

Tommy Thompson park Spring/Summer 2007

Toronto's Urban Wilderness

Master Plan Implementation Project Community Newsletter

Background

This newsletter provides an update of current and future activities associated with the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project.

The Project

In 1989, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) completed an extensive provincial environmental assessment and planning process which resulted in the creation of the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan. In 1992, an Addendum was prepared and later approved by the Minister of the Environment. This planning process became the foundation for the creation of a unique urban wilderness feature on Toronto's waterfront.

Until recently, limited funds have been available to implement the Master Plan, with the City of Toronto contributing funding for interim management. A funding partnership between TRCA and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation for \$8 million will realize key components of the Master Plan including natural area enhancement and the installation of park infrastructure.



Shoreline enhancement activities at Embayment A

Project Objectives

- Preserve significant species
- Protect environmentally significant areas
- Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat
- Enhance public recreational opportunities



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Natural Area Enhancement

Natural area enhancement work scheduled to begin this year include shoreline modifications, the creation of shorebird habitat and butterfly meadow enhancement.

In the summer, TRCA will commence construction of shoreline enhancement activities at Embayment A. These restoration efforts will increase emergent vegetation and structural fish habitat along the shoreline. In the fall, similar shoreline modifications will be undertaken at Embayment B.

Shorebird habitat is currently under construction in the Toplands area and will be completed shortly. Shorebirds, such as plovers, snipes and sandpipers, forage for invertebrates in shallow bodies of water. Wet meadow habitat will be created through the management of water depths in the area creating habitat for shorebirds. For example, in the spring, water levels will be raised to limit vegetation growth and maintain open mudflats and invertebrate production. We hope to see shorebirds using this habitat this fall!

Butterfly meadow enhancement will be undertaken along the neck of Tommy Thompson Park. This work will include developing dry meadow areas by planting both tall and short grass species in addition to wildflower species to support butterflies in various life cycle stages. This terrestrial natural area enhancement will also improve habitat for other insects and birds that forage for these insects. The increase in butterfly and other insect populations will also increase the pollination of native vegetation. In turn, these native plants will provide a seed source for the surrounding area and may help to increase the density and quantity of native plants.

The Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Plan and the Terrestrial Natural Area Enhancement Plan can be downloaded from TRCA's website. Visit: www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/ttp

Did you know?

Just as Tommy Thompson Park acts as a resting and feeding ground for migratory birds, it also provides this service for migratory butterflies like the Monarch. In the fall, large congregations of Monarchs can be seen in the park getting ready for their long journey south. Enhancing butterfly habitat is not only for the resident populations but also for butterflies that are passing through and need to recharge their energy reserves!



Existing meadow at Tommy Thompson Park



Lesser Yellowlegs



Monarch butterfly



View of the Toronto skyline from Tommy Thompson Park



Trail construction

Park Infrastructure

In December 2006, TRCA commenced general site clean-up in preparation for the implementation of the Trails Master Plan. Construction has begun with the development of the Primary Pedestrian Trail which will be located on the east side of the existing asphalt road. When completed, this trail will be three metres wide and 4,326 metres in length; the surface will be granular paving.

Construction of the Secondary Pedestrian Trail has also begun in certain areas within the park. When completed, this trail will be 1.8 metres wide and 5,483 metres in length; the trail surface will be improved where required but no paving will be undertaken. During the construction phase you may notice that the trail bases are

wider than the final width; this is to allow access for construction equipment and to provide sufficient width support for the final surface treatment. When the equipment has finished with the trail construction, the width will be adjusted to the final dimensions as outlined in the Trails Master Plan.

Additional work related to the implementation of the Trails Master Plan will include repairs to the main asphalt road, the installation of culvert pipes and associated grading to ensure proper site drainage. Lookout features will be installed to allow for unobscured views of Lake Ontario and the City of Toronto skyline.

The Trails Master Plan can be downloaded from TRCA's website. Visit: www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/ttp

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Lake Ontario Park Update

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation is currently undertaking a Master Plan for the area known as Lake Ontario Park. This new park will span from Cherry Beach in the west to the RC Harris Treatment Plant in the east and will include Ashbridges Bay Park and Tommy Thompson Park. A consulting consortium, led by Field Operations, will prepare a Master Plan with the goal of fostering the creation of a new waterfront park that is beautiful, sustainable and that serves as a special place for Toronto, analogous to Vancouver's Stanley Park. The Master Plan will have regard for the approved Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan which is currently being implemented by TRCA. For more information about Lake Ontario Park, please visit: www.waterfronttoronto.ca

Public Safety

Tommy Thompson Park is open to the public year-round on weekends and holidays, except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Operating hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (April to October) and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (November to March).

During the implementation of the project, the use of some areas of the park may be limited. Signage will be posted to clearly delineate areas where access is temporarily restricted.



Nature viewing opportunities at Tommy Thompson Park

For further information regarding Tommy Thompson Park, please visit: www.trca.on.ca/ttp

If you have specific questions regarding the project or if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, contact:

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