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Landscape architects to discuss master plan for Toronto's ravines

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2014
BERT ARCHER

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Toronto's ravines take up 10 times the amount of acreage of Manhattan's entire park system. And given that Manhattan and Toronto have roughly the same daytime population - about 3 million — we have a lot of grass to frolic in.

But the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority doesn't think we're taking full advantage of this aspect of the urban ecosystem.

"We have all these wonderful ravines running through our city and a lot of people don't know they're there," says Steven Heuchert, the TRCA's senior manager of planning and development.

Though he thinks the city's done "a pretty good job" of keeping the system reasonably natural, Heuchert thinks the next step is incorporation the ravines into the city, and the city into the ravines.

"For example, a lot of entrances to these ravines are nothing more than a little pathway put there to accommodate some sort of infrastructure," he says.

"There may be a pipe there and maintenance people need to get in to work on the pipe, but we don't make these things generally accessible to the public."

Heuchert gave a talk on Oct. 9, hosted by the TRCA, on his thoughts about where the ravines have come from, and where they ought to be going to. It was part of a series of talks in the **Ravine Portal exhibition** that will be continued tomorrow night by the landscape architects of the Lower Don Master Plan, which Heuchert says puts into practice on a relatively small scale the ideas he thinks should be extended to the entire ravine system.

"The Lower Don Master Plan and the work that Evergreen is doing to try to connect their site into the city a little better are good examples of what I was speaking to in my presentation," Heuchert says, "looking at design solutions to make people recognize that the ravines are there, getting them in in a co-ordinated fashion."

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Tomorrow's talk, titled "**Possible Futures**," will include Seana Irvine, Chief Operating Officer of Evergreen, with Bryce Miranda and Brent Raymond, landscape architects and partners at DTAH.

Writer: Bert Archer

Source: Steven Heuchert