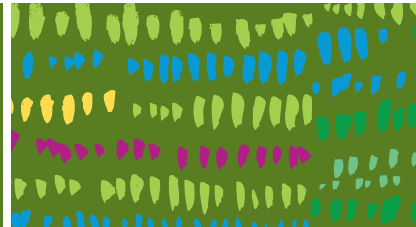


Annual Report
January 1 – December 31, 2024



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?

Implementing the Meadoway Vision

This year-end report highlights the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) progress in achieving key milestones for The Meadoway through 2024. Strong stakeholder relations continue to be instrumental in maintaining community support and fostering engagement, both of which have played a critical role in the project's success to date. Recent development of a strategy for Fundraising and Sponsorship in the corridor has identified new opportunities for partnerships and investments that will further strengthen The Meadoway's long-term sustainability and broaden its impact.

In 2024, the meadow restoration team completed adaptive management across 151 hectares of meadow and mown buffer areas. These restored meadows flourished with pollinators and wildlife, increasing biodiversity and enhancing species richness. The Garden Club of Toronto worked closely with TRCA restoration and construction teams to create the new Meadoway Entrance Garden, bringing new pollinator habitat and an educational space for all to enjoy adjacent to Wexford Park.

TRCA's monitoring teams collected data on birds, butterflies, and flora throughout the 16 km corridor to better understand the ongoing evolution of the meadow through restoration practices. Collaborative research with the University of Waterloo, University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), and Trent University provided valuable insights into plant-pollinator relationships and meadow site preparation methods. Over the coming

winter months, TRCA will update The Meadoway Restoration Manual to capture the latest best management practices tested on site.

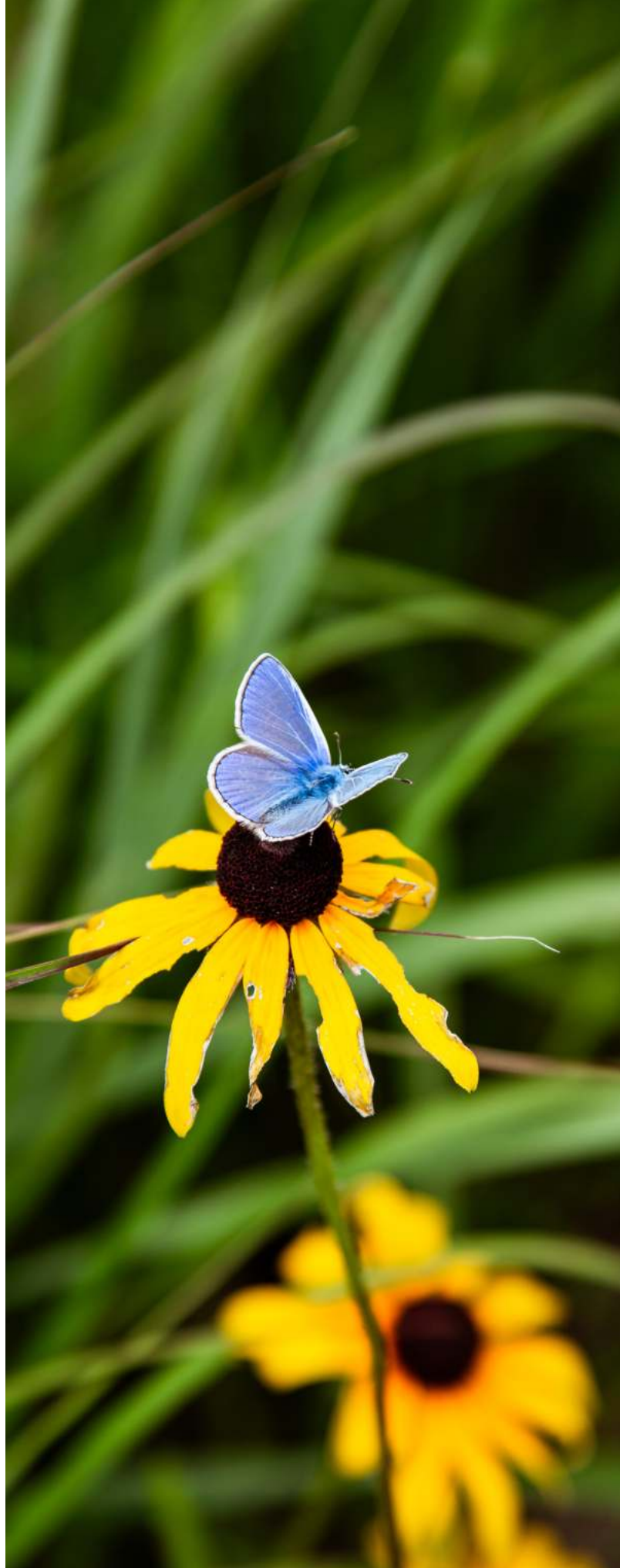
The team celebrated the completion of a new 650 m segment of multi-use trail at Section 6, Phase 1, between Military Trail and Morningside Avenue. Officially open to the public, this milestone enhances active transportation linkages for the community and improves connectivity along The Meadoway corridor.

Progress on delivering the pilot TO360 signage and wayfinding program in Section 5 continues, with design and interpretive content being finalized in partnership with the City of Toronto to enhance safety and accessibility. Hydro One's approval has been secured, and implementation is now set for Spring 2025 to align with implementation of public realm improvements in Section 5. These custom furnishings and gathering nodes funded by Parks Canada will provide for areas of amenity, rest and reflection in the corridor, enhancing the visitor experience.

Social media emerged as a key driver of outreach and engagement in 2024. TRCA expanded its presence on Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), leading to significant increases in reach and interaction. The Instagram "Highlight Campaign" resulted in a 379.4% increase in post saves and a 22% rise in shares. The use of consistent monthly posts and cohesive messaging across platforms helped broaden The Meadoway's reach, fostering stronger community involvement and raising awareness of project milestones.

Education remained a cornerstone of outreach efforts. The Meadoway's Curriculum-Linked Education Program engaged over 1,000 students and teachers through hands-on activities, field trips, and conservation work. Students were involved in native plant cultivation, meadow planting, and invasive species management, fostering a deeper understanding of local ecosystems and environmental stewardship. The program's expansion to equity-deserving communities ensured wider access to these educational opportunities, inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards and building lasting community involvement.

As we look ahead, TRCA remains committed to creating a more connected and accessible Meadoway for all, with exciting new milestones set to be realized in the coming year.



2024 Highlights by Section:



1

Bermondsey-Western Gateway
East Don Trail to Pharmacy Avenue

Restoration

- 10 ha of established meadow

2

Massey Wilds
Pharmacy Avenue to Kennedy Road

Restoration

- 20 ha of established meadow

3

Lawrence Avenue Community Hub
Kennedy Road to Thomson Memorial Park

Restoration

- 11 ha of newly established meadow

Active Transportation

- Request for Pre-Qualification completed
- Request for Tender issued

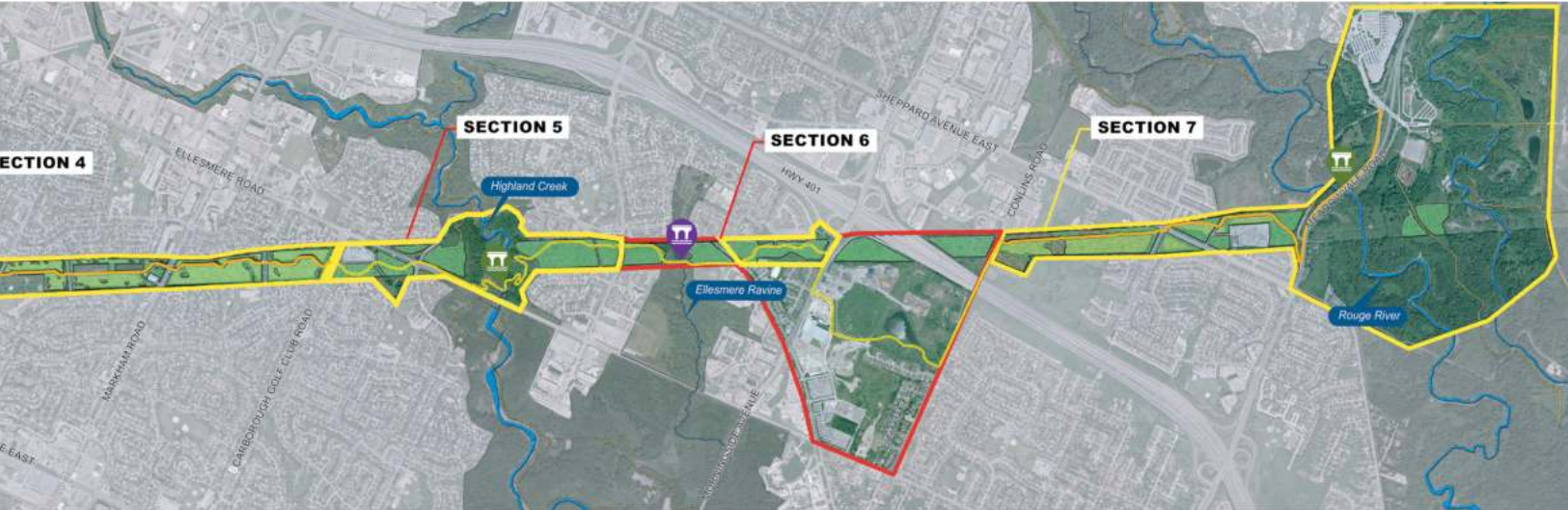
4

Scarborough Butterfly Trail
Thomson Memorial Park to Scarborough Gateway

Restoration

- 25 ha of established meadow





4
Centre
 Memorial Park to
 Golf Club Road

of established
 w

5
The Ravines
 Scarborough Golf Club Road
 to Neilson Road

- Restoration**
- 16 ha of newly established meadow

- Active Transportation**
- detailed design complete for public realm improvements
 - TO360 wayfinding program designed and approved by Hydro One

6
Eastern Entrance
 Neilson Road to Conlins
 Road

- Restoration**
- 8 ha of newly established meadow

- Active Transportation**
- Phase 1: 650 m trail complete
 - Phase 2: conceptual design and data collection underway

7
The Rouge Gateway
 Conlins Road to Rouge Park

- Restoration**
- 9 ha of established meadow







MEADOW REVITALIZATION

The 2024 field season was a productive period for TRCA's Restoration Team, focusing on adaptive management across all sections of the corridor. The team managed previously restored meadow areas, and prepared and reseeded 5 hectares of land that required re-establishment for various reasons. Various site preparation methods were employed, supporting ongoing research on meadow restoration best practices, and these areas were seeded with native species.

In addition to reseeded, the team removed garbage from the corridor, mowed turfgrass buffers, managed invasive species, installed new signage, and conducted maintenance mowing. Native seeds were also collected for future use on-site. Maintaining meadows requires significant effort, and the team ensured the meadow and surrounding areas were well-maintained throughout the seasons.

TABLE 1: THE MEADOWWAY RESTORATION DELIVERABLES - January to December 2024

Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (151 ha – Meadow Footprint 99 ha)	Size/Quantity
Buffer Mowing - All Sections	38 ha – Decrease in area from mid year report as City staff fully managed section 4 buffer mowing
Invasive Species Management – All Sections	151 ha total area–Invasive species management in 111 ha
Maintenance Mowing	20 ha
Site Prep, various Sections (for fall native seeding)	5 ha
Native Meadow Seeding in Various Sections	160 kg
Garbage Collection	9500 Kg
Seed Collection	10 Kg
Monitoring (Completed May to September)	
Monitoring Plots 1m x 1m (Section 5)	14 plots
Monitoring Plots 20m x 20m	34 plots
Bird Transects	16 transects
Butterfly Transects	29 transects, 8.3km surveyed



Research	
University of Waterloo	1) Quantify the carbon stocks and fluxes in different sections of the Meadowway to contrast turf grass with recently restored meadow and with more mature restored areas. 2) Investigating the diversity of and relationship between plants and butterflies in unrestored turfgrass with their relationship and diversity in the successfully restored areas.
Trent University	Assessing site preparation methods and their depletion of the seedbank (efficacy of each method). Vegetation surveys after each round of preparation will be completed, including soil samples to grow the residual seedbank out in the lab to assess seedbank depletion.
University of Toronto Scarborough	Assessing temperature differences in microhabitats and the effects on pollinator brood success.



Section 1

area - 15 ha, meadow footprint - 10 ha

In Section 1, ongoing activities included garbage collection, seven rounds of turfgrass buffer mowing, and the pruning of trees and shrubs adjacent to the meadows. Site preparation trials were conducted using multiple treatment methods, including herbicide application, tilling, and construction preparation. These areas were subsequently seeded with native species. Collaboration with other TRCA teams also led to the construction of The Meadoway Entrance Garden.

Additional activities included 5 hectares of maintenance mowing, invasive species management, and native seed collection to assist with overseeding weaker areas.





Section 2

area - 29 ha, meadow footprint - 20 ha

In Section 2, the team removed garbage and yard waste, completed seven rounds of turfgrass buffer mowing, managed herbaceous and woody invasive species both manually and chemically, and pruned adjacent trees and shrubs. Seed collection was conducted to provide additional resources for weaker areas. Information signage maintenance was also carried out.





The Meadow

MEADOW RESTORATION

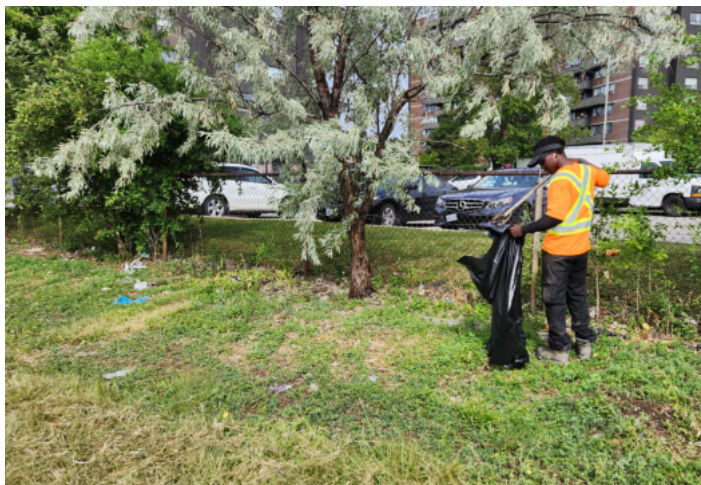
The meadow has been planted with native wildflowers and grasses to help restore the meadow to its original state. This is a great example of how we can help restore the meadow to its original state. This is a great example of how we can help restore the meadow to its original state.

www.themeadow.com

Section 3

area - 18 ha, meadow footprint - 11 ha

This section saw the removal of over 4,500 kg of garbage. The team also performed invasive species management, pruning of surrounding buffer areas, and completed seven rounds of buffer mowing. Additionally, informational signage was installed, and native seeding and cover crop seeding were finalized. Maintenance mowing was conducted to improve light levels for meadow growth.



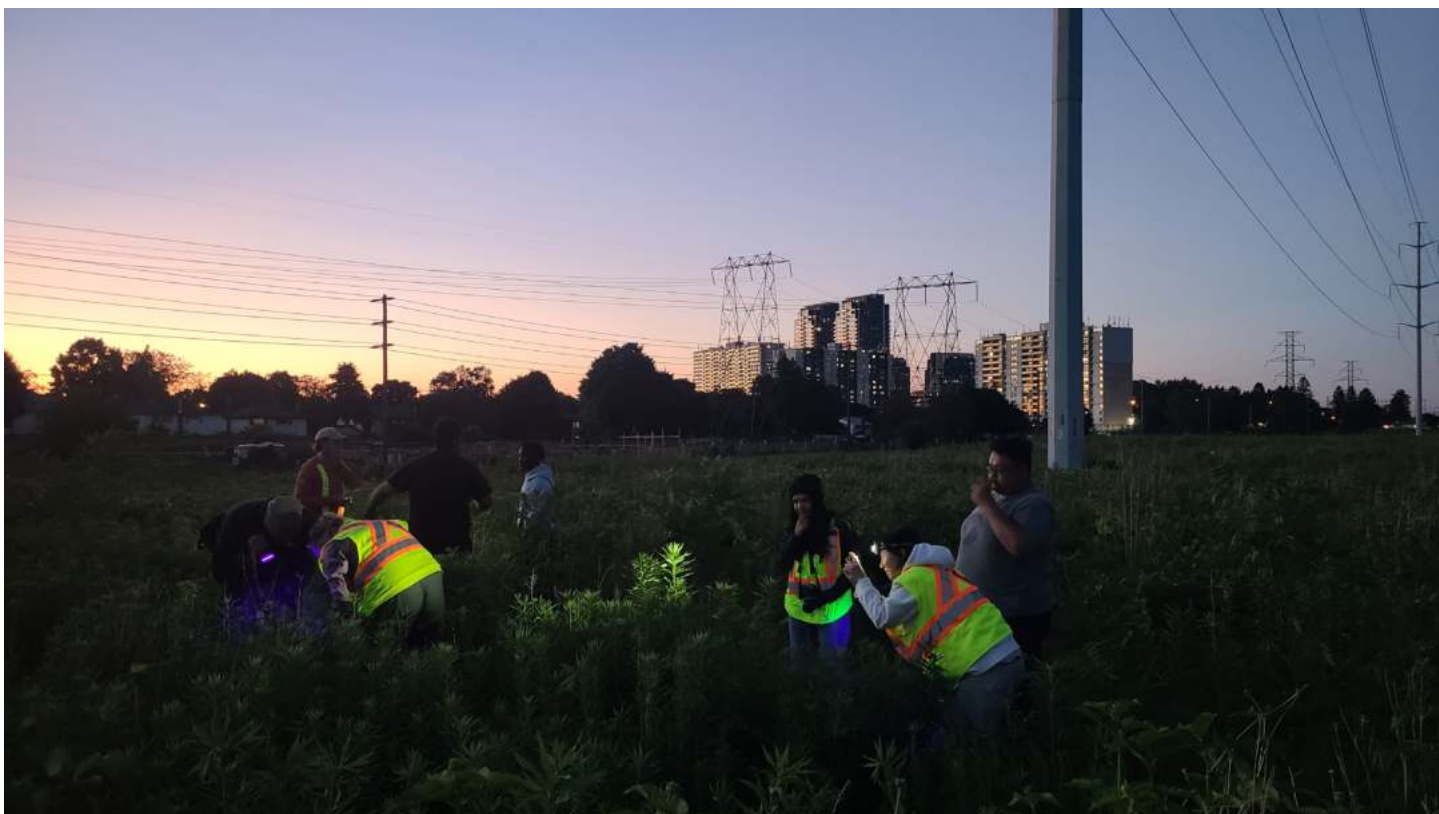


Section 4

area - 41 ha, meadow footprint - 25 ha

In Section 4, garbage collection, invasive species management, and site preparation trials were key focuses.

Three trials tested the efficacy of herbicide treatments, plowing, disking, and direct seeding into turfgrass areas. Turfgrass buffers were mowed, and native seeds were collected for future restoration efforts.





Section 5

area - 21 ha, meadow footprint - 16 ha

The Restoration Team completed garbage collection and maintained the new roundabout garden. Maintenance mowing was conducted in the early spring and late fall to improve light conditions, while overseeding of native grasses occurred in the spring. Turfgrass buffer pruning, site preparation trials, and invasive species management were also carried out, with new native species emerging as the meadows matured.





Section 6

area - 10 ha, meadow footprint - 8ha

As this was the first growing season for the meadow in Section 6, early activities included native and cover crop seeding, signage installation, and ongoing garbage collection. Invasive species management and maintenance mowing were conducted to ensure proper germination of meadow species. Pruning of adjacent trees and shrubs helped improve access and reduce competition for the new meadow.





Section 7

area - 17 ha, meadow footprint - 9 ha

The restoration team completed garbage collection, seven rounds of buffer mowing, and pruning of adjacent trees and shrubs. A site preparation trial was conducted in one plot, which received multiple treatment rounds before being seeded with a custom native seed mix. Invasive species management and seed collection activities were also completed.





Monitoring and Research

**All TRCA terrestrial monitoring research conducted in 2024 (Vegetation, Birds and Butterflies) will have data analysis review later this fall and early winter and findings will be updated in the terrestrial monitoring report.*

Throughout 2024, TRCA's terrestrial monitoring teams continued to collect data on bird, butterfly, and vegetation across the 16 km corridor, focusing on how meadows evolve through restoration practices. Monitoring was conducted in Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, with new plots added in Sections 3 and 6, marking the first year after seeding. Data analysis for the 2024 season will be reviewed in the upcoming winter and included in the terrestrial monitoring report. Collaborative research with the University of Waterloo, UTSC, and Trent University also progressed, with a focus on plant-pollinator relationships, meadow restoration methods, and site preparation techniques.

Vegetation Monitoring

In 2024, TRCA staff continued vegetation monitoring across various sections of The Meadoway. A total of 34 monitoring plots, each measuring 20m x 20m, were visited twice—once in June and again in September. These plots, located in Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, have been monitored since 2023. This year also saw the addition of five new plots in Sections 3 and 6, where baseline data had been collected in 2020. With 2024 marking the first year of monitoring after seeding in these new sections, the data will contribute valuable insights into the restoration process.

In addition to these larger plots, the team also conducted monitoring in 14 smaller plots (1m x 1m) in Section 5. These plots support an experiment initiated by The Meadoway restoration team, aimed at informing best practices for native meadow creation in highly urbanized environments. The second round of data collection in these plots occurred in September and will help assess the success of various treatment methods.

Bird Monitoring

Since 2016, bird monitoring stations have been gradually added across the corridor and, in 2024, TRCA conducted meadow-bird counts at 16 stations. These stations stretch from the Bermondsey Hydro One Transmission Station in the west to the Sheppard Transformer Station in the east, including two new stations between Kennedy and Brimley Roads. This represents the highest number of bird surveys completed since the start of the project and provides critical data to track avian biodiversity and habitat use over time.

Butterfly Monitoring

As with bird monitoring, butterfly transects expanded in 2024, with a new section added between Kennedy Road (east of the railway) and Brimley Road. By the end of 2024, a total of 8.85 km of transects have been established along The Meadoway, with 8.3 km of these surveyed this year. These surveys are crucial for assessing the diversity and abundance of butterfly species, which are important indicators of meadow health and restoration success.

Highlights from Ongoing Collaborative Research

In 2024, The Meadowway's restoration efforts were supported by several ongoing research projects conducted in partnership with leading academic institutions, providing insights into meadow restoration, biodiversity, and environmental health, to guide future restoration efforts.

At UTSC, researchers focused on two projects examining temperature variations in microhabitats and their effects on pollinator brood success. Fieldwork, led by Scott McIvor's lab, raised mason bee larvae and utilized handheld LIDAR technology to capture detailed environmental data. Temperature sensors were also deployed at different heights and locations within the meadows. This research is expected to offer valuable insights into how temperature variations in meadow ecosystems impact pollinator health, helping refine habitat management strategies.

Trent University assessed the effectiveness of various site preparation methods on seedbank depletion. Led by Autumn Watson's lab, this study included conducting vegetation surveys after each round of site preparation and the analysis of soil samples grown in laboratory conditions. This research helps determine effective techniques for restoring native plant communities in urbanized areas.

University of Waterloo researchers, led by Rebecca Rooney's lab, focused on two areas of study: quantifying carbon stocks and fluxes across different sections of The Meadowway, and exploring plant and butterfly relationships. The first study, comparing turfgrass with restored and mature meadow areas, highlights the carbon sequestration potential of meadow ecosystems.

For the second study, long-term monitoring data from and plant species identification were used to understand plant-butterfly dynamics with floral measurements recorded at nine sites

The research conducted by these academic partners not only advances scientific understanding of meadow ecosystems but also directly informs The Meadowway's ongoing restoration strategies, ensuring that the project remains grounded in evidence-based practices.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025, TRCA is exploring the use of goat and sheep grazing as a novel meadow management technique. Discussions are underway with Hydro One, the City of Toronto, and other stakeholders to pilot this program in the fall of 2025. The aim is to explore whether grazing can serve as a natural alternative to reduce biomass in restored meadow areas, mimicking the effects of a prescribed burn. This approach would help prevent the meadows from transitioning into shrub thickets and eventually forest, which could compromise long-term meadow restoration success. TRCA's current practice of using maintenance mowing every 3-4 years has shown mixed results, and this pilot will explore additional long-term management options. More details on this initiative will be provided in the 2025 early summer report as approvals and logistics are finalized.





ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIONS

The Meadowway continues to enhance active transportation and strengthen community connectivity, with a focus on creating a sustainable urban space that promotes healthy, active living. In 2024, progress has been made in expanding the trail network across the corridor, including new trail construction, as part of ongoing efforts to build a fully connected, sustainable transportation network for residents and visitors alike.



Section 3

Part 1 – Marcos Boulevard to Arsandco Park

To support the implementation of Section 3, a Request for Tender (RFT) was released to qualified bidders on October 17, following the successful completion of the Request for Pre-Qualification phase. This marks a key milestone in advancing construction, with a planned start in the spring of 2025.

The proposed design includes a 1.4 km multi-use trail with a signalized mid-block crossing at Midland Avenue. The crossing and other safety enhancements will ensure the trail is accessible and secure for pedestrians and cyclists. Lighting requirements for the mid-block crossing have also been identified and addressed in collaboration with Toronto Hydro, ensuring proper illumination to enhance visibility and safety during low-light conditions. Additional highlights include a pedestrian/cycle bridge over a tributary of Highland Creek, south of Arsandco Park, further strengthening connectivity within the corridor.



Section 6

Part 1 – Military Trail to Morningside Avenue

A key achievement in 2024 was the successful completion of the new multi-use trail in Section 6, Phase 1 in September. TRCA awarded the construction contract to Dynex Inc., with on-site mobilization beginning in April. Construction activities progressed through the summer, culminating in the completion of the 650 m at-grade trail that now enhances connectivity and accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Part 2 – Pan Am Drive to Conlins Road

TRCA is exploring funding possibilities with the City of Toronto to develop detailed designs for this connection of The Meadowway and has continued to hold discussions with UTSC staff to coordinate the trail alignment through the campus property. The University has shared previously completed studies (e.g., surveys) of the area for collaboration.



Public Realm Trail Improvements

Undertaken with Financial Support from Parks Canada

In 2024, a significant focus of The Meadoway project has been the development of custom furnishings and rest nodes in Section 5. These features are designed to enhance the user experience by providing seating and amenities for both cyclists and pedestrians. Designed for quality and durability, these spaces will provide trail users with a comfortable place to rest and enjoy the natural surroundings. The intent is that implementation of these features in Section 5 will serve as a pilot for future installation of seating throughout the corridor.

Detailed designs were completed this summer, following which a tender was released to an invitational shortlist of bidders. That competition resulted in only one bid that was beyond the project budget. The project team collaborated with the consultant to revise the tender package and specifications for re-tendering in November to address feedback received through the initial procurement process. The contract is expected to be awarded by the end of 2024, marking an important step forward in bringing these amenities to life in 2025.

Meadoway TO362 Wayfinding Program

In Coordination with City of Toronto

In 2024, TRCA and the City of Toronto advanced the branding and signage content for the pilot implementation planned for Section 5 of The Meadoway. The TO360 wayfinding program is set to improve accessibility and safety throughout the trail system, and other sections of The Meadoway are being considered for inclusion in the Wayfinding Program for 2025.

The project team will continue to work with WFF on recognition opportunities as the signage typologies are finalized for implementation.

Trail Partners



The Meadoway



Weston Family Foundation



Trans Canada Trail

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025, the completion of trail construction in Section 3 is forecasted, alongside the detailed design for Section 6, Phase 2 (pending funding). These new trail sections will further close the gaps in connectivity, enhancing access and mobility for all users.

Supporting infrastructure will also be a key focus in 2025. The finalization of The Meadoway wayfinding plan will be a major milestone, with the pilot implementation in Section 5 scheduled to roll out. Additionally, the public realm features in Section 5 will be installed, setting the stage for improving the trail user experience.



Rendering of a rest node in Section 5





THE MEADOWWAY,
GOING TO WINDINGWOOD
AVENUE,
KEEP RIGHT
EXCEPT TO PASS



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Community Powered Greenspace

This year has seen successful growth in The Meadoway’s educational programming, further integrating it within the Toronto community. As these programs develop, they have the potential to change how urban communities connect with nature. The Meadoway has transformed a simple greenspace into a dynamic learning environment where students and residents engage directly with local ecosystems, gaining hands-on experience in environmental stewardship. These opportunities foster a deeper understanding of the natural world and cultivate a shared sense of responsibility for its care. TRCA is grateful for the continued and growing partnerships with schools, teachers, organizations, and community members, whose collaboration has made these programs successful. Each lesson, field trip, and restoration activity has strengthened participants’ connections with the corridor, contributing to the creation of a resilient urban landscape. The Meadoway continues to serve as a model for community-driven environmental initiatives, inspiring lasting change and paving the way for a more sustainable future.

Curriculum-Linked Education in The Meadoway

The Meadoway Curriculum-Linked Education Program has experienced growth and meaningful impact on local communities within Scarborough throughout the year. Over the course of 2024, 1003 students and teachers will have engaged in hands-on, curriculum-linked activities, deepening their understanding of the natural world and providing them with opportunities for environmental stewardship. The experiences provided by The Meadoway Education Program, whether through classroom learning, educational field trips, or direct involvement in hands-on conservation activities, have meaningfully connected students from 40 classes to this local greenspace, fostering a lasting appreciation for nature.

TABLE 5: 2024 Curriculum Linked Education in The Meadoway Program Overview (January 1 – December 31, 2024)

Time Period	# of Students	# of Teachers	# of classes
April to June 2024	556	20	24
July to August 2024	25	6	1
September to October 18, 2024	234	9	9
Anticipated October 19 to November 30, 2024	145	8	6
Totals by Category	960	43	40
Totals	1003		40



Program Development and Delivery

The Meadowway's Curriculum-linked Education program has continued to foster student connections to local greenspaces through hands-on experiential learning. By engaging in these natural environments, students develop a deeper sense of place and a connection to the ecosystems surrounding them, fostering a lasting interest in environmental stewardship.

As highlighted in the interim report, in early 2024, teachers received growing kits for students to cultivate native plants in their classrooms. Each kit included soil, pots, spray bottles, optional grow lights, instructions, and seeds of Black-eyed Susan and Wild Bergamot, selected by TRCA educators for successful growth. Teachers were encouraged to reach out to TRCA for additional support during the growing period. After establishing their plants, students visited The Meadowway, where they reflected on their classroom growing experience and participated in curriculum-linked activities on meadow habitat restoration and the importance of native plant species.

As The Meadowway Curriculum-Linked Education Program progressed into the fall, the focus shifted from spring growth to more hands-on learning, with students engaged in invasive species management, seed collection, seed distribution, and planting. While the curriculum-linked themes and activities remained consistent with those offered in the spring, students were able to deepen their connection with nature by actively participating in land stewardship, fostering a reciprocal relationship with their environment and a sense of responsibility and care for the natural world. A donation of 600 native plants by Wexford PlazaPOPs supported planting activities in Section 2, enabling Wexford area students to plant over 100 large pot native wildflowers and grasses in the Fall of 2024.

The Meadowway Curriculum-Linked Education Program has successfully continued to deepen students' connection with nature throughout 2024, offering unique experiential learning opportunities both in the classroom and on-site. TRCA hopes these opportunities will leave lasting impacts on young people, helping them not only to grow their understanding of the natural world but also to instill a sense of responsibility and pride in their contributions to the community, encouraging them to become advocates and stewards of their local greenspaces, like The Meadowway, for years to come.



The Meadowway
SUSTAINABLE RESTORED GREEN SPACES

MEADOW RESTORATION

The area has been planted with native wildflowers and grasses. Patience is critical for the success of any meadow. You can expect to see beautiful wildflowers in the summer and fall each year. Meadows are a vital component of our natural landscape as they provide food and shelter particularly for birds and butterflies. Maintenance mowing will occur every 3-4 years.



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Conservation Foundation

Conservation Foundation

ATTENTION

This is a
NO MOW
AREA

www.thm.co.uk

Conservation Foundation



Highlights and Achievements

Some of the key highlights for 2024 showcase the diverse range of groups served by The Meadowway Curriculum-Linked Education Program, from special needs students to equity-deserving communities, as well as increased programming related to Indigenous perspectives, emphasizing accessibility, engagement, and meaningful connections to nature and cultural practices.

Accessibility: Special needs students often face barriers to outdoor and environmental education. The Meadowway Education Program aims to address these barriers by offering tailored programs that ensure all students can participate in meaningful learning experiences. In 2024, the program supported two special needs classes from General Carer Public School and YMCA Academy, providing an inclusive environment for students to engage with nature. During a guided walk with YMCA Academy, educators observed students actively interacting with their surroundings in a calm and supportive setting.

Equity Deserving Communities: In August 2024, Community Outreach and Education provided school programming for a local childcare center serving children from families escaping domestic violence. By offering opportunities for equity-deserving childcare centers to join The Meadowway Education Program, the initiative promotes equality and enhances well-being by making nature accessible to all children. Staff collaborated with the center to create a safe outdoor classroom environment, and students received grow kits in July 2024 before participating in an outdoor field trip to Section 4 of The Meadowway for a planting activity. This partnership marked a valuable opportunity

for TRCA's Education Programming and highlighted the importance of offering similar opportunities more frequently, as evidenced by the high level of student engagement and the positive impact of connecting with nature.

Indigenous Connections: The Meadowway offers a natural setting for land-based learning, which is central to Indigenous perspectives. In 2024, two key field trips highlighted meaningful connections to Indigenous teachings and aligned with Ontario's Indigenous Language Arts curriculum. In May, educators from Wexford Collegiate School incorporated Indigenous knowledge into restoration activities, including planting native species and removing invasive Canada Thistle. These hands-on experiences reinforced the Indigenous worldview of environmental stewardship and the relationship between people and nature.

Additionally, the Community Outreach and Education teams piloted a program with Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute, where students created a multimedia reflection and photo essay linking The Meadowway to Indigenous Language Arts. Activities included a guided plant identification walk, a water reflection exercise, and native plant seed dispersal, all incorporating Indigenous perspectives. The program was well received, and there is interest in expanding it to more classes in 2025. In May 2024, Flemming Public School conducted a field trip to Section 7 of The Meadowway, engaging local students and parents, who expressed excitement about the area's positive impact on their neighborhood. This trip also generated interest among local residents, further connecting the community to The Meadowway's environmental initiatives.



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

TRCA's English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist works closely with ESL teachers, resource supports, and coordinators at Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) centres to curate programming and experiences related to The Meadoway that is suitable and relevant to various levels of language learners.

Offering programs specifically tailored to Newcomers and ESL learners helps to bridge language gaps and cultural experiences, making The Meadoway and its programming more inclusive. This ensures that Newcomers feel welcome and can fully engage with their surroundings. These programs also foster leadership and volunteerism by providing New Canadians with opportunities to take on active roles in programming and community stewardship. This benefits individuals by helping them develop new skills while also enriching the community by fostering a more diverse and engaged group of environmentally conscious members.

Program Development and Delivery

The strategic goal for 2024 was to focus on Newcomer and ESL Learner groups that live adjacent to or in close proximity to The Meadoway to build more meaningful connections to their local greenspaces. Two in-classroom events were organized for Fall 2024, featuring presentations and hands-on educational resources tailored to various language levels. These sessions focused on:

- The importance of healthy ecosystems, and the role that they play in maintaining biodiversity and beneficial ecological services;
- The role that ecological restoration plays in an urban environment;
- The Meadoway, including restoration projects, active transportation, and native species; and
- How community groups and students can use the space and be part of the transformation

On October 1, 2024 an in-class session was held with Kennedy LINC through TDSB, instructing a LINC English Level 4 Class with 22 participants and 1 teacher. Kennedy LINC classes have a longstanding connection to The Meadoway as they had participated in planting events from 2014-2018 (formerly The Scarborough Butterfly Trail).

This year, a new partnership with the Islamic Foundation of Toronto was developed to support a Newcomer seniors program related to The Meadoway. This program will be delivered November 13, 2024 and is anticipated to engage over 120 participants and teachers.

Events

In 2024, a key focus was to expand and diversify community programming by offering a range of themed events and activities tailored to different age groups, backgrounds and interests. Additionally, programming was designed to reflect seasonal changes, ensuring that events were accessible and engaging throughout the year. Whether it was stewardship activities in the spring, educational seminars and planting in the fall, or recreational focused events in the winter, the goal was to create a dynamic, year-round experience that would resonate with diverse community members and encourage widespread participation.

In spring 2024, 24 community volunteers participated in a litter clean-up at Section 3 of The Meadoway, removing 94 lbs of litter, learning about the effects of plastics on ecosystems, and spreading native wildflower and grass seeds.



TABLE 6: 2024 Events in The Meadoway Overview (January 1 – December 31, 2024)

#	Date	Location	Event
1	April 20, 2024	Section 3; Lawrence Avenue East and Marcos Boulevard	Let's Clean Up The Meadoway: Earth Day
2	September 14, 2024	Section 4; Thomson Memorial Park	Get into The Meadoway: Saving Seeds
3	September 29, 2024	Section 2; East of Warden	Community Fall Planting in The Meadoway
4	October 4, 2024	Section 6; Military Trail	Unveil the Trail: A Celebration in The Meadoway
5	December 2024	Section 5; connecting to Morningside Park	In progress: Winter hiking and birding activity

In 2024, a new partnership was established between TRCA and the Toronto Master Gardeners (TMG), to develop and deliver a native plants workshop titled 'Get Into The Meadoway: Saving Seeds'. This event, which focused on native plant seed collection and propagation, was the result of collaborative planning between co-developed by TRCA and TMG from late spring until summer. 4. Held on September 14th, 2024 at Thomson Memorial Park, the event engaged 21 enthusiastic participants.

TRCA Community Outreach and Education staff, along with three Meadoway Ambassadors, led a guided walk that discussed the importance of urban greenspace, the role of native plants, and introduced participants to The Meadoway project. The second portion of the event was led by 4 TMG volunteers, who conducted a demonstration on native plant seed collection and propagation. Participants gained hands-on experience collecting seeds from native species, such as Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) and Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).

The event concluded with a native plant seed swap, where participants exchanged seeds of Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), Giant Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*), Hairy Beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*), and Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) collected from the event and gardens of TMG members. Feedback from the Toronto Master Gardeners was overwhelmingly positive, with strong interest in continuing this partnership and exploring further collaborative programming into 2025.



This year the Community Outreach and Education team was pleased to continue its partnership with local non-profit PlazaPOPs, collaborating with local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), residents, businesses and community organizations to create a seasonal pop-up community space enhanced with native plant gardens at Wexford Plaza. TRCA supported the opening event by providing educational resources related to The Meadowway, including information on gardening for pollinators, naturalization, and bird friendly gardening, thereby extending outreach to local communities and promoting urban ecosystem restoration.

In the fall of 2024, PlazaPOPs generously donated native wildflowers and grasses to support the 'Community Fall Planting' event in Section 2 of The Meadowway, near Wexford Park. Held on September 29, 2024, this event engaged 22 participants in restoration efforts aimed at highlighting the importance of restoring meadow habitat within urban ecosystems. With the assistance of Community Outreach and Education staff and 3 Meadowway Ambassadors, were able to contribute to The Meadowway by planting 270 native wildflowers and grasses.

The remaining 430 plants donated by PlazaPOPs were utilized in various Education Programs and corporate volunteer opportunities throughout The Meadowway.



To commemorate the opening of the new trail in Section 6 at Military Trail, Community Outreach and Education hosted 'Unveil the Trail: A Celebration in The Meadoway'. This event aimed to encourage local community members to access The Meadoway through active transportation, while learning about the project, the significance of native plants, and local flora and fauna. Participants were also invited to express their creativity by adorning the trail using chalk art.

Despite the rainy weather, 75 community members joined the celebration on October 4, 2024. Attendees represented a diverse group from local residential areas, elementary and secondary schools, the UTSC campus and Centennial College. This event provided a valuable opportunity to engage new audiences in The Meadoway project and bring the local community together for a unique celebration.

As the year transitions into winter, TRCA's Community Outreach and Education team is collaborating with Meadoway Ambassadors to design our final program, a family-friendly guided recreational hike focused on bird identification skills and citizen science projects. During the Ambassador Program's first meeting in June 2024, several volunteers shared their interest in developing and facilitating bird related programming within The Meadoway.

To further this initiative, a meeting is set for early November to collaborate with Ambassadors in the development and delivery of this program. It is anticipated that this initiative will attract an additional 20-30 community members.



Additional (Alternative Funding and Fee for Service)

In addition to The Meadowway's core funded programming, the Community Outreach and Education team provided several opportunities for The Meadowway engagement over the course of the year. These included corporate volunteer programs, custom school programs, private events, and festival booths. By participating in TRCA's signature events, The Meadowway reached over 2000 festival attendees effectively linking the project to specific themes such as birding at the Spring Bird Festival, the benefits of creating pollinator habitat at the Butterfly Festival, and promoting access to The Meadowway during the Adventures of Salmon event held at Morningside Park.

The Ravine Youth Team, a City of Toronto funded skills-based employment program at TRCA, had the opportunity to work in The Meadowway this summer. On June 13-14 and June 19-21, this group of eight seasonally hired staff supported participated in The Meadowway by cleaning up litter and hand-pulling invasive plants from various sections. The team received hands on training in pesticide application for invasive plant control on July 22 and 23, furthering their skills and knowledge in environmental stewardship

Community Event and Information Booths

- **January 27** - Snowshoes and Snow Clues
- **April 6** - Scarborough Seedy Saturday and Green Fair
- **May 11** - TRCA's Spring Bird Festival at Tommy Thompson Park
- **August 17** - TRCA's Butterfly Festival at Tommy Thompson Park
- **September 22** - TRCA's Adventures of Salmon

Corporate Engagement Programs

- **April 16** - Look After Where You Live (TRCA's Corporate Program)
- **April 17** - Look After Where You Live (TRCA's Corporate Program)
- **May 24** - Look After Where You Live (TRCA's Corporate Program)
- **October 18** - Look After Where You Live (TRCA's Corporate Program)

School Events Creating Links to The Meadowway

- **May 7** - Native Plants Program (2 events)
- **October 3** - Custom Plant ID and Water Connections Program

Volunteers in The Meadoway

The Meadoway Ambassador Program is a volunteer initiative aimed at fostering community engagement and supporting activities within The Meadoway. Since its launch, eleven volunteers have joined, with applications still open to encourage broader participation from surrounding communities. Ambassadors are selected based on their interest in The Meadoway and proximity to the area. Once accepted, they receive training on TRCA volunteer procedures, the history and vision of The Meadoway, and resources to enhance their ability to engage and educate the community about the project.

The program aims to build a community-driven network of volunteers who actively contribute to the engagement, promotion, and stewardship of The Meadoway. In the summer and fall of 2024, Ambassadors participated in various community outreach events, including the Butterfly Festival on August 17, a community planting event on September 29, and the “Get into The Meadoway: Saving Seeds” presentation on September 14. They facilitated activities and provided educational presentations to the public. A second meeting on September 24, 2024, reviewed the program’s impact and discussed future opportunities. Ambassadors engaged in visioning exercises and received training in citizen science monitoring through the Big Year EcoChallenge. Plans were also made for volunteer-led litter cleanups and invasive species management, set to begin in late Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, expanding year-round engagement opportunities for volunteers.



Looking Ahead

With only a few programs remaining in 2024, the Community Outreach and Education team is already planning for 2025 by setting strategic goals and initiating planning efforts. This year introduced a new strategy for offering diverse, seasonally varied community events across multiple sections of The Meadoway. The success of this approach has established a foundation for future expansion, with new partnerships being explored for 2025 to focus on stewardship-related community partners, enhancing the program's impact.

The Ambassador Program will continue onboarding over the winter in preparation for Spring 2025, while existing members will form an executive committee to guide future initiatives. In late Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, hands-on training will be provided to volunteers for restoration activities. Additionally, the English as a Second Language Learner Programs will shift earlier in the year to better align with community event themes, encouraging greater participation from New Canadians.

As we approach the final year of this funding opportunity, The Meadoway's educational programming remains committed to innovation and growth. The Meadoway School Program will continue seeking engagement opportunities, particularly in Section 7, and will explore creating video content to engage elementary students ahead of their visits. By expanding its reach and deepening community engagement, The Meadoway aims to serve as a vital resource for environmental education, benefiting local residents, schools, partners, and equity-deserving groups.





For more information visit
www.themeadoway.ca



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