



## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE **Rivers Rising** PROJECT

**Rivers Rising** is a community engagement collaborative project of the Toronto Green Community's (TGC) Lost Rivers program, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto's (NCCT) First Story program, and the Toronto Community Garden Network (TCGN). The **Rivers Rising** project involves:

- **Daylighting stories of Toronto's Lost Rivers;**
- **Daylighting past and present stories of Indigenous and newcomer communities in Toronto;**
- **Creating green communities, the blue green city, and social enterprises;**
- **Connecting with nature, with each other and with the past to create a sustainable future.**

The project will take place over the course of three years in four neighbourhoods using storytelling as the thread to connect people with each other and with the *blue green* city. We will engage community and build capacity of community members to tell their own stories about the connection to their Lost River watershed reflecting themes of sustainable food, water, and culture. The stories will be captured through digital formats becoming content for an online platform and a web based app that offer self-guided and guided walks through Toronto neighbourhoods located in Lost River watersheds. This will increase public access and promote collaboration within and between communities across Toronto.

With the support of local community partners (i.e. local community centres, community garden groups, etc.) we will promote the project throughout the selected neighbourhoods and beyond. We will hold community events where we will first share our stories about the local lost rivers and local Indigenous culture and heritage; then we will ask participants to share their own place-based stories. These events will help us begin to identify stories and to recruit up to ten community members who are interested in taking a leadership role in the project. We will provide these community 'ambassadors' with hands-on training in the process of capturing the stories as well as leading Lost River neighbourhood walks. The ambassadors will also have the opportunity to participate in the anticipated ecotourism social enterprise.

We will conduct three walks in each community with an estimated attendance of 30-50 people at each walk. In Year 2 of the project, our trained ambassadors will act as mentors to subsequent ambassadors recruited from additional communities further building capacity and connections across diverse communities. This project will support communities in discovering and sharing their neighbourhood stories and in jointly seeking opportunities for blue green infrastructure projects and social enterprise initiatives.



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