

# CCFEW NEWS

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

February 2005

## Annual General Meeting

CCFEW's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at LAMP, beginning at 7:00 pm. We are very pleased to welcome Glenn Coady as our guest speaker this year. Glenn is an accomplished birder with a wealth of ornithological knowledge. He is co-author of the Greater Toronto Bird Checklist and Reporting Guidelines. He is a regional coordinator for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, an authority on the birds of the GTA, and Photo Quiz Editor of *Ontario Birds*. He is also one of our bird walk leaders.

Glenn will be speaking about arctic birds. Most of us only see arctic birds when they venture south in the winter, but Glenn has made numerous trips to Canada's north to study, and document our arctic birds. He will be sharing some of his experiences and video from those adventures.

We will also be electing our Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting. The board positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Serving on the board is a rewarding experience. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in making things happen in our community.

If you are interested in becoming more involved, but don't want to commit to being a member of the executive, our monthly planning meetings are normally held on the second Monday of each month (except July and August). Everyone is welcome to attend.

## Beavers In The City

Many people have been excited to see resident beavers at Colonel Sam Smith Park over the last few years. It is wonderful to see animals normally associated with wilderness making their home in the city, but there is a down side. Beavers eat a lot, and one of their favourite foods is tree bark. The beavers have lived-up to their industrious reputation by felling many trees and shrubs in search of food.



*Protected & unprotected trees at Col. Sam Smith Park*

When a naturalized area is used by wildlife in a natural way (for food), should we be surprised? Should we be upset? Should we do something about it? Now that they are here, there's not too much that can be done. Many of the shoreline shrubs will regenerate quickly, but we have lost larger trees that will take much longer to replace. The TRCA has now protected many trees with wire cages, but it's not practical to try to protect every tree and shrub.

Although this problem has become more serious here in the past year, it is not unique. It occurs in many places around Toronto, including the Humber Bay Parks. Hopefully, the beaver

population will stabilize at a level that is sustainable for the park's vegetation.

### **Where To Now for CCFEW?**

Lately I've been wondering if CCFEW is due for some redefining. For as long as I have been a member, we have had a large silent majority, and a small minority who are actively involved. That is still the case, but the active minority have many work, family and other volunteer commitments which make it very challenging to take on meaningful project and advocacy roles. Is it time for us to reassess and refocus our efforts? How should we be reaching out to the community to draw in more like-minded people as active members? Should we establish a presence on the web? Do we have the resources to maintain a relevant website?

I would welcome discussion on this issue at any time, but our Annual General Meeting would be an excellent opportunity to share your views.

### **Keeping Track of the Birds**

The CCFEW bird walks continue to be the most popular CCFEW activity. A few hardy souls will show up in even the worst winter weather, and warm weather walks can draw as many as 30 participants.

In October, we published the CCFEW Bird Checklist. It lists 159 species seen on past walks with columns for 5 separate lists. The checklist was printed just in time for the October walk. Fortunately, the list also includes some blank spaces for new species, because on that walk we saw a migrating Golden Eagle fly overhead. Another new species for the list!

### **Arsenal Lands Development**

Have you been wondering what will become of

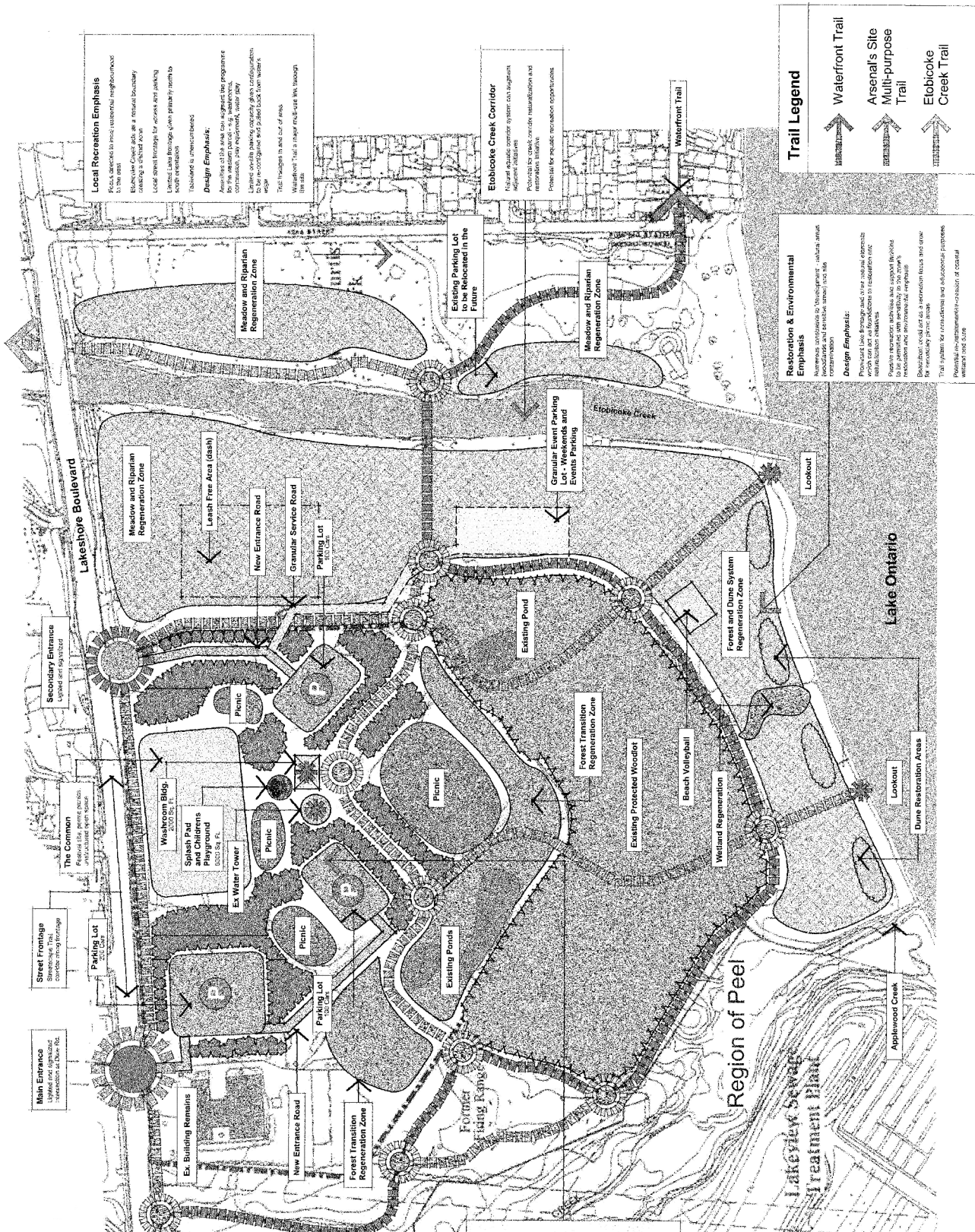
the land to the west of Marie Curtis Park? This area is known as the Arsenal Lands, and it will soon be a public park. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Peel Region Conservation Authority, and the Cities of Toronto and Mississauga are cooperating to create a new park on the border of the two cities. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, the plans for the park were unveiled at a well attended public meeting.

There are some changes planned on the east side of Etobicoke Creek, but most of the changes and development will be on the west side, in the area that is currently fenced off. A variety of amenities will be centred around the existing water tower: picnic areas, washrooms, a children's splash pad, and parking. "The Common", an open area bordering Lakeshore Boulevard, will be an unstructured open space that can be programmed for events and festivals. The idea is to keep the parking and amenities close to Lakeshore Boulevard, where their high visibility should make them safer and less prone to vandalism.

The southern portions of the park will be for passive recreation. The woodlot will be preserved and the open areas targeted for habitat restoration and regeneration. Although all of the current Marie Curtis Park is currently in the City of Toronto, it appears likely that all areas to the west of Etobicoke Creek will be managed by Mississauga, and the area east of the creek will be managed by Toronto.

The plans for the area to the east of the creek are less extensive and, at this point, less well defined. The most significant changes are reduced areas of mowed lawn and increased naturalization adjacent to the creek. This will force a relocation of the parking lot. It will probably be moved closer to Forty-second Street. There are many benefits of shoreline naturalization, but the most obvious one is that it discourages Canada Geese from using the park. They prefer a clear line of sight between the water and their grazing area.

# Arsenal Lands / Marie Curtis Park Concept



## **Parking Versus Green Space**

There have been many factors delaying the start of construction on the new Father John Redmond Secondary School on Colonel Sam Smith Park Drive. One important factor has been parking. Parking requirements have been an issue at the Lakeshore Grounds site from the beginning, and the problem hasn't gone away. The problem is that if all of the facilities on the Lakeshore Grounds provided all of the parking spaces they were required to, with no shared use, there wouldn't be much green space left. Several shared use arrangements have been made: Humber College and the Separate School Board are using the city lot at the Power Plant, and the Assembly Hall is expected to use some of Humber College's spaces in the evenings.

Humber College is required to provide 0.235 parking spaces per full time student. With enrollment at the Lakeshore campus expected to reach 5000, they will need more parking. Some time ago, Humber secured the right to use the vacant portion of the RL Clark Filtration Plant for additional parking. The playing field for Father John Redmond Secondary School is planned to occupy part of the same parcel of land. Humber is understandably reluctant to give up that potential parking without either a reduction in the parking standard or an alternate parking site.

City planners meanwhile are in the awkward position of asking Humber to provide more parking without paving more greenspace. Clearly

there are some important and difficult choices to be made. Should the local residents support a reduction in the parking standard with the goal of maintaining greenspace? How will the surrounding neighbourhoods be affected if there isn't enough parking on site? Will a shortage of parking result in increased transit use?

We believe this is an important issue that needs to be addressed, and it is not limited to this site. The same issue emerged in the Long Branch "Avenues" study. Some desirable types of business are discouraged along Lakeshore Boulevard simply because they have no way of providing the number of parking spaces mandated by the zoning bylaws.

## **Sherway Development**

Although it is well away from the lakeshore, and not within the scope of CCFEW, we have been watching with interest and concern the events unfolding around the development proposal at 700 Evans Avenue. This is the former Sheridan Nurseries site, and now the proposed location for a 990 unit, 32 story condominium complex.

At first, it was hard to take this proposal very seriously. While some areas around Sherway Gardens are zoned for high density residential development, this isn't one of them. The final, scaled-back, proposal still exceeds the the height limit by 7 times, the density (units per hectare) by 3 times, and the floor space index (the ratio of floor area to lot size) by 2 and a half times. Surely a proposal like this wouldn't get serious



*Father John Redmond Secondary School Site in Late January*

consideration, right? Wrong! The planning department supported it, and without intense community lobbying, it would surely have been approved at council. It was ultimately rejected by City Council, but the applicant has appealed to the OMB, so the fight is far from over.

This scenario is very reminiscent of the kinds of things we have seen and will, in all likelihood, continue to see in and around the Humber Bay Shores. Just because the Official Plan, the Secondary Plan, and the zoning bylaw says that a certain type of development shouldn't take place, doesn't mean that it won't.

Even if a new development looks okay when judged solely on its own merit, we need to be careful about making exceptions to the rules. If one applicant is granted exceptions, how can it be justified not granting similar exceptions to the neighbouring properties? This effectively creates a new benchmark, a "new normal", from which all succeeding proposals will be judged. When the rules are bent, we must be vigilant to ensure that the community benefits, and that a precedent is not set.

For more information on this situation, check <http://alderwood.info>

### Mimico Linear Park Update

The public meetings are over for now, and it might seem that nothing is happening with the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park, but things are progressing quietly. There are a lot of approvals required to make large-scale shoreline modifications. The first step was the environmental assessments. The TRCA received provincial environmental assessment approval last summer, and federal approval in December. The TRCA is now preparing the necessary reports and information required for applications for approval under the Federal Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act. At the same time, they are

negotiating the purchase of the necessary properties and waterlots to implement the project. Assuming all the necessary approvals and the required properties are acquired, construction could start in July of this year.

### Community Websites

There are several websites devoted to issues and events in our local community. Here are some of them:

<http://humberbayshores.org> is the website of the Humber Bay Shores Condominium Association. It is a good source of information about current developments in the Humber Bay Shores area.

[Torontolakeshore.com](http://torontolakeshore.com) is the website of the Lakeshore Community Partnership. It has a community calendar and a variety of other community information.

<http://alderwood.info> is devoted mainly to news and background about the proposed development at 700 Evans Avenue.

<http://www.newtoronto.ca> is devoted to the issues around a new salt storage facility and Redi-Mix cement plant on New Toronto Street.

<http://www.onthelakeshore.com> is an independent community information website.

<http://www.lakeshorevillagewest.com> is another community information website with a slick appearance, but not too much local content yet.

Another new and useful site worth knowing about is <http://maps.google.com>. It's not local, but it is the newest and (for now) best way to generate a map of anywhere in North America.

# The Contact Sheet

## CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Thursday, March 10th, 7:00 p.m.  
at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street.  
(see page 1 for more details)

## Bird Walk Dates

9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**Humber Bay Park East**  
Saturday, April 2  
Meet in the main parking lot

**Colonel Samuel Smith Park**  
Sunday April 24  
Meet in the south parking lot

Meet at 9:00 am, rain or shine. The walks are free for all to attend.

## Community Cleanup Day

Colonel Sam Smith Park  
Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>  
8:00a.m. - 3:00p.m

## CCFEW Monthly Planning Meetings

Monday, April 11

Monday, May 9

Monday, June 13

These monthly meetings are used mainly to discuss current issues, projects and policy positions. As always they are open to anyone who is interested in attending.

Meetings are normally held on the second Monday of the month at 7:30p.m., at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street.

## CCFEW Contacts

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## CCFEW Membership Renewal Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual : \$10 \_\_\_ Family : \$15 \_\_\_ Institutions/Corporate : \$25 \_\_\_

Mail this form along with a cheque/money order payable to "CCFEW" to:

CCFEW, 6 Meaford Avenue, Etobicoke, Ontario M8V 2H5