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Community Profile: Toronto Bay Initiative Restoring Our Waterfront - It's All In A Day's Ground Work

By Katia Houde, LEAF volunteer

Bill McMartin, Executive Director of Toronto Bay Initiative, is proud of TBI's "on the ground" work.

It's a mandate that often requires a little elbow grease - pulling weeds, planting shrubs, and cleaning up the shoreline are just a few of the hands-on activities that this citizen-based environmental organization is involved in.

"It's very satisfying work, with meaningful results," Bill says. "And the community is proud of the lasting impact it has."

TBI's work focuses on Toronto's waterfront and addresses issues such as the loss of natural green spaces in the area and the improvement of land and water quality.

In order to help regenerate the waterfront's habitat, TBI organizes several events a month, including tree and shrub planting on the shores of the Toronto Islands and its most recent event, weeding at the Spadina Quay. This work

involved removing invasive plants from the wetland, as these often out-compete native species for light, nutrition, and space.

Invasive plants are fast-growing, are able to spread and reproduce rapidly, and make the most of unfavorable conditions; they are typically non-native.



Many of the alien plant species introduced to North America were intentionally brought over by European settlers and were chosen for their aesthetic qualities and food value. Others have accidentally made their way here through transport and ship ballasts.

Regardless of their means of arrival, invasive plant species are a nuisance to regeneration efforts and can impede the conservation of natural habitats.

Some of the common plant pests found near the waterfront are purple loosestrife, thistle, and Queen Ann's lace. And these are precisely the culprits that volunteers from TBI weeded out on September 13th.

Armed with gloves and plastic bags, provided by the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation, these volunteers engaged in labour of love and a community effort to bring back our waterfront.

For more information on Toronto Bay Initiative and their events visit: www.torontobay.net

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Harvest time! Students, park staff gather tree seeds

Taken from article by Jack Evans, Cobourg Daily Star, September 27, 2006

All those trees in Presqu'ile Provincial Park don't just happen, says Don Tyerman, biodiversity specialist with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Brighton park.

He figures in any given year, the park loses literally several hundred trees from wind, lightning, disease, vandalism and other causes. Therefore, an active tree-planting program goes hand in hand with the park's annual operations.

The annual collection of seeds in late September comes at a time when the park is ready to close down for camping purposes. It is also an activity which generated a unique partnership between Presqu'ile and Sir Sandford Fleming College over the past eight years, said Mr. Tyerman.

With a high-tech plant and tree nursery on the college grounds combined with a park planning program, Mr.

Tyerman made arrangements for the college to grow most of the seeds collected from the native trees of which the park has always boasted a generous, healthy population.

"It is a special partnership we developed between Sir Sandford Fleming and the park," he said. "Then, two years ago, we added the function of park planning students combing the Presqu'ile to help harvest seeds."

So, September 22, about 35 students, plus staff members, spent much of the day on a bus excursion to Presqu'ile to harvest seeds.

The white cedar and red oak were at their peak for harvesting. For the oak seed, it was simply a matter of gathering acorns. The cedar required the volunteers to pull clusters of "cones" off the tips of cedar branches. Back at Sir Sandford Fleming, the cones will be processed in a machine to remove the tiny seeds inside.



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They will then be planted both for area nurseries and the park.

The outing drew some interesting comments from participating students.

"This is my first time in Presqu'ile Park. It's awesome. I'll be back," Nicole Higgins of London, ON said.

On the weekend of Sept. 30 weekend, a busload of students from Queen's University was expected for the same adventure.

This is the first year for the Queen's crew, Mr. Tyerman said.

Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment.

-Rene Dubos, microbiologist, environmentalist, Pulitzer Prize winner

Take Action: Contribute to the Conservation of Wild Birds

From IMBD's fact sheet "Ways Citizens Can Contribute to the Conservation of Wild Birds"

Create Backyard Habitat

Creating backyard habitat is something nearly everyone can do. Provide food and shelter with native plants, shrubs and trees.

Think before you spray

An estimate 67 million birds die each year from exposure to the harmful effects of pesticides.

Be a responsible cat owner

Biologists estimate that free-ranging cats kill hundreds of millions of birds each year.

Buy shade-grown coffee

You can help conserve vital rainforest habitat and protect more than 150 forest-dependent migratory bird species just by drinking shade-grown coffee.

Get involved in community planning

Make sure future use and zoning plans consider the interests of wildlife.

Join a conservation group or volunteer at a refuge or park

The help you provide can make a real contribution to the future of wild birds.

Donate your old binoculars

Give new life to your old binoculars by passing them on to new birding enthusiasts.

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day

Find and attend an IMBD event in your community or start something yourself. Visit www.birdday.org for more information.

To view the complete fact sheet, visit <http://www.fws.gov/birds/documents/LR-WaysCitizens.pdf> .

Featured Resource

www.forests.org

Forests.org works to end deforestation, preserve primary and old-growth forests, conserve and sustainably manage other forests, and to commence the age of ecological restoration.

The site contains action alerts, links to forest-related websites around the globe and a forests conservation blog. It is packed with information and contacts.

Dendro Devotion

By Marc Willoughby, M.L.Arch.,
O.A.L.A., I.S.A. Certified Arborist

Match the tree species with the appropriate cultivar.

Tree Species

- 1) Crabapple
- 2) Honeylocust
- 3) Red Maple
- 4) Ginkgo
- 5) Serviceberry
- 6) Tree Lilac
- 7) Sugar Maple
- 8) Hawthorn
- 9) Linden
- 10) London Plane

Cultivar

- a) Ballerina
- b) Green Mountain
- c) Toba
- d) Redmond
- e) Bloodgood
- f) Ivory Silk
- g) Shademaster
- h) Princeton Sentry
- j) Morgan
- k) Dolgo

Science Bite: Finding the Right Mix of Trees to Fight Climate Change

Taken from an article appearing in www.seedmagazine.com. Written by Meryl Rothstein

Throughout the escalating climate change crises, much attention has been given to cleaning up the world's industrial plants. But, according to researchers at the State University of New York, part of the solution could come from an entirely different kind of plant—trees. Scientists have long known that trees can help us to reduce energy use and clean the air of pollutants and gases we emit into the atmosphere.

But not all trees are created equal. As part of a research project, students and faculty members at SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry have determined the precise combination of trees that would be most effective in reducing the level of greenhouse gases in the air around Syracuse, NY.

"It's one more step you could take to help combat greenhouse gases," said Richard Smardon, an environmental scientist and one of the researchers involved.

People have not yet figured out "how to stick the 'urban vegetation' into that equation," he said.

Read the rest of the article by [clicking here](#)

For a healthy urban forest on Mount Royal

Taken from the article by CNW Telbec, October 6, 2006

Close to a hundred volunteers from the Université de Montréal community joined Les Amis de la montagne and the Centre de la montagne on October 6th to plant 500 indigenous trees and shrubs. "The forests of Mount Royal play a vital role in regards to quality of the environment," said Sylvie Guilbault, Executive Director of Les Amis de la montagne. "Since 1998, we have planted close to 5500 trees and shrubs with the help of over 1000 volunteers on the public and private properties of the mountain in support of the efforts to protect the wooded areas of the mountain and urban biodiversity. The participation and contributions of the university community and the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation are important for the enhancement of Mount Royal and we are grateful to all parties for contributing to this action."

More than 100 high school students and Université de Montréal students and employees participated in a first tree planting session in 2002, when 200 Red Oak and 75 Sugar Maples were planted near the old ski hill which was particularly affected following the 1998 ice storm. For more information, call (514) 843-8240 or visit www.lemontroyal.qc.ca.

Events and Announcements

Nominations for National Stewardship Awards

Wildlife Habitat Canada is seeking nominations for their national stewardship awards. The program is intended to raise awareness of sustainable practices and the need for biodiversity conservation in Canada's forests. Deadline for nominations is November 30th, 2006

www.whc.org/stewardship_awards.htm

City of Mississauga's Gypsy Moth Control Program Symposium, Thursday, November 30th, 2006

9:00am to 12:00pm at Noel Ryan Auditorium, Mississauga Central Library

Registration is free but limited to 240 people. Registration must be received by November 20th. For registration forms and more information go to www.treecanada.ca/gmsymposium-reg.pdf

Dovercourt Tree Tour and Community Bonfire Saturday December 2nd, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Join GreenHere and LEAF for a guided tree tour through Dovercourt Park and the surrounding neighbourhood. The tour will be led by LEAF's certified arborist Todd Irvine and local tree advocate Andrea Dawber of GreenHere. The Tree Tour will be given in English and translated into Portuguese. Learn about issues facing the urban forest and the many restoration efforts of GreenHere. We'll also cover some of the colorful local history of the area.

The Tree Tour will begin at 1:00pm in Dovercourt Park, where local citizen efforts have resulted in many new tree plantings. We'll visit some raised bed plantings on Hallam, historical houses along Gladstone and Westmoreland Ave and stop several times for significant trees and locations of interest. We'll come back to Dovercourt Park by 3:00pm for a community bonfire.

LEAF Annual Celebration and Networking Party Wednesday, January 17th, 2007

Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St West, Toronto 7:30pm (doors open @7)

Mark your calendars early for this event! Learn about LEAF's urban forest achievements over the past year. Then enjoy local ecologist Paul O'Hara's presentation **The Faithful Witness: The Journey of the White Pine in Southern Ontario**. This beautiful, visual journey will take us through time and space to tell the story of our changing landscape through the eyes of the ever-present, majestic white pine. Enjoy a night of casual networking after the presentations with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. \$15 in advance (\$10 student/fixed income) \$20 at the door

Visit www.leafontario.org/events or call us at 416-413-9244 for tickets.

Toronto Tree Portrait 2007 Calendars

This year's edition explores the nature of relationships between people and trees. Internationally renowned photographer Vincenzo Pietropaolo has collaborated with writer Lorraine Johnson to produce the calendar. Proceeds from the sale of the calendar support the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation. For more info go to

www.torontoparksandtrees.org/portraits.htm

Get Involved with the UFN!

We want to hear from you! Email your stories, suggestions, announcements, photos, and ideas to info@leafontario.org

Dendro Devotion Answers:
1) k 2)g 3)j 4)h 5)a 6)f 7)b 8)c 9)d 10)e