

Rouge River Watershed Plan

Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future

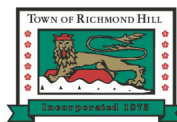
Report of the Rouge Watershed Task Force
2007

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority



Acknowledgements

This *ROUGE RIVER WATERSHED PLAN - Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future* was written by Suzanne Barrett, under the direction of the Rouge Watershed Task Force, and represents the combined effort of many participants. Appreciation and thanks are extended to all of the members of the Rouge Watershed Task Force, as listed in Appendix C; to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Rouge Park staff and consultants, as listed in Appendix G and to the government partners.



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50 Bloomington Road West
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 3G8
Ph 905-713-7426
Fax 905-713-6028
rougepark@rougepark.com
www.rougepark.com

5 Shoreham Drive
Downsview, Ontario
M3N 1S4
Ph 416-661-6600
Fax 416-661-6898
www.trca.on.ca

November 30, 2006

Mr. Dick O'Brien
Chair
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
5 Shoreham Drive
Downsview, ON
M3N 1S4

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Rouge River Watershed Plan is the product of the Rouge Watershed Task Force. At the last meeting of the Task Force, following 2.5 years of discussion and study, the report was adopted with the final resolution.

Underlying the report is a wealth of scientific study including some groundbreaking modelling as well as innovative empirical social science research. These studies and the often lively discussions at the Task Force meetings have brought to the fore some key messages at once sobering and yet providing the opportunity for positive action.

The underlying science demonstrates unequivocally that the Rouge River watershed is at a crossroads. At its heart is the largest urban wilderness park in North America. Yet pressures on five municipalities, two regional governments, the province and the federal government (which owns substantial tracts of land in the watershed) create enormous and often conflicting management demands.

Concern for the environment is once again at the public forefront as this report is being finalised. There is no doubt that members of the public want to "do the right thing" when it comes to environmental matters. Yet the complexity of the problem can be overwhelming to an individual citizen. The phenomenal participation rate in blue and green box programs demonstrates how much change can be effected with appropriate leadership and direction. Research, the public will and economics all appear to be moving towards favouring a more truly sustainable way of living in a North American urban area. Opportunities exist today for individual buildings, infrastructure, transportation, energy and water management that were merely theoretical only a few years ago. Decisions to take advantage or squander these opportunities will directly affect the future of this watershed.

The watershed plan provides general direction. It is the broadest of navigational tools. It points out the routes available and the desired destination. By itself, this document will not achieve any results. If there was one sentiment expressed consistently by members of this Task Force it was a desire that this report not be yet another report that would be filed away and gather dust. Leadership is needed to make specific decisions at all levels from governments, to planners, developers and individuals that are consistent with the goals of this plan. Not all decisions need necessarily cost money. Inaction, indecision and lack of leadership also have their costs— often to be paid for (with accrued interest) by future residents.

Within our own sphere, every citizen in this watershed is a leader and a decision maker. Every one of us has the power to make decisions that will affect the future of this watershed.

It is my sincere hope that the right leadership will be demonstrated by all decision makers in the watershed so that the general principles and goals of this watershed plan will indeed be put into specific action. I believe that if this is done, when this plan is next reviewed, we can all be proud to have navigated through the future years of this watershed in a way that we and more importantly perhaps, our children and their children can be proud of.

The text of the final task force resolution follows:

THAT the Rouge Watershed Task Force forward its final Watershed Plan to the TRCA for its consideration;

THAT TRCA be requested to complete all supporting documents as soon as possible and conduct further consultation, including an expert peer review, on the final draft Plan and supporting documents;

THAT Rouge Watershed Task Force members be circulated a copy of the expert peer review report;

THAT TRCA be requested in the finalization of this document to ensure that comments have been addressed in keeping with the Task Force principles, tone and spirit of the final Task Force Plan;

THAT TRCA be requested to facilitate the development of an Implementation Guide and a five year Implementation Workplan and budget for the Rouge River Watershed Plan, in consultation with key implementing partners;

THAT the TRCA be requested to establish an Implementation Committee as soon as possible following the finalization of the Watershed Plan in order to promote and track the implementation of the Watershed Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT the Rouge Park Alliance, the Municipal partners, the Provincial and Federal governments as well as all residents, organizations and relevant interest groups be requested to provide their ongoing support for the implementation of the principles and goals of the Rouge River Watershed Plan.

Yours Very Truly



Bryan J. Buttigieg
Chair, Rouge River Watershed Task Force

Rouge River Watershed Plan

Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rouge River watershed is an extraordinary resource in Southern Ontario, treasured and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. It spans 336 km² of land and water in the Regions of York and Durham, Cities of Toronto and Pickering, and Towns of Markham, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville. It includes all the lands that drain to the Rouge River and its tributaries, including the Little Rouge River, starting in the hills of the Oak Ridges Moraine and flowing south to Lake Ontario (see Figure 1-1).

Why do we need this watershed plan? If you live, work or play in the Rouge River watershed, you depend on its health in a number of ways. The Rouge watershed is a source of your drinking water – whether you rely on wells or water from Lake Ontario. Unpaved land absorbs water from rain and snowfall to replenish groundwater and streams and reduce the negative impacts of flooding and erosion. Healthy aquatic and terrestrial habitats support diverse communities of plants and animals. Agricultural lands provide local sources of food and green spaces provide recreation opportunities. A rich human heritage affords links to the past that enrich and inform our lives today. The natural beauty of the forests, meadows, farmlands, wetlands, rivers and creeks provides urban dwellers with solace, renewal and contact with nature.

Increasing concerns about the health of our cities and countryside, the safety of our drinking water and the future of the Oak Ridges Moraine have led to a number of initiatives towards sustainable living in Ontario, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the Great Lakes Region. Actions taken in the Rouge watershed can provide a model for actions in other watersheds, as well as influence the environmental health of larger systems.

What is the role of the watershed plan? Specifically, the watershed plan is intended to inform and guide municipalities, provincial and federal governments, TRCA, Rouge Park, non-government organizations and private landowners as they update their policies and practices for environmental stewardship.

This watershed plan was prepared by a multi-stakeholder task force that includes representatives from all levels of government agencies, private businesses, not-for-profit organizations and the public and was coordinated by TRCA and Rouge Park (see Appendix C). The plan has a strong technical foundation, based on decades of monitoring of environmental conditions combined with a leading edge approach to modelling of potential future conditions. A series of management summits was held to convene experts who could help identify best practices and recommendations to achieve the objectives of the Rouge Watershed Task Force.

The guiding framework for this watershed plan comprises an overall goal, a set of principles, nine goals and 22 objectives with specific targets. Our overall goal is:

To work towards a healthy and sustainable Rouge watershed by protecting, restoring and enhancing its ecological and cultural integrity within the context of a regional natural heritage system.

Our goals, objectives and targets address:

- Groundwater
- Surface water
- Stream form
- Aquatic system
- Terrestrial system
- Air quality and climate change
- Cultural heritage
- Nature-based recreation
- Sustainable land and resource use

One of the foundations of this plan is the *Rouge River State of the Watershed Report*, which provides a wealth of recent information about natural and cultural resources and human activities in the watershed. Land use in the Rouge watershed today is approximately 40% rural, 35% urban, 24% natural cover and 1% open water. The lower watershed is dominated by Rouge Park, with a small but well established area of urban development to the west. The middle and western parts are experiencing rapid urban expansion and have sparse natural cover except in Rouge Park. The upper and eastern portions of the watershed are primarily rural and agricultural with some small towns and villages.

The Rouge watershed represents a rich inheritance for current and future communities. The Little Rouge River watershed is still relatively undeveloped with considerable natural cover and a water balance typical of a rural watershed. The aquatic systems in the upper Little Rouge and parts of the Main Rouge are healthy enough to support cold- and cool-water communities including species of concern such as redbreasted dace and brook trout. Natural habitats support a high diversity of plants and animals, including many that are rare or at risk (such as the nationally threatened Jefferson salamander, provincially significant Cooper's hawk and regionally rare one flower cancer-root). Major blocks of publicly owned lands have been reserved for conservation and greenspace purposes, most notably the 41 square kilometre Rouge Park. The Rouge watershed also has a rich cultural heritage, including many archaeological and historic sites, landscapes, stories and artifacts from earlier inhabitants as well as the diverse cultures of present day communities.

Unfortunately, there are signs of stress. Decades of urban development have resulted in harmful changes that exceed the carrying capacity of natural systems. These changes include increased surface runoff, more water pollution, greater annual flow volumes in rivers and streams, increased erosion and sedimentation, channel instability, loss of biodiversity, and greater incidence of smog. They are signs that the ability of the air, land and water to absorb the negative impacts of human activities is strained and cannot be sustained over the long term unless fundamental changes are made. Rehabilitation of infrastructure and restoration of natural habitats to address these issues is underway, but these measures are expensive and time consuming.

To help us understand how the watershed might react to changes in land use, environmental management and climate in the future, we undertook a multi-faceted process of analysis and synthesis. This included modelling studies to compare eight potential scenarios, as documented in our *Scenario Modelling and Analysis Report*. The results of this work were combined with an examination of existing conditions and trends in the watershed, a review of

watershed research in other areas, and the best professional judgement of a range of experts in many fields.

What can we expect in future? We discovered that if future development proceeds with current approaches to community design and stormwater management, it will not be possible to maintain current watershed conditions, let alone improve them. If development practices are changed to use the best foreseeable community designs and management techniques, it may be possible to maintain and in some cases enhance current conditions. However many of the new designs and technologies for sustainable urban development are still evolving and being tested so we recommend that where permitted, development should proceed with caution. Evaluation should be undertaken, with extensive and meaningful public consultation, to assess how well watershed objectives and targets are being met and recommend adjustments to development practices when necessary.

Fortunately, the Rouge watershed offers many unique opportunities, including the assembly and renaturalization of lands as part of Rouge Park and the continuation of agriculture on public and private lands. Watershed municipalities are already working to address the negative impacts of existing developments and are among the leaders in promoting sustainable practices. These opportunities provide valuable tools to help address concerns with current watershed conditions, manage impacts from future land use changes and adapt to the uncertainties associated with global climate change.

The pathway to a healthy watershed that emerged from this analysis is based on a comprehensive and inter-dependent set of strategies that will protect and enhance valued resources, regenerate damaged systems, and build more sustainable communities. These strategies encompass three broad themes:

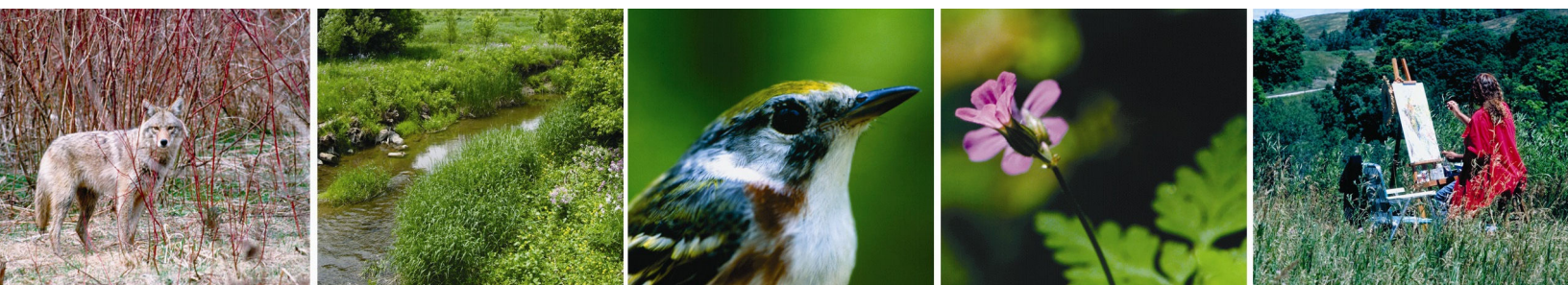
- 1) **Establish the targeted terrestrial natural heritage system:** Figure 5-2 illustrates an expanded natural heritage system that provides multiple benefits, including biodiversity and habitats, water balance maintenance and restoration, opportunities for nature-based recreation, improved quality of life, and greater resilience to urban growth and climate change. It can be accomplished by protecting existing valued assets, securing additional lands, regenerating degraded areas and improving stewardship of public and private lands.
- 2) **Build sustainable communities:** We have identified more sustainable approaches to urban form, infrastructure, transportation and resource use that will contribute to overall improved quality of life. They should be applied to new communities, as well as to the intensification or redevelopment of existing ones. Some of the key features include reduced imperviousness, measures to maintain or restore water balance, design features to facilitate sustainable choices (e.g. energy conservation, reduced vehicle use, support for local agricultural products) and protection and adaptive re-use of cultural heritage features. Development, where permitted, should proceed at a pace and extent that allows sufficient time to adopt, test and evaluate the effectiveness of new technologies and to make adjustments if the results do not meet our objectives and targets for the watershed.
- 3) **Recognize and develop a regional open space system:** The Rouge watershed has the basis for a significant, inter-connected regional open space system including Rouge Park and regional trails, conservation areas and major municipal parks. We recommend that this system be further developed to reach its potential to provide nature-based recreation

experiences for a growing population, support for healthy communities, interpretation of natural and cultural heritage, linkages with local neighbourhoods and connections to surrounding watersheds.

An important prerequisite for action will be to increase awareness among watershed residents, businesses, developers and agencies of the importance of the watershed, its water cycles, natural systems and cultural heritage. We recommend a long-term outreach program to provide information and understanding, explain how people can act on this knowledge, and inspire action. Our social marketing study, *Action Plan for Sustainable Practices*, showed that there is a modest basis of understanding and support for sustainability, but the public needs more specific information, marketing campaigns and assistance to inspire action. It also highlighted a number of issues that reduce opportunities for businesses to adopt sustainable practices, therefore we plan to remove barriers and provide incentives for the business community.

The coordinated efforts of government agencies and community leaders are also crucial to the success of this watershed plan. They have many complementary tools available, including plans and policies, permits and regulations, enforcement, infrastructure operations and maintenance, stewardship and regeneration programs, and education and awareness initiatives. More details about how these existing tools can be used to help implement the watershed plan are provided in the *Implementation Guide*.

We are standing at a crossroads. In one direction lies a future modelled on the past, with continued losses of environmental quality, biodiversity and cultural heritage along with considerable costs to address the health, social and economic consequences of degraded environmental conditions. In the other direction is a future with healthy natural systems and a rich natural and cultural heritage, supporting a higher quality of life for our communities. This plan outlines the key steps to achieve the best possible future for ourselves and our grandchildren. We hope you will support it and become a partner in its implementation.



**Rouge River Watershed Plan
Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future**

Implementation Guide

March 2008

Prepared by: Toronto and Region Conservation



Executive Summary

Introduction

The Rouge River Watershed Plan *Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future* (TRCA, 2007) was prepared by a multi-stakeholder task force to provide effective guidance for the protection and enhancement of the Rouge River watershed. The task force included representatives from all levels of government agencies, private businesses, not-for-profit organizations and the public and was coordinated by TRCA and Rouge Park. The watershed plan is intended to inform and guide municipalities, provincial and federal governments and TRCA as they update their policies and programs for environmental protection, conservation, and restoration within the contexts of land and water use, and the planning of future urban growth. The plan provides direction to local non-governmental organizations and private landowners with regard to best management practices and opportunities for environmental stewardship. To accomplish the management strategies set out in the plan, there will need to be coordinated efforts by a variety of implementing partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this Implementation Guide is to facilitate implementation of the recommendations contained in the Rouge River Watershed Plan *Towards a Healthy and Sustainable Future* (TRCA, 2007). The Guide organizes the watershed plan recommendations according to relevant implementation tools and assembles additional information to inform initial action. The Guide further summarizes a 10 year work plan of implementation projects, within the context of existing programs and likely implementing partners. Like the watershed plan the Implementation Guide is intended to inform and guide the ongoing implementation and development of programs and policies. The proposed projects in the workplan are meant to serve as a basis for discussion. The proposed projects contained in this Guide are intended to serve as a basis for discussion among implementing partners and as a source for the further development of individual partners' own long term work plan and budget preparations.

Strategic Watershed Management Direction

The Rouge River Watershed Plan concludes that the watershed is at a critical crossroads in that it continues to support many unique natural and cultural heritage values, and yet a number of present and anticipated stresses will challenge the ability to sustain this remarkable condition. The watershed plan identifies three integral actions for the protection and enhancement of the watershed:

1. Expand Terrestrial Natural Cover

Create and enhance natural cover in a targeted terrestrial natural heritage system (TNHS). This action is especially important in areas upstream of existing and future urban growth, from a water management and erosion control imperative, and for parts of the target system vulnerable to loss or impact from urban growth, from a habitat biodiversity standpoint. It will also contribute to serving the growing demand for nature-based recreation and provide greater resilience to climate change. Land use policy, regeneration and land securement projects are the primary implementation mechanisms to achieve this set of recommendations.

2. **Build More Sustainable New Communities and Retrofit Older Ones to Improve Their Sustainability**

By improving water management and promoting more sustainable practices overall.

a) *Improve Water Management*

Manage for pre-development water balance (i.e., runoff volume control and maintenance of infiltration) by protecting natural heritage systems, naturalizing urban landscapes, using innovative lot and conveyance level stormwater management technologies, and rainharvesting. This set of actions is critical to water management and the associated health of the aquatic system.

b) *Promote Sustainable Practices Overall*

Facilitate the use of these innovative water management approaches by promoting improved urban form, green buildings and sustainable behaviour, and at the same time address a broad range of other objectives for the sustainable community. Of particular interest is the need to accelerate the shift to the adoption of more sustainable practices – through education/awareness, testing, and demonstrating new technologies. A co-ordinated combination of new policies, “retrofit” type regeneration projects, improved operations and maintenance programs, stewardship/education, and monitoring initiatives will be necessary.

3. **Recognize and Develop a Regional Open Space System**

Further develop the regional open space system to support the growing population and healthy communities by improving accessibility to trails, interpretation and celebration of natural and cultural heritage. Distinctive urban wilderness experiences of Rouge Park and countryside experiences are offered in the Rouge watershed. Cultural heritage features and landscapes are increasingly playing a role in recreation (e.g., rural heritage settings, adaptive re-use of heritage buildings). Active and participatory education programs were identified as a strategic means of engaging the public and raising awareness of these issues and several regeneration capital works initiatives have been identified to address this set of recommendations.

Top Priority Implementation Projects

This Implementation Guide identifies a 10 year work plan of implementation projects addressing all recommendations of the watershed plan, and organized according to primary implementation mechanisms:

- Policy;
- Regeneration;
- Land securement;
- Stewardship and education;
- Operations and maintenance;
- Enforcement; and
- Monitoring.

The following list of top priority implementation projects has been selected with consideration for their collective ability to address the three integral actions noted above, in an expeditious and mutually supportive way. They are not listed in any particular order. The reference numbers in brackets (i.e., 1-8) are the respective project numbers, as listed in the implementation work plan tables within the Guide, where additional information is provided.

Policy and Policy Related Special Studies

1. Municipalities should work with TRCA to investigate ways to incorporate the following **new policy directions** into their planning documents (see Table 1.1 for details) (1-1):
 - a) Identify a **targeted terrestrial natural heritage system**, based on the system recommended in the watershed plan, and adopt policies to protect and restore natural cover.
 - b) Manage for pre-development **water balance** (i.e., reduce excess runoff volume, maintain or restore natural levels of infiltration and evaporation) with particular emphasis on areas identified as **locally significant recharge**.
 - c) Develop strategies and policies to promote **sustainable urban form**, including sustainable infrastructure, transportation and resource use.
 - d) Conduct **Master Environmental Servicing Plans** (MESPs) in a subwatershed context to establish the environmental features, functions and linkages as part of the growth planning process.
 - e) Recognize the **regional open space system** and the distinctive natural and cultural heritage that provides a basis for recreational experiences.
 - f) Conduct **comprehensive flood risk assessment plans** where intensification is proposed in a flood vulnerable area and/or a Special Policy Area.
 - g) Support **stormwater retrofits** in existing developments and redevelopment projects.
 - h) Adopt policy to implement the Greater Golden Horseshoe Conservation Authorities' **Erosion and Sediment Control** Guideline for Urban Construction and update municipal Erosion and Sediment Control by-laws and Fill by-laws as necessary.
 - i) Adopt policy to recognize and implement the Rouge River Watershed Based **Fisheries Management Plan**.
 - j) Support **updated and expanded monitoring** programs, including ambient monitoring, requirements for pre-development baseline monitoring, and the promotion and testing of new technologies and their cumulative watershed effects.
2. ORM Municipalities – recognize the Rouge River Watershed Plan in their official plans, as required by the **Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan** (ORMCP) (1-7).
3. MPIR, MMAH, municipalities, TRCA, AMO, CO, BILD - should establish **development standards for sustainable community design** for application to new development proposals or urban expansions, consistent with the special recognition in the Greenbelt Plan for the Rouge Park and its watershed (1-3).
4. TRCA, municipalities and other approval agencies - Develop a strategy/procedure for **streamlining approvals for innovative designs** (1-4).
5. TRCA, BILD, municipality - Promote a **sustainable greenfield neighbourhood demonstration project** (1-5).

6. TRCA – Undertake a **continuous simulation** and event-based **hydrologic modelling** pilot study to determine the most conservative approach to sizing SWM ponds for flood control in future growth areas (1-11).
7. TRCA, municipalities- Undertake a scoped **economic assessment** of the implications of implementing the watershed plan’s integral recommendations, including valuation of ecosystems services, preparation of a methodology for applying the net gain approach, and development of recommendations for applying fairness and equity in implementation (1-18).

Regeneration

1. All partners – **Increase natural cover**: 1) in Rouge Park - implement existing restoration plans; 2) in Whitebelt - prepare restoration implementation plans for the NHS identified in municipal plans and co-ordinate with developers; and 3) in Headwaters - prepare restoration implementation plans and implement prior to urban development (2-1,2,3).
2. TRCA, municipalities – Develop **sustainable neighbourhood retrofit action plans** (2-6).
3. TRCA, Rouge Park, municipalities – Undertake detailed planning and develop a long term funding strategy to implement the Rouge watershed **inter-regional trails network** (2-12).
4. TRCA, Rouge Park, Whitchurch-Stouffville – Develop a **Northern Countryside recreation strategy** (2-13).
5. Ministry of Culture and partners – Establish a facility for **storage of archaeological artifacts** and document collections that is accessible to researchers; secure funding for capital and operations (2-15).

Land Securement

1. TRCA and Rouge Park – update priority list for land securement within the Rouge watershed based on the Rouge Watershed Plan’s recommended priorities within the TNHS (3-1).
2. TRCA, municipalities and Rouge Park - Work with MPIR to investigate mechanisms, as may be necessary beyond planning measures, to **secure the targeted TNHS lands in the “whitebelt”** that do not have any legislated protection (3-2).

Stewardship and Education

1. TRCA and municipalities – Deliver **technology transfer workshops, seminars and materials** for sustainable technologies, erosion and sediment control, and sustainable urban form (4-1,2,7,8).
2. TRCA, municipalities and others – Develop a co-ordinated program to **accelerate implementation of lot level retrofits** by the business and residential and institutional sectors (4-11, 4-16, 2-6, 5-10).
3. TRCA, Rouge Park, MNR, Community groups, municipalities, Co-ordinate the development of educational materials on **invasive species removal** techniques and engage volunteer groups to help in monitoring and removal (4-14).
4. Municipalities, utilities, TRCA – Develop an outreach program based on the results from the Renewable Energy Road Map to promote the **uptake of renewable energy technologies** (4-26).

5. TRCA – Encourage all schools in the watershed to achieve Ontario Ecoschools Program certification (4-27).
6. Rouge Park – Implement the **Rouge Park Interpretive Plan** (4-30).
7. TRCA and others – Develop a pilot project for Ontario **history and archaeology seminars for adults**, featuring Rouge sites. Special attention to reaching out to new Canadians and descendents of past peoples of the watershed as target audience (4-40).
8. TRCA, municipalities, Aboriginal groups - Develop a communications plan in partnership with Aboriginal groups. (4-48).
9. GTA Agricultural Action Committee - Provide profile and **recognition for** institution, restaurants and businesses that feature **local food** selections (4-53).

Operations and Maintenance

1. Municipalities – Conduct assessments of **sediment accumulation in SWM ponds** and develop a prioritized list of clean out projects. (5-1).
2. Municipalities, TRCA – Develop guidelines for design and establishment of municipal **SWM facility maintenance programs**, including monitoring, rehabilitation and financing mechanisms (5-2, 3, 4).
3. TRCA, Town of Markham – Prepare **flood emergency response plan** for SPAs, including an inventory of hazards, prioritization, and emergency response protocol (5-24).
4. TRCA – Undertake a **flood risk reduction study** to improve the hydraulic capacity of road and rail crossings in flood vulnerable areas (e.g., Markham (Unionville) Special Policy Area) (5-22).
5. TRCA – Track advances in the prediction of climate change and reassess local flood risks and management measures (5-25).

Enforcement

1. Various agencies, municipalities - Develop **interjurisdictional compliance protocols** for poaching (wildlife), erosion and sediment control, tree cutting, topsoil and land disturbance, dumping, trespassing, and encroachment). Identify gaps in regulatory capability and capacity. Identify options for addressing gaps. Develop resources and implementation plan (6-2).

Monitoring

1. TRCA and partners - Identify technologies that show promise and monitor their performance using **Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP)** – i.e. Rainwater collection and re-use, permeable pavement, groundwater and soil contamination risk with infiltration technologies, and long term performance and maintenance costs of any green technology (7-1, 7-2).
2. TRCA and partners - Launch **cumulative effects monitoring** program for innovative development design (7-6).

3. TRCA, municipalities- Review recommendations for additional monitoring in the Rouge watershed as part of the 5 year review and **update of the Regional Watershed Monitoring Network (RWMN)**. Priorities include specific recommendations for additional monitoring of precipitation, stream flow, fluvial geomorphology, groundwater, and aquatic systems (7-8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22).
4. Volunteers, TRCA - Develop a **volunteer based detection program for aquatic invasive species** (i.e., Round goby, rusty crayfish). See also stewardship section re terrestrial invasive alien species (7-25).
5. Municipalities – Develop and implement a program to **monitor trail use and participation rates** in other related recreational activities (7-29).

Tracking progress

TRCA is proposing to convene an annual multi-stakeholder forum to report on progress at implementing the watershed plan and update priorities for the coming year. Meetings will be held with municipal staff and other key stakeholders 2-3 times per year to plan and discuss follow up from the forum. Particular attention will be given to the status of top priority implementation projects set out in the workplan. Changes and trends in the watershed conditions will be monitored under the Regional Watershed Monitoring Network and reported on a regular basis through publication of a watershed report card.