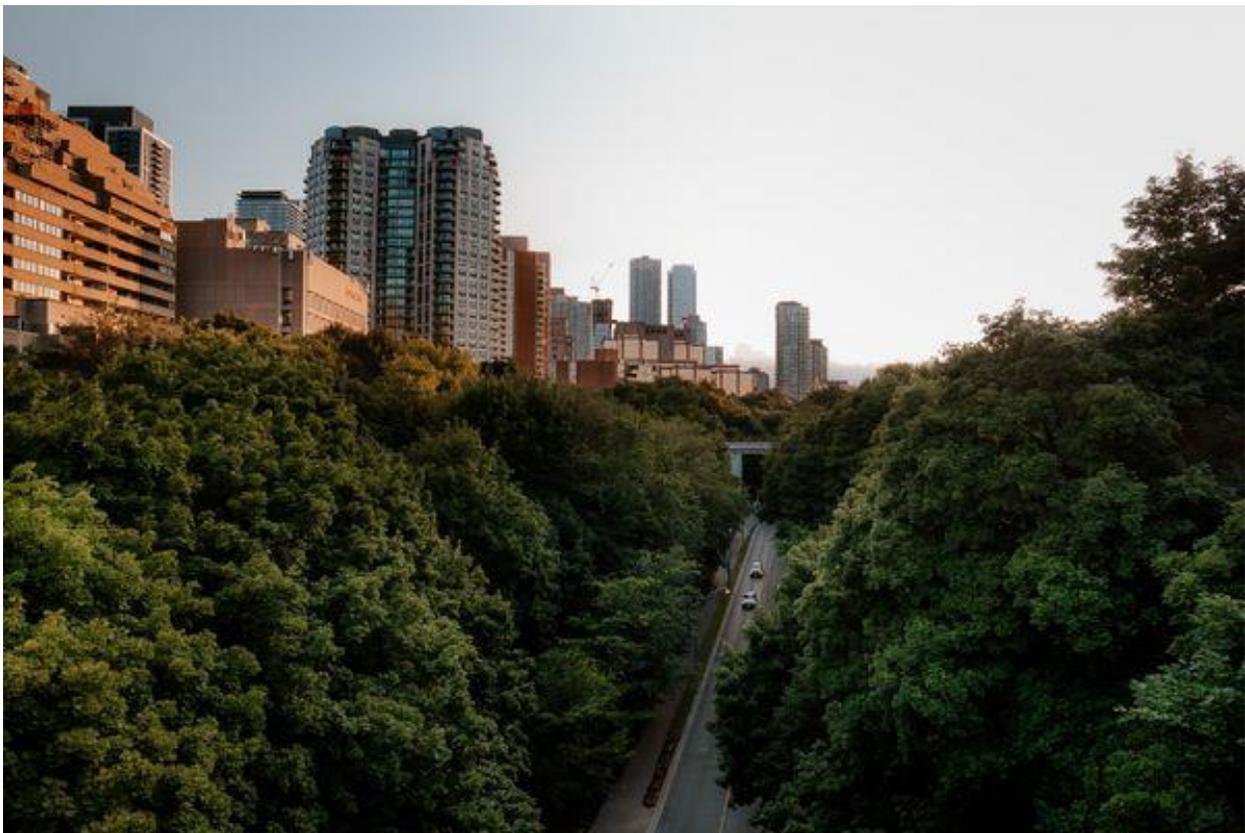


Accessed Sept. 12, 2022; <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-torontos-ravines-are-in-a-critical-state-threatened-by-invasive/>

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## Toronto's ravines are in a critical state, threatened by invasive species, climate change and intensive land development

Special to The Globe and Mail/ Joel Rodriguez



The sun sets over Rosedale Ravine trail near Rosedale Valley Road, in Toronto. Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail

Toronto's ravine system makes up a significant part of the city's green infrastructure, as natural parklands and urban forests provide countless environmental, health and recreational benefits. However, the city's ravines are in a critical state, threatened by invasive species, climate change and intensive land development.

In January 2020, Toronto City Council adopted the Ravine Strategy Implementation Plan to protect the city's ravines. A group of volunteers formed the Toronto Nature Stewards (TNS)

to help implement the plan and advance independent stewardship to restore the ecological health of Toronto's ravines.

Hundreds of volunteer stewards work under the direction of lead stewards and meet regularly to pick up litter and remove invasive plants, such as lily of the valley, Japanese knotweed, and dog-strangling vine, which can crowd out native species.



Daniel Cushing prepares to remove lily of the valley from Roxborough Parkette North site.  
Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail



A handful of the invasive plant. Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail

Before the program started, only city park officials were allowed to remove invasive species from ravines. But the partnership allows volunteers to identify and remove these plants without supervision.

Geoffrey Chan and Catherine Berka are lead stewards at TNS's Roxborough Parkette North site. Mr. Chan says the stewardship work has given him an appreciation for the rich variety of life that exists within the city's ravine system.



Catherine Berka, Geoffrey Chan and John Oyston work on identifying and removing Japanese knotweed  
.Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail

“I used to think only of places like the Amazon as being powerhouses of biodiversity, but here in this part of Ontario, we have a wealth of biodiversity too,” he said. “Although I grew up in Toronto, I never knew this until now. It’s right in our backyard, and it’s a treasure.”

Toronto Nature Stewards now oversees 23 sites and has 60 trained lead stewards across the city. The stewardship year begins in April and runs until late October or early November.



Geoffrey Chan  
Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail



Finbarr O'Callahan works on identifying and removing Japanese knotweed. Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail



Leslie Kestin, Geoffrey Chan, Finbarr O'Callahan, John Oyston, Jonathon Martynski and Anqi Dong at Roxborough Parkette North site. Joel Rodriguez/The Globe and Mail