

20 Years of Speaking Up for Nature in High Park

This month the High Park Natural Environment Committee celebrates its 20th anniversary. Many thanks to all the dedicated individuals who have cared and contributed so much to this work. While the challenges may sometimes be frustrating, we have helped bring about many positive results. We are making a difference!

Grenadier Pond Interpretive Signs Project

Signs for Phase 2 of the signs project have been drafted, edited and reviewed by a number of volunteers, and then submitted to the City. We are in the process of collecting images to use on the signs. For more information about the interpretive signs project see the project [webpage](#).

Purple Martin House

The martin house on the south shore of Grenadier Pond has been rebuilt by a group of students from Bishop Marrocco/-Thomas Merton Catholic Secondary School. Read [article](#). Since the house was erected by our Purple Martin Stewards, Michael and Ray, nesting activity has been observed.

Prescribed Burn held in Spring 2013

A prescribed burn was conducted on April 17th. It was successful, and the area is greening naturally. The area (4 ha) was smaller than in past years. See our Prescribed Burns [page](#) for photos and media coverage, including an excellent article in Torontoist and a Toronto Star video with staff interviews.

Ongoing Efforts to Protect Wildlife at Grenadier Pond

We are concerned about the impacts of fishing: disruption of shoreline habitat of breeding birds; suffering and fatalities of birds and animals from abandoned line and hooks; disruption of the pond's natural trophic structure if the top predator population is not protected; unsightly litter accumulation; and lost opportunity for the general public to experience "wild nature in the city" in a peaceful manner.

Efforts to date include: more signage; more enforcement of by-laws and regulations; a petition for a temporary ban on fishing; a detailed submission including an incidents map and recommended actions; a meeting in Feb. 2013 with MNR, TRCA, fishing groups, and Leslie Gooding from our group; a cleanup by the Toronto Urban Fishing Ambassadors in April; a GTA Urban Fishing Summit in May which included a discussion of the issues at Grenadier Pond. In general, all parties seem to recognize the need for better protection of wildlife and better education of anglers. Abandoned line and wildlife incidents are evident again this spring. We will continue to press for appropriate measures to be taken.

Weir Operation to Resume

After several years of raising concerns about the weir not being operated as intended, we are pleased to report that the responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the weir at south end of Grenadier Pond has been assumed by TRCA. The overall objective is to mimic historical pond water level fluctuations.

Gypsy Moth Control

In High Park the City is carrying out an integrated control program which includes ground (not aerial) spraying. We recommended minimal spraying in High Park because of other moths and butterflies (e.g. hairstreaks) which have a similar occurrence and lifecycle. We also suggested that volunteers could possibly assist in the future with the removal of egg masses. For more info on the High Park treatments, see this [note](#). For more info on the city-wide control program, see the City's [website](#) and Gypsy Moth [booklet](#).

Other Items

Control of **Garlic Mustard**: Sites to be cleared are chosen strategically by staff since it is not practical to try to clear all areas. Some sites are cleared by the City's restoration crew, others by volunteers. It takes 5 to 7 years to get a site to be free of garlic mustard so that planting may proceed.

The GPS-based **Tree Tour** project is partly done. A downloadable map is being prepared. The question of signage and labels on the trees is still to be resolved.

Concerns about **mowing** encroaching on natural areas have been passed on to the Park supervisor.

Stewardship Activities

The annual Native Plant Sale held on May 12th was a great success (910 plants sold, \$5,165 raised of which half goes to our stewardship program, the other half to support the Greenhouse). Educational events were also held over the winter, and work events twice a month in the spring, plus five invasive plant work events in April and May by the Elite Squad. See www.highparknature.org for more event details.