

# Toronto Nature Stewards Jan. 2021

Hello Toronto Nature Stewards! We look outside and see cardinals at the feeder and buds forming on the trees. If we ignore the temperature, dare we hope that spring is in the air and that we can soon start stewarding?

Here is our update on important news:

- 1. Naming of the group:** 34 people responded to the survey and 44% chose *Toronto Nature Stewards* as our name for a landslide win! Thank you for participating in the survey and we hope that everyone is content with the choice. We will be drafting some sort of a logo in the future. Ideas are welcome.
- 2. Status of City Collaboration:**
  - We met with Councillor Pasternak on December 9, 2020 and agreed to a plan for engaging with City staff.
  - Our first meeting with City staff was on January 11, 2021. In addition to the Councillor and his staff, City representatives included Jason Doyle (Director of Urban Forestry), Kim Statham (Manager, Urban Forestry Policy & Planning), and Wendy Strickland (Ravine Strategy Project Manager). We proposed a process and timeline for consultation and agreed to meet again.
  - The City has scheduled our next meeting for February 5, 2021. Things are moving, but slowly. We hope to set up a regular schedule and continually involve the broader stewardship group moving forward through the manual and framework. We hope to set up a shared drive or website for this purpose, as the next deliverable will be an updated manual.
  - While the first meeting was encouraging and generated a lot of enthusiasm, we were also told that there was a process and due diligence that had to be followed by the City. This process includes Stakeholder input, union impacts, legal issues, etc.
  - As the City may be contacting you or members in your organizations, we encourage you to continue supporting a more autonomous stewardship model without City supervision.
- 3. Indigenous Involvement Update:** The team has been working on engaging the First Nations community on a number of fronts and recognize this will be an ongoing activity. We'd like to thank one of our knowledgeable volunteers who provided us with

an in-depth set of indigenous resources which we are slowly working through to determine how best to incorporate these into our work. We have also been in contact with the City of Toronto's Indigenous Affairs office to seek their advice on which community members to approach and also how to engage in an authentic and respectful manner. To further our knowledge about Indigenous people and the land in Toronto, we recommend this virtual event about Indigenous Treaties presented by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) on February 9, 2021.

<https://trca.ca/event/lake-ontario-evening-indigenous-treaties-and-peoples-of-toronto/>

4. **Portal:** We have learned that the CEDAR application doesn't store information that stewards enter, to create a steward profile. As is, it would be necessary for stewards to enter all their information every time they register for an event, which does not lend itself well to Adopt-a-Patch. We are reviewing some of the "off-the-shelf" low cost volunteer registration applications that are available, and considering how we might meet our needs with a blend of applications. Old fashioned paper-based and/or common programs (like Excel/Facebook) are also an option during this first year.
5. **Lead Steward Curriculum:** Work on the curriculum continues and we anticipate launching the training in March! Please consider who you know that may be interested in becoming a Lead Steward and email us. We will be communicating more on this soon.
6. **Manual Update:** Best Management Practices are being developed for Phragmites with input from Lynn Short, Humber Arboretum. Stuart Livingstone, has offered to review the section on Dog-strangling Vine. Lenka Holubec will be looking at the legal framework and making sure it is consistent with other protection policies. We are looking forward to incorporating comments based on our discussions with the City.
7. **Toronto Nature Stewards Website** – under construction. This will be hosted at U of T, Daniels Forestry who will also handle registration, web-based curriculum, donations, etc. This will be very "bare-bones" to begin.
8. **Communications** – We wish to develop a newsletter with branding, etc. for Toronto Nature Stewards. If you have any experience in this field, please contact us.

We hope you are getting opportunities to enjoy the bright sun and colder temperatures.

Best wishes,

Clyde, Paula, Sandy, Pat, Paul, Catherine, Dale, Andrew

