



# TORONTO NATURE STEWARDS



Newsletter 4  
November, 2021

## News and Updates

It's the season of change - changing colours, falling acorns, and the perfect time to celebrate our stewarding success from the summer while looking forward to next steps for the 2022 season.

### 2021 Pilot Program

Some sites have wrapped up for the season; others will continue until the ground freezes. We extend a big thank you and congratulations for the many successes of our 2021 Pilot Program.

### Success by the Numbers

- 23 Lead Stewards
- 153 volunteer stewards
- 9 sites across Toronto
- 12.35 hectares stewarded
- 1547 volunteer hours
- 2705 L of litter removed (54 bags)
- 31 970 L (431 bags) of invasive plants removed

Not to mention the immeasurable number of invasive plants removed but not bagged – rather, left on the site as mulch to improve soil quality.

### Invasive Species Management

Invasive species approved for removal are:

- Buckthorn **\*New**
- Burdock
- Dog-strangling vine
- Garlic mustard
- Goutweed
- Hedge parsley
- Japanese knotweed
- Lily of the valley
- Norway maple seedlings **\*New**
- Phragmites
- Wood avens

We aim to expand this list for our 2022 program.

A special thank you to *Kim Statham* and *Karen Sun* at City of Toronto, *Parks, Forestry & Recreation* for their commitment to helping us pilot, improve and expand our program.

### Indigenous Involvement

TNS continues to meet with Indigenous leaders and get their perspectives on our program and help us make additional connections in the community. Our members have made multiple trips to the indigenous teaching lodge on the Humber where we have met with Doug Anderson and John La Rose who have shared some of their traditional knowledge on restoring the land and have been very supportive of our pilot program and stewarding land together.

### Public Manual In Action

This summer provided the perfect opportunity to put our Public Land Stewardship Manual into action. We are incorporating learnings from the 2021 Pilot Program toward improving the program for next year.

### Website, Logo, Social Media



Toronto Nature Stewards  
[@torontonaturestewards](https://www.facebook.com/torontonaturestewards)



[@torontonaturestewards](https://www.instagram.com/torontonaturestewards)



[@naturestewards](https://twitter.com/naturestewards)



*Invasive Phragmites removal.  
TNS members at Cherry Beach,  
Toronto*



## Private Manual Under Development

In parallel, we continue to develop the Private Land Stewardship Manual, and are testing out manual content on private property. Private ravine land encompasses private homes, as well as corporations, schools, and apartments buildings. With private property covering over 40% of Toronto's ravine land, stewardship from private property owners is more important than ever.

Through this process, we aim to help homeowners identify and remove invasive species and plant native shrubs and trees. In addition to these important acts of stewardship, we also recognize that homeowners face a unique set of issues that public stewards do not necessarily deal with – concerns about privacy, property access, erosion, water control, and a general lack of knowledge about the legislative framework governing private ravine land.

Accordingly, while public stewards have a general appreciation of the need for stewardship, most private landowners require significant education. This will be a big challenge moving forward as we continue to develop our Private Land Stewardship Manual and make content available on a website.

## "Jumping worms"

It is important to be aware of the other types of invasive species that might be in the ravines. We are collaborating with researcher *Dr. Michael McTavish* from U of T's Institute of Forestry and Conservation to monitor invasive jumping worms that are an ever-growing concern across Toronto's natural areas.

### ATTENTION: Invasive jumping worms found in Ontario

- Jumping worms (snake worms, crazy worms) refer to several species of invasive earthworms that damage gardens and natural landscapes.
- Previously rare in Canada, jumping worms have recently been found in gardens and ravines in Toronto, Hamilton, and Kent County (summer 2021).



If you see jumping worms in your area, please contact  
**Dr. Michael McTavish** ([michael.mctavish@alum.utoronto.ca](mailto:michael.mctavish@alum.utoronto.ca)), University of Toronto.

## Logo, Website, Social Media

Huge thank you to *Karen Yukich, Oksana Kul, Ravi Ponnudurai, Catherine Berka, Katerina Atanassova, Jason Ramsay-Brown* and *Dawn Ramsay-Brown* for creating our Toronto Nature Stewards logo!

We are in the ongoing process of developing a website that will digitize our public and private manuals, amongst other things - stay tuned!

**Are you social media savvy?**  
 We are looking for a volunteer to run the Toronto Nature Stewards social media pages by creating posts and updates to keep our internet presence alive! For more information, please contact: [toronto.nature.stewards@utoronto.ca](mailto:toronto.nature.stewards@utoronto.ca)





## First-Ever Lead Steward Workshop And Celebration

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our inaugural Lead Steward Workshop and Celebration on September 25th, 2021 at Sherwood Park. Stewards met in-person to share learnings from their experience with the Pilot program, as well as enjoy a nature walk led by Stephen Smith from Urban Forest Associates, and celebrate with food and drink!

We could not have been successful without the enthusiasm, dedication and patience of the Lead Stewards. We would also like to recognize our other amazing supporters and hardworking leadership team who helped drive the process. Special thanks to our dedicated interns Anna Meng and Julia Michalski for organizing a wonderful get together. Everyone worked extremely hard to get the program off the ground and bring unsupervised stewardship to Toronto.



## Looking Ahead To 2022

Building on this year's many successes, we are highly motivated - and excited - to expand and improve the TNS program for 2022. Some highlights of our future plan:

- **Lead Steward Recruitment:** Not only are many of this year's Lead Stewards continuing next year, we have already recruited new Lead stewards for 2022.
- **Site Expansion:** We aim to secure an additional 23 sites. Our site criteria include a broader geographic range and proximity to neighbourhood improvement areas. We have completed site walks and applications and await approvals from the City.
- **2022 Lead Steward Training Curriculum:** Based on the knowledge and experience from the Pilot program, a new Lead Steward Training Curriculum will begin in January 2022 (specific dates TBD)
- **Monitoring:** While monitoring is a definite challenge, we aim to design a monitoring system that will be used to track changes and record restoration progress over time.

## ...Looking Ahead To 2022

We are steadfast in our goal to create a safe, fun, and inclusive stewarding environment for all our volunteers. Expanding the program creates more opportunity to involve people from across the city, harnessing the power of teamwork, building communities and educating property owners to restore and protect our enviable 11,000 + hectares of ravines and natural areas.



Photos by Catherine Berka, Laura Scrivener and Ravi Ponnudurai.