



## **Royal Botanicals Gardens' Statement on the City of Hamilton's Chedoke Creek Report**

*Thursday, February 13 HAMILTON, ON* -- As the principal owner and chief environmental steward for the Cootes Paradise conservation area, Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) will be closely reviewing today's report by the City of Hamilton and its interim remediation recommendations for Chedoke Creek. This urban creek feeds directly into Cootes Paradise, a 600-hectare wildlife sanctuary that contains one of the highest biodiversity of plant species per hectare in Canada.

The City's report, which was developed at the request of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, is an assessment of the sewer and stormwater overflow issue that resulted in the release of substantial quantities of untreated wastewater into Chedoke Creek for the period of January 2014 to July 2018.

While RBG was not formally engaged to provide technical input on the City's Chedoke Creek assessment, we recognize that this is an important first step in addressing the cumulative impact that this leak has caused to the broader area. Over the next few months, we look forward to collaborating with the City of Hamilton on its forthcoming report, expected in May 2020, that will focus on remediation considerations for Cootes Paradise.

RBG has been clear that we feel the extent of the release over a four-year period requires robust analysis, as well as a review of existing policies and procedures to prevent this from happening again. We believe it is crucial to convene a technical working group with experts from the City of Hamilton, RBG, the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Conservation Halton, the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan's (HHRAP) Coordination Office, the Bay Area Restoration Council as well other agency and federal counterparts to combine our collective expertise, promote information sharing, assign appropriate lines of accountability and identify ways to mitigate issues in the future.

We want to arrive at a solution that will repair the water quality and ecological well-being of both Chedoke Creek and Cootes Paradise, while putting our region on the global stage for best practices in waste and stormwater management. Protection, restoration and sustainability are at the core of what we do. We want to ensure that RBG remains a safe and vibrant space for people to connect with the natural world through internationally recognized nature sanctuaries, ecological attractions and diverse learning experiences both now and for generations to come.

**Mark Runciman, CEO, Royal Botanical Gardens**

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