

AS AN EDITORIAL

Action at the Spit has become more diverse, as various organizations and political entities each try to exercise their own authority and control on the lands at and around the Spit. Essentially, the second half of 1990 could be reported by saying that an absence of the Newsletter has meant that no news is good news - and we collectively decided to save the cost of mailing on this basis.

We thought that with this newsletter we could bring you up to date on a number of the current issues affecting the Spit.

WATERSHED - AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

Watershed, the second interim report of the Crombie Commission, issued in September, made a number of broad recommendations on the future of the Toronto waterfront. The report accomplished two things of importance to Spit-lovers...

First, the report tackles the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) head-on, and makes many recommendations to redefine and redirect the THC. A large number of deputants to the Crombie Commission, Friends of the Spit included, stated that the THC should be a port authority only (that is to have its jurisdiction limited to the operation of the commercial shipping port). In fact, the Royal Commission goes as far as to specify which port lands should remain with the THC, and to recommend that the remainder be transferred!!!

The second major item of the report for us shows that all land south of Unwin Avenue becomes parkland!!!

The report further states that the Outer Harbour Marina (also known as "the THC marina") should be conveyed to the City, limited to the existing 400 slips. A continuous water promenade is also recommended.

While we are on record as opposing the Outer Harbour Marina in any shape, size or form, the rest of the recommendations are substantially those that we wish.

And, happily, the City of Toronto has endorsed Watershed.

OUTER HARBOUR MARINA - OMB APPEAL

As you may remember, May 1990 would have seen the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing the appeal against the City of Toronto zoning amendment which permitted 400 berths at the Outer Harbour Marina.

This hearing was adjourned, pending discussion between the parties involved. At our Annual General Meeting, the membership adopted a resolution that the steering committee continue to pursue its negotiations with the parties involved, in the hope that satisfactory resolution could be achieved without going to the OMB. At the time of this writing, negotiations have taken place; however, nothing has been finalized.

Discussions taking place

The THC had proposed to accommodate sailing clubs on the marina arm, while retaining the right to at least some of the existing berths. The Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) had agreed to an adjournment of its Environmental Assessment application for its Master Plan for the Spit pending discussions between the City of Toronto and the THC, to find a permanent home for the sailing clubs. While these discussions were proceeding, the Watershed Report was issued.

Again, at this writing, there has been no resolution.

TRAIL ALONG WATERFRONT

Among the recommendation of the Crombie commission is a Greenspace Trail along the waterfront.

Already, a volunteer committee has been formed by environmental and citizens groups, to make it happen. One of our members is representing Friends of the Spit on the Ad Hoc Committee on the Waterfront Trail. Our thanks to Boris Mather for being our rep.

SAILORS TO GET PERMANENT LEASE

Shortly to be ratified by Toronto City Council, the sailing clubs will be granted the use of portions of the North Shore, in the vicinity of Cherry Beach, "for community non-motorized boating operations. The security of tenure that the sailors have sought for so long is now available to them on north-shore parkland.

Happy New Year. Our best wishes to you for 1991.

THEREFORE, THE MTRCA NO LONGER HAS ANY REASON FOR INCLUDING SAILING CLUBS IN ITS MASTER PLAN. NOW THE SPIT CAN BE LEFT TOTALLY NATURAL.

The pressures that the sailing clubs in their desire for a permanent home placed on the politicians can now be solved - the politicians can have it all ... home for the sailors on the north shore - and a public urban wilderness for the entire Spit.

Now, we ask: WHEN DOES URBAN WILDERNESS GET PERMANENT STATUS?

TRIANGLE LANDS - THC PROPOSES "INDUSTRIAL" USES IN 6-STORY BUILDINGS

Despite the recommendations of Watershed, the Toronto Harbour Commission is still attempting to proceed to subdivide the triangle lands, at the base of the Spit, for a "business park".

This plan has been soundly criticised by many parties. The City's own planning staff has recommended that Toronto City Council discontinue the processing of the THC application. For our part, we have made several deputation to the City, to the effect that there should be no subdivision, and that, at the very minimum, the entire area south of Unwin Avenue should become public open space.

Our position corresponds to the recommendations of the Crombie Commission in its Watershed report.

Last December, a sub-committee was established by the City of Toronto to deal with this land. No report has yet been made available.

CELL ONE CAPPING PROPOSAL

Cell one - that is the first of the lagoons you see on the east side of the Spit as you go towards the tip - is nearly filled with dredgeate from the Keating Channel. As required under the Keating Channel Environmental Assessment, the MTRCA must cap this cell.

At a meeting of the Natural Area Advisory Committee, in January, the MTRCA told the Friends of the Spit representative that the dredgeate in the cell appeared to be far less contaminated than had been originally feared, and that the dredged material met the criteria for recommissioning of land for park purposes.

Marsh habitat could be possible

The MTRCA is proposing a scheme whereby the dredgeate would be capped with clean fill, and a number of islands created. This would allow a marsh habitat, consisting of year-round water, flooded areas and solid land.

Provided that the analysis of the contaminants continues favourably (a number of concerns have been raised in this respect), and that the Ministry of the Environment accepts the MTRCA capping proposal, Friends of the Spit feels that it would go a long way toward satisfying our request to return marshland to an area that was once 1000 acres of wetlands, at Ashbridges' Bay.

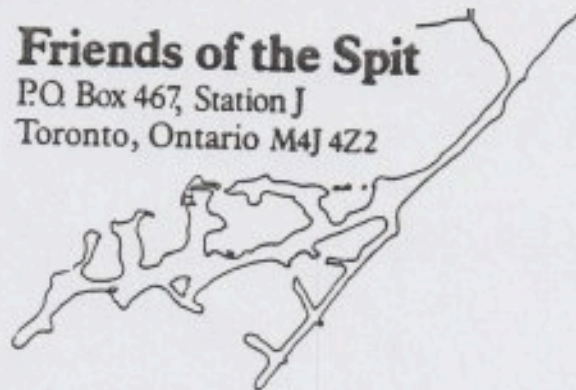
CONFUSING FALCONS

Through December, many observers reported seeing a dark-faced Gyrfalcon at the Spit. However, during the Annual Christmas Bird Count, which took place at the Spit on December 23, this dark phase bird was identified as a Peregrine Falcon, with leg bands identifying it as a release from one of the Canadian breeding programmes.

For members who are birders, this confusion and controversy will continue for many months. From our viewpoint, a local Peregrine isn't shabby, so why complain!!

Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 467, Station J
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THANK YOU MARION BRYDEN

Marion Bryden, the popular MPP for Beaches-Woodbine, retired from politics prior to the last Provincial election. Mrs Bryden has always been a strong supporter of the Public Urban Wilderness concept for the Spit, putting a lot of time and effort to help us resolve this issue.

On countless occasions, Mrs Bryden took time from her demanding duties to speak on behalf of the Spit at City Hall, at the MTRCA, at the THC, and at many other public meetings.

We take this opportunity to thank her, and her husband Ken, for all their work on our behalf. We wish them much happiness in their "retirement" from elected office. We know they will continue to be very involved, and we are grateful.

DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

While for the last couple of years or so our membership has been spared the pleasure (?) of being called to attend public meetings and of being asked to write yet another letter to some agency or the other, the steering committee of Friends of the Spit has been hard at work behind the scenes. We have been extremely busy attending meetings, preparing briefs, giving deputations, taking our display to several events, and talking to many elected and appointed officials.

We feel it is time to get some new blood at the helm of Friends of the Spit, to help us meet the challenges of the new year. If you are interested in getting involved with the steering committee, we would very much like to hear from you.

Basically, the role of the steering committee is to establish and implement, on behalf of the membership, the strategy that will further the cause of keeping the entire Spit as a Public Urban Wilderness. If you are enthusiastic, can spare a bit of time, and enjoy being involved in the public process, give us a call at 699-6442 to discuss, or drop us a line. We would be pleased to hear from you.

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT RENEWAL

Memberships for 1991 are now due. We do hope you will renew, and consider doing so early (this would really please our treasurer). 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) or \$8.00 (family) and additional donations are welcome. NOTE: It is our understanding that we do not have to charge G.S.T., since membership is a nominal amount and does not provide any material advantage (bureaucrat have not yet devised a means of taxing feeling good about helping to save something we believe in, thank goodness!)

NAME _____

PHONE NOS _____

(Please write your name as it appears on the mailing label)

Is your address correct? Did you move?
Please keep us informed of any change.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

First, a warm welcome to the many new members who have joined Friends of the Spit since our last Newsletter.

If this is the first Newsletter you receive, you may be a little confused by all the issues surrounding the Spit, some of which - by no means all - are reported on briefly in this issue. Don't despair. You will learn a bit more with time. The important is that you enjoy the Spit and have come forward to help keep it as a carefree, car-free natural environment.

Notice to all our members

Since Friends of the Spit is an advocacy group, it does not qualify as a charitable organisation and, therefore, we cannot issue receipts for income tax purposes.

Friends of the Spit membership lists are confidential. They are not traded or sold to any one.

TERN RAFTS SUCCESSFUL

In its Tommy Thompson Park Newsletter of October, 1990, the MTRCA reports that the tern rafts you saw placed in Embayment D and in Cell One were successful.

In total, terns built 128 nests and laid 361 eggs. The MTRCA estimates that between 150 and 200 young terns fledged! This certainly helps the Common Tern population.

The MTRCA plans to continue this program in 1991, in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

VIEWING DAY 1991 ? - MAYBE

For three years in a row, starting in 1988, Friends of the Spit has held very successful "Viewing Days" at the Spit on the first Sunday in June, with the assistance of a grant from Environment Canada.

No decision has yet been taken regarding another similar event this year. But it is not too early for you to think of helping. In previous years, we had great volunteers, who really made the day enjoyable for the many first-time visitors to the Spit. We would like to thank them all for their cheerful assistance.

If you have renewed for 1991, there is a red check mark on your mailing label.
Thanks for renewing promptly.