

Friends of the Spit

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Inside:
- Municipal elections: Who'll protect the Spit? - Scary Stuff!

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SOME GOOD NEWS...

The Province approved the rezoning to Gr (conservation lands) of the 12-acre parcel at the base of the Spit. There were no objectors.

This marks the winning of a battle that members of Friends of the Spit fought with their usual savvy, aided by many like-minded individuals and groups, including the Sierra Defense League, The Toronto Field Naturalists and the Toronto Ornithological Club, and supportive Toronto politicians, including Steve Ellis, as chair of the Land Use Committee.

But the war continues.

AND COMING SOON ON THE INTERNET...

Friends of the Spit Home Page

We should be posting our own home page within a few weeks, but you can now e-mail us at:

fos@interlog.com

NEWSLETTER

October 1997



AS AN EDITORIAL

Quick... what is the most precious feature of the Spit? No, it is not a rare bird, animal or plant. Hint: it is one of the most threatened parts of human life. You give up? The answer is: FREEDOM FROM COMMERCIALISM.

Indeed! Advertising has taken over our streets, invaded our libraries, our hospitals and our children's schools. It assails us in our parks and even in washrooms. The Spit is one place where you are free from all that visual and intellectual pollution.

Or it was...

As you see on this page, corporate Canada has now arrived at the Spit. This is scary!

While some may view rampant commercialisation as the price one must pay for amenities, let us remember that he who pays the piper calls the tune. Corporations exist to make money, period. Any "good citizen" activities they sponsor have to contribute to the fulfillment of that goal.

For instance, the principal sponsor of the event pictured at right decided to use the Spit because of a perception that people going there are adventurous types, therefore a market for 'expedition clothing'. (The company's request to display and sell said clothing at the Spit was rejected by the MTRCA.)

The Spit is a refuge for wildlife in the city. It should also continue to be protected as a refuge for humans.

The shape of things to come?

CORPORATE INTERESTS SNEAK ONTO SPIT



Welcome to Mercantile Co. Nature Park... formerly the Leslie Street Spit Public Urban Wilderness! This was the sight that welcomed you at the Spit on June 22. In addition to the tent of the famous maker of expedition clothing (left), the van on the right was plastered with the logos of Bell Mobility, CIBC, NutriBar, Montclair, Fan Radio, and General Motors. The five wearers of the well-known white hat that floats are all MTRCA and sponsor staff.

This event was the brainchild of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, as part of its Summer's Journey promotion of the waterfront trail. Two days before the event, Friends of the Spit were called by a very enthusiastic Trust staffer. She told us about the event and asked us to inform our members of this marvellous opportunity at the Spit, mentioning that people spotted wearing two pieces of the sponsor's clothing would be getting a giveaway item. Wow!

Do we need to mention that we were less than cooperative!

Calls to the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) — who have the mandate to manage the Spit — elicited the response that yes, they had agreed to the event and viewed it as a good way to attract more people to their interpretive walks. The MTRCA also told us that they had rejected the main sponsor's request to parade its famous elephant on the Spit (*editor's note: no, we're not kidding!*) and to display and sell its merchandise.

Is the Spit worth selling off for the sake of a few more interpretive walkers?

Several MTRCA staff members were on hand — on other days, there is only one MTRCA person at the Spit— having volunteered for the day and for a famous hat, plus probably all the bottled water and energy bars they needed. According to the MTRCA, the event resulted in its leading 3 interpretive walks, for a total of 27 people, throughout the day.

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Entirely public

NO PRIVATE OR RESERVED AREAS ON THE SPIT

We have heard disturbing reports that visitors to the Spit were told by individuals, who were not MTRCA staff, to leave certain areas as these were "private" or "reserved". Apart from the official No Entry zones: nesting colonies, environmentally sensitive areas and dumping sites, there are no areas of the Spit reserved for any one group or activity.

We are discussing the matter with the MTRCA and will report further in a future newsletter. If you witnessed such incident, it would be helpful if you called us or wrote us a note.

Happy Halloween!



What a marvellous fall we had. The Spit was glorious...



ANY SPIT-FRIENDLY CANDIDATES?

Not many. On November 10, there will be 56 councillors and one mayor elected. These 57 people will make crucial land use decisions regarding the Spit that were made previously by a 17-member Toronto City Council.

This means that whereas we needed to convince 9 Toronto councillors to vote in favour of the Spit, we shall now have to gain the support of 29 mega-councillors. THEREFORE, YOUR VOTE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT.

Key to symbols:

♥♥♥♥ Best of friends Unfailing, consistent, long-term record of support as elected councillor and/or MTRCA board member.	♥ Good friend Generally good support as elected councillor over a shorter term and/or less involved due to office held.	✿ Potential friend As elected official or community activist has shown support for parkland and related issues.
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♥ **MAYOR**
Barbara Hall This is the time to be pragmatic and go for some substance over "style".

TORONTO
While we gratefully recognize that all Toronto Council voted for the Gr rezoning at the Spit, what really counts is consistency of support. This is why a number of Toronto candidates who were on the outgoing Council are absent from this list. Their record consistently belies that one supportive vote.

Davenport
♥♥♥♥ Rob Maxwell Sincere, quiet, reliable supporter

Don River
♥♥♥♥ Jack Layton An indispensable friend
♥♥♥♥ Peter Tabuns An indispensable friend
♥ Pam McConnell Sincere supporter
✿ Terry Bracket Editor of etc news. Reported favourably about Spit issues

Downtown
♥♥♥♥ Kyle Rae An indispensable friend
♥ Olivia Chow Good record on Metro. Receptive to green ideas

East Toronto
♥♥♥♥ Steve Ellis A prime supporter of Gr rezoning. Good record on parkland/green issues
✿ Sandra Bussin Opposed commercialisation in local park (that local councillor facilitated!)

High Park
♥ David Hutcheon Rallied round in commendable fashion to become a sincere supporter
✿ David Miller Excellent record of support of green issues on Metro Council

Midtown
♥♥♥♥ Ila Bossons Excellent, reliable supporter on MTRCA board
♥♥♥♥ Howard Levine As member of previous Toronto Councils was a sterling supporter
♥ John Adams Has become an active, sincere supporter

North Toronto
♥ Anne Johnston Supporter on previous Toronto Councils

Trinity-Niagara
♥ Joe Pantalone Sincere supporter when on Toronto Council. Good Metro record
♥ Martin Silva Sincere, quiet, supporter. (note first name!)

East York **EAST YORK**
✿ Michael Prue Generally supportive of parkland issues on Metro Council

Lakeshore-Queensway **ETOBICOKE**
✿ Irene Jones Active supporter of Etobicoke waterfront rehabilitation group (CFEW)
✿ Blake Kinahan Active supporter of Etobicoke waterfront rehabilitation group (CFEW)

North York-Spadina **NORTH YORK**
♥♥♥♥ Howard Moscoe Excellent record of support on MTRCA board. An indispensable friend

Seneca Heights
✿ Joan King Active supporter of Friends of the Don Valley

York-Humber **YORK**
✿ Bill Saundercook Active supporter of Humber River naturalisation and rehabilitation

SCARBOROUGH
Supporters of the protection of the Rouge Valley System and green community activists

Scarborough-Agincourt **Scarborough-Highland Creek**
✿ Doug Mahood
✿ Sherene Shaw (uneven record) ✿ Ron Moeser (uneven record)
✿ David Socknacki (uneven record)

Scarborough Bluffs **Scarborough-Malvern**
✿ Gerry Altobello ✿ Edith Montgomery (excellent support)
✿ Ed Green (community activist) ✿ Bas Balkinsoon (uneven record)

Scarborough City Centre **Scarborough-Wexford**
✿ Worrick Russel (community activist) ✿ Mike Tzekas (community activist)

SLIM PICKIN'S

← This list of "friendly" municipal election candidates is disturbing. On the one hand, some Toronto wards have a surplus of excellent people (only 2 councillors are elected per ward), while many wards in other municipalities have no candidate that we could identify as "Potential friend".

Note that Friends of the Spit does not endorse or support any party or political candidate. However, we will continue to report on politicians' actions that have an impact on the Spit.

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Federal waterfront land grab SPIT IN JEOPARDY?

The Federal legislation to transfer ownership of the Toronto portlands (where the Spit is located) to the Federal Government is back on the agenda. According to an article in the Toronto Star by David Lewis Stein, the feds "are trying to grab our waterfront so they can claim credit for the Toronto Olympic Games"



The engineer of this legislation is Broadview-Greenwood MP Dennis Mills, who thinks that the government of Canada should be a presence on the waterfront.

"From what I hear, the presence they have in mind is using their land on the waterfront as the site for the 2008 Olympics if Toronto wins the bid," wrote Mr. Stein.

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Conservation Authorities \$\$\$ BUYS SEAT ON BOARD

Conservation Ontario, the umbrella group for Conservation Authorities (including the MTRCA), has opened its membership to corporations. For \$750,000, a company can purchase a seat on the board.

The first corporate member to be warmly welcomed by the Conservation Authorities is none other than Dofasco, one of the biggest polluters of Lake Ontario.

"This raises serious questions as to the role and strings attached to corporate money," said Paul Muldoon, of the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

Is the day far away when Conservation Ontario will woo corporate allies with the prospect of being able to peddle their wares at Conservation Areas (and at the Spit)?

To its credit, the MTRCA opposed this sell-off to corporate interests.

