

# Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 467, Station J  
Toronto, Ontario M4J 4Z2



## AS AN EDITORIAL ...

*1991 was a quiet year for Friends of the Spit, in comparison to past years of public meetings and letter-writing. Nevertheless, considerable behind-the-scenes activity took place. Here are some of the highlights of the past year.*

### THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE WATERFRONT a.k.a. THE CROMBIE COMMISSION

The Commission's final report is scheduled for early 1992. This report, whatever it says, will be one of the prime instruments in determining the fate of the Spit.

So far, judging by both the Interim Report and Watershed (the "progress reports" issued by the Commission up to now), the Commission sees much merit in a Public Urban Wilderness Spit.

In a final meeting, in November, your representatives again stressed to the Commission that Friends of the Spit spoke on behalf of a broad spectrum of users, and that the Spit was not a place that could be parcelled and divided to support all uses at once.

We reiterated our position that the Aquatic Park Sailing Club should not be on the Spit, but rather housed on the North Shore or on the THC Marina arm, and asked that the Commission advocate protecting all habitats on the Spit.

We also asked that the Commission advocate that the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) withdraw their planning study from the Ministry of Environment Approval Process (environmental assessment) and instruct them to revise their plan.

### HOME ON THE MAINLAND FOR SAILING CLUBS

Earlier this year, Toronto City Council adopted a very positive report from the Planning and Development Department recommending that the community boating clubs, including Aquatic Park Sailing Club (that is presently on the Spit under a yearly lease arrangement with the M.T.R.C.A.), be given security of tenure on the North Shore of the Outer Harbour.

The new agreement provides for the clubs to be accommodated within a "park concept" to be developed for the area. It is our information at this time that agreement has been reached between the clubs and the City for a five-year interim lease.

Now, there is no valid reason left for the MTRCA to keep claiming that they have no other solution than put community boating clubs on the Spit.

## NEWSLETTER December 31, 1991

### CITIZENS FOR A LAKESHORE GREENWAY

The establishment of a trail connecting waterfront communities from Burlington to Port Hope was a recommendation of the Crombie Commission's Interim Report. The idea was endorsed by the Honourable Ruth Grier, Ontario Minister of Environment.

Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway (C-Flag), brings together community and outdoor associations and interested individuals, to pursue the trail concept and make it happen.

Friends of the Spit belongs to C-Flag, and one of our members, Boris Mather, has become Chairperson of this new group that wants to see a lakeshore trail for pedestrians and cyclists and conserve recreational and natural areas along the waterfront.

For information, write to: Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway, P.O. Box 1067, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2P2. In Toronto, you can call the local Chapter at 591-7474.

### BEST QUOTE OF THE YEAR

"It is my position that the preferred long term solution regarding the Outer Harbour clubs is to accommodate all Outer Harbour boating and sailing clubs, including Aquatic Park Sailing Club, on the North Shore, and/or the Outer Harbour Marina, and not on the Leslie Street Spit."

Robert Millward, Toronto's Commissioner of Planning and Development, to Herb Park, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, February 18, 1991

... our position too!!!

### NATIONAL WILDLIFE STRATEGY ANNOUNCED

The Canadian Minister of State for the Environment, the Honourable Pauline Browes, selected the Spit as her location to announce the National Wildlife Strategy. The news was better than the weather, which forced a last minute change to an indoor venue.

Among those present at the announcement were David Crombie, representatives of many environmental groups, including World Wildlife Fund, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Citizens for a Lakeshore Trail and Friends of the Spit, and delegates from Canadian Wildlife Service and the

MTRCA. The announcement covers additional funding for endangered spaces, a policy on wetland conservation, and other important ecological and systemic conservation and research items. For more information, please write to the Minister directly: Pauline Browes, M.P. Minister of State for the Environment, 2163 Lawrence Avenue East, Suite B, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 2P5.

**NO INCREASE! NO GST! MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF THE SPIT FIGHTS RECESSION**

**MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT RENEWAL** — Memberships for 1992 are due. We hope you will renew to continue the fight for the Spit. Please mail this slip with your cheque to: **Friends of the Spit, P.O. Box 467, Station J, Toronto, Ont. M4J 4Z2**  
**Membership is still \$5.00 (individual) \$8.00 (family) Additional donations welcome.**

**Is your label correct? If not, please check the box and make the necessary changes on the reverse.**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE NOS** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** A red check mark on your label indicates you have renewed. Thank you for your support.

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS** • **FRIENDS OF THE SPIT DOES NOT EXCHANGE ITS MAILING LIST WITH ANYONE**  
• **AS AN ADVOCACY GROUP, WE ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CHARITABLE TAX STATUS.**  
**THEREFORE WE ARE UNABLE TO ISSUE RECEIPTS FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES.**

**BIZARRE QUOTE OF THE YEAR**

"First, establish a small park of deer on the Spit. They'd be virtually tame, of course, but still natural. I believe that the available Spit resources would support a small herd. Second, it might be fun to establish a small ferry service from Centre Island to the Lighthouse on the Spit. The one main problem with the Spit is that it dead ends. Such a "fun" ferry would relink the end of the Spit to the overall recreational facilities of the downtown parks."

From a candidate for Metro Council in the November, 1991 election, as reported in Toronto Society of Architects Newsletter

**Gee whiz, we're left speechless!!!**

**WILDLIFE NEWS PLANTS**

This summer, through an Environmental Youth Corps grant, University of Toronto Botany students analyzed the vegetation at the Spit and presented proposals for ways to keep Purple Loosestrife out of the proposed wetlands. These future wetlands are now being planned for the east side of the Spit, at the site of the dredgeway cells when these are filled.

Some of the work that was performed by these students has gone

into preparatory chapters for a book on the flora and fauna at the Spit to be published at some future date.

**BIRDS**

**Nesting statistics** — This year, 42,495 pairs of Ringbilled Gulls, 106 pairs of Herring Gulls, 824 pairs of Black Crowned Night Herons, and 62 pairs of Double Crested Cormorants were counted nesting on the Spit. Some 300 pairs of Common Terns were counted nesting on the artificial rafts erected by Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the MTRCA. This was the only occurrence of terns nesting at the Spit.

**Sighting** — In May, one of the CWS workers spotted a Kirtland's Warbler. Not only was this bird quite astray, it is also very rare — one of only approximately 500 in existence!

**WORST QUOTE OF THE YEAR**

"You are correct that some circumstances have changed, especially with respect to the Outer Harbour and we are monitoring these very carefully. At the present time, we have no plans to request any withdrawal or amendments to the approved plan."

The MTRCA in a letter signed by J. C. Mather (no relation to the Chair of C-Flag!) in response to Friends of the Spit's request to withdraw their 'Master Plan' for the Spit submitted to the Province for Environmental Assessment, August 20, 1991

**Golly, what will make the MTRCA change???**

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\* **Season's** \* \* \*  
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\* \* **Greetings** \* \* \*  
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To all members of Friends of the Spit. May 1992 see your wishes come true. \* \* \*

**MEMBERSHIP**

**CORNER** A warm welcome to the new members who joined since the last issue. If this is your first Newsletter, you may be a little confused by the number of key players and the number of issues surrounding the Spit. Don't worry. You will get more knowledgeable with time. In the interval, enjoy the Spit.

**WINTER WONDERLAND** — Remember, the Spit is open during the winter (Saturdays and Sundays, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), weather permitting. A winter excursion on the Spit can be most enjoyable — there are no crowds (but there are always people) and the landscape is most attractive, especially after a snowfall. If you go, please take the usual precautions : dress for cold weather and bring a hot drink and a snack.

**GET READY TO PROTEST ...**

We've heard a sick rumour that once again there is pressure being placed on the City to allow power boat races in the Outer Harbour, adjacent to the Spit. You will recall that a few years ago Friends of the Spit stood alone in protesting these races. We remain completely opposed to them and hope that saner heads will rule and deny race permission.

**GET INVOLVED** — We would be very pleased to hear from members interested in joining the Steering Committee. No experience necessary, only enthusiasm, love for the Spit, a bit of free time and the desire to participate in the public process. Drop us a line at our P.O. Box address.

