

Friends of the Spit

2060 Queen Street East
P.O. Box 51518
Toronto, ON M4E 3V7



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NEWSLETTER

April 1994

SPIT EA DOESN'T DELIVER

The Spit Environmental Assessment Review document, issued at the end of March by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Energy, overlooks the imperative of protecting the Spit as a "wilderness" and fails to respond to the wishes of the vast majority of the involved public.

Basically, this government review takes a hands-off attitude towards the MTRCA's Master Plan for the Spit. A bureaucratic compendium of what procedures were followed when, it takes no position on the two major issues that will have a critical impact on the future of the Spit as a wilderness park: Aquatic Park Sailing Club (APSC) and the location and need for an "environmental shelter" half-way down the Spit. One positive result of the review is that it saw a need for the MTRCA to provide a mechanism for public participation in the future. Accordingly, it requested the MTRCA to "develop and identify an amendment procedure to be followed to deal with any change in the EA".

During the process, 38 "individual public submissions" were received. The vast majority (31) specifically opposed Aquatic Park Sailing Club (APSC) remaining on the Spit while 2 were in favour. Of the groups, such actual users as the Sierra Club, the Toronto Field Naturalists, Metro By Cycle opposed it while support was from bureaucracies

"The public comments suggested that capital costs must be minimized and to do this the best option was to 'leave it alone'." — EA Review, p. 16

such as the Toronto Harbour Commission and the Ontario Sailing Association. Believe it or not, APSC claimed to "have support from a majority of the Park's users". Of the 15 sub-

missions specifically commenting on the environmental shelter, 14 were against it as unnecessary. *(continues over)*

SUBMISSIONS ON THE EA REVIEW

We urge you to write your comments on what we feel is the EA's unsatisfactory response to the need to protect the future of the Spit. Your letters should be addressed to:

The Honourable C.J. (Bud) Wildman
Minister of the Environment and Energy
12th Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5

by April 25, 1994. Quote EA File No. CA-MT-02 (send us a copy if you can).

MEANWHILE, BOATERS THUMB NOSE AT PUBLIC HOURS, DRIVING ON THE SPIT AT THEIR CONVENIENCE

Aquatic Park Sailing Club (APSC) — that has year-round exclusive residency on the Spit, complete with clubhouse and wire mesh fence, and 24 hours a day, 7 days a week car access, except during "public hours" — has been relentlessly demanding MORE car access to the Spit. It has made private representations for total car access to Toronto's Planning Department, The Metro Toronto Conservation Authority (MTRCA), politicians and others, while publicly claiming "environmental conscientiousness" (sic) in front of gullible city councillors.

In addition to unlimited access off public hours, APSC can drive their cars on the Spit during public hours for 3 weekends in the spring and 3 in the fall, for "preparation".

APSC has become ever-more brazen in flouting the rules. On Saturday March 5, one of our members spotted four (4) cars driving out from APSC privatized land base in Embayment C. He reported the incident to the MTRCA. Their response appears on the right.

Should the Environmental Assessment and short-sighted politicians and bureaucrats continue to feel that allowing APSC (or any other car-dependent activity) to use the Spit is acceptable, we can expect nothing but escalation of this type of intrusion — until the persistent whinings of this small group of 100 opportunists (who pay \$50 a year each to moor their boat on the Spit — less than a monthly Metropass) win them unrestricted car access, and other services — at public expense.

the metropolitan toronto and region conservation authority
5 shoreham drive, downsview, ontario. m3n 1s4 (416) 661-8600 FAX 661-8998

March 17, 1994

CFN: 0135

Mr. John Robert Carley
Co-Chair
Friends of the Spit
P.O. Box 51518
2060 Queen Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M4E 3V7

Dear Mr. Carley:

We have been advised that the four private vehicles exiting Tommy Thompson Park during public hours on March 5, 1994 were associated with an Aquatic Park Sailing Club work party.

The Club's action in this regard was in contravention to the Authority's access policy. We have taken action to reiterate and advise the Club of the Authority's policy for vehicular access by Aquatic Park Sailing Club other than during the preparatory weekends identified in the annual licence agreement. Staff will continue to monitor weekend vehicular access to ensure compliance with the Authority's access policies.

Thank you for your organization's continued interest in this Park.

Yours very truly,

Larry Field
Larry Field, M.C.I.P.
Manager, Waterfront Planning
Engineering and Development Section
Water Resource Division

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We need to document automobile violations*, and other unauthorized acts, on the Spit with solid proof. IF YOU SEE A VIOLATION, it's best not to intervene, but try to get as much relevant information as possible, such as:

- Date •Time •Description of car (make, model, colour, etc.) •Licence number •Direction of travel •Speed •Number of people •Exact location
- If you have a camera, a picture would be very useful.

Please phone your sightings to 699-3143. You can leave a lengthy message. Make sure you leave also your name and phone number, in case we need clarification. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

*Except for the APSC 3 preparatory weekends, the only vehicles allowed on the Spit during public hours are marked police cars, MTRCA staff car, the shuttle van and one car parked at APSC.

1994 Memberships Now Due

It's membership renewal time! To renew your membership support, and we hope you do, fill this stub and mail it with your cheque to:

Dues: \$5.00 – Individual
\$8.00 – Family/Group
Additional donations welcome

Friends of the Spit
 2060 Queen St. East – P.O. Box 51518
 Toronto, ON M4E 3V7

Please make address corrections on your label on the reverse

Yes, I am renewing my membership to help keep the Spit free from development and privatization.

NAME _____
 (Please Print)

SIGNATURE _____

PHONE NUMBERS _____ H _____ B _____

Important note: Friends of the Spit does not exchange its mailing list.



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 A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

DON'T GO TO THE SPIT WITHOUT IT!
 Order your copy of this illustrated guide in time for spring outings on the Spit. Cost: \$5.00 plus \$1.00 postage per book. Use the coupon below. Please print clearly, this is your shipping label.

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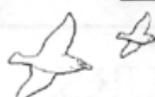
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NEW MAILING LABELS – Our volunteer database keeper acquired a more modern printer and computer program to replace the aging dot-matrix machine and software that served us well for a number of years. The new database allows us to display messages on the label, the most important of which is your renewal status. If you see "REN/94" on your label, your renewal has been received for that year. If you receive our newsletter "for information" as a media or public official, the word "COMP" appears on your label and this is not a solicitation for membership.

SPIT EA DOESN'T... (continued)

If you sent a letter to the EA branch, you probably received a copy of the review document. The document may also be consulted at Toronto City Hall and other locations (call us at 699-3143 for addresses).

We thank all the Friends who sent in their comments last June (your letters were great!) and we ask you to write once more (and get your friends to write also). If you have not yet commented on the issue, we urge you to do so this time (see over for information on where to mail your submission — it does not have to be long or involved, but we recommend firmness).



OUR MOST HEARTFELT THANK YOU

To the **Birder's Nature Store** and owner Sue Potter, who donated the profit from their first week of operation to Friends of the Spit.

Just as important as the gift, which was sizeable, is the spirit in which it was given. "We wanted to do something tangible for an organization that is truly community-based," said Sue.

The Birder's Nature Store is located at 2257 Queen St. East (at Hammersmith).



"It seems to me that empire-builders apart, the current era of dejected economic conditions (...) may prove a blessing with respect to the Spit: if we cannot afford these expensive plans — and bear in mind that they usually turn out much more expensive than projected — nature will continue to work its wonders at little, if any, expense to the taxpayer." — Submission to the EA

AND ON THE LOONY FRONT... After all these years, Bozo proposals for the Spit still surface: In the February 3 *Toronto Star*, an Ontario Government planner named Eli Ophek wrote an article proposing that the Spit be used for a second international airport to service Toronto. Imagine, we're paying our civil servants to come up with this kind of innovative thinking — wowwee! Mr. Ophek was ridiculed in several Letters to the Editor.

Perhaps, with luck, he will go back and read the Royal Commission's reports, the MTRCA Revised Master Plan, and even our literature! However, we must always be aware that, for some, an "empty" piece of land is something upon which the human hand must make a strong imprint.

The community was assured by Frances Lankin, MPP Beaches-Woodbine, that there are no plans to build an airport on the Spit. But can we trust governments? Why else would a government planner sail a trial balloon?

POWER BOAT RACES NEAR THE SPIT ON AGAIN

The only sure thing is that there are no sure things. And one thing we should be wary of is to congratulate a politician who is acting out of character!

Remember the power boat races that Land Use Committee rejected last year? And remember the "Tip of the Hat" we gave Councillor Michael Walker for his eloquent defense of the Spit?

Well, now the boat races are ON (for 1994, 1995 and 1996), thanks to "courageous" Councillor Walker, who with his sidekick John Adams, presented a motion to reopen the issue at City Council and this time voted in favour of the races.

Friends of the Spit have actively opposed these races at every turn. For the races to go on, the proponent still has to put an indemnity to the Toronto Harbour Commission, which must then sign the undertaking and agreements, leading to a Bill being introduced at City Council. Still a chance to protest...

By the way, municipal elections are being held this November. You may remember that, on a previous election, Councillor Walker squeaked in on a recount...



THE GREAT INTELLECTUAL DEBATE

Time: Summer 1993

Place: Toronto City Hall

Occasion: Land Use Committee meeting to discuss the City of Toronto's response to the Environmental Assessment for the Spit.

Friends of the Spit presented a deputation to the Committee to the effect that the continuance of Aquatic Park Sailing Club was a threat to the future of the Spit as a public urban wilderness and that their response to the EA should be that they agreed the club should move. Wow! Here are a few of the comments we heard:

- "They should stay. I kind of like boats. I think they are cute." (Councillor Kay Gardner)
 - "It was so nice when Friends of the Spit and the boaters got together against the power boat races. We should all be nice to each other." (Councillor Barbara Hall)
 - "If they were rich guys, I would have been happy to see them go." (Councillor Robert Maxwell)
- The mind boggles! Not quite so funny was the fact that, with two exceptions, the Committee members did not know what was at issue — they thought that they were to take a decision regarding zoning for Aquatic Park on the Spit and not merely to draft a response to an EA. Only two Councillors were on top of the issue: Howard Levine — "It's time we had some vision for this City, for what the Spit can be as a wilderness, and protect it." he said (BRAVO!) and Peter Tabuns, who has always been very supportive of the wilderness concept.

"A beautiful and fragile wilderness has grown up in Tommy Thompson Park. It's very wildness is what so attracts thousands of ordinary visitors. Please do not destroy this unique area with excessive interference in order to accommodate a special interest few." — Submission to the EA

"There is a special magic in being able to show your children beavers, loons, snowy owls, herons and kingfishers almost on your doorstep, and I would like to see this magic preserved for future generations..." — Submission to the EA

The BIG BIRDWATCH will take place on June 4 — proceeds to the Charles Sauriol Environmental Trust Fund, which is used to assist in the purchase and preservation of green-space. Many prizes are to be won. To register (\$40 per team of 4), call the MTRCA at 661-6600, ext 352.