

Public input sought on TRCA's resource management tract

The public is encouraged to learn about the evolution of a vital natural resource.

The Nashville Resource Management Tract (NRMT) is owned by TRCA and is approximately 720 hectares in size. The property is located in King Township (203 hectares) and the City of Vaughan (608 hectares). It is found within the Humber River Watershed. The property is bordered by King Road to the north, Nashville Road to the south, Albion-Vaughan Road to the west and Highway 27 to the east.

NRMT is a diverse site containing many different habitat types such as upland forests, bottomland forests, meadows, former agricultural fields and wetlands. The property supports a variety of wildlife, provides significant deer wintering yards and is an important migratory corridor. Because of its large size, as well as its current and future ecological value, the NRMT is an integral part of TRCA's natural heritage system.

Last year, TRCA re-initiated the management plan process for the NRMT. The objective of the management planning process is to develop a plan for the NRMT property that protects the natural environment while exploring its potential for nature-based recreation. Currently, TRCA has completed two out of three phases required to complete the management plan. Phase one and two were responsible for developing a background report, determining management zones and creating a plan vision and goals for the property.

Phase three of the project will finalize the trail plan, develop the management plan document and ultimately obtain approval of the plan from the public and the TRCA board.

As part of the Nashville Management Plan, TRCA has partnered with members from the public to develop a trail plan for the area. The trail plan complements the overall management plan for the Nashville Tract and offers guidelines for the development of an integrated trail system through the property. The plan includes local loop trails within Nashville as well as interregional connections to connect communities such as Nobleton, Kleinburg and Bolton. The trail systems are designed to accommodate a variety of different users and therefore offer different trail types, lengths and difficulties.

This plan aims to develop a trail network that allows visitors to travel through the park and to access public use areas and facilities while protecting and promoting awareness of the unique natural and cultural features of the NRMT.

The objectives are to connect the NRMT trails to local and regional trail systems; provide at least one universal access trail (accessible trail); provide trails that can also serve as wildlife access routes and natural linkages; promote limited and passive public uses that have minimal negative environmental impacts; protect the environment by implementing sensitive trail design solutions. TRCA established staff and public committees. The Public Advisory Committee was made up of representatives from community groups, agencies, local stakeholders, and area residents and landowners. The committees were provided with a terms of reference document that was used to guide the contributions of the two committees throughout the development of the management plan. TRCA staff prepared the management plan with guidance from the steering and advisory committees as well as input from a public consultation process.

Locals involved in the process included King Township and the King Environmental Advisory Committee.

The advisory committee members played an integral role in developing goals, plans and management recommendations for the NRMT. The committee provided direction and comments throughout the various stages of the process. TRCA staff have prepared the management plan with guidance from the steering and advisory committees as well as input from a public consultation process. The advisory committee just recently approved the draft trail plan.

"There are many astounding natural features on the site and we are really excited to share it with the community," said Adam Dembe, senior technician TRCA.

The public sessions will be held Monday, Oct. 21 at the Nobleton Arena, at 7 p.m. Another meeting will be held Oct. 22 at the Albion-Bolton Community Centre Auditorium in Bolton at 7 p.m.

For more, contact Dembe, 416-661-6600, ext. 5939, adembe@trca.on.ca or visit www.trca.on.ca.