

The CCFEW News

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

April 2011

The annual newsletter is always an opportunity to reflect on the activities and accomplishments of the preceding year. This year, more than most, I get a feeling of *déjà vu*. So many things that we expected to happen last year are still out there, maybe to happen this year: Mimico Linear Park Phase II, the Sherway Trail, Stormwater Management, 51 Lake Shore.

Meanwhile, there were long awaited projects that were completed: the often contentious skating trail at Sam Smith Park was completed and opened. New interpretive signage was installed at Sam Smith Park.

There were also the projects and events that started and concluded last year: The first annual Bird Festival at Sam Smith Park, and the attempts to establish a nature education centre there.

This newsletter will try to summarize what has happened, what hasn't, what is happening, and what's going to happen along the Etobicoke waterfronts. Of course many people stay current with this through our e-mail updates and our website, which now averages well over 100 visitors each day.

events in the parks than sitting indoors talking about them! Despite some wonderful speakers and varying the timing, we still consistently get far more people out to a Bird Walk than we do to an annual general meeting.

This year's AGM will be on May 9th, 7:00pm at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street. We will be reviewing the past year, setting priorities for the coming year, and unveiling a brand new CCFEW logo.

We will also be electing our executive. Positions open for election are President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.



Annual General Meeting

Our annual general meeting will be a break from tradition this year: We will have the usual board elections, reports, etc. but it will be an extended version of our monthly meeting with no guest speaker. Our members have spoken with their feet: they're more interested in getting out to

Spring Bird Festival

The Spring Bird Festival will be back at Colonel Sam Smith Park for a second year on Saturday, May 28th. Last year's inaugural event was organized in a very short time and still managed to be a tremendous success. This year's event, benefiting from experience and a longer planning

window, promises to be even better. Events and activities will include:

- 1 hour guided bird walks on the hour
- Live animal displays
- Whimbrel watch
- Children's activities
- Nature photography

The festival will run a bit longer this year: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm with the first bird walk starting at 8:00 am. Participants include the City of Toronto, TRCA, CCFEW, FOSS, the Toronto Ornithological Club, Birds & Beans, and many more.

Stormwater Management

Plans are still being made for a major stormwater management initiative in south Etobicoke. We first wrote about it way back in our 2009 newsletter. There was a public meeting late that year, and it would appear that virtually no progress has been made. The consultants and engineers would of course dispute that characterization, since they have done a lot of work analyzing the alternatives. The optics problem is that it now looks almost identical to what we saw back in 2009 before the consultations began. CCFEW was invited, as a member of the working group, to view and comment on the plans before they go to a full public meeting.



We were disappointed to see that none of the recommendations we had made early last year had been heeded. The preferred option is shaping up

to be the “big pipe” option with a central treatment/settling facility located somewhere in Colonel Samuel Smith Park. To be fair, the option of many smaller treatment facilities would be more expensive to operate and the more naturalized options such as settling ponds require more space than can be found in an urban setting. Still, many of us were left feeling that we will be spending a large sum of money for infrastructure that will cause tremendous disruption in the short term and no visible benefit in the long term. (The benefits in terms of water quality will be there, but they won't be something tangible for seen in years to come.) We have urged that some form of creek rehabilitation or improvement to visible infrastructure be incorporated into the plans. Partial daylighting of one or more historic creeks would be particularly appropriate since these were key elements of natural stormwater management before we paved vast areas and put the creeks into underground pipes.

We expect another public meeting later this year, but again, that's what we said last year!



This newsletter was printed on recycled paper containing 100% post-consumer fiber.

Marie Curtis Park Revitalization

Marie Curtis Park is located in the extreme southwest corner of Toronto, on the Mississauga border, at the mouth of the Etobicoke Creek. The park was created in the 1950s following Hurricane Hazel. The hurricane destroyed the houses at the mouth of the creek, and moved the creek mouth east. The municipal boundary follows the original location of the creek, so more than half of the park is actually west of Etobicoke Creek.

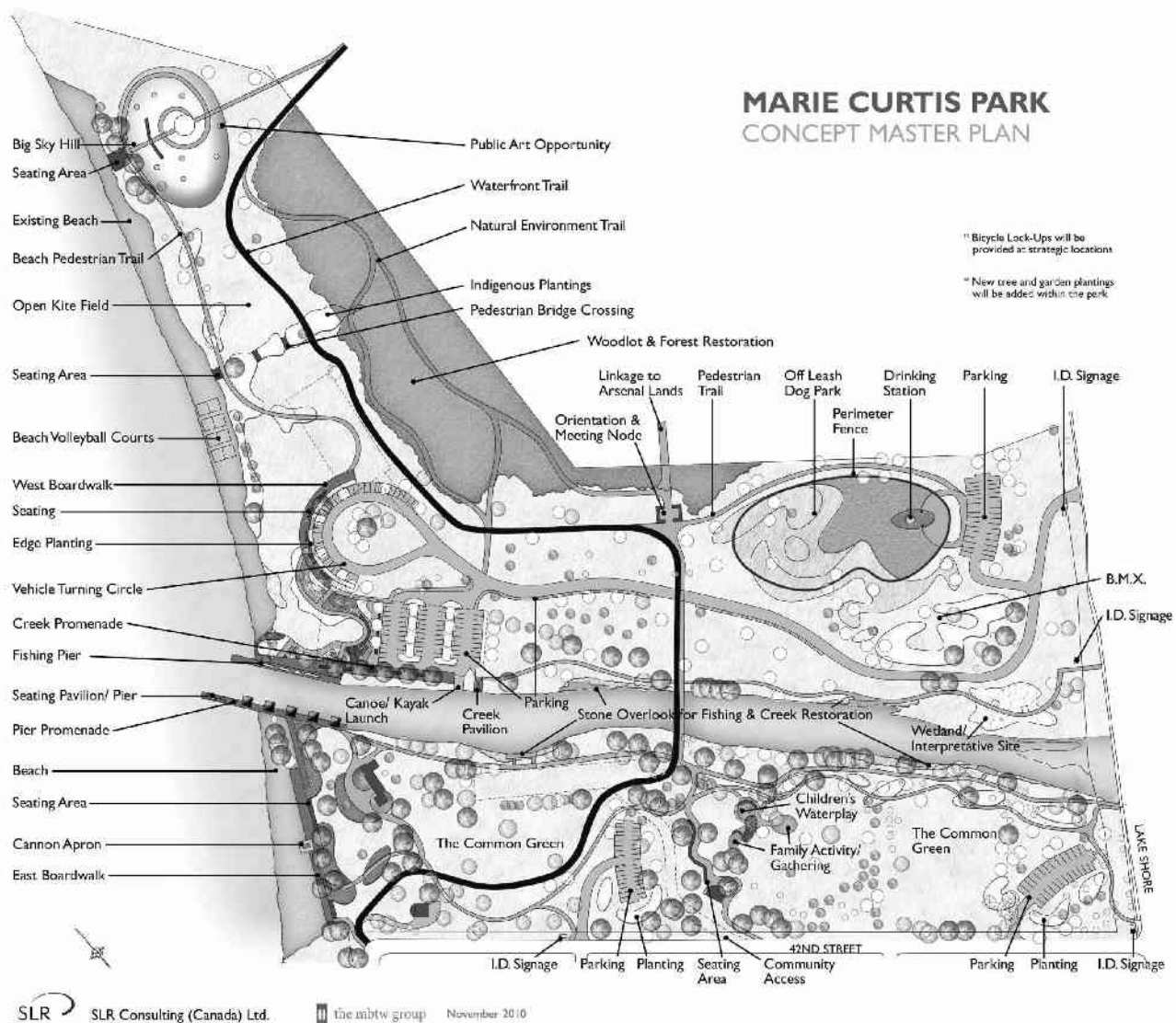
The park is overdue for a redesign. This was supposed to happen as part of the Arsenal Lands plan, which included the lands immediately to the west in Mississauga. That plan became stalled when the City of Mississauga enlarged the scope of their side into the “Inspiration Lakeview” process, so the City of Toronto and the TRCA are proceeding with plans to redesign the Toronto portion of the park.

The first concept plan was presented at a public open house in June 2010. Staff took the comments from that open house back and reworked the plan. The revised master plan

shown below was presented to the public on November 9, 2010 at the Assembly Hall.

The City of Toronto has budgeted 2.8 million dollars for this project in 2011 – 2012. City and TRCA staff are working hard to ensure this project gets built before that money is lost.

To see the plan enlarged and in colour, visit http://www.ccfew.org/html/marie_curtis_park.html There you will also find the 2011 & 2012 work plans, and any project updates as they become available.



Nature Education at Sam Smith Park

CCFEW has long believed that the Power House at Colonel Samuel Smith Park would make an ideal location for outdoor and nature education. Last year we found that the Humber Arboretum shared the same vision. We partnered with them in the submission of two Trillium Fund grant applications last year to fund such a program. The idea was to provide low cost nature programming to elementary school children right in a City park. The Humber Arboretum would run the programs with volunteer support from CCFEW and Friends of Sam Smith. The funding was intended to kick-start the program by allowing programs to be offered at a very attractive cost, establishing it as an education centre which would ultimately become self-supporting.

Two big attractions we saw in this idea were that it was a demonstration that you don't have to leave the city to find nature, and that it was accessible by TTC, greatly reducing the cost of transportation.

Our applications were turned down both times, but there will be nature programming in the park this year. The Humber Arboretum Centre for Urban Ecology will be running programs from Building "H" in May and June. It's a smaller, slower start than we had planned for, but hopefully it will grow.

Sherway Trail Update

In our April 2010 newsletter, we described the new extension to the Etobicoke Creek trail north to Sherway Drive. Well, it didn't happen last year. It may happen this year, but it all depends on permits. The trail will cross property owned by more than one public body and pass underneath a

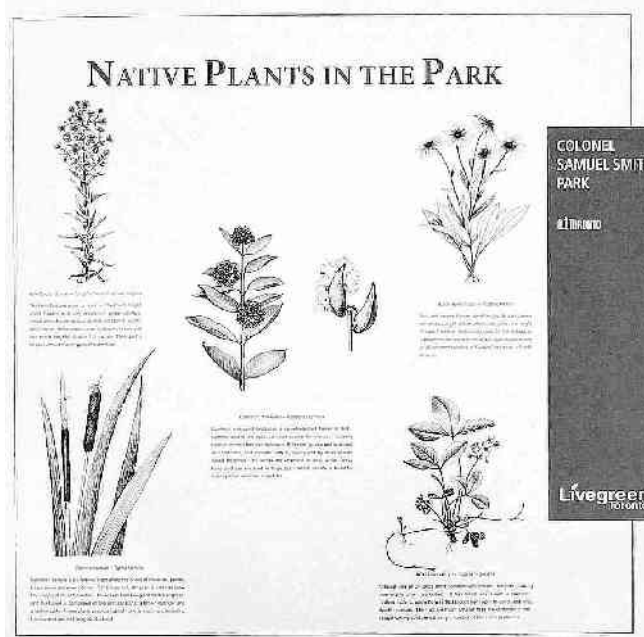
QEW bridge. Getting approvals from all the stakeholders is a bigger job than building the trail!

The existing trail was repaired and repaved from Lake Shore Blvd all the way up to the QEW last year. That work included the start of the trail extension, right up to the QEW right of way with the help of federal infrastructure funding.

Hopefully the 2012 newsletter will talk about the official opening rather than more delays!

Interpretive Signage

A series of 9 new interpretive signs were installed at Colonel Samuel Smith Park last May, finally replacing the badly vandalized signs that had been in place since the park's creation. The signs' concept and content was created by a team of students from the Ecosystem Management Program at Fleming College, with final design, art and production by the City of Toronto.

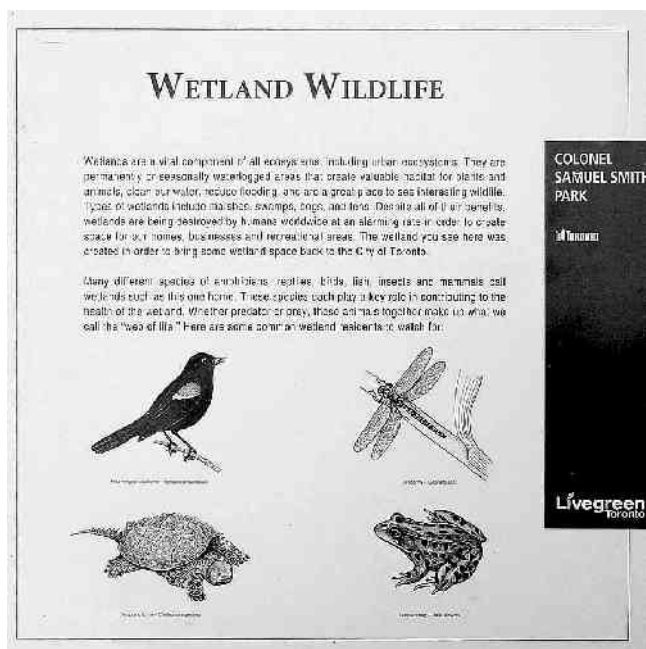


Another enthusiastic team of students from the same program are now putting the final touches

on another interpretive sign plan, this time for the Etobicoke Valley Park. The signs will be placed along the trail from Marie Curtis Park all the way up through the trail extension to Sherway Drive. They had so many ideas, I'm sure it was difficult to distill them all down to just eight signs, but this is the final list:

- Geology of Etobicoke Creek
- Watersheds
- Formation of a Creek & Flash Floods
- Invasive Species
- Wildlife Corridors
- Forest Communities
- Birds of Etobicoke Creek
- Fish Barriers

Hopefully the signs will be ready for the opening of the trail extension. Next year?



Mimico 20/20

The Mimico 20/20 Process is still moving along. This is a City Planning process begun in 2006 to establish a development plan for the areas near the waterfront from Parklawn Road west to Royal York Road. City planning is a topic that tends to

make people's eyes glaze over, but it **is** important. The ultimate goal of this process is to produce a secondary plan. This is a legal tool, produced through extensive public consultation, that will establish the rules and priorities for all new development in the area.

There are many different groups involved with different priorities: tenant rights, affordable housing, transit, etc. CCFEW's primary interests are waterfront protection and public access. We are very interested in connecting the community with the lake. Historically, most residents of Mimico have been largely cut off from the lake despite being so close. The Mimico Linear Park goes a long way to improving that situation, but we want to ensure that the trend continues.

Mimico Waterfront Linear Park Phase II

We waited a long time for phase I of the Mimico Linear Park, and we'll have to wait a while longer for phase II. There is good news though: the final legal hurdle to completing the park was cleared in January with provincial approval to expropriate the missing pieces of waterfront. Construction should begin in July, after fish spawning is complete. If all that happens as planned, expect the park to be largely complete by



the fall of next year, with an official opening in 2013.

This will create easy and safe pedestrian access from Mimico to the Humber Bay parks. It is also the final trail linkage that will separate the waterfront trail from public roadways all the way from Norris Crescent to Harbourfront in downtown Toronto.

The design of Phase II will undergo a small revision from the original plan to widen it where it meets Grand Harbour. The widening is intended to reduce the likelihood of pedestrian-cyclist collisions. One of CCFEW's objectives when that redesign happens is to ensure that the existing public right of way on the west side of Grand Harbour is maintained and respected. Although that walkway has at times been blocked with a locked gate, it is public and we need to be vigilant to ensure that it remains so.

Songbirds & Migration

Last fall, CCFEW participated in an event at the ROM, “**Songbirds and Migration: Making the Connection**”. It was organized by Birds & Beans and featured presentations from **Dr. Bridget Stutchbury**, Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology and a professor in the Department of Biology, York University, **Dr. Robert Rice**, leader of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center’s Bird Friendly® coffee certification program, and **Christina Sharma**, founder of Project CHIRP! To make a display, we collected local bird photos, many taken on our bird walks. Southern Graphics Systems generously donated the printing and layout to produce two large and two small display boards. What to do with them between events? You can find them hanging in the back room of Birds & Beans coffee shop!



Did You Know?

Did you know that Google Maps now gives directions in Toronto for TTC, cycling, and walking? The public transit option has been there for a while, but it finally works in Toronto! Our website now includes a "MAP" link for any events which don't have a clearly defined meeting point. This includes bird walks, plantings, and clean-up events. The link will take you to a Google map of the site with a blue marker on the meeting point. You can then get directions by your preferred mode of transportation.

51 Lake Shore Drive

The story of 51 Lake Shore Drive first appeared in our 2009 newsletter and the story isn't finished yet. This piece of waterfront property has been the subject of redevelopment proposals since late 2007. An OMB hearing which began in 2009 has still not been concluded because of questions regarding the ownership of the waterfront portion.

CCFEW's interest has always been protection of and public access to the waterfront. We were particularly interested when it appeared that the

waterfront edge might actually be public property. However, when the City decided not to assert a claim of ownership, we backed away from the process since they would be the most likely public owner.

When the OMB hearing resumes, we will continue to work toward securing public access to the waterfront.

CCFEW Contacts
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E-Mail Updates

There is more information on everything in this newsletter on our website. If you are not already receiving notices of events and meetings, send an e-mail to: subscribe@ccfew.org, and we'll put you on our list.

CCFEW Membership Form

New: ___ Renewal: ___ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please put me on the e-mail list for notification of events & meetings: Y / N

Electronic communication only. Do not send paper copies of newsletters, etc. Y / N

Individual : \$10 ___ Family : \$15 ___

Mail this form along with a cheque payable to "CCFEW" to:
 CCFEW, 6 Meaford Avenue, Etobicoke, Ontario M8V 2H5

CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Monday, May 9th, 7:00 pm

at the LAMP, 185 Fifth Street
(see page 1 for more details)

CCFEW Bird Walks



Saturday, April 30th
Saturday, June 18th

9:00 am to 11:00 am
rain or shine

at Colonel Samuel Smith Park
(meet in the south parking lot)
Sponsored by Birds & Beans

Spring Bird Festival

Saturday, May 28

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Colonel Sam Smith Park

See Page 1 for more details



Trees Across Toronto Planting

Colonel Samuel Smith Park

Saturday, April 30th

Starting at 10:00 am

Planting site: near the picnic shelter north of the pond close to where the gravel paths meet the paved trail.



Etobicoke Creek Valley

Invasive Species Pull 2011

Sunday, May 15
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Learn about garlic mustard and remove it from the park. The pull will be followed by a planting of native wildflowers.

Meet at Etobicoke Valley Park at Westhead Rd. and Savona Rd.

For [location details](#) and to register for the event, please visit:

www.trcastewardshipevents.ca

Contact: 416-661-6600 ext.5575

For more details on these and many other events and meetings, visit

<http://ccfew.org/html/activities.html>