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OUR GREENER SIDE CELEBRATION

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated March 13, 2009, from the Commissioner of Environmental Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides information on Our Greener Side Celebration, a one day event to be hosted on May 9, 2009 at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area. The event will provide an opportunity for York Region residents to explore new and emerging environmental and sustainability programs available across the Region.

3. BACKGROUND

Our Greener Side Celebration will highlight a sustainable Region

The concept for Our Greener Side Celebration has its origins with the York Region Children's Water Festival. Every year for the last ten years the Region, in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is host to 5,000 grade four students in a week long event to educate children about water and the environment. The success of the children's water festival prompted the idea of broadening the event to reach not only the children but the families of York Region and to encompass other sustainable initiatives.

To meet the challenges of climate change and develop sustainable communities, towns, cities and regions must work collaboratively to achieve broad based adaptations in human behaviour and social norms. Behaviours as they relate to the consumption of water, energy, food and leisure products, as well as generated waste, represent significant areas of opportunity for focusing on learning programs that meet the common goal of sustainability.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A day of family fun and environmental awareness

Through a variety of government and non-government agencies within York Region, residents already have access to a wide range of programs and services that support creation of a sustainable Region. Our Greener Side Celebration will help to raise awareness about these programs, provide a portal into environmental and sustainable services in the Region and highlight opportunities for new programs to meet current and future needs.

Located at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Our Greener Side Celebration will focus on core themes of:

- Water conservation
- Waste reduction
- Green energy
- Revolution in transportation
- Local foods/agriculture
- Backyard greening
- Habitat conservation

Our Greener Side will be fun for the whole family. There will be lots of activities for everyone including themed entertainment, hands-on activities like tree planting, kid's games, bird box building, green arts and craft projects, a local farmers market, and a native plant sale. Our Greener Side will also be hosting a community BBQ showcasing local foods. Throughout the day, workshops on topics of interest will take place, including how to "green" your home and garden, local foods, saving energy, and others.

To highlight the importance of sustainability, operationally Our Greener Side Celebration will be an eco-friendly, carbon-neutral event. Green energy will be used to power the event and carbon offsets will be purchased to offset any carbon emissions that are produced as a result of the event. Exhibitors and attendees will also have the option to purchase offsets for their travel to and from Bruce's Mill Conservation Area.

Our Greener Side Celebration is presented by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in partnership with York Region and local municipalities.

Information will be available online at www.ourgreenerside.ca.

Two events on one day means more fun for the whole family!

Staff from Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region and York Regional Police have worked together to ensure that Our Greener Side Celebration and the Annual

York Regional Police Open House provide an entertaining and educational experience to the residents and visitors of York Region.

The two events are sharing resources whenever possible. Busing to and from the rear parking lot is to be shared and provided by York Region Transit. Signage inside Bruce's Mill Conservation Area will direct visitors to both events. York Regional Police will provide security and traffic control services throughout the park to ensure the safety of all visitors.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for Our Greener Side Celebration is being provided through a variety of sources such as in-kind support from York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and financial support through fundraising. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has also applied for a grant under the Celebrate Ontario 2009 program of the Ministry of Tourism. They have also submitted funding proposals to TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and Loblaws.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

To meet the challenges of climate change and develop sustainable communities, towns, cities and regions we must work collaboratively to achieve broad based adaptations in human behaviour and social norms. Our Greener Side Celebration will provide a day of fun and learning for children and adults providing a glimpse of what is possible in a sustainable community.

7. CONCLUSION

Staff from York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and York Regional Police are committed to providing an entertaining and educational experience to the residents and visitors of York Region by highlighting how each of us can contribute to a sustainable community.

For more information on this report, please contact Laura McDowell, Director, Environmental Promotion and Protection Branch, Environmental Services Department at Ext. 5077.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.