



Tiered steps leading to the Otonabee River

5.1 Significance of the Otonabee River

The Symons Campus setting is unique, with many of its buildings and amenities offering a direct physical and visual connection to the river. The Otonabee River is of local, regional, and national significance, and serves many functions: it is vital to the health of flora and fauna on campus; it has and continues to be a main travel route and source of food; it provides opportunities for recreation and water-based athletics; and it is identified as a significant cultural heritage feature for Trent University, the City of Peterborough, and the Michi Saagiig. First Nations speak of *time immemorial* to describe their presence on the lands and waters of their traditional territory, with evidence of populations near river mouths and on the shores of embankments in Ontario dating back to the Archaic Period (8,000 BCE - 950 BCE). The river also comprises a portion of the Trent Severn Waterway, a historic canal and series of lockstations operated by Parks Canada (an agency of Environment and Climate Change Canada) and recognized as a National Historic Site.

The following pages provide general guidelines applicable to new initiatives proposed to locate within the Symons Campus to ensure that the river continues to be a central and celebrated element of the campus, as envisioned in the original Ron Thom vision, and its hydrologic system protected and nurtured.



Odoonabii-ziibi

It is the traditional role of Anishinaabe women to speak for the water, to ensure its protection and wellbeing for future generations. There are special ceremonies of thanksgiving, led by the women, that acknowledge the importance of water. Often these ceremonies take place on the shoreline, including on the Otonabee River.

Anishinaabe teachings and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge reinforce the importance of water to the sustenance of all life, including human kind, plant life, and all animals in Creation. Water comes in the form of the lakes and rivers, wetlands, ground water, and water that comes in the various forms of precipitation. Water also comes in the form of sea water, the sweet water from enaatig (the sugar maple), and birth water that comes before a baby is born.

