

Friends of the Spit

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the Web
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We are online!

Friends of the Spit are on the Web. Come visit. Tell your friends.

A homepage on the Internet is a very cost-effective way of reaching many people who have not heard of the Spit, in addition to a large number of members and allies. The benefits were proved during the Gr rezoning issue two years ago. Messages posted on environmental and community Web sites helped enormously in rallying concerned individuals and winning the day.

Our site, designed by computer-savvy Friends, is sponsor-free and gimmick-free, so that it loads quickly. Its purpose is to attract new members and keep the membership informed about developments between Newsletters. In addition to information about the Spit and about Friends, our site contains the current Newsletter, environmental tips and ideas as well as links to other pages that may be of interest. So "Come, explore" Friends of the Spit Web site at:

<http://www.interlog.com/~fos>

NEWSLETTER

April 1998

AS AN EDITORIAL

- A new, 57 member Toronto Council
- Continuity lost on the Toronto Conservation Authority board
- Wind turbines along the waterfront
- The bid for the 2008 Olympics
- Takeover of the Portlands by the Federal government
- The Waterfront Regeneration Trust
- The Trans-Canada Trail
- Habitat creation and management at the Spit

How's that for a full plate?

Each of these, and many others just over the horizon, will require our attention during the next months and years. At this time, few have the dramatic urgency of, say, the Gr rezoning of the base of the Spit, but every one of them could create another challenge to the Spit as a Public Urban Wilderness and as a special place for getting away from it all.

We will discuss each of these points in some detail over the next few issues. If you have questions, ideas or concerns you wish to see covered, drop us a note, by mail, e-mail or phone.

If you are not on the Internet...

Several branches of the Toronto Public Library have computers connected to the Internet. Access is free, but you have to reserve and are limited to one hour at a time. Enquire at your branch for details.

Friends of the Spit's Web page will have no impact on your printed Newsletter and on the timely notification of hot issues by mail or by phone. Our Web page is just an additional means of reaching present and potential supporters.

How do you convince 57 city politicians?

Mega City challenging for Friends

Consider that prior to the November, 1997 municipal elections, 17 politicians (one mayor and 16 councillors) made the crucial land-use decisions that affected the Spit.

Now, 57 elected officials, many unaware of the Spit history, will vote on issues that have an impact on its viability as a public urban wilderness. From a practical, point of view, it means that:

- At least 30 councillors will have to be lobbied and persuaded to support our side. This triples the number on the previous council (9) that we needed to win a vote.
- Our effectiveness was enhanced by the clout of our politically-active members, allies, and supporters, who could (and did!) have an impact at election time. Our numbers in Toronto made us a force to be reckoned with. Owing to the increased size of the city, we will have to work much harder to muster community support and make sure it translates into an impact on the ballot box.

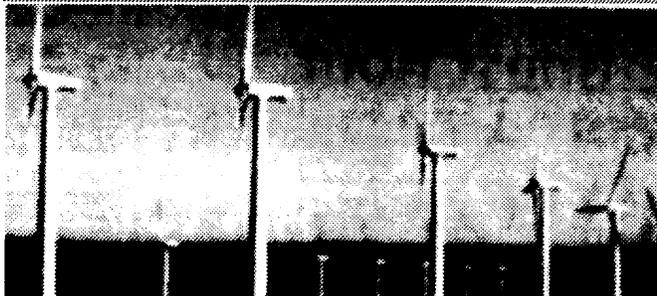
There is one beam of light. The two councillors for Ward 25 (Don River), where the Spit is located, are both great supporters, with a sincere love for the Spit. We know we can rely on Jack Layton and Pam McConnell to educate their fellow council members, despite their huge workload and the brutal number of issues — from trite to crucial — put in front of Council.

Could it be "Gone with the wind" for the Spit?

Group wants to build wind turbine farm

Here we go again! Another scheme to use the Spit as if it were an empty, worthless piece of wasteland just awaiting developers' "magic touch". This time, it's a wind turbine plant. And it's certainly not your picturesque Dutch windmill, but "high-tech megatowers".

Wind energy can reduce the use of fossil fuels that contribute to global warming. This technology is far from benign, however. A vast amount of land is required for the towers (50 - 150 feet high) and huge blades. A group called the North Toronto Green Community, is pushing to put a turbine plant on the waterfront, with the Spit one of their choice locations — due to steady wind. We are categorically opposed. To sacrifice valuable parkland and wildlife habitats as a trade-off for environmental gains in other areas is not acceptable. The Spit is unique in North America, fulfilling a crucial role as public urban wilderness, wildlife reserve, and environmental resource.



New plant species? Can you imagine the Spit sprouting hundreds of towers weighing 50,000 pounds, with blades the length of half a football field? Wind turbines help lessen the need for fossil fuels, but the Spit with its critical wildlife corridors and sensitive environment is not a suitable place for such an invasive project.

A great gift... a great way to get new members for Friends of the Spit!

The Spit Kit

Protecting the Spit as a public urban wilderness is a demanding and relentless undertaking. By giving a Spit Kit to friends and family members, you help increase our membership and widen our reach within the community.

For a gift that is inexpensive and fun, give a Spit Kit and take the recipient(s) on an introductory trip to the Spit. The Spit Kit includes:

- ☼ 1 year membership in Friends of the Spit
- ☼ Bird checklist
- ☼ Plant Communities of the Leslie Street Spit (our plant book)
- ☼ A card announcing your gift
- ☼ Come, explore (brief intro with map)
- ☼ Spit poster (mailed in a tube)*

To order: send \$17 (individual) or \$20 (household/group: 2 or more at the same address) to:

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

Include: name, address and phone number of the recipient and your name and phone number, or fill the form on your renewal slip. Allow 3 weeks for delivery.

The plant book is also available separately for \$6.00 including postage and handling

* Posters are free (\$5.00 covers the tube and postage). You can get them at the Spit from the MTRCA (who produced them). Kits without poster are \$12 (individual)/\$15 (household).

Come, explore
The Spit



Toronto Field Naturalists celebrate their 75th anniversary

A heartfelt "many happy returns" to this great organization and our best wishes for a bright future.

Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN) have been staunch supporters of Friends of the Spit since our foundation — a mere 20 years ago!

We take this opportunity to thank them for all their help. We look forward to continued cooperation with this "venerable" organization.

In addition to nature advocacy work, TFN offer a number of very interesting guided walks at various locations throughout the city (some during the week and in the evening), all accessible by TTC, and monthly meetings. Their newsletter, illustrated with delightful pen and ink drawings, is an excellent source of information about local wildlife and related issues.

To enquire about joining TFN, call (416) 968-6255.

Yours to enjoy – All of it! But use extra care during the nesting season.

No private areas on the Spit

With the exception of environmentally sensitive areas and construction zones, the entire Spit is public, including all Embayments and shorelines. We have heard disturbing reports of individuals blocking the way, claiming that an area was "private".

There are no such areas on the Spit. Should you be confronted by individuals telling you that you cannot go into an area, turn back and report the incident immediately to the Conservation Authority attendant. The police have been informed and are cooperating with the Conservation Authority to stop this kind of behaviour.

A reminder also that **dogs are not allowed on the Spit**. Dogs are very disturbing for wildlife and create a hazard on the spine road used by walkers, cyclists and bladders. Please report immediately all instances of dogs on the Spit to the Conservation Authority attendant.

It's that time again...

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thanks to the large number of Friends who have already renewed their support for 1998.

If you have not yet renewed according to our records, a renewal slip with your label is enclosed. Your continued support is greatly appreciated and we thank you. If you have renewed for 1998, you will see "REN/98" on your label.

Poetry corner

LESLIE STREET SPIT SPRING

*The things we built to last forever
crumbled now beneath our feet*

*Chunks of sidewalk, slabs of concrete
hunks of wall of brick*

*rusty reinforcement rods, tangled
twisting skyward*

*We scalped her forests, raped her bowels
fired and wrought a dreadful soup —
spilled out now in the lake*

*In this land of de-construction
cairns of stones and lay-man's sculptures
water worn bricks strung
on tendrils of steel jutting
at angles from aggregates
testament to the creativity of man*

And nature?

*Hear the rumble of the lake
crashing on this rough shore
steadily, forever
reclaiming her own
pounding out red and yellow sand
polishing glass pebbles — opaque, green
even blue — some old Noxema jar
or other brand name bottle*

I do not know

*We trudge over clean fill
trucked from near and far
wind blown in fine dirt and dust
fills every crevice — with seed*

*Winter weeds stand graceful
amongst the rubble*

*Some small green creeper dares
to bloom tiny yellow trumpets*

*The strength of nature manifests
transforms the miseries of man*

Yvonne Macor 3/94

The author adds that she wrote this poem
"after a very pleasant walk on the Spit".

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Your submissions are always appreciated. We will be pleased to publish your poems or essays about the Spit in the Newsletter, space permitting.