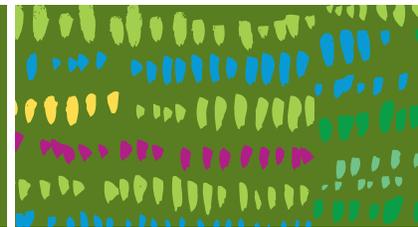




**Phase 2 – 2023 Annual Progress Report
January 1 – December 31, 2023**



A program of:



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Project Overview & Progress Summary

It began in 2012 with an idea: Why not rethink the under-utilized space beneath a hydro corridor and repurpose the turf grass into a thriving meadow?

Supporting The Meadoway Vision

The Meadoway is an innovative city building initiative that will provide a naturalized link between Rouge National Urban Park and downtown Toronto, stitching together over 15 parks and greenspaces, 7 watercourses, employment centres, and transportation hubs across 34 neighbourhoods in Scarborough. This multi-use trail network will enhance the connectivity of the existing urban fabric, which will be complemented by meadow restoration and opportunities for recreational spaces, and more. In addition to the revitalization of the 16 km corridor, the project seeks to build meaningful community engagement and educational opportunities that will facilitate an increased sense of community pride and ownership of this important natural connection.

To help realize the vision and overarching objectives of The Meadoway, on April 11, 2018, the Weston Family Foundation announced a pledge of up to \$25 million to support the project, with a firm commitment of \$10 million to help deliver the Phase 1 activities between 2018 to 2022. An additional \$1.348 million of bridge funding was secured by the Weston Family Foundation during Phase 1, allowing for the continuation of the meadow restoration program and strategic implementation of the multi-use trail.

In May 2023, the Weston Family Foundation committed another grant of \$6.332 million over 2023 to 2025 to support the second phase of the project, realizing \$17.68 million of their \$25 million pledge to The Meadoway. Key objectives in Phase 2 include the continued build-out of the multi-use trail network and supporting public realm infrastructure, completing the remaining meadow restoration works, ongoing adaptive management and monitoring of the corridor, and delivery of the education and community outreach program.

SECTION 1 - BEFORE



SECTION 1 - AFTER



Summary of Phase 2 Progress through 2023

TRCA hit the ground running in 2023, with significant advances made in all Phase 2 delivery areas. An expanded restoration crew prepared and seeded almost 20 ha of hydro corridor and added Section 5 into the adaptive management plan, which now encompasses a total of 110 ha. As a result, restoration of the full 16 km corridor is now complete, apart from a few small remaining areas to be restored in parallel with trail construction activities in 2024.

Active transportation and connections also reached a major milestone in 2023, with the grand opening of the first major trail gap to be filled since The Meadowway launched in 2018. Section 5 at Highland Creek now adds an additional 2 km of paved multi-use trail to the existing network and provides a new connection to the recently completed Upper Highland Creek Pan Am Path, a critical trail system that routes users south through Morningside Park to Lake Ontario. Significant progress was also made on improving safety and accessibility for users, including the finalized plan for wayfinding across the entire corridor, the allocation of funds to execute a piloted wayfinding program in Section 5 in 2024, and the completion of centreline and logo painting for almost 3 km of trail in Section 7, connecting Conlins Road to Rouge National Urban Park. Building off the award-winning Visualization Toolkit for The Meadowway, design development of a family of public realm furniture has also been advanced in 2023, positioning TRCA to begin implementing these elements in 2024 and beyond.

In preparation for 2024, detailed design and tender ready plans for Section 3 and 6 (Part 1) trail gaps were finalized and an approved contractor was hired through a successful competitive procurement process to implement Section 6 in the new year.

The Meadowway Education and Community Outreach Team engaged over 1,000 students and teachers as part of Meadowway specific curriculum-linked education programs, spanning Grade 1 up to College level classes. For new Canadians, over 100 English as a Second Language learners were engaged in collaboration with a number of different education initiatives, including Toronto District School Board Essential Skills Upgrade and TRCA's Newcomer Youth Green Economy programs. At the community level, four public events were hosted across the 16 km corridor engaging local residents in tree plantings, litter clean ups, guided hikes, and citizen-science programs utilizing the help of over 30 volunteers.

As TRCA wraps up the first year of Phase 2 and looks ahead to 2024, The Meadowway is well positioned to continue delivering on its core objectives, including completion of meadow habitat establishment and transition to long-term adaptive management, continued delivery of critical gaps in the trail network, and ongoing outreach and engagement that fosters the goal of community powered greenspaces.



SECTION 5 - BEFORE



SECTION 5 - AFTER







MEADOW REVITALIZATION

What a year TRCA meadow restoration staff have had working to increase meadow habitat throughout the 16 km stretch of The Meadoway and adaptively manage the ever-changing meadows that are already in place. Field crews have done an amazing job looking after the existing meadows and adaptively managing invasive species that present a continuous challenge within the corridor. The restoration team has been active in leading guided walks, tours and helping to educate practitioners and the public on the benefits of meadow restoration.

TRCA’s terrestrial monitoring teams have also completed multiple rounds of analysis in the field to identify birds, butterflies, and flora within The Meadoway and will be working this fall to create the 2023 monitoring report based off the data collected from the spring through to the fall.

TABLE 1 : THE MEADOWAY RESTORATION DELIVERABLES - JANUARY TO NOVEMBER 2023

Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 (123 ha)	Size/Quantity
Buffer Mowing - Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7	42 ha
Invasive Species - Sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7	111 ha
Maintenance Mowing	4 ha late summer (Reduced maintenance mow in spring due to low levels of thatch build up –No areas were mowed in the spring due to this-fall maintenance mow will be 4 ha in total).
Section 3 and 6 Site Prep (for fall native meadow seeding)	17 ha prepared in 2023 –Total area 19 ha but remaining 2 ha of meadow will be seeded in 2024 when trail implementation is completed in both sections.
Section 3 and 6 Native Meadow Seeding	17 ha seeded in fall 2023, Total area 19 ha but remaining 2 ha will be completed spring/fall 2024
Garbage Collection	4345 kg
Monitoring (Completed May to September)	
Monitoring Plots 1m x 1m (Section 5)	14 plots
Monitoring Plots 20m x 20m	29 plots
Bird Transects	13 transects
Butterfly Transects	12 transects

The meadow restoration crew expanded again in 2023, with an on-site staff compliment of 13 to manage the increasing restoration footprint which grew with the addition of 17 ha of new meadow habitat. Site preparation has been ongoing from May through November in Sections 3 and 6 to prepare to seed these areas in late fall or early winter. The crew continued to adaptively manage 111 ha within Sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7, including invasive management, buffer mowing, maintenance mowing, and garbage cleanups.

Research	
<p>University of Waterloo and Trent University: Rebecca Rooney and Autumn Watkinson Funded by Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada Funded</p>	<p>Funding was secured for a multi-year research project that will include multiple student research positions (2024-2026). Goals of the research include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify restoration methods that support the creation of diverse and resilient meadow habitat; 2. quantify the outcomes of meadow restoration for butterflies and their plant associates; 3. measure the net benefits of turfgrass to meadow restoration in terms of climate adaptation (via urban heat stress) and mitigation (via enhanced soil carbon storage); and 4. determine the potential for Urban Greenspace enhancement of utility corridors nationally.
<p>University of Toronto: Scott McIvor Lab MSC and PhD research projects</p>	<p>MITACS funding was secured for 2 projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of invasive plant management on urban plant-pollinator interactions • Assessing the effect of mowing practices on stem-dwelling arthropod assemblages in an urban conservation project <p>Additional ongoing research in The Meadoway included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germination potential after cutting of invasive thistle • Invasive seed bank effects on meadow establishment <p>Research has continued throughout the field season in 2023, and analyses of findings are expected to be completed in 2024.</p>



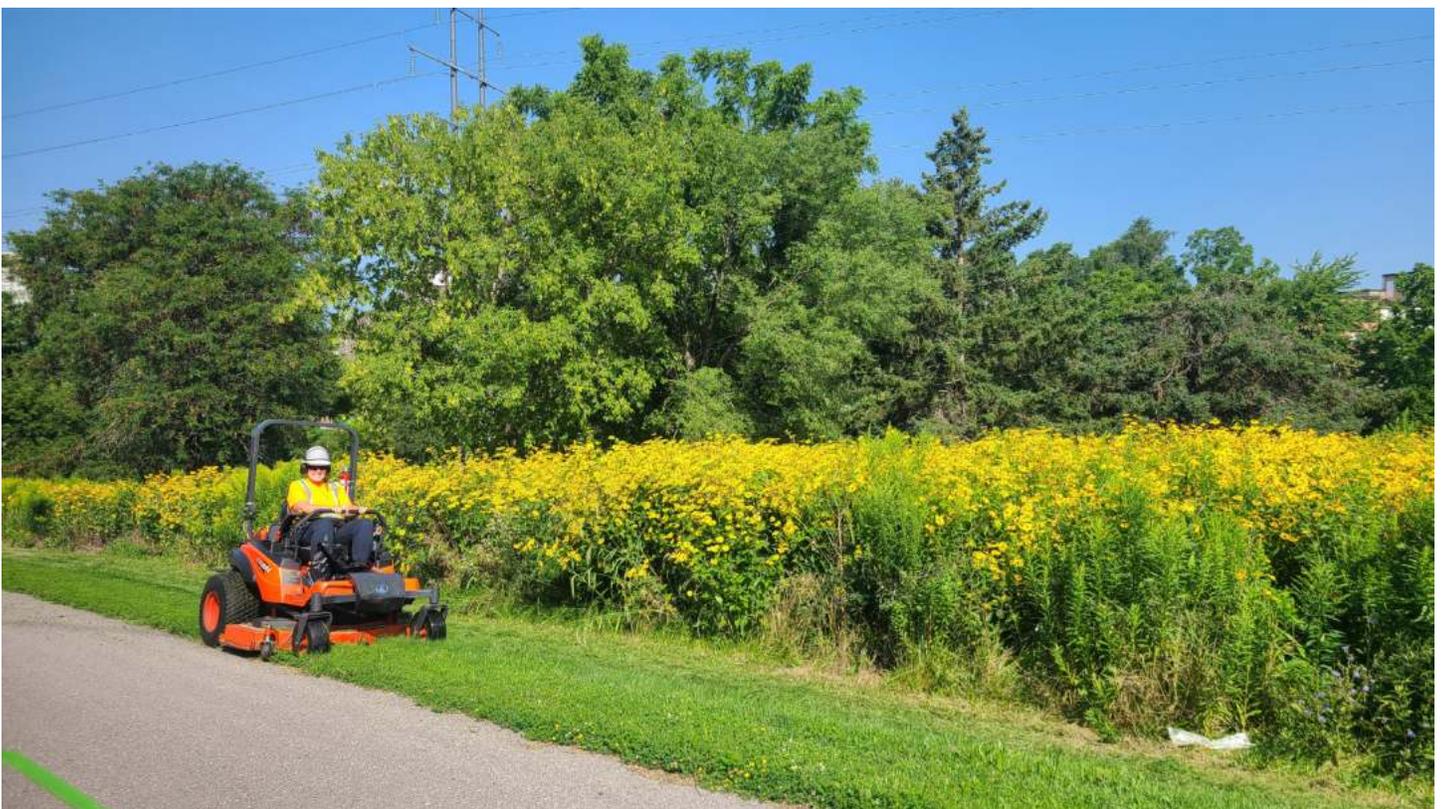
Section 1

area - 15 ha, meadow footprint - 10 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Seven rounds of buffer mowing and trimming around meadow/fence line.
- Continuous invasive species management.
- Native species overseeding/enhancement.
- Terrestrial monitoring plots, bird and butterfly transects.
- Preparation for The Meadowway entrance garden, including archaeological screening in late fall.



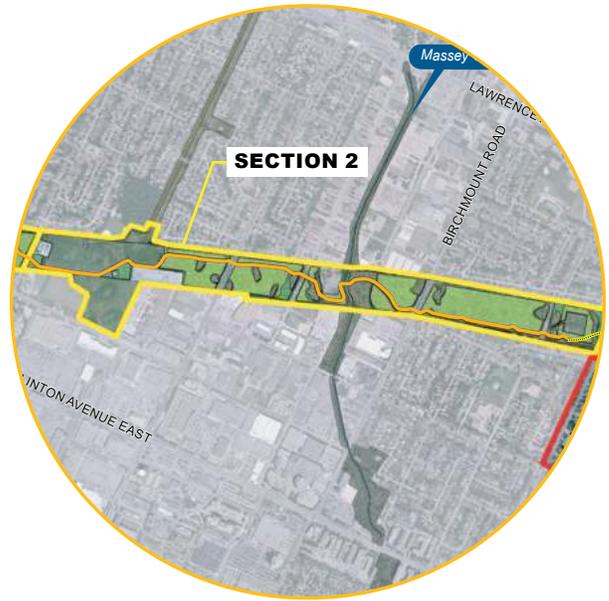


Section 2

area - 29 ha, meadow footprint - 20 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Maintenance mow to encourage greater sunlight penetration, split between winter and fall.
- Seven rounds of buffer mowing and trimming around meadow/fence line.
- Continuous invasive species management.
- Terrestrial monitoring plots, bird and butterfly transects.
- University of Toronto research program on bees.





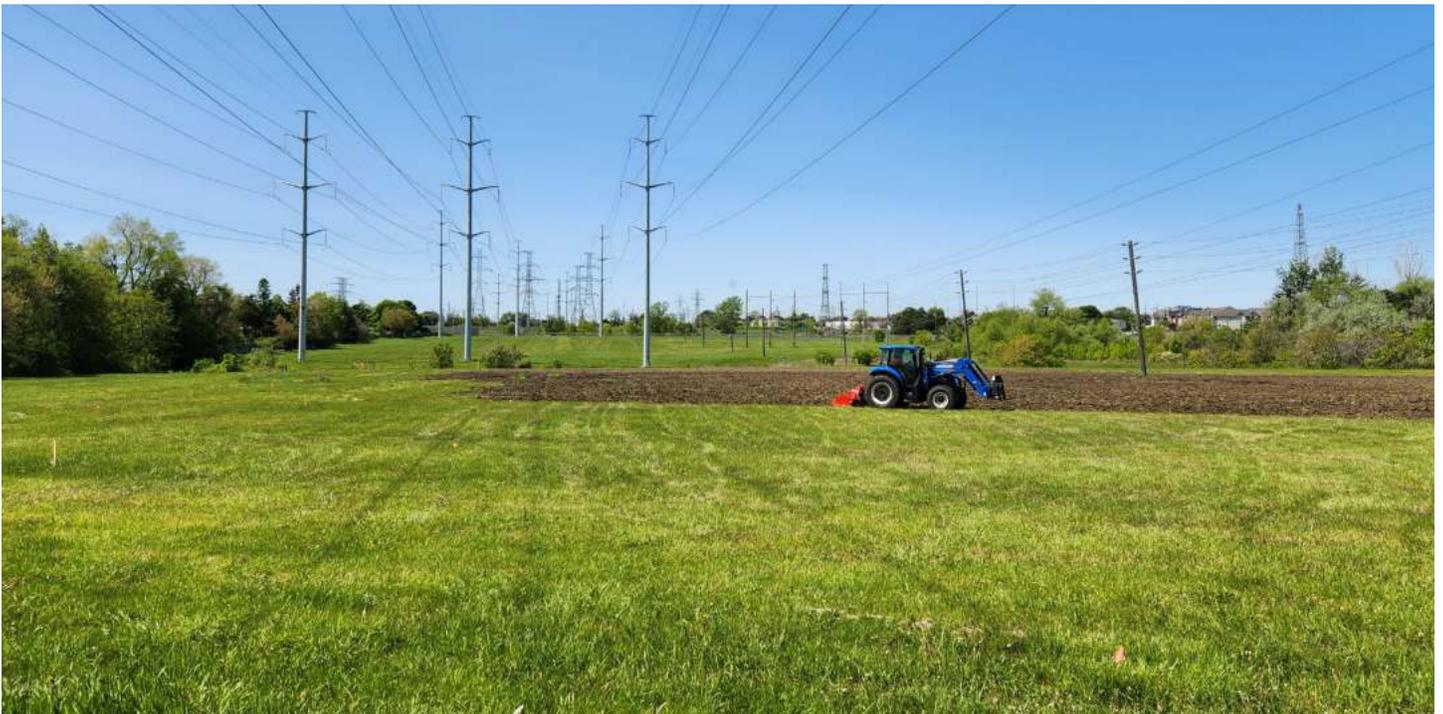
Section 3

area - 18 ha, meadow footprint - 11 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Marking out Section 3 work area footprint.
- Securing utility locates.
- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Trimming and clearing of tree branches that create hazards and promote invasive species.
- Stump removal to reduce hazards.
- Completed four rounds of site preparation.
- Adaptive management for invasive species.
- Prepared shrub node areas for infill of plant material.



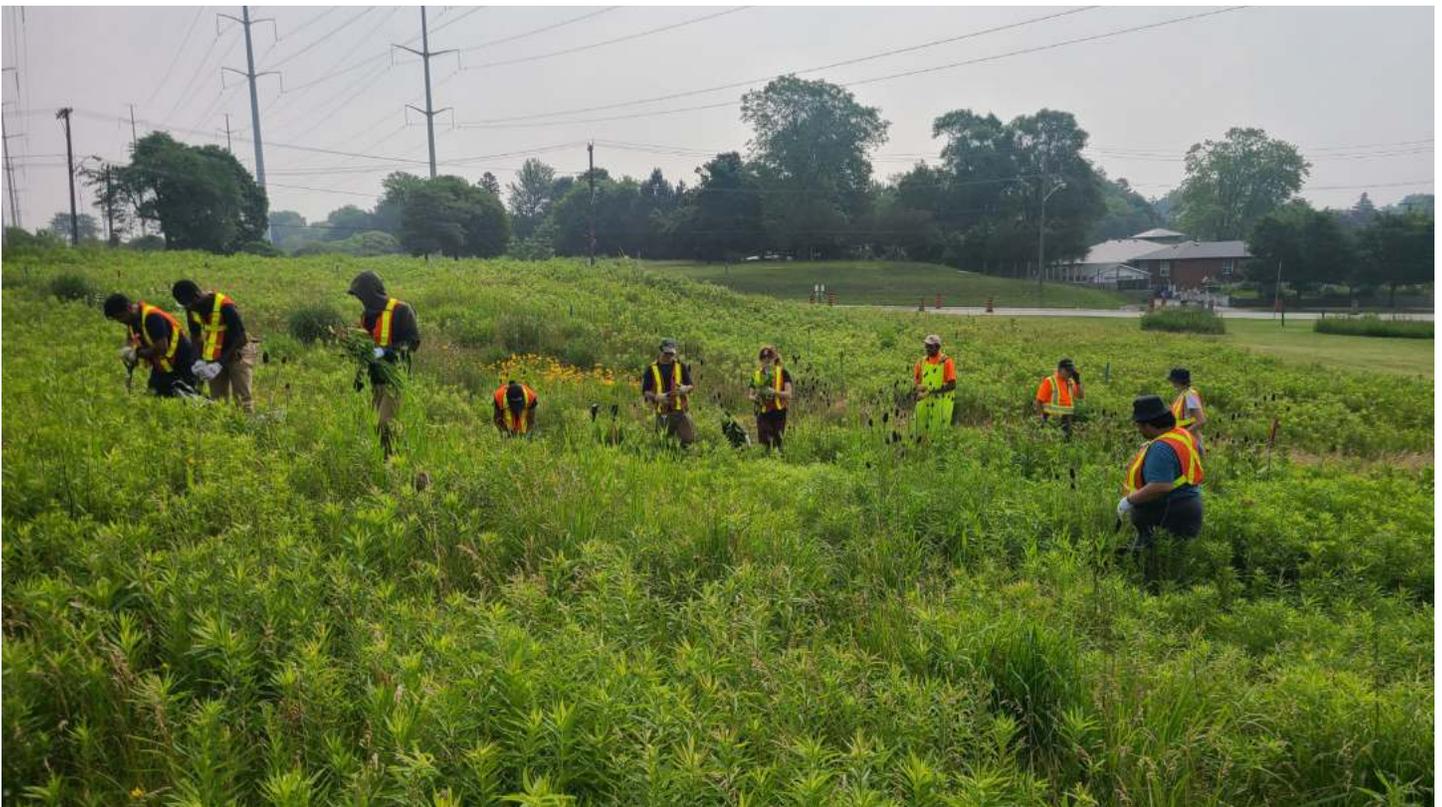


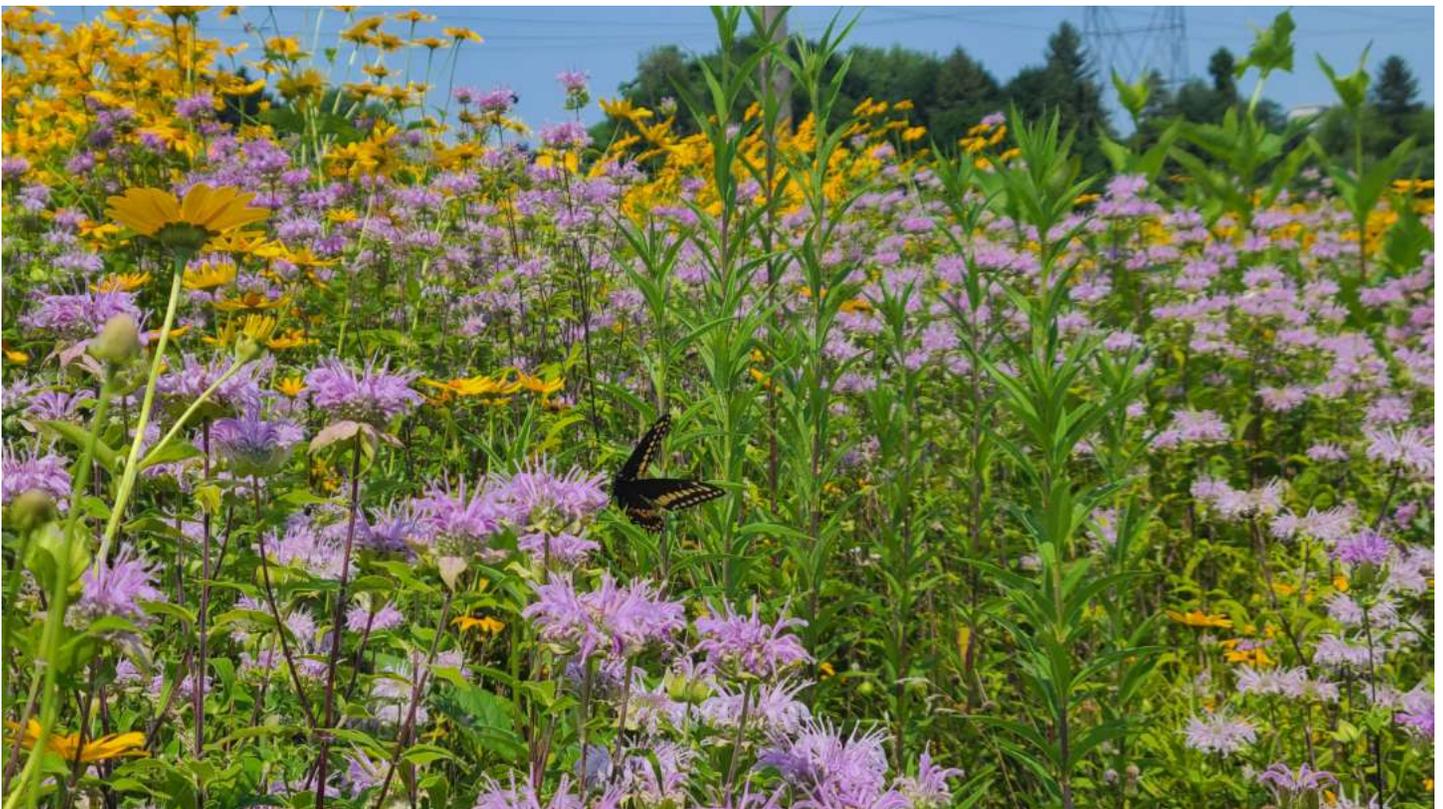
Section 4

area - 41 ha, meadow footprint - 25 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Planting event with 1,500 plants.
- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Multiple buffer mows and trimming around meadow/fence line.
- Adaptive management for invasive species.
- Terrestrial monitoring plots, bird and butterfly transects.
- Field work for University of Toronto research study on bees and thistle management.



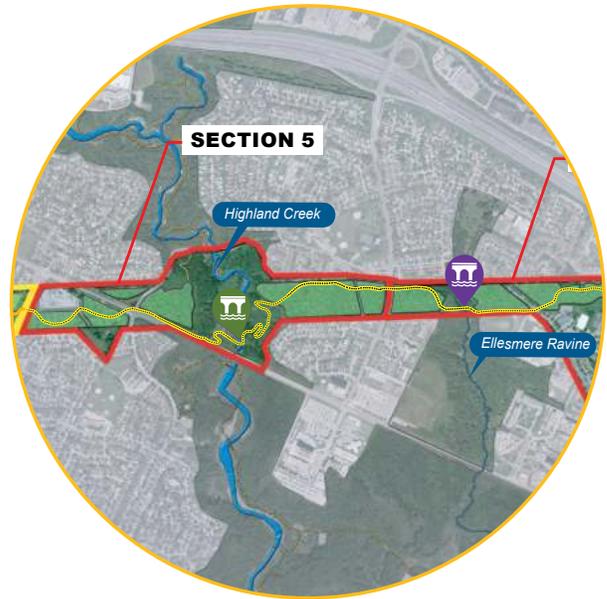


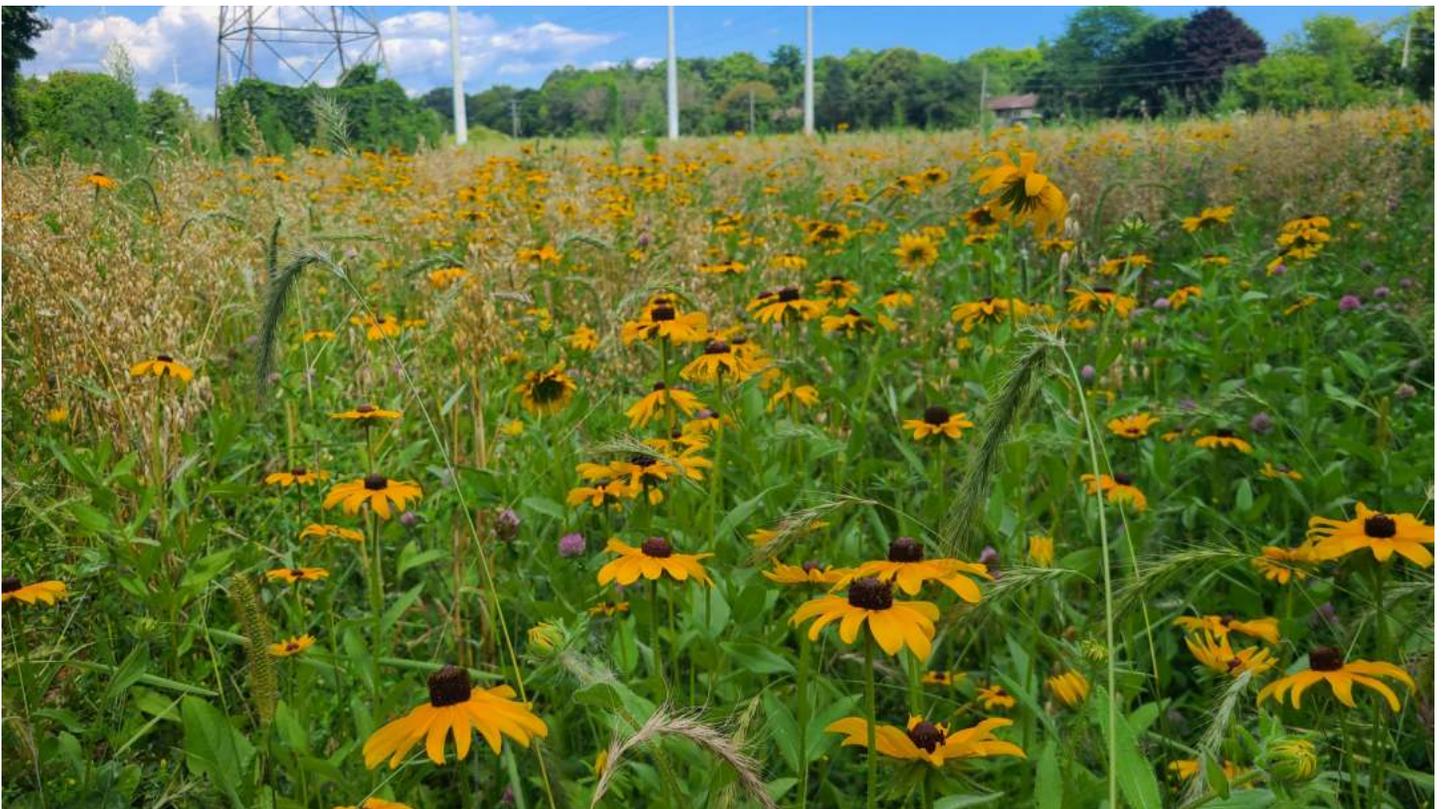
Section 5

area - 21 ha, meadow footprint - 16 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Overseeded meadow area with a nurse crop of oats and additional meadow seed.
- 7 rounds of buffer mowing and trimming.
- Maintenance mow of meadow to stimulate growth.
- Adaptive management for invasive species.
- Terrestrial monitoring plots, bird and butterfly transects.



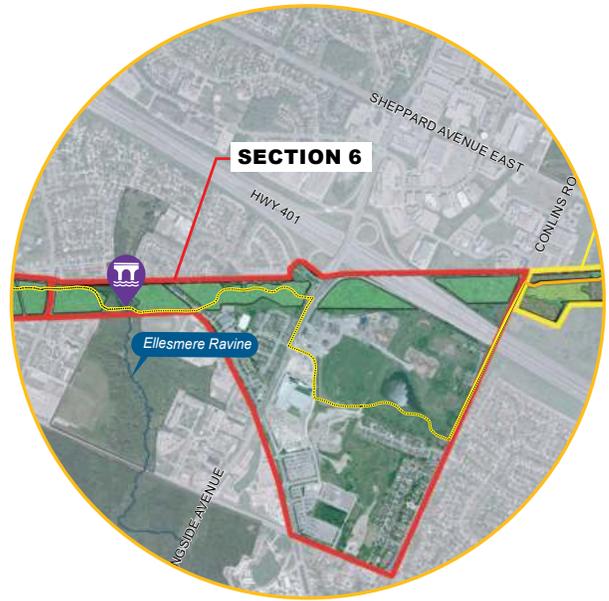


Section 6

area - 10 ha, meadow footprint - 8ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Marking out Section 6 work area footprint.
- Securing utility locates.
- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Trimming and clearing of tree branches that create hazards and promote invasive species.
- Ground down stumps to reduce hazards.
- Completed five rounds of site preparation
- Adaptive management for invasive species.
- Prepared shrub node areas for infill of plant material.





Section 7

area - 17 ha, meadow footprint - 9 ha

Activities completed in 2023:

- Collection and disposal of debris and garbage from the meadow areas.
- Adaptive management for invasive species.
- Multiple buffer mows and trimming around meadow/fence line.
- Terrestrial monitoring plots, bird and butterfly transects.





Lessons Learned

Meadow Site Preparation and Seeding

- New sites can hide unexpected objects/hazards and care must be taken to avoid equipment damage.
 - » *Having replacement parts on hand to prevent long service interruptions is essential.*
- Mechanical removal of some species is not effective (i.e. bindweed) and targeted chemical treatment is required to remove these species.
- Use of the new seed drill allowing seeding of nurse crop concurrently increases nurse crop germination dramatically and should allow a reduced seeding rate in future as well as saving time from having to seed both separately.
- Site conditions greatly affect progress – too much thatch clogs equipment, too much soil moisture causes seed pickup from tires or stuck equipment.
 - » *Better to delay and change tasks to suit conditions.*
- Clean native seed is essential for application with the Seed drill.
 - » *Excess stalks in seed will result in clogged tubes of the drill and extra time to complete application.*

Monitoring and Research

Vegetation

TRCA Flora Field Biologists monitored 29 plots of 20m x 20m:

- 24 old plots in Sections 1, 2, 4 and 7.
- 3 plots in Section 5 where the baseline data in 2020 was collected, with 2023 being the first year after seeding.
- 2 new plots in Section 1.4 and 2.2.
- Staff visited these plots twice (one visit in late spring (June) and another visit in late summer (September)).

TRCA also collected the first round of data to support an experiment initiated by The Meadoway Restoration team to inform best practices for native meadow creation in a highly urbanized environment. 14 plots of 1m x 1m were set up and monitored (10 in the Xerces treatment and 4 as a control).

The images to the right illustrate the seeding and site prep trial in Section 5.3 using the Xerces meadow plot trial using plowing techniques compared with TRCA mow, till, cover crop repeat site prep method. The images highlight the difference in species that are growing, with both site prep methods showing great results so far with native species starting to take off and grow. TRCA will continue to monitor this plot over the next couple of years to learn more about invasive species pressure and longevity of native meadow species.





Birds

In 2023, staff continued to monitor breeding birds from the series of stations located along the central axis of The Meadowway in Sections, 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7. A total of 13 stations were visited twice – once on the 15th and 16th of May, with the second visit-series conducted over the 6th and 7th of June. Once again, Savannah Sparrows were well-represented and appeared to be successfully fledging young from some of the shorter turf sections.

The late season butterfly transect visits afforded staff the opportunity to observe many migrant songbird species – warblers and sparrows – foraging for invertebrates and seeds in the dense forb cover throughout the corridor. The provision of such rich foraging for migrant songbirds is a benefit from The Meadowway project that has not yet been given as much attention as perhaps is deserved.



Western Palm Warbler – one of many songbirds making the most of the rich foraging in the fall meadow community

Butterflies

Butterfly counts were conducted once a month from June to September through all sections of the corridor, except Sections 3 and 6. Numbers of the more obvious migrant species – Monarch and Cabbage White – seemed rather lower than usual. Meanwhile, the recently arrived European Common Blue continues from strength to strength with persistently higher number every year since 2019.

Although numbers of some of the smaller resident native species remain low, species such as Acadian Hairstreak and Tawny-edged Skipper were pleasant surprises. Acadian Hairstreak (a new species for the formal transects but one that has been encountered within The Meadowway previously on one or two occasions) was no doubt simply nectaring since its larval foodplants are Salix species - found primarily at or beyond the edge of The Meadowway. The skipper on the other hand, like other native skippers such as Peck's and Hobomok (also observed in 2023), is likely to be a local breeder, utilizing the various native grass species.



Left: Acadian Hairstreak, encountered in the centre of Section 1 – a new species for the transects

Right: Tawny-edged Skipper has been only very rarely encountered on the transects since 2018

Research

Urban meadow restoration in Right-of-Ways is still in its infancy and has many lessons to learn. Research in meadow restoration is a key component of the restoration practices that are ongoing within The Meadoway. TRCA staff continue to learn and refine site preparation techniques, seed mixes, treatment timing and adaptive management within The Meadoway project. This research helps to improve best management practices in meadow restoration, creating key performance indicators to highlight success which can be used on other projects at a national/international scale.

The Meadoway team continues to monitor, test, learn and improve meadow restoration techniques and methods, using The Meadoway as a living laboratory. This includes daily/weekly inspections/management by the onsite restoration teams, annual terrestrial monitoring for vegetation, bees and butterflies and collaboration with multiple research institutions including University of Toronto, University of Waterloo and Trent University using The Meadoway as their research site.

Below are a few highlights from 2023's ongoing collaborative research:

Partnership with University of Toronto including 2 Mitacs funded research projects include:

- Effects of invasive plant management on urban plant-pollinator interactions
- Assessing the effect of mowing practices on stem-dwelling arthropod assemblages in an urban conservation project

Additional ongoing U of T research in The Meadoway include:

- Germination potential after cutting of invasive thistle
- Invasive seed bank effects on meadow establishment
- Drone mapping of invasive species





Looking Ahead to 2024

TRCA is also working closely with Autumn Watkinson (Trent University) and Rebecca Rooney (University of Waterloo) to successfully secure Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada(NSERC) funding for a multi-year research project that will include multiple student research positions (2024-2026).

Objectives of the research include:

- Identify restoration methods that support the creation of diverse and resilient meadow habitats.
- Quantify the outcomes of meadow restoration for butterflies and their plant associates.
- Measure the net benefits of turfgrass to meadow restoration in terms of climate adaptation (via urban heat stress) and mitigation (via enhanced soil carbon storage).
- Determine the potential for Urban Greenspace enhancement of utility corridors nationally.

Meadow restoration establishment will be completed for the large-scale sections of the corridor, and focus will move to adaptive management and monitoring throughout the 16 km stretch of existing meadow. Restoration staff will still have to establish a few meadow areas around the trail connections that will be going in this fall and next year which should amount to 2 ha in total. Staff will also be seeding around the Entry Garden Park near Pharmacy Avenue and will begin site prep in late spring following the garden creation. Once the seeding around the trails, staging areas and entry garden are complete, TRCA will achieve a total of 104 ha of established native meadow by end of 2024.

		Year 1 (2023/24)				Year 2 (2024/25)				Year 3 (2025/26)			
		Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
O1: Restoration Methods	Q1.1	Recruit MSc1	Field			C1	Field	P2	Thesis				
	Q1.2	Recruit PhD1		Field		C2	Field	C3	P4	C6		P7	Thesis
O2: Butterflies-plant networks	Q2.1	Recruit BSc1	Field	Thesis									
	Q2.2	Recruit PhD2	Field			Field	Field	C4	P5	C7		P8	Thesis
O3: Temperature & Carbon	Q3.1					Recruit BSc2	Field		Thesis				
	Q3.2	Recruit PhD3	Field			Field		C5	P6		C8	P9	Thesis
O4: Synthesis & Scale up	Q4.1 & 4.2	Recruit PDF1			P1			P3			C9 & C10		P10
TRCA focused communication & outreach				Entire Team				Entire Team			Entire Team		
Monthly Zoom meeting		Entire team				Entire team				Entire team			
Lab exchange (Waterloo-Trent)						HQP				HQP			
Field & data TRCA mentorship		HQP				HQP							

Gantt chart depicting proposed nserc program scheduling and project milestones. C refers to conference presentations, p to expected published papers







ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIONS

Substantial progress was made on active transportation and connections in 2023, with the most significant milestone being the completion of the Section 5 trail at Highland Creek. Opened formally to the public via a ribbon cutting event on October 20, Section 5 represents the first gap to be filled since the launch of The Meadoway in 2018 and adds an additional 2 km of multi-use trail to the existing network. A new connection was also built linking the recently completed Upper Highland Creek Pan Am Path to Section 5, expanding the Scarborough multi-use trail network and connecting The Meadoway to Lake Ontario.

Work also began on the construction of the Section 6 (Part 1) multi-use trail between Military Trail and Morningside Avenue, further advancing one of The Meadoway's core objectives of establishing a fully connected, 16 km trail network within the Gattineau hydro corridor. With an anticipated completion date of Summer 2024, this work will run in parallel with the launch of Section 3 (Part 1) trail construction between Marcos Boulevard and Arsandco Park the same year. In support of Section 3 implementation, the finalization of tender documents and prequalification of contractors was completed in Fall of 2023 to allow for rapid mobilization next spring.

Building off the early design direction developed in the award-winning Visualization toolkit, Perkins&Will was brought back on board to develop a bespoke family of public realm elements to enhance accessibility, user safety, and comfort. Conceptual through to detailed design was completed for the preferred option, with anticipated implementation of the Section 5 Highland Creek pilot schedule for 2024.

Lastly, improvements to existing trail infrastructure were completed for the Section 7 multi-use trail between Conlins Road and Meadowvale Road at Rouge National Urban Park. New coloured centrelines and Meadoway branded logos were painted along the trail surface, improving safety and wayfinding for users.

Section 5

Part 2 - Highland Creek to Neilson Road

- Construction of multi-use trail on the east slope switchback and upper tablelands, east of Neilson Road;
- Installation of erosion and sediment control, perimeter fencing and tree protection on switchback and tableland portions
- Installation of entrance at Neilson Road, resting node, armourstone retaining wall;
- Completed connection to Section 5 (Part 1) at the elevated boardwalk;
- Completion of approximately 1 km of multi-use trail;
- Topsoil and seeding of disturbed areas;
- Completion of path intersection/roundabout on tableland;
- Installation of safety signage, fencing, and bollards; and,
- Completion of all trail paving, trail line painting, concrete curbs installation and rest nodes.



Section 3

Part 1 – Marcos Blvd to Arsandco Park

- Completion of design for the Midland Avenue pedestrian at-grade crossing;
- Request for Supplier Prequalification developed and issued;
- Draft Request for Tender package developed and complete;
- City of Toronto Ravine and Natural Features Permit approval and tree removals complete; and
- Completion of a Soil Characterization Program for excess soils management under Ontario Regulation 406/19.

Section 6

Part 1 – Military Trail and Morningside Avenue

- Request for Supplier Prequalification developed and issued;
- Request for Tender package developed and issued to qualified bidders;
- Award of contract to Dynex Construction Inc. for construction works;
- Full execution of agreements with contractor; and
- Completion of a Soil Characterization Program for excess soils management under Ontario Regulation 406/19.

Meadoway Trail Improvements

Undertaken with financial support from Parks Canada

The original objective of the Parks Canada funding as noted in the Phase 1 Final Progress Report – the implementation of a short trail spur connection in Section 7 – was revisited in 2023 due to potential scheduling conflicts with other projects and unforeseen technical complexities with the proposed trail location.

The revised approach will provide significant added benefit to The Meadoway and are outlined below, along with critical tasks completed in 2023:

1. Implementation of the Section 6 (Phase 1) trail system
 - » *Tendering complete and contractor onboarded*
 - » *Site mobilization in support of construction*
2. Public realm elements design and tender
 - » *Completed onboarding of consultant team*
 - » *Concept, schematic, and detailed design of preferred elements complete*
3. Implementation of public realm elements pilot in Section 5 (scheduled for 2024)
4. Trail improvements to existing Section 7 trail system
 - » *Completed line and logo painting*

Meadoway TO360 Wayfinding Program In coordination with City of Toronto

- Completion of sign location and type plan for the full length of The Meadowway trail;
- Preparation and submission of HONI/IO technical submission;
- Updating of location and type plan based on HONI/IO feedback, including resubmission of package for second round of review; and
- Drafting of interpretive signage content for Section 5 pilot program.

Looking Ahead to 2024

Next year will see significant progress in active transportation and connections for The Meadowway, including the construction of two new trail gaps in Sections 3 and 6. Critical supporting infrastructure will also be rolled out, including finalization of the Meadowway wayfinding plan and implementation of the Section 5 wayfinding pilot. The design and implementation of the public realm furniture plans are also targeted for 2024, along with breaking ground on the new Entry Garden Park, a unique feature of The Meadowway funded by the Garden Club of Toronto.







COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION IN THE MEADOWAY 2023

Community Powered Green Spaces

TRCA's Toronto Community Outreach and Education team was inspired by and honoured to achieve the goal of *animating The Meadoway story and bringing to life the project's slogan "Community Powered Green Spaces" by fostering meaningful connections between local students, residents and stakeholders within the corridor, in 2023.* With immersive and multi-phase experiences for school-aged students, differentiated and customized learning for English as a Second Language learner's, exciting and engaging public events and meaningful, contributory experiences for volunteers, the team was thrilled to spend so much time in The Meadoway with the community this year. Opportunities to meet and work alongside community groups like PlazaPops, build deep connections with schools and students adjacent to The Meadoway, such as Tredway Woodsworth Public School, support and engage with classes from Toronto District School Board's ESL and ESU programs and build programming with partners that share narratives like The City of Toronto Scarborough Museum, the team has seen the realization of community powered green spaces along the 16 km corridor.

Curriculum-Linked Education in The Meadoway

Overview

The first full year of funding for school groups to visit The Meadoway has seen great success as more students than ever find their place in and make their mark on the 16 km corridor. Having engaged 1,004 students and their teachers (via 36 classes) in curriculum-linked programs, the spring brought the opportunity for 437 of those students and 18 teachers (17 classes) to learn about, visit and get their hands dirty along the corridor. Over the summer, the Community Outreach and Education team piloted working with a summer camp in The Meadoway and hosted another 18 students and one teacher. The summer is such a rich time in The Meadoway affording the opportunity to still connect with students from the area while school was out. Throughout the early fall of 2023, the new school year saw another 436 students visit The Meadoway with 20 teachers coming out to The Meadoway to learn about seed collection/harvesting, invasive species and help plant native species. Late fall will provide a new opportunity for approximately 70 students and their teachers to learn about The Meadoway through a mix of field trips and in-class sessions about winter in The Meadoway.

TABLE 5: 2023 CURRICULUM-LINKED EDUCATION IN THE MEADOWAY OVERVIEW

Time Period	# of Students	# of Teachers	# of classes
May-June 2023	437	17	17
July – August 2023	18	1	1
September – October 2023	436	20	17
November – December 2023	70	3	3
Totals by category	961	41	38
TOTALS	1,002		38



Program Development and Delivery

The seasons of The Meadowway provide unique and differentiated learning opportunities for students of all ages, grades and abilities. TRCA's Toronto Community Outreach and Education Meadowway program development invited students to nurture their natural curiosity through these spaces in their community and link their exploration across multiple facets of their lives, embedding that The Meadowway is theirs to enjoy, explore and care for.

Spring visits to The Meadowway actually begin in the classroom in the winter prior. Classes scheduled to visit in the spring receive grow kits in the winter, including:

- soil,
- grow lights,
- pots,
- instructions and,
- native seeds (specifically: Black-Eyed Susan and Wild Bergamot)

Students begin the exciting process of germinating their seeds in class. The wildflower mix of Black-eyed Susan and Wild Bergamot are specifically selected not just for their suitability to The Meadowway, but also because they have seen excellent success rates with students – both in germinating and once planted in The Meadowway and because their seeds can be more easily harvested in the fall by other students who come to visit during that season. Teachers are invited to reach out to TRCA's environmental educators for customized support during germination period to support ideal outcomes – both for the plants and the students. This activity begins an investment of fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for the seeds, while classes use this time to explore various and grade-specific curriculum connections while they care for and monitor their progress. As spring arrives, students head out to The Meadowway to learn more about the project, explore the budding spaces and lay their own roots by planting their sprouts in the ground. This multi-phase program creates vivid memories through actionable and sensory-infused work and brings learning to life with the intent to build Meadowway stewards for life in each individual student.



With the beginning of fall comes the start of a new school year and fresh classes to explore The Meadowway during a different season and see the space through a different lens. Students learn about the history, work in and future of The Meadowway, and still get to participate in a planting, all while reveling in the autumn colours of the meadow. They do not have the time to germinate seeds and get them in the ground in time; however, they do get a unique opportunity suited to the season – seed harvesting. They also get to assist with invasive identification and removal, typically focusing on Canada Thistle.

Some schools, even if in close proximity to the corridor, face transportation challenges in getting their student population out and into The Meadowway. As such, TRCA’s OCT certified educators have developed an in-class learning session to help better include and meet the needs of these groups. Given the visits are on school property, they are scheduled for late fall where students will learn about The Meadowway project as part of their community, the significance of healthy meadow ecosystems in urban areas, and how they can enjoy visits with their families and friends to the space throughout the seasons.



Highlights and Notable Achievements

Highlights and additional notable achievements include the wide range and inclusion of diverse and equity-deserving students/schools/communities in programming that this funding was able to support, as well as the success in engaging schools within a hyper-local proximity to The Meadowway. In leveraging TRCA's Education and Training Divisions' strong relationships with both Toronto-based school boards, this funding provided experiences to students identified as neurodivergent, in-need of extended mental health support, special education support, Eco Teams and classes from all grades (1-12). Connecting diverse learners and providing such rich experiences to groups of student residents who might otherwise not have afforded the field trip opportunity is a privilege that the TRCA Community Outreach and Education team is proud to have.

The Toronto Education team looks forward to expanding on the already incredible suite of programs developed, deepening existing relationships with the schools and boards along the corridor and forming new relationships with schools that have not yet been able to attend a program in The Meadowway.



Supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners and The Meadoway

Overview of Engagement

Leveraging the expertise of TRCA’s Multicultural Connections Program (MCP) English as a Second Language (ESL) expert, the Professional Access Into Employment (PAIE) program experts and Newcomers Youth Green Economy Project (NYGEP) experts, the Education and Training Division hosted two events and will host an additional four events engaging 101 new Canadians, specifically English as a second language (ESL) learner’s, in Meadoway programming.

TABLE 6: ENGAGEMENT OF NEW CANADIANS THROUGH ESL COURSES

Date	Program/School Board Hosted	Event	Participant Count
October 10, 2023	NYGEP & PAIE participants	Protecting and Visiting Natural Areas in Canada	7
October 15, 2023	NYGEP & PAIE Participants	Planting Roots: NYGEP and PAIE in The Meadoway!	25
November 7, 2023	Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Essential Skills Upgrade (ESU) program	The Meadoway: An Invitation!	15
November 14, 2023	Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Essential Skills Upgrade (ESU) program	The Meadoway: An Invitation!	17
November 21, 2023	Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Essential Skills Upgrade (ESU) program	The Meadoway: An Invitation!	20
November 28, 2023	Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Essential Skills Upgrade (ESU) program	The Meadoway: An Invitation!	17
Totals			101

Program Development and Delivery

Dates, program topics and delivery modes are all carefully designed by TRCA's MCP experts to best meet the needs of new Canadians and English as a second language learners. This includes topics that are relevant to people who have recently arrived to the area and potentially unfamiliar with the climate and navigating shared public spaces in the region. The content is thoughtfully delivered in ways that best meet the comfort level of those new to the region and employing ESL strategies to ensure all participants receive the vital information required to access The Meadowway in a way that helps participants to feel safe and welcomed. Finally, in partnership with all participating programmers, including TDSB, dates are selected (or directed) that support the best attendance outcomes.



Educational Events Overview

People powered green spaces have been in full swing this year in The Meadoway with 4 funded public events and 10 additional events taking place either in The Meadoway, in support of The Meadoway or in preparation for a fantastic 2024 season in The Meadoway.

TABLE 7: THE MEADOWAY PUBLIC EVENTS 2023

#	Date	Location	Event
1	April 22, 2023	Section 2; adjacent to Wexford Park	Let's Clean Up The Meadoway!: Earth Day
2	August 31, 2023	Section 4; adjacent to Thomson Memorial Park	Bumblebee Watch: Citizen Scientists in The Meadoway
3	October 15, 2023	Section 2; adjacent to Wexford Park	Fall In Love with The Meadoway!: Fall Colours and Planting
4	October 29, 2023	Section 4; adjacent to Thomson Memorial Park	Halloween Howl in The Meadoway

Event Details & Descriptions

Let's Clean Up The Meadoway: Earth Day! invited local residents and Meadoway enthusiasts to gather in Section 2 on Earth Day to honour the day and celebrate the space and our place in it. With activities for all ages, participants came together to learn about microplastics, stormwater pollution, and the importance of keeping natural areas free of litter. After learning about The Meadoway, participants were given the tools they required to get to work and pick up litter. Cleaning up and removing over 100lbs of garbage from The Meadoway was a brilliant kick-off to spring in The Meadoway.

On August 31, The Meadoway played host to citizen scientists who came out to discover the diversity of native bees while enjoying the beauty of the corridor! At *Bumblebee Watch: Citizen Scientists in The Meadoway* participants learned how to tell a bee from a wasp, and how to identify common bumble bees in the Greater Toronto Area all whilst learning why native meadow is such an important part of our ecosystem health. After the lesson, the group ventured into The Meadoway to collect and identify local bees and learned how to use the Bumble Bee Watch app and contribute their findings to ongoing monitoring efforts.



With the burst of colours that comes with the fall there is not a better time to get out and fall in love with The Meadoway. On October 15th, TRCA's Toronto Community Outreach team was pleased to work in partnership with local non-profit PlazaPops to support the end of their seasonal efforts beautifying the Wexford Heights neighborhood. With their native species plants needing a permanent home, plants were picked up from four locations across the neighborhood and transported to Section 2 of the corridor for transplanting. Participants from PlazaPops and their partner organizations, Wexford heights BIA, Working Women Community Centre and Arab Community Centre of Toronto joined in, along with members of the public to tour the stunning colours of the meadows in fall, followed by a team planting event.

Halloween season sets the perfect opportunity to get families from The Meadoway area out into the space to explore, connect with and better understand the project. This event, *Halloween Howl*, provided pumpkins to participants to paint/decorate followed by a guided hike through the corridor at dusk. The dark provided the ideal backdrop to talk to participants about safety in The Meadoway and discuss how the meadows provide vital habitat for so many animals, like coyotes, with whom we share urban spaces.



Additional Unfunded Events

There is great interest from the public in The Meadowway as seen through a variety of other opportunities for engagement with local communities and residents. Some come by way of community groups reaching out for support of their local initiatives, some are in support of TRCA's wider community efforts and others are through various alternative funding strategies, but all have one thing in common – a keen interest in The Meadowway. TRCA's education team has been thrilled to spread the word of The Meadowway through:

- 1. Community event informational booths (x4)**
 - Scarborough Seedy Saturday & Green Living Event (300 people engaged)
 - Earth Day at The Science Centre (228 people engaged)
 - TRCA's Celebrate The Humber (420 people attended event)
 - TRCA's Adventures of Salmon (180 people engaged)
- 2. Partnerships (x1)**
 - Programming developed in support of and collaboration with City of Toronto Sustainability Weekends and delivered at The Scarborough Museum, Thomson Memorial Park and The Meadowway (97 people engaged)
- 3. Corporate groups planting events (x4 events)**
 - Look After Where You Live (TRCA's corporate engagement program)
 - Student support/employment programs
- 4. Ravine Youth Team (x8 staff for one week)**

With so many opportunities to meet with residents from along the corridor and enthusiasts of The Meadowway project, it has been a full year of engaging with and sharing in the excitement and joy that people have for this incredible project. TRCA's Community Outreach and Education team looks forward to a bustling and productive 2024 in The Meadowway with event plans already underway for another 4 public engagements.



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WILSON RIVER
COURTNEY PARK



The Meadowway
COMMUNITY POWERED GREEN SPACES

ADVISORY
SALMON
The Meadowway



Volunteers in The Meadoway

Overview of Volunteer Engagement

Hearing from engaged residents about their excitement, curiosity and commitment to The Meadoway has been an inspiring motivator to this particular project. TRCA has been in the process of rebuilding and migrating its collective volunteer efforts to a new management system and with both the new system now in place and the voice of residents there is great opportunity to achieve the goal of a “Friends of The Meadoway” volunteer group. Great work has already gone into being in touch with existing volunteers, setting up the new system to recruit, manage and stay in touch with incoming volunteers and recruiting volunteers for 2023 events:

Public events in The Meadoway are made more meaningful and valuable to all participants when localized, dedicated volunteers are in place to support them. The plan to engage local residents, through TRCA’s network and stakeholders to The Meadoway project will continue to evolve more deeply integrate a tight group of dedicated volunteers, with a clear self-sustaining leadership and aligned vision as the larger project continues throughout 2024 and 2025. This year saw concerted efforts to modernize the volunteer recruitment and management system utilized by TRCA to coordinate and onboard volunteers while simultaneously beginning to spread the word that The Meadoway is open for volunteer networks.

TABLE 8: VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT 2023

Time-line/Event	Action	Result
January - June 2023	Implement and transition to new volunteer management system: Better Impact	System implemented with The Meadoway lead and The Meadoway events incorporated/listed
April 2023	Begin TRCA and The Meadoway volunteer recruitment, onboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 volunteers recruited All 31 successfully onboarded for TRCA volunteer work
April 2023	Engage volunteers in public events	3 volunteers attended and engaged in “Let’s Clean Up The Meadoway: Earth Day!”
April 2023	Engage volunteers in public events	2 volunteers attended and engaged in The Meadoway engagement booth at Earth Day at the Science Centre
Summer 2023	Designed structure of volunteer initiative for The Meadoway, within Better Impact	Volunteer recruitment plan developed that fully incorporates new Better Impact volunteer management system and new TRCA Volunteer Policy (released June 2023)
November -December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create The Meadoway Engagement Volunteers positions using the new Better Impact system host one volunteer welcome/orientation for The Meadoway volunteers 	In progress

Looking forward: 2024 and Beyond

The Meadoway is bubbling with activity and passion – communities are coming together, students are literally rooting themselves there, volunteers are emerging, and excitement is brewing. The TRCA team hears comments like, “Wow, I bike here so much, but I never realized The Meadoway was so interesting!” (school program participant, 2023) and “I have lived in this area (east Wexford) my whole life and have enjoyed watching The Meadoway come to fruition.” (local resident, fall 2023). TRCA staff observe people getting their hands dirty putting plants in the ground, showing up to pick up litter and scanning QR codes in the corridor to learn more. TRCA receives emails from people wanting to know more, do more, learn more about The Meadoway. All of this inspires the Toronto Community Outreach and Education team to continue engaging with the people, listening to what they want The Meadoway to be, what it is to them, and building programming, events and engagements that foster the goal of building, community powered green spaces.



Volunteer Initiative Evolution

Once this core group of approved volunteers (mandatory TRCA requirement) is welcomed, trained and ready to go, TRCA aims to engage volunteers in in-person public events throughout 2024 and beyond, while also continuing to foster and facilitate a deeper connection with The Meadoway, its meadows, communities and multi-use trail. Through regular and ongoing consultation with the group, TRCA hopes to expand its reach to more possible volunteers year over year. TRCA’s plan is to scaffold and bridge the volunteer group to achieve:

- A larger identified and approved group of volunteers specifically dedicated to and interested in The Meadoway, while continuing to recruit possible members through stakeholders and deepening community engagement in the communities surrounding the project
- Empower, through modeling and scaffolding, the group to take ownership over sections of The Meadoway where they can engage in hyper-local activity including public programming/engagements as well as restoration/maintenance
- Learn from the local volunteers what is important to them and their communities to better inform future TRCA (and broader) work in The Meadoway
- Ultimately create a self-sustaining, self-run group of committed locals along the corridor to bring to life the true ethos of community powered green spaces.







For more information visit
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