

Wychwood Park Pond Restoration

...a Taddle Creek community project

Community:

Wychwood Park Heritage
Conservation District

Restoration Plan:

Deborah Martin-Downs and
Alice Dove,
Gartner Lee Limited
Ruedi Hofer,
PMA Landscape Architects
Ian Bruce, Thomson, Bruce and
Associates

Contractors:

Paul Ehnes, Greenery Unlimited
Galcon Marine Dredging
Ron Priem, Toronto Tree Service

With Assistance From:

Heritage Toronto
City of Toronto Parks and
Recreation
Toronto and Region
Conservation Authority
The Taddle Creek Watershed
Initiative

Background Information:

The Trustees of Wychwood Park
Wychwood Park Archives
Gartner Lee Limited

Project Completion:

Wychwood Park Pond restoration
activities are complete except for
ongoing planting, maintenance
and ravine rehabilitation



Site Description:

The pond is located within the community of Wychwood Park, which is bounded by Alcina Avenue - Tyrrel Avenue, Burnside Drive, Davenport Road and Braemore Gardens. It is within a wooded ravine system that carries the waters of Taddle Creek.

Site History:

Wychwood Park developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1874 Marmaduke Matthews, an English artist, purchased a large portion of what is now Wychwood Park including the ravine and creek. In 1877 his friend and businessman, Alexander Jardine, purchased the remainder. The two men envisaged the picturesque glade as an artists' colony which would contain housing and common land, and in 1888 they registered a plan of subdivision with the City of Toronto. Sometime prior to 1900 Mr. Matthews enhanced the lovely, deeply wooded ravine by enlarging the natural basin at the south end of Taddle Creek to form Wychwood Park pond.

Wychwood Park is considered the headwaters of Taddle Creek, a historic creek that once flowed through the heart of the city and through the University of Toronto campus until late last century. Although it now lies buried as part of the city's sewer system, it can nevertheless still be seen flowing above ground through Wychwood Park, before entering a storm sewer at Davenport Road.

The Wychwood Park community places great value on the ravine, the stream and the pond. It was realized several years ago that the pond was gradually filling with silt, that the water was becoming turbid and that water quality was deteriorating. For these reasons the Trustees and residents of Wychwood Park community undertook the ecological restoration of their pond.

Restoration Profile:

The pond is mostly fed by groundwater from springs and the stream, with additional flow coming from surface runoff (rain events, snowmelt). In recent years the pond has experienced a reduced flow of water and a decline in water quality. The gradual accumulation of sediments had left the pond with a depth of just one metre of water.

Restoration has now been completed to clean the waters and bring the pond back to a high degree of ecological functioning. The pond was drained in the summer of 1998 in order to remove the accumulated sediments, the goldfish as well as native fish, the turtles, and the hard log shoreline. A total of 1100 cubic metres of sediment was dredged out, and recycled by the City as a soil nutrient amendment for the new Woodbine Park. The log edge around the shoreline was also taken away to recreate natural shoreline conditions. This allows shoreline plants to again take root, improving the filtering of road runoff, augmenting wildlife and fish habitat, and enhancing aesthetic value.

Galcon Marine Dredging
Ron Priem, Toronto Tree Service

With Assistance From:

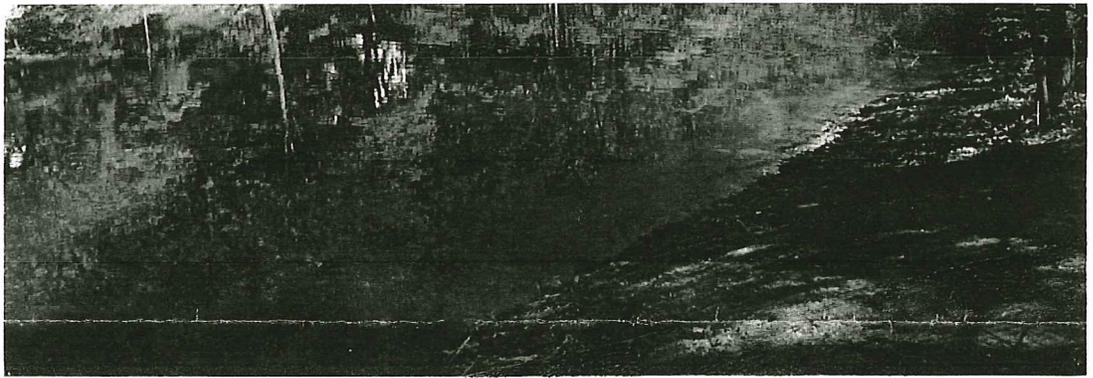
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Restoration Features:

Native fish will be introduced to the pond, such as largemouth bass, minnows and sunfish. A small number of goldfish will be re-introduced. The snapping turtle will be brought back, after successful surgery to get a fish hook removed. The shoreline and slopes are being landscaped by planting native plant species to filter road runoff, enhance biodiversity and stabilize the eroding slopes. Aquatic plants like water lilies will be introduced to enhance water quality and to provide habitat. Stormwater drains have also been upgraded at the pond and french drains installed, to improve water quality. A new dam has been built at the south end of the pond to regulate water levels.

Partnerships:

Wychwood Park residents undertook and financed the pond restoration project under the direction of Gartner Lee Limited. They consulted and successfully collaborated with the City of Toronto (Heritage Toronto, Parks and Recreation, Public Works) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to ensure the pond restoration complements broader historic, sewer- and watershed objectives. Wychwood Park is a member of the Taddle Creek Watershed Initiative, a diverse grassroots coalition of community groups interested in regenerating the Taddle's buried watershed.

