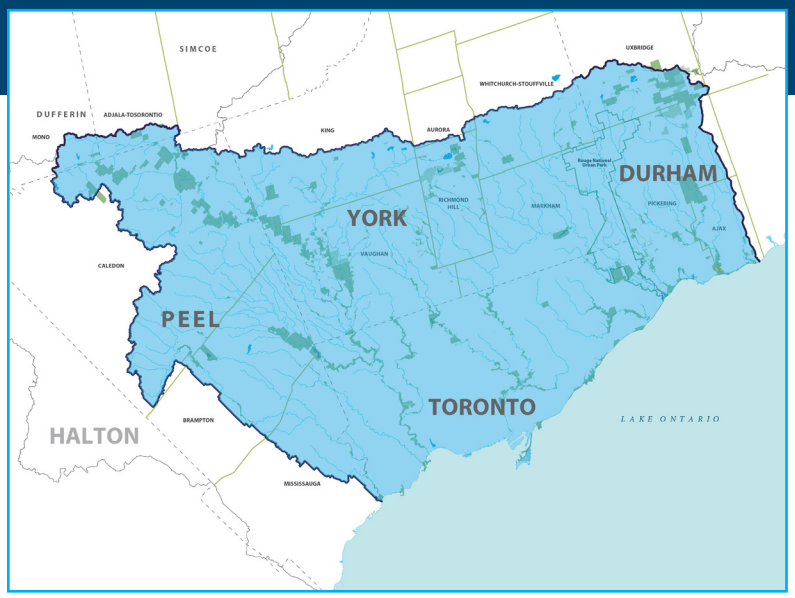
TRCA WIDE

FLOOD AND EROSION SERVICES

Watercourse Debris Management Response Program



OVERVIEW

TRCA manages hundreds of kilometres of natural watercourses across its jurisdiction, many of which now experience significantly increased debris accumulation due to ongoing urbanization. This buildup creates community and environmental risks, including elevated flooding and erosion hazards, navigation blockages, and barriers to migrating fish. To proactively protecte treasured ravine systems and address these issues, TRCA requires a dedicated debris management response program capable of assessing, documenting, tracking, and mitigating debris blockages. The program will include a centralized intake system for public and municipal requests, GIS-enabled field tools and database development, and dedicated staff capacity to support timely evaluation and mitigation.

OBJECTIVES

To establish the first-of-its kind data-driven debris management program that enables coordinated and timely identification and mitigation of blockages, reducing flood and erosion risks, protecting infrastructure, and improving aquatic habitat. Partner investment strengthens public safety, enhances environmental health, and supports more efficient municipal and TRCA operations across the region.

BENEFITING STAKEHOLDERS

- Municipal Partners
- Residents and property owners in flood-prone areas
- Emergency response services
- Utility and infrastructure operators
- Environmental regulators
- Visitors and trail users

EXPECTED IMPACT

A fully implemented debris management response program that provides consistent monitoring, rapid mitigation actions, improved watercourse stability, and reduced emergency callouts leading to safer communities, healthier waterways, and more resilient natural infrastructure.

BUDGET & FUNDING

Estimated Total Cost ($000's): $1M

Possible Funding Sources:

- Provincial hazard management funding
- Federal public safety funding

OWNERSHIP

- TRCA, Municipal Partners, Province of Ontario

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KEY PRIORITIES

Establish a Centralized Intake and Triage System

High Priority

Create a unified reporting mechanism for municipalities, residents, partners, and TRCA staff to submit debris concerns. This ensures issues are captured consistently, prioritized objectively, and routed efficiently for action.

Implement Standardized Assessment and Risk Protocols

High Priority

Deploy consistent field assessment criteria to evaluate debris hazards - flooding, erosion, habitat disruption - to support transparent prioritization and timely intervention.

Reduce Emergency Callouts through Proactive Maintenance

Shift from reactive clean-ups to a planned, preventative approach - reducing municipal emergency response burden, lowering long-term maintenance costs and proactively adressing future erosion risk possibilities.

KEY DATES

- **Possible Start:** 2026
- **Duration:** 1-2 year to implement, annual program afterwards

RISKS IF UNFUNDED

Environmental: Increased flood and erosion risks, unsafe conditions with community impacts (housing, trails), continued aquatic habitat degrataion impacting migratory fish.

Financial / Economic: Higher long-term costs due to reactionary measures in light of increased storm intensities, higher liability exposure for both TRCA, municipal partners, residents and private landowners (i.e. utility and infrastructure operators).

Deferred Action Risk: Delaying a system-wide approach results in ongoing piecemeal responses that are inefficient and ineffective. The sediment buildup and outlet deterioration that continue until addressed holistically make restoration more complex and costly. Postponing action also results in loss of data and fragmented understanding of flood and erosion risk.

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