board of Directors approval at the October 22, 2021 Board of Directors meeting.

**CARRIED**

**BACKGROUND**

At Meeting #6/18 on July 20, 2018, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Authority approved the establishment of an Outdoor Education Task Force comprised of Trustees from area school boards and representatives from TRCA's Authority. The Outdoor Education Task Force was convened with an eighteen (18) month term and mandate to study, develop, and recommend strategic future directions related to out-of-classroom learning as it pertains to natural science, conservation and the environment in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), specifically including Peel, York and Durham Regions and the City of Toronto.

TRCA's Board of Directors convened the Outdoor Education Task Force as a multi-stakeholder approach to identifying opportunities that will sustain the current system of publicly built and operated school board and conservation authority out-of-classroom learning centres and programs into the future.

The Outdoor Education Task Force was comprised of the following School Board Trustees and TRCA Board members:

- Durham Catholic District School Board: Trustee Morgan Ste. Marie
- York Region District School Board: Trustee Cynthia Cordova
- York Catholic District School Board: Trustee Jennifer Wigston

- Peel District School Board: Trustee Will Davies
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board: Trustee Frank Di Cosola
- Toronto District School Board: Trustee Anu Sriskandarajah
- Toronto Catholic District School Board: Trustee Garry Tanuan
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir: Chair Melinda Chartrand
- TRCA (City of Brampton): Regional Councillor Rowena Santos
- TRCA (City of Toronto): Mr. Basu Mukherjee

On January 25, 2021 the Outdoor Education Task Force completed its work and submitted five (5) recommendations for review and endorsement by TRCA's Board of Directors, which were endorsed on February 26, 2021, as noted above. The Outdoor Education Task Force recommendations form the basis for strengthened collaboration amongst and between TRCA and area school boards as well as other learning organizations within the broader public sector. A key goal of the Outdoor Education Task Force was to build on Section 197 of the Education Act and establish mechanisms to better leverage the public learning assets and natural resources of both school boards and conservation authorities while maximizing the use of finite financial public and private funding in delivering important nature-based outdoor education experiences for students of our watersheds.

TRCA's Board of Directors, at its meeting held on February 26, 2021, adopted Resolution #A17/21 as follows:

*WHEREAS at its Meeting #6/18 held on July 20, 2018, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors approved the establishment of an Outdoor Education Task Force comprised of elected officials from local school boards and TRCA's Board of Directors;*

*AND WHEREAS the Outdoor Education Task Force has been convened to study, develop and recommend strategic future directions related to natural science, conservation and environmental out-of-classroom learning in the Toronto region;*

*AND WHEREAS at Meeting #5/20 held on January 25, 2020, the Outdoor Education Task Force endorsed the final report, Vision Statement and Strategic Recommendations, as amended, for submission to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors;*

*THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the final report of the Outdoor Education Task Force be received;*

*THAT the Vision Statement, as amended at the January 25, 2021 Outdoor Education Task Force meeting, be endorsed;*

*THAT the following recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force be approved for action:*

*Recommendation #1: Establish Shared Governance Model – Natural Science and Education Committee as a Subcommittee of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Board of Directors*

*Recommendation #2: Establish Consistent Access and Curricular Standards Across TRCA and School Boards*

*Recommendation #3: Establish a Unified Performance Measurement System*

*Recommendation #4: Advance Shared-Ownership and Access Models That Enhance and Sustain an Overall Out-Of-Classroom Learning System*

*Recommendation #5: Develop a Long-Term Equitable Access Financial Plan*

*THAT the approved Vision Statement and Strategic Recommendations be circulated to area Boards of Trustees for consideration and endorsement;*

TRCA has worked with local schools and school boards to provide outdoor education programs and services since 1953. Enabling this work, Section 197 of the *Education Act* provides for school boards to enter into agreements with conservation authorities for the purposes of providing out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation or other out-of-classroom programs. Currently TRCA is one of Ontario's largest providers of out-of-classroom experiential learning with over 155,000 students engaging in TRCA learning programs annually through a network of education centres, conservation areas and local greenspaces, in addition to in-school programs. TRCA educational offerings are curriculum-linked and enable student learning related to a wide range of subjects that both meet curricular objectives while advancing TRCA strategic goals and supporting TRCA's core mandate. Further to learning program services, TRCA provides access to TRCA lands and greenspaces for area school boards for board-operated outdoor education centres through lease or other formal agreements either on, or adjacent, to TRCA-owned land, thereby maximizing public-sector partnerships through efficient use of publicly owned land for learning purposes.

Central to the Outdoor Education Task Force recommendations is the establishment of the Natural Science and Education Committee to provide a shared governance framework to advance the recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force. TRCA has historically brought key stakeholders together as necessary for important discussions related to the segment of the formal education system that relates to natural science, conservation and the environment, most recently through the Outdoor Education Task Force. The convening of the Natural Science and Education Committee was seen as an essential component of TRCA's work as a leader in this field by members of the Outdoor Education Task Force.

#### **RATIONALE**

Building on the success of the Outdoor Education Task Force, the Natural Science and Education Committee will provide for a multi-stakeholder governance framework to advance shared objectives pertaining to out-of-classroom learning related to natural-science, conservation and the environment in the Greater Toronto Area. By bringing together key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, area school boards, indigenous communities and youth, TRCA and school board partners will be better able to leverage the value of the publicly built and operated system that supports out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment more effectively, while also ensuring the current and future learning needs are met.

The Natural Science and Education Committee will be an advisory board of TRCA's Board of Directors with a mandate to:

Study and make recommendations to the Board of Directors of TRCA regarding recommendations to TRCA and government and agency partners on improvements and



future needs as it pertains to the provision, planning or access for students to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment in the Greater Toronto Area region.

The objectives of the Natural Science and Education Committee will be to advise TRCA and partner agencies on the effective implementation and advancement of the recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force, specifically the following:

- (a) Establish Consistent Access and Curricular Standards Across TRCA and School Boards.
- (b) Establish a Unified Performance Measurement System.
- (c) Advance Shared-Ownership and Access Models That Enhance and Sustain an Overall Out-Of-Classroom Learning System.
- (d) Develop a Long-Term Equitable Access Financial Plan.

In order to ensure representation from key public-sector stakeholders, membership will be comprised of representatives from the following:

- (a) School Board Trustee from each of the area school boards (up to 10);
- (b) TRCA Board of Directors Member (up to 2);
- (c) Ministry of Education (up to 2);
- (d) Indigenous representatives with a Treaty right or historical affiliation to TRCA's jurisdiction (up to 2);
- (e) Youth representatives (up to 2) attending an educational institution in TRCA's jurisdiction.

Representatives from indigenous communities will ensure that appropriate voice is given to those with Treaty Rights or historic affiliation with TRCA's jurisdiction, which are historically under-represented in decision-making structures as it relates to this type and nature of experiential learning. Additionally, youth representation at future tables such as the Natural Science and Education Committee was an important point of discussion for members of the Outdoor Education Task Force, and as such has been integrated into the Terms of Reference for this new committee.

To align with municipal and school board election cycles, committee members will be appointed for a four-year term aligned with municipal and school board Terms of Council or until their successors are appointed, with meetings held, at minimum, three times per year.

As an advisory board of TRCA's Board of Directors, the Natural Science and Education Committee will report to TRCA's Board of Directors with minutes and action items circulated to participating member organizations as required.

#### **Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

**Strategy 3 – Rethink greenspace to maximize its value**

**Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship**

**Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models**

**Strategy 9 – Measure performance**

#### **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

TRCA's 2020 budget for school-based education programs and activities was \$5.1 million, with

\$3.77M (74%) generated through user fees, grants and other revenue and the remaining \$1.33M (26%) supported through municipal funding for special programs, such as Peel EcoSchools, Watershed on Wheels, Water Festivals and others.

The operational costs for administration of the Natural Science and Education Committee is estimated to be \$30,000 per year, primarily funded through operating account 365-01.

**DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE**

With TRCA Board of Directors approval of the establishment of the Natural Science and Education Committee, TRCA staff will prepare a call for appointments to member organizations, including supporting documentation and information for prospective members.

Following the call for appointments, staff will report to TRCA's Board of Directors for approval of appointments at the October 22, 2021 Board of Directors meeting, with the anticipated inaugural meeting of the Natural Science and Education Committee taking place in November 2021.

Report prepared by: Darryl Gray, (416) 791-0327

Emails: [darryl.gray@trca.ca](mailto:darryl.gray@trca.ca)

For Information contact: Darryl Gray, (416) 791-0327

Emails: [darryl.gray@trca.ca](mailto:darryl.gray@trca.ca)

Date: May 17, 2021





Toronto and Region Natural Science and Education  
Committee Terms of Reference

## **TORONTO AND REGION NATURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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Toronto and Region Natural Science and Education  
Committee Terms of Reference

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.01. To establish a multi-stakeholder committee as a subcommittee of the Board of Directors of TRCA to advise and coordinate the efficient implementation of recommendations from the Outdoor Education Task Force advisory board as it pertains to the provision, planning or access for students to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation, and environment in the Toronto region.
- 1.02. To meet the current and future needs of the student population in the Greater Toronto Area region as it pertains to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation, and the environment, and ensure equity of access to programs and services.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.01. Through working with TRCA and government, agency and community partners advance implementation of the recommendations of the Outdoor Education Task Force as endorsed by the TRCA Board of Directors (2021) by leveraging expertise, assets and capacity within the out-of-classroom learning system related to natural science, conservation, and environment, with a particular emphasis on deriving enhanced value from publicly-owned and managed facilities and programs through improved collaboration and integration:
  - (a) Establish Consistent Access and Curricular Standards Across TRCA and School Boards.
  - (b) Establish a Unified Performance Measurement System.
  - (c) Advance Shared-Ownership and Access Models That Enhance and Sustain an Overall Out-Of-Classroom Learning System.
  - (d) Develop a Long-Term Equitable Access Financial Plan.

**3. AUTHORITY**

- 3.01. To study and make recommendations to the Board of Directors of TRCA regarding recommendations to TRCA and government and agency partners on improvements and future needs as it pertains to the provision, planning or access for students to out-of-classroom learning related to natural science, conservation and the environment in the Greater Toronto Area region.
- 3.02. The work of the Subcommittee of the Board is to meet needs located wholly or partially within the school boards of TRCA's participating municipalities.

**4. MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS**

- 4.01. Membership to consist of:
  - (a) School Board Trustee from each of the area school boards (up to 10);
  - (b) TRCA Board of Directors Member (up to 2);



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- (c) Ministry of Education (up to 2);
- (d) Indigenous representatives with a Treaty right or historical affiliation to TRCA's jurisdiction (up to 2);
- (e) Youth representatives (up to 2) attending an educational institution in TRCA's jurisdiction.

Membership for School Board Trustees will be based on proportional membership from School Boards in TRCA's jurisdiction. The Minister of Education will be formally requested by the TRCA Chair to designate two senior officials (one at a minimum Director level) within the Ministry of Education. Membership for Youth representatives will be advertised on TRCA's website and announced to TRCA's existing Youth Council that is part of the Regional Watershed Alliance subcommittee of the TRCA Board of Directors. Membership recommendations for Indigenous representatives will be requested by the TRCA Chair to the Chief of Indigenous communities with a Treaty Right or historical affiliation to TRCA's jurisdiction.

- 4.02. Committee members will be appointed for a four-year term aligned with municipal and school board Terms of Council or until their successors are appointed.
- 4.03. The Chair and Vice-Chair for this subcommittee of the Board of Directors will be elected from amongst its Members for the term of the Committee at the inaugural meeting of the term. The Board of Directors may appoint an interim Chair until such time as an election can take place. The election procedures and procedural matters used for this election and in the administration of the subcommittee will be that outlined in the Board of Directors Administration By-law.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.01. The **Chair** is responsible for:
  - (a) Presiding over Committee meetings, setting the agenda and generally ensuring the effectiveness of meetings;
  - (b) Calling special meetings, as required;
  - (c) In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will perform the above functions;
  - (d) In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, Members shall appoint an Acting Chair who, for the purposes of that meeting has all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chair.
- 5.02. **Committee Members** are responsible for:
  - (a) Working collaboratively to study and develop recommendations related to the mandate;
  - (b) Represent their school board or organization;
  - (c) Represent the interest of TRCA and/or those of their participating municipality, when representing TRCA's Board of Directors;
  - (d) Attending Committee meetings as required;
  - (e) Acting as a resource to TRCA, TRCA's municipal partners and the Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation by providing advice on matters of community interest;



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- (f) Collaborating with other conservation authorities and lower tier municipalities on opportunities that transcend TRCA jurisdictional boundaries;
- (g) Maximizing the collective impact of the Committee through resource and data sharing, measuring, and reporting on regional priorities;
- (h) Reporting to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

5.03. **TRCA's Director, Education and Training** is responsible for providing general support in regards to the activities and actions of the Committee and setting agenda for the meetings.

5.04. **TRCA's Clerk's Office** is responsible for acting in a Committee Clerk capacity, arranging meeting logistics, preparing the agenda, maintaining meeting minutes, tracking and delegating action items.

**6. GOVERNANCE**

6.01. The Committee is an advisory board of the Board of Directors and as such does not have decision-making power but shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

6.02. The Committee may establish subcommittees/working groups or standing committees as needed.

6.03. The Committee shall meet at minimum three times per year or more frequently as required. Members are required to attend all meetings of the Committee.

6.04. A quorum will consist of one-third of appointed Members. If there is no quorum within one half hour after the time appointed for the meeting, the Chair for the meeting shall declare the meeting adjourned due to a lack of a quorum, or shall recess until quorum arrives, and the Clerk shall record the names of the Members present and absent. If during a meeting a quorum is lost, then the Chair shall declare that the meeting shall stand recessed or adjourned, until the date of the next regular meeting or other meeting called in accordance with the provisions of the Board of Directors Administrative By-law. Agenda items may be covered and presented, and issues discussed, but no formal recommendation may be made by the remaining Members which do not constitute a quorum.

6.05. At official Committee meetings, Members will be eligible for travel expenses according to Board of Directors Administrative By-Law, where these are not covered by their agency or other source. Members shall not receive a per diem or honorarium for attendance at meetings and functions.

6.06. If any part of the Terms of Reference conflicts with any provisions of the Board of Directors Administrative By-Law, the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* or the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or a provision of a Regulation



Toronto and Region Natural Science and Education  
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made under one of those Acts, the provision of that Act, Regulation, or By-Law prevails.

- 6.07. In all matters of procedure not specifically dealt with under the Terms of Reference, Board of Directors Administrative By-Law shall be binding.

**7. REPORTING**

- 7.01. The Committee is considered an advisory board of TRCA and shall make recommendations and report to the Board of Directors.
- 7.02. The minutes of the Committee will be received by the Board of Directors.
- 7.03. Each member shall report back to their appointing agency as required.

**8. DEFINITIONS**

None.

**9. ADMINISTRATION**

<b>Review Schedule:</b>	5 Years	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	May 28, 2026
<b>Revision History</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Approval Authority and Date</b>		
1	Approved by Board of Directors, May 28, 2021		



**Letter of Acceptance**

**Member of the Natural Science and Education Committee**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ District School Board, agree to participate on the Natural Science and Education Committee.

**Term of Office**

- The term of the Natural Science and Education Committee shall commence from date of appointment by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors and be for a period of XXXX.

**Lead Member Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Thank you for your agreement to join the Natural Science and Education Committee of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. We welcome your involvement and expertise and look forward to a fruitful collaboration.**

**Please send this completed form to the Clerk's Office at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority at [clerks@trca.ca](mailto:clerks@trca.ca) by September 17, 2021.**