

# Bring Back the Don

SEASONAL UPDATE

Fall 2004



## You Are Invited! Pictorial History of the Don Valley at the Market Gallery

Susan Ross, Task Force Member

Starting in October, the next time you are shopping at the St. Lawrence Market, be sure to drop by the Market Gallery to see our exhibit. The Task Force is teaming up with the Market Gallery to present an exhibit entitled *Reconnecting with the Don - Balancing the Valley*.



*Riverdale Park, 1923, John Ryan, Photographer, Toronto Public Library, TRL Canadian Historical Picture Collection, T32447.*

The exhibit explores Toronto's changing attitudes towards the Don Valley over the last century. Using historical and contemporary photographs, documents and art, the exhibit traces the evolution of the valley from early agricultural settlement, to industrial area dependent on the river, to transportation corridor. It also explores efforts to restore ecological balance and to re-establish a vital watershed in one of the most urbanized areas of Canada.

The Market Gallery is located at South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front Street East. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.

The exhibit opens October 2, 2004 and runs to January 30, 2005. Admission is free.

## The BMW Toronto Building – Sustainable Design on the Don

John Wilson, Task Force Chair

It doesn't look like a "Bring Back the Don" project, but, in a way, it is. The redesigned BMW Toronto building on Sunlight Park in the Lower Don has several important environmental features that BMW agreed to after consulting with our Task Force.

*The architecture, designed by Quadrangle Architects Ltd., has been hailed by critics.* It has won the Ontario Association of Architects' 2004 Award of Excellence, and it was a hit at this year's "Doors Open" event. But you have to look closely at this dramatic building to see how it "raises the bar" for environmental performance.

During the planning stages, Quadrangle Architects and the landscape designers, the MBTW Group, met with us.

We agreed that the design would address three issues:

- Bird-friendliness
- Stormwater quality
- Appropriate plantings

The glass on a large part of the building was selected to be visible to birds migrating along the Lower Don. (An added feature of the darker glass – it highlights the cars on display in six clear window panels on the third and fourth floors.) The exterior lighting points downward and dims automatically after dark to prevent fatal bird collisions.

Stormwater from the parking lots is directed to a large swale next to the Parkway where it is filtered through sand to purify it before it enters the Don River. The native perennials along the swale, and shrubs elsewhere on site, were selected from a list we provided.

The Lower Don will never look like it did 200 years ago, but BMW has pointed the way toward sustainable building design that will help the efforts to preserve this vital ecological link.

## Volunteering in the Heart of a Community: A Profile of Josephine and Heather Sinopoli

Aynsley Morris, Task Force Member

On a summer evening in Riverdale Park East, amongst the soccer players, swimmers and picnickers, you may have spotted a group striding purposefully, armed with clippers, garbage bags and a clipboard. The group was undoubtedly heading towards the Riverdale Park East wetland, led by daughter-mother duo Josephine and Heather Sinopoli. Josephine became involved with the Community Stewardship Program three years ago when she was an intern with the Task Force. She convinced her mother that leading a stewardship team would not only be a great mother-daughter experience, but would also help relieve stress, while giving back to the community. "We like the Riverdale Park East site because of its location; the community is all around it and it's an important part of the park," said Josephine. Although the amount of work sometimes seemed overwhelming, Josephine and Heather continued to visit the site each week to clear out invasives, take biological inventories and make a big contribution to bringing back the Don.

Interested in volunteering? Check out the Events listings for the fall schedule.



*Mother and daughter working together at Riverdale Park East wetland.*



Bring Back the Don

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events happen rain or shine, and usually last a couple of hours.

For more information about any of our events, please call 416-392-0401.

## Plantings

### Attention Teachers and Students:

Our planting events are a great way for students to learn about environmental issues in an outdoor setting, and have a lot of fun! Weekday events are scheduled with school groups in mind and usually run from 10 a.m. to noon, rain or shine. For a weekday event schedule contact Trisha at 416-338-5053, or email [driver@toronto.ca](mailto:driver@toronto.ca). Please note that we ask groups of ten or more to register in advance.



Milkweed

High school students are welcome to gain volunteer hours with Bring Back the Don at our weekend planting events. Please see the schedule below.

### Weekend Planting Events

Plantings are fun for families, individuals and groups. We provide shovels, gloves and other tools. You just need to wear sturdy shoes and clothing that can withstand a little dirt. Please contact Trisha for more information or to register a group of ten or more.

### Beechwood Wetland & Sun Valley Stewardship Event

**Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to noon**

Meet at Beechwood Wetland, located along the Lower Don Trail north of Pottery Road, and south of the Beechwood Drive access, to pick up materials and instructions. Beechwood Drive runs north from O'Connor Drive, just west of Pape Avenue.

### Riverdale Park East Tree and Shrub Planting

**Saturday, October 2, 10 a.m. to noon**

Riverdale Park East is located on Broadview Ave., south of Danforth Ave., north of Gerrard Street East. The planting event will take place at the wetland, at the bottom of the north slope of the park.

### Nordheimer Ravine Tree and Shrub Planting

**Saturday, October 23, 10 a.m. to noon**

Nordheimer Ravine runs from St.Clair Avenue West and Spadina Road, south-east to Boulton Drive, north of Davenport Road. The planting event is located on the trail, west of the Boulton Drive access.

## Walks

### The Burke Brook - Don River Connection

**Sunday, September 12, 2- 4 p.m.**

This event will start and end at the main entrance to Sherwood Park (limited parking available), at the eastern end of Sherwood Avenue, east of Mt. Pleasant Road. Join Janice Palmer, a Task Force member, to explore part of Burke Brook, a tributary of the Don River and observe how the health of both Burke Brook and the Don River are influenced by neighbourhood activities.

### Restoration Projects along Castle Frank Brook

**Sunday, October 24, 2 p.m.**

A joint walk with the Task Force to Bring Back the Don and the North Toronto Green Community to see and discuss several small restoration projects in Cedarvale and Nordheimer Ravines. Meet in front of Eglinton West Subway Station. Leaders John Routh and Peter Hare. Visit [www.lostrivers.ca](http://www.lostrivers.ca) for more information.



Queen Anne's Lace

## Other People's Events

Many other groups host community activities in and around the Don Watershed:

### Upper Don, Humber, Rouge Highland and Toronto Island Planting Events

Please visit [www.toronto.ca/greentoronto](http://www.toronto.ca/greentoronto)

### Trail Management in the Don Valley Workshop with IMBA's Trail Solutions Program

**October 30-31**

Hosted by the City of Toronto Natural Environment and Horticulture Section and the Don Valley Trail Users' Club. Call Keri McMahon at 416-392-0373 for more information and to register.

### Volunteer for Nature

Please visit [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)

### Friends of the Don East

Please visit [www.fode.ca](http://www.fode.ca) or call 416-466-9153 for a listing of FODE events.

### Lost Rivers Walks

Please visit [www.lostrivers.ca](http://www.lostrivers.ca)

### Riverdale Farm Events

Please visit [www.friendsofriverdalefarm.com](http://www.friendsofriverdalefarm.com)

### RiverSides

Please call 416-868-1983 or e-mail [riversides@riversides.org](mailto:riversides@riversides.org) for information on the Water in the City walks.

## THANKS TO OUR 2004 FUNDING PARTNERS!

So far this year, funding for Task Force projects has come from: City of Toronto, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Environment Canada, EcoAction Community Funding Program, Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, Unilever Canada, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Ontario Ministry of Natural

Resources, Unilever-Evergreen Aquatic Stewardship Grant, The Mill St. Brewery and many others.

Bring Back the Don also thanks the many individuals, corporations, school groups and community organizations that have participated in our projects and have contributed to "bringing back" the Don watershed.

### DOING RESEARCH ON THE DON?

See the bibliography on our website, [www.toronto.ca/don](http://www.toronto.ca/don). The Toronto Public Library has a collection of related materials at its Urban Affairs Branch in Metro Hall, 55 John Street (John at King). Call 416-397-7241 for more information.

### BRING BACK THE DON

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don is a 23-member citizens' group sponsored by the City of Toronto that works to "bring back" a clean, green and accessible Don River watershed.

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don Metro Hall, 23rd Floor  
55 John Street,  
Toronto ON M5V 3C6

For information about events or activities, please call 416-392-0401, or e-mail us at [driver@toronto.ca](mailto:driver@toronto.ca).

Bring Back the Don events are also posted on the City of Toronto's web site: [www.toronto.ca/don](http://www.toronto.ca/don)



## Bring Back the Don



### We are celebrating our 15th Anniversary!!

Since 1989, volunteers have planted thousands of trees, shrubs and wildflowers in the lower Don. The Task Force is widely recognized as a model for community-based urban environmental regeneration.

### Help us create the next 15 years starting with our 5 year plan:

- Naturalize the river mouth
- Increase education & outreach programs
- Restore 25 sites including wetlands, meadows and forests

With your support, Bring Back the Don will continue to make Toronto a more livable city.

The Task Force welcomes donations. Please make your cheque payable to the City of Toronto, Task Force to Bring Back the Don and send it to:

Task Force to Bring Back the Don, Metro Hall, 23rd Floor 55 John Street,  
Toronto ON M5V 3C6

[www.toronto.ca/don](http://www.toronto.ca/don)



Black-eyed Susan & Wild Bergamot

Flower photographs taken by Heather Sinopoli in Riverdale Park East Wetland