

# Disasters Avoided

## Toronto, Ontario Avoids Flood Disasters ...and offers the tagline “A City Within a Park”

- After devastation from Hurricane Hazel in 1954, Toronto created and now maintains parkland along rivers to avoid another flood disaster.
- Other advantages include reduced air pollution, improved physical and mental health, and spaces for environmental education.

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Along the Humber River, where Raymore Drive used to be (photo: Ilan Kelman).



In 1954, over 80 people perished around Ontario during Hurricane Hazel with about one third of these deaths along Raymore Drive in Toronto. Afterwards, as part of significant changes to municipal governance, floodplains were turned into parkland rather than rebuilding properties there. Lengthy walking and cycling paths include playgrounds and nature areas, reducing air pollution, supporting physical and mental health, and providing sites for environmental education. Wildfires and cliff erosion remain concerns, while parts of the city still flood, indicating more work to do for avoiding disasters.

### References:

- Bonnell, J.L. 2014. Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don River Valley. University of Toronto, Toronto.
- Rajabali, R. and N. Agrawal. 2022. Taming the Flow, Then and Now: A Canadian Case of Floodplain Management, *Frontiers in Water*, vol. 4 <https://doi.org/10.3389/frwa.2022.931214>

Published May 2025.