



Possibility grows here.

Greenbelt Foundation

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GREENBELT FOUNDATION BACKGROUNDER

Rivers for Resilience Videos

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Overview

Healthy river valleys provide Ontario communities with clean drinking water and cool oases during hot summer months, minimize flood risks, and provide critical habitat for southern Ontario's 78 species at risk.

In 2017, the Greenbelt Foundation was instrumental in having **21 urban river valleys designated as Greenbelt-protected waterways**, ensuring the Greater Golden Horseshoe's most important sources of fresh water remain protected. But the ongoing sustainability of these ecosystems relies on the dedicated stewardship of community groups and volunteers.

In March of 2018, the Greenbelt Foundation partnered with Park People to create the Greenbelt River Valley Connector Program in order to engage Ontario residents and add value to their local river valleys.

Greenbelt River Valley Connector Program

From 2018-2020, the Greenbelt River Valley Connector Program engaged and connected residents with their local Greenbelt-protected river valleys through community-based outreach, stewardship, and education. The program, which was comprised of grants given out over three years, supported local leaders and community partners in providing nature-based programming of urban river valleys, restores their ecological health, educates the public on them, and enhances public enjoyment of them.

The final culmination of the program was the [production of three videos](#), which illuminate the unique importance of these river valleys, the benefits they provide to local residents, and the work being done to protect them.

See lower down for a profile of three of the urban river valley stewards who spoke in the videos.

The Greenbelt's 21 Urban River Valleys

The 21 Greenbelt-protected urban river valleys flow from the headwaters in the Greenbelt's Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment (among other headwaters), through Canada's most developed region

and into Lake Ontario, providing a protected source of clean drinking water to seven million Canadians, and a natural refuge and migration corridor for endangered species.

The 21 Greenbelt-protected urban river valleys are:

- Credit River
- Rouge River
- Don River
- Humber River
- Etobicoke Creek
- Duffins Creek
- Twelve Mile Creek
- Fifty Creek
- Grindstone Creek
- Bronte Creek
- Fourteen Mile Creek
- Oshawa Creek
- Sixteen Mile Creek
- Lynde Creek
- Graham Creek
- Carruthers Creek
- Farewell Creek
- Harmony Creek
- Soper Creek
- Wilmot Creek

Stewards of our Urban River Valleys

The Greenbelt River Valley Connector Program has supported many groups and organizations who provide ongoing engagement and restoration programs that benefit the Greenbelt's 21 Urban River Valleys. Some of the key stewards profiled in the videos are below.

EcoSpark

EcoSpark is an environmental charity connecting people to their local natural environment through education, monitoring and stewardship. Operating since 1996, EcoSpark has developed a reputation as a community leader in local engagement, education, citizen science and collaboration. The EcoSpark mission is to empower communities to take an active role in protecting and sustaining their local environments. We do this by giving people tools for education, monitoring and influencing positive change.

"Through citizen science, EcoSpark leads students and community members on a journey to discover the beauty of nature, act through stewardship projects, and inspire change by sharing information about the health of the world around us."

--Holli Campbell, Environmental Education Coordinator, EcoSpark

Riverwood Conservancy

The Riverwood Conservancy (TRC) is a volunteer and member-based charity that provides programs and services focused on environmental education, conservation, gardening, and horticulture. We invite individuals and families to explore this natural space in the heart of Mississauga and take advantage of our range of programs and activities. Founded in 1985 as the Mississauga Garden Council, today The Riverwood Conservancy works with like-minded groups and individuals to enable people of all cultures, ages, and abilities to respectfully connect with nature and learn about the importance of protecting and experiencing the beauty of Riverwood.

The Riverwood Conservancy is the charity that provides programs and direction for Riverwood – the 150-acre, urban nature preserve situated on the shores of the Credit River in Mississauga. Working



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together with like-minded groups and individuals, our mission is to enable people of all cultures, ages, and abilities to respectfully connect with nature and learn about the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring natural spaces for the well-being of future generations – all while experiencing the beauty of the Riverwood gardens.

"Preserving our urban river valleys is essential to the health of both people and wildlife, and the efforts of The Riverwood Conservancy's volunteers are pivotal in our conservation projects. With the help of our diverse community of volunteers, we continue to protect our local ecosystems, and offer opportunities for people of all cultures, ages, and abilities to connect with nature."

--Derek Stone, Conservation and Program Manager, Riverwood Conservancy

Evergreen

Cities that are low carbon, inclusive to all and sustainable at their core. Cities to live, move, work, play, learn and thrive in. Since 1991, we've been facilitating change. Working with other city builders to convene, collaborate and catalyze ideas into action. Our teams connect with many stakeholders to lead with a mindset focused on solutions. We collaborate to develop innovative ideas and catalyze change by testing solutions, developing prototypes and scaling projects.

Through our award-winning suite of programs, we have actively engaged Canadians in creating and sustaining healthy urban environments in our schools, our public spaces, in housing and transit systems, and communities themselves. Flourishing cities start here – at a site, in a neighbourhood, on the ground – where spaces become great places, and have a real and lasting impact, creating a better world for all.

"For over 30 years, Evergreen has been deeply connected to the ravines, engaging with the community through hikes, rides, public markets, stewardship efforts, and public art installation. We have experienced first-hand how the urban ravine system plays a vital role in city life and that the work to protect, maintain, and improve one of Ontario's biggest assets is a group effort."

--Orit Sarfaty, Chief Program Officer, Evergreen

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