

Friends of the Spit

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- We get an
award!!!
- New bird
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Hassle-free Holiday shopping

Give a Spit Kit

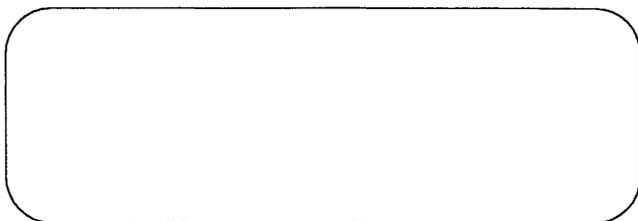
In addition to making a handy, inexpensive gift, the Spit Kit is a good way to get new members.

Please see the yellow slip included with this mailing (it is on the reverse of your renewal slip if you have not renewed your 1998 membership) for a description of our Spit Kit and ordering instructions.

If you have given a Spit Kit in prior years and wish to renew the membership as a gift, the instructions are also on the yellow slip.



*Happy Holidays
and Best Wishes for
the New Year to all
the Friends.*



NEWSLETTER

October 1998

AS AN EDITORIAL

Much of this issue is unashamedly self-congratulatory! So be it, because we have great reasons to give ourselves a huge pat on the back.

When your opponents as well as your allies laud you, you have been doing something great—and your opponents are honourable.

So we let them speak for themselves...

Recognition from the Conservation Authority

Very well said!

The Honour Roll Award was presented to Friends of the Spit by Mr. Craig Mather, Chief Administrative Officer of The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This is the full text of his talk before presenting the award.

“The planning of Tommy Thompson Park was a long, sometimes frustrating, sometimes confrontational, sometimes poetic, sometimes humorous learning experience.

One of the main protagonists in this ten-year drama was the group known as the Friends of the Spit.

Their never-wavering belief in their vision for the Spit (now known as Tommy Thompson Park) and the tenacity with which they pursued their vision throughout the planning process, not only had to be admired, no matter which side you were on, but ultimately carried the day.

I personally will never regret having gone through this process, for I learned a lot, the Authority learned a lot and I think our waterfront is much better off because of it.

Conservation Authority recognizes Friends of the Spit with

Honour Roll Award 1998

At a well-attended “Recognition Day” in the Black Creek Pioneer Village Visitors Centre, Friends of the Spit received an Honours Roll Award from The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

We are always pleased to receive awards, and we always unmodestly but truly acknowledge that they are “well-deserved”. This one is quite special and unusual, however, being given to us (Continues over)

The tree. The co-chairs of Friends of the Spit proudly planting our tree at Black Creek Pioneer Village, “supervised” by Mr. Craig Mather, CAO of the TRCA, who presented the award.



The award. A miniature of the Honour Roll Award is included in this mailing, so that all members can share in this accolade from the Conservation Authority.

The Friends of the Spit’s vision for Tommy Thompson Park was one of a wilderness park in the middle of downtown Toronto. In my view, despite the many competing interests, this was and is the right vision.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to those individuals who make up the Friends of the Spit for ensuring that this very unique

Honour Roll Award

1998

in honour of

Friends of the Spit

For their efforts for more than 20 years in advocating the environmental protection and preservation of the Leslie Street Spit (now known as Tommy Thompson Park); for their dedication and tenacity during the 10-year Tommy Thompson Park master planning process in advocating their vision for the Park as an urban wilderness on the Toronto waterfront; and for their continuous commitment to ensuring that this waterfront park continues to provide an opportunity to learn and experience nature in a very unique setting in the centre of Canada’s largest urban area.

Dick O'Brien
Dick O'Brien
Chair

Craig Mather
Craig Mather
CAO

urban wilderness park will remain a testament to what nature can do and be, if you just leave it alone.

It is for this reason that we are recognizing the Friends of the Spit today.”

We are all the more impressed by this talk since Mr. Mather often bore the brunt of our interventions during the lengthy Spit Master Planning exercise.

by an agency that we have dealt with more often than not from the opposite side of the rink. Many of us will have bittersweet memories of the epic struggles and endless meetings of the 80s and early 90s...the despair, the hopes and, unfortunately, the acrimony (neither Friends nor the TRCA being the worst offenders, by the way).

Now, yesterday's opponents—and still today's on a number of issues—has looked beyond politics and appreciated your achievements. It is a rare moment to cherish. It says a lot about Friends of the Spit, and a lot about individuals in TRCA management and on their board.

The award included the ceremonial planting of a tree and, for us to keep, an inscribed spade. The spade and the framed citation are now part of Friends of the Spit's history.

May our tree thrive as a symbol of Friends of the Spit's stewardship of nature.

Birds of Tommy Thompson Park

Leslie Street Spit Checklist
1988

This list has been produced by Toronto and Region Conservation in partnership with Friends of the Spit. Funding provided by Environment Canada's Great Lakes 2000 Cleanup Fund and the City of Toronto. Illustrated Author Photo. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting:

Toronto and Region Conservation
1 Sheppard Avenue, Downsview, M2N 5P4, or

Friends of the Spit
E.B. Box #2216, 2060 Queen Street East, Toronto, M4E 3V7

Hot off the press and up-to-date

New Spit bird checklist

A new checklist of the birds at the Spit, prepared jointly by Friends of the Spit and The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), is now available.

Friends of the Spit produced and published the first checklist of birds at the Leslie Street Spit in 1988. This major undertaking for us testified that we were not only an advocacy group but also took stewardship of the land very seriously. If you still have that edition, it must be well-filled and well-used!

The new checklist is available at the Spit from the TRCA attendant. To receive a copy by mail, send a stamped self-addressed envelope (business size) to: Friends of the Spit, P.O. Box 51518, 2060 Queen St. East, Toronto, Ontario M4E 3V7

Note: If you want 2 or 3 copies, please put 90¢ postage on the self-addressed envelope, to ensure Canada Post will deliver. Please indicate how many copies you want.

With the "blessing" of the Canadian Wildlife Service

Harbour Commission bulldozes Tern nests

On June 1, a group of naturalists looking for a rare bird witnessed the bulldozing of dozen of Common Tern nests by the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC). The THC claimed that this was necessary to enable surveying work to proceed.

As you well understand, this raised the anger of environmental groups. The media were contacted and stories were published in both The Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail.

According to a preliminary investigation by environmental groups, Environment Canada issued a permit to destroy the nests on June 2, that is the day after the bulldozing took place!

The Sierra Legal Defence Fund, on behalf of a number of naturalist groups, including Friends of the Spit, filed a formal request for an investigation with the Provincial Environment Commissioner. The investigation should be completed at the end of October.

Friends of the Spit also wrote a letter to the Canadian Wildlife Service, the branch of Environment Canada responsible for migratory bird protection(!!!). This letter is on our web site.

Worth a visit

Spit web site expanded

Friends of the Spit now has an extensive site on the World Wide Web. Come, explore it.

Come, explore

Our web site has two objectives: make the Spit and Friends of the Spit more widely known, to increase our constituency, and keep members and allies informed as issues develop between newsletters.

The site also offers hot links to sites that may interest our members as well as relevant articles too long to reproduce in this newsletter.

You can also send e-mail to Friends of the Spit directly from the site. Just click on a link containing our e-mail address (fos@interlog.com).

Friends of the Spit's web site is at <http://www.interlog.com/~fos>

Wind turbine off the Spit...for now

Members nix idea

The Friends are generally a pretty cool group, except when they perceive danger to the land they fought for 20 years to preserve.

The article about the possibility of wind turbines on the Spit in the April Newsletter got our members up in arms. We received e-mail, letters, post cards, notes on the back of renewal slips, overwhelmingly rejecting the mere thought of building this (and anything else) on the Spit.

Subsequent discussion with the North Toronto Green Community, the group attempting to put a wind turbine on the waterfront, ascertained that the Spit had been taken off their list of possible sites.

Two issues remain as far as we are concerned: the impact on birds since practically all of the Toronto waterfront is on the flyway and the effect on the Spit of a site in close proximity. Apart from these, a position on this project is outside our mandate.

We are aggravated that every Tom, Dick, and Harry zeroes in on the Spit as the site for whatever is their pet project, announces it publicly and unilaterally and, as some have done, claims a "higher purpose".

Does this herald a new era?

THC consults Friends

Much to our pleasant surprise, the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) initiated a discussion with us regarding the placement of sand into Embayment A on the Spit.

In early October, together with representatives of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), we met with the THC, who outlined their plan to shift 54,000 m³ of pure sand dredged from the Eastern Gap shipping channel into the southeastern area of Embayment A.

The sand originated from the erosion of the Scarborough Bluffs that was carried by lake currents to Wards Island, then deposited by storms in the Eastern Gap, where it became an obstacle to navigation. This sand is seemingly very clean.

The work, scheduled for late fall and early winter, will enable the creation of a wet-land in Embayment A—part of the Master Plan for the Spit—years ahead of schedule. The TRCA will plant the area with vegetation similar to that of Embayments B and C.

At the meeting, concerns about disruptive effects of the work were discussed and addressed.

Members are well aware of the unsympathetic (to say the least!) attitude of the THC towards the Spit over the past 20 years, the latest example of which being their wanton bulldozing of Tern nests (see left). Does this approach to us indicate a new direction for the THC... or is it trying to protect its bacon in the imminent federal government takeover? We wonder.