

To Toronto City Council and City of Toronto Staff

I am writing this letter to support Councilor Fletcher's motion, MM33.19 - Protecting the Cottonwood Flats and the Lower Don Lands.

Don't Mess with the Don (DMWTD), is a leading Toronto grassroots registered charity recognized widely for its environmental and community programming throughout the Don Valley and Toronto. In 2023, DMWTD was recognized by the Canadian Museum of Nature as *Canadian Community Group* of the year for our outstanding contribution to Stewardship, Clean ups and community programming. Since our inception in 2018, DMWTD has cleaned nearly 400,000 pounds of trash from Toronto's ravines and waterways. DMWTD has numerous partnerships with the City of Toronto including Stewardship, the DVP clean up and providing kayaking at Biidaasige Park. All DMWTD programs are free to everyone.

Over the past few years illegal raves have been conducted in many parts of the Don Valley. DMWTD has worked closely with Bylaw Officers to protect our greenspaces. Enforcement is not enough, and preventative measures are necessary to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and important ecosystems. Cottonwood Flats in the Lower Don and other nearby areas have been the site of numerous raves over the past several years, often weekly or bi-weekly. Hundreds of ravers with rental trucks, stages and lighting, drinking and drug use have severely damaged these areas and destroyed incredibly important stewardship work done by TRCA and City of Toronto Stewarding Programs as well as work done by community stewarding groups including DMWTD, Toronto Nature Stewards and Toronto Field Naturalists. Years of important restoration work have been damaged or destroyed. These raves are almost always for profit, lasting well into the early morning hours with deafening music and bright lights disturbing wildlife and nearby neighbourhoods.

DMWTD fully supports this motion and thanks Councillor Fletcher and her staff for their support and advocacy for our vital greenspaces.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence Warriner

President, Don't Mess with the Don