

Our Email:

Dear candidate for Toronto's municipal elections:

Nature and parklands are vital assets of our city and much beloved. Earlier this year, we all saw the public's extraordinary response to the proposal of jets at Billy Bishop airport. Citizens need to know candidate priorities for protecting and restoring local nature. To show where you stand, we invite you to answer the questions below and share your answers to our email: action@torontofieldnaturalists.org Please reply soon: our deadline is **Sept. 25**, end of business day. We will compile and publish all responses received by the deadline. Our social media networks have wide reach to Toronto's nature community, with over 64,000 views of our recent posts. The [Toronto Field Naturalists](#) (TFN) is a volunteer-run non-profit nature organization. We connect people with nature in the Toronto area, and have been a trusted voice for nature for over a century.

Q. 1: If elected, what will be your priorities to protect Toronto's ravine lands?

Q. 2: If elected, what will be your priorities to protect and enhance the natural waterfront lands of Toronto?

Q. 3 (optional): We invite you to add other ideas you may have to protect nature in Toronto.

Background:

Why Ravines Matter:

The ravine network of Toronto is a great natural feature distinguishing our city. Our ravines cover 11,000 hectares, or 17 percent of Toronto's land area. Nearly 90% of respondents to the 2015 Ravine Strategy survey agreed that ravines are vital to their quality of life.

Toronto's ravines provide an estimated \$822 million each year in recreational and ecological benefits, including nature-based recreation and improved public health. However, the City's Operating Budget invests a small amount annually in ravine care: just \$3.6 million in the 2026 budget.

Over decades, many pressures have degraded our ravines, especially trampling and erosion by off-trail walkers, cyclists and off-leash dogs; invasive plant species; climate impacts including droughts and flooding, and illegal dumping. In many areas our ravines are so popular they are being "loved to death". Even Toronto's best remaining bits of nature, the "Environmentally Significant Areas" or ESAs, are deteriorating and many still lack management plans. Our ravines rely critically on volunteers for care, management of invasive plants and restoration. A patchwork of volunteer-based programs like the City's Community Stewardship Program, the non-profit Toronto Nature Stewards, and TFN's work at Cottonwood Flats has

been caring for about one third of ravine lands since 2020. That leaves about two thirds of ravines still without care.

[Learn More:](#)

Ravine Strategy 2026 Implementation Update: Feb. 10, 2026; reported to Infrastructure and Environment Committee; reported by City of Toronto's Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry and General Manager, Parks and Recreation; [Ravine Strategy Update Feb 10 2026](#)

Waterfront Parklands: Why they matter:

From Etobicoke Creek to the Scarborough Bluffs, Torontonians love their lakefront nature; walking and cycling the many trails; relaxing under shade trees; observing migrating songbirds and Monarch butterflies; taking in sunrises, sunsets and stormy clouds; spotting overwintering ducks and of course boating and swimming.

Toronto's waterfront parklands face many pressures; not only erosion from storms and flooding, but also the housing and recreational needs of a growing urban population. Waterfront parks are extremely popular; Tommy Thompson Park receives an estimated 250,000 – 300,000 visitors per year. Toronto Island has upwards of 1.4 million visitors per year. The public has also enthusiastically embraced the new Biidaasige Park and the restored Mouth of the Don.

Further stresses have been placed on our waterfront by the push of the provincial government to effectively privatise public waterfront lands. At Ontario Place, Torontonians have already lost over 800 trees and precious waterfront parklands. Airport expansion for jets remains a provincial goal at Billy Bishop Airport.

[Learn More:](#)

City of Toronto [Status Update Report: Wider Waterfront Program](#) Nov. 25, 2025

City of Toronto [Tommy Thompson Park update May 10, 2021](#)