



# 2001/2002 Annual Report

## Facilitating ongoing public input and assistance in the stewardship of High Park for present and future generations of park users

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High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Box 108, 95 Lavinia Ave., Toronto, ON M6S 3H9

For More Information about the Committee's Activities and Events, Call the Volunteer Hotline: (416) 392-1748

Visit our Website at [www.city.toronto.on.ca/involved/vsp/vsp.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/involved/vsp/vsp.htm)

### The Year in Review

A high level of Committee activity took place during 2001/2002 including the following:

- Volunteers organized and hosted 22 Park walks involving over 600 participants;
- Over 2,000 native plants were placed as part of the program to restore vegetation to pre-settlement condition in one third of the Park;
- Volunteers sold over 1,000 native plants to residents in neighborhoods near High Park as a means of expanding the native vegetation boundaries of the Park;
- The Nature Centre accommodated over 1,350 school students in hands-on nature learning activities. Another 800 students were involved in an activity-based nature education programs in the summer; and,
- Volunteers in The Park Watch program spent over 550 hours in efforts aimed at keeping the Park a safe and friendly place and made over 700 park user contacts.

### High Park Zoo

In January 2002, a public meeting was held in High Park by Councillor George Mammoliti to sound out the idea of amalgamating the management of High Park Zoo and other City animal displays with the Toronto Zoo. It was one of three meetings held around the City. The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee (HPCAC) after a good deal of discussion, took the point of view that the High Park Zoo should continue to be managed by the Parks Department with a possible service agreement established with the Toronto Zoo. A delegation of HPCAC members presented this position to the Toronto Economic Development Committee in March. The City Committee decided to continue with the Parks department managing the High Park Zoo.

### 1947-97 Bloor St. W.

We have continued to oppose the construction of the Context Development condominium on a piece of land adjacent to the northwest corner of the Park, primarily on environmental grounds. If the project proceeds, we will be exercising extreme

vigilance during the excavation stage to prevent possible ecological damage in the Park in general and in Wendigo Creek/Grenadier Pond in particular. The Committee will also be vigilant during the construction phase concerning any potential damage to Park plants or soils adjacent to the construction site.

### Transportation Subcommittee

The Transportation subcommittee is committed to promoting environmentally benign methods of transportation through the Park and to limit commuter and car traffic.

The Committee has proposed to the City that the paved road from Colborne Lodge Drive leading to the allotment gardens be named Allotment Lane.

Our subcommittee has as many viewpoints as members do. We seek people who wish to share their energy and insights to creatively address the Park's current and future transportation issues.

### Natural Environment Subcommittee

We meet regularly with City staff to review proposed projects and restoration efforts within the Park. Along with other subcommittees, we provided input into the City's plans to upgrade the Southeast Family Recreational Area. This includes a proposal to fill in the northern part of the Upper Duck Pond and reconfigure the remaining part as an enhanced wetland. The Subcommittee has validated suggested plant and tree lists for initial and future stages of the project. We have been pleased to work with Urban Forestry in the development of the "High Park Vegetation Management Plan", now in press, and to assist in the prescribed burn program.

Following a meeting with our members, City staff and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, a new protocol is being developed for adjusting water levels on Grenadier Pond to improve habitat.

## **Walking Tours**

Our popular Walking Tours continued throughout the year on alternate Sunday afternoons in the fall and winter seasons and every second Tuesday evening in the spring and summer. The total number of walks (22) was less than in previous years but showed an increased level of attendance and interest. Over 640 people participated, many of whom were new to the Park. The average turnout was 29. Participants' donations (\$2 is suggested) helped to support this and other volunteer programs.

The walking tours covered a range of natural and historical topics designed to interest both "regulars" and newcomers alike. We very much appreciate the interest and enthusiasm of both walk leaders and hosts, many of whom participate year after year. Thanks are also due to the staff of Colborne Lodge, where the Sunday afternoon walks usually finish for a cuppa (warm or cold depending on the time of year) and an introduction to the Lodge/Museum. We thank City staff, too, for their continuing support in printing walking tour flyers and others for their help in publicizing these walks.

## **Volunteer Stewardship Program**

Volunteer Stewards (VSPs) continue growing and planting native flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees, as well as weeding and monitoring in the Park, and have spent 1,780 hours on restoration in this sixth year of the Program. About 2,000 plants have been placed, most on the Tablelands. In Spring 2002 on the Boulevard Beds (around the Grenadier Cafe and Teahouse parking lot) roughly two tons of sand have been moved and contoured, about 30 flats of plants transplanted, five bushels of weeds pulled, an additional large landscape stone has been delivered and four large logs been sourced.

Our goal is restoration of the natural areas in High Park (roughly 135 acres or 44 hectares) to pre-settlement conditions, as well as spreading use and knowledge of native plants. Our immediate goals are to increase increase native plants in the Boulevard beds.

Roughly 1,000 native plants were sold by VSPs this year, "expanding the borders of High Park" to the benefit of birds, bees and butterflies. Sales resulted in around \$1,600 after costs, despite, on occasion, cold weather, a hailstorm and impending snow. Funds were used to purchase hoses (a prerequisite for planting during the dry 2001 summer), tools, display boards, and to bring back plants which have disappeared from the Park. Among these are: Prairie Buttercup, last recorded in the Park in 1933, Canada Milk Vetch, last recorded in the Park in 1891, Hairy Beardtongue/Blue Penstemon, and Poke Milkweed, a white flowering Milkweed which grows in dry woods.

Under a sub-program, Adopt-a-plot holders take direct responsibility for a specific area on the Tablelands. Numbers have increased. A total of 17 plots have now been adopted, with 23 people involved.

The web site arranged by Rigmae Lee, City Works & Emergency Services, continues to attract new volunteers, as did a display of VSP photos on Seedy Saturday, held March 2 of this year. VSP photos and books on Black Oak Savannah restoration are currently displayed on the second floor of the High Park Library, 228 Roncesvalles Avenue.

Thanks to all VSPs for their continuing wit, eagerness, constant hard work and unflagging enthusiasm and to our faithful database keeper, Sharon Lovett and the "hot line voice" Jean Vesik.

Among City staff, thanks to Arthur Beauregard, Manager of Natural Environment and Horticulture; High Park Greenhouse staff including Sue Clarke, Cora Thomson and Jocie Bilodeau; Carol Guy, High Park Supervisor; Beth McEwen and Vojka Miladinovic of Urban Forestry; and Cara Webster and Karen Sun of the City Parks Restoration Crew.

## **High Park Nature Centre**

The High Park Nature Centre enjoyed an excellent season in 2001, our third year of operation. We were able to build on our experience and accumulated resources and get the program up and running more quickly. Recruiting took place in February, giving us an excellent choice of candidates. Also, a volunteer, Kathleen Keefe, lined up many of the school bookings in advance.

Participation in our programs increased by close to 50%. In the May/June period our Oak Savannah restoration program accommodated 51 groups with about 1350 students. The school groups planted 2000 native grasses, sedges and wildflowers and learned about High Park's Oak Savannah and the restoration program. Over 800 children, from 44 organized groups plus family-oriented events, participated in our activity-based nature education programs over the summer.

We improved attendance at our public events, partly by arranging to meet at a familiar central location. We also strengthened our cooperative relationship with other children's programs operating in High Park.

In addition to running excellent programs in 2001, our staff, Karen Okamoto and Robin Jane Roff, expanded the Centre's collection of educational material by developing new games, questionnaires and puzzles. With funding from the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation we developed new habitat displays.

Our 2002 season is now well underway with increased funding that will enable us to introduce a new fall session for school groups. The High Park Nature Centre is operated with financial support from the Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma, the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation, the HRDC Youth Employment Strategy, the Toronto District School Board (One-on-One Youth Internship Program) and the City of Toronto, as well as in-kind support from Colborne Lodge and Parks & Recreation Division.

## **High Park Youth Corps**

An exciting new development has been the birth of the High Park Youth Corps - a program run by high school students for high school students, with support from adult volunteers and the Nature Centre. The program will include a combination of social, educational and hands-on activities. Events are expected to be held every other Saturday morning in the fall and less frequently during the winter months. Participants will have their volunteer work credited to their school volunteer hours requirement.

## Contact with other Groups

We continue to participate in the Humber Watershed Alliance and Tall Grass Ontario. In respect to the latter group, a new "Hands on Biodiversity" gallery has been opened at the Royal Ontario Museum. It features High Park and other prairie/savanna remnants in southern Ontario. Other contacts include the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Evergreen.

## Safety & Recreation Subcommittee

Our purpose is to promote the diverse cultural and recreational activities that High Park offers in a manner compatible with the natural environment and character of the Park; to ensure personal safety needs of High Park users are met; and to promote safe use of the Park.

## High Park Dog Community

A new Off Leash Pamphlet was created and signage has been installed throughout the Park indicating Off Leash/On Leash areas. An educational period with dog owners will be on-going and more active enforcement, including fines, will take place.

## High Park Adventure

The High Park Adventure is a community-built playground on the east side of the Park. Our focus is to provide a safe and exciting play experience for children. With proper annual maintenance of the playground, children in our community will be using it many years from now.

The 3rd annual maintenance event is scheduled for Saturday, Sept 21, 2002. Activities will include moving and raking wood chips, tightening loose screws and removing graffiti.

In-kind support is received from Roof Works, High Park Wallpaper & Paint Centre, Pollocks Home Hardware, Rennie's No Frills, Starbucks Coffee & Galaxy Donuts.

## Park Watch

Park Watch volunteers keep High Park a safe and friendly place by maintaining a visible, trustworthy and welcoming presence in High Park. We provide information and assistance to park users and promote responsible behaviour in the Park.

Park Watch spent 559 volunteer-hours in the Park during 2001-02, with over 707 contacts or incidents recorded. Park Watch Headquarters operates out of the Chess Club located at the north end of High Park, providing better access for both park users and our volunteers.

Park Watch receives in-kind support from Bell Mobility.

## Annual Events & Joint Programming

Approximately 800 people enjoyed the various programs and events jointly offered by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee and Colborne Lodge. Some of the highlights were:

🦇 **5th Annual Pumpkin Float** (Sunday, Oct. 28/01) - Over 60 children carved pumpkins that were lit with candles and placed in the Duck Pond to float like sailboats set afire. The setting sun, the darkening park and shadowy trees all formed a glimmering background to a sea of jack-o-lanterns.

🦇 **5th Annual Winter Fun Day** (Sunday, Jan. 21/02) - Over 200 children participated in games, horse and wagon rides, pony rides and roasting marshmallows over a bonfire.

🦇 **5th Annual Spring Egg Hunt** (Sunday, March 24/02) - Over 100 children hunted for Easter eggs, had their faces painted, dyed eggs and participated in egg races.

Proceeds from these events assist in the maintenance of the High Park Adventure and other programs in the Park. These events received in-kind support from Johnvince Foods, local Shoppers Drug Marts (Southport, Bloor and Dundas St) and Rennie's No Frills.

## Colborne Lodge Report

### Joint Programming - Public

Colborne Lodge and the HPCAC continue to improve and expand on the wide variety of cooperative public programs conducted on the social and natural history of High Park. HPCAC participation and support at Earth Day in High Park and the High Park Harvest Festival are integral to the continuing enjoyment and relevancy of these programs to the over 3750 visitors who attended the events in 2001.

### Joint Programming - Educational

Joint marketing and promotion of the Nature Centre and Colborne Lodge's educational programs resulted in the delivery in the spring of six full-day park programs to 188 school children. The distance between the two sites proved to be too great for primary grades. There is great potential, however, for cross-curricular programs for Grades 3 – 8 on the history and natural environment of High Park.

### High Park Discovery Camp

Colborne Lodge sold out the camp in its second year of offering. This week-long camp introduces children to the wonders of Colborne Lodge and High Park through games, crafts and activities. Parents ranked highly the educational value and knowledge of the park gained through the camp.

## Treasurer's Report

### Financial Statement June 1, 2001 to May 31, 2002

#### Walking Tours and General Programs

Opening Balance at June 1, 2001	\$1,484.99
Income from Walking Tour Donations	\$1,012.55
Expenses in Support of Volunteer Programs	<u>(\$430.35)</u>
Closing Balance at May 31, 2002	\$2,067.19

#### Volunteer Stewardship Program

Opening Balance at June 1, 2001	\$2,744.44
Income from Donations and Sales	\$1,603.37
Expenses	<u>(\$2,834.95)</u>
Closing Balance at May 31, 2002	\$1,512.86

#### Adventure Playground

Opening Balance at June 1, 2001	\$2,399.25
Income from Donations and Sales	\$1,882.58
Expenses	<u>(\$2,766.36)</u>
Closing Balance at May 31, 2002	\$1,515.46

#### Nature Centre

Opening Balance at June 1, 2001	\$5,501.91
Income from Donations and Fees	\$18,080.08
Expenses	<u>(\$15,080.75)</u>
Closing Balance at May 31, 2002	\$8,051.24

#### CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNTS

Opening Balance at June 1, 2001	\$12,130.59
Income	\$22,578.58
Expenses	<u>(\$21,112.41)</u>
Closing Balance at May 31, 2002	\$13,146.75

**For information about HPCAC volunteer activities and programs, please call:**

**HIGH PARK VOLUNTEER HOTLINE  
416 392-1748**

**Or Visit our Website at  
[www.city.toronto.on.ca/involved/vsp/vsp.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/involved/vsp/vsp.htm)**

## The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee

The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee is a volunteer group made up of a broad range of park users, including individuals and organized groups. The Advisory Committee provides public input on park policies, goals and objectives; helps facilitate volunteer involvement in park initiatives; and promotes public awareness and responsible stewardship of the Park. Meetings are open to the general public.

The HPCAC voting membership includes local ratepayer/residents associations, recreational stakeholders, long-term interest groups, business/park entrepreneurs and eleven members-at-large from the community.

Our meetings are open to the general public. Meetings are usually held at the Howard Park Tennis Club at 6.30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of September, November, January, March and May. The Annual General Meeting is usually held at the Grenadier Café and Tea House on the third Wednesday in June.

The executive members of the HPCAC for 2001/02 were:  
Robin Sorys and Paul Rappell (co-chairs)

Luther Dean (treasurer)

Ken Sharratt (secretary)

plus the chairs of the subcommittees and program groups.

The HPCAC is supported by three subcommittees:

Safety & Recreation (Robin Sorys, chair);

Transportation (Susan Flanagan, chair); and

Natural Environment (Ron Allan & Karen Yukich, co-chairs).

In turn, these subcommittees sponsor a number of volunteer programs, including:

Park Watch (Gloria Worth, chair)

HP Adventure (Robin Sorys, chair);

HP K-9 Committee (Klara Latif, chair);

Volunteer Stewardship Program (Gillian Smith & Tony Jovan, co-chairs);

Adopt-a Plot Program (Ron Luft, coordinator)

Nature Centre (Karen Yukich and Karyn Morris, co-chairs);

Youth Corps (Ray Bieleskie and Sarah Kear); and

Walking Tours (Ron Allan and Cheryl Hart, co-chairs).

Archival information about the HPCAC and the natural restoration of High Park is maintained at the Runnymede Public Library at 2178 Bloor Street West.

The HPCAC operates in partnership with the Toronto Parks and Recreation Division and Colborne Lodge.