



TORONTO

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

# The Village at Black Creek Indigenous Engagement and Placemaking



## Amarok Wolf

Wolves feature prominently in Inuit myths, showcasing their intelligence, social structure, and survival skills. Inuit stories highlight respectful human-wolf encounters and the boundaries between species. Wolves communicate through unique vocalizations, body language, and scent marking, with each pack's distinctive howl audible up to 16 kilometers away!

Once the shaman was a wolf, but then she almost starved to death until one of the wolves took compassion on her and said, "Go a good hold of the ground with your claws and try to keep up with us when we run". She did this from then on and so she learned to run and catch caribou.

Please do not climb me!

## OVERVIEW

This initiative expands Indigenous leadership, presence, and storytelling at Black Creek Pioneer Village by supporting the development of Indigenous led exhibits, installations, and programming. Funding will support key positions, including an Indigenous Engagement Supervisor, Coordinator, and Indigenous Education Interpreters, along with a Collections Coordinator to steward Indigenous artifacts in partnership with TRCA archaeologists.

## OBJECTIVES

Expanding Indigenous led programming at Black Creek will deepen authentic representation, strengthen relationships with Indigenous Nations, and enhance public understanding. The initiative builds sustained capacity for Indigenous interpretation, exhibits, and collections care. The objective is to embed Indigenous perspectives throughout the site and ensure respectful stewardship of collections and stories.

## BENEFITTING STAKEHOLDERS

- Residents of Toronto and surrounding regions
- Toronto Region tourism
- Indigenous artists, cultural heritage professionals, and community members
- Residents of local Neighbourhood Improvement Areas benefiting from increased use of local services

## EXPECTED IMPACT

- Indigenous cultural heritage is preserved and promoted through exhibits and artifact digitization
- Indigenous and equity-deserving communities are engaged in exhibits, programming and the future of The Village.
- New employment opportunities for Indigenous artists, cultural heritage professionals and students
- Increased tourism and visitor spending in an underserved area of Toronto

## BUDGET & FUNDING

**Estimated Total Cost (\$000's): \$7.5M**

- Indigenous History Exhibit: one-time, two-year duration: \$250 annually
- Annual Programming & Engagement: \$500 annually: staffing of Indigenous cultural heritage professionals, services & supplies

### Possible Funding Sources:

- City of Toronto, corporate sponsors, private donors

## OWNERSHIP

TRCA owns and operates The Village at Black Creek.



## KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES TO DATE

### Indigenous History Exhibit

High Priority



Design and installation, guided by five First Nations.

Work to Date: Exhibit concept plan completed and approved by First Nations advisory committee.

### Indigenous Staffing & Programming

High Priority



Hire Indigenous staff and interpreters to support programming.

Work to Date: Indigenous artists regularly animate the site.

### Collections Care

Medium Priority



Digitize and preserve artifacts for public access.

Work to Date: Archival and oral history research completed.

## RISKS IF UNFUNDED

**Social:** Indigenous history remains absent from exhibits and programs at The Village. Relevance of The Village is questioned, leading to declining visitation.

**Financial / Economic:** Loss of tourism revenue and sponsorship opportunities. Future costs for exhibits and artifact care will increase.

**Deferred Action Risk:** Delays jeopardize Indigenous story integration. Collections remain inaccessible, and heritage artifacts risk deterioration.

## FUNDING BENEFITS

Funding partners advance reconciliation in a tangible way by supporting Indigenous leadership, education, and cultural revitalization. Communities benefit from more inclusive storytelling, enhanced cultural understanding, and stronger relationships with Indigenous Nations. The initiative elevates Black Creek as a model for respectful, community driven heritage interpretation.



## KEY DATES

- Ongoing

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Wendy Rowney, Senior Manager,  
Community Outreach and Education  
[Wendy.Rowney@trca.ca](mailto:Wendy.Rowney@trca.ca)