

UPDATE

January 2017

NOTE: Our Forestry/Natural Environment contacts were not available to attend this meeting and no report was provided.

Prescribed Burn

A fall burn site tour was held in October for City staff and technical advisors, and three of our members attended. The walk examined the 2016 burn sites, and considered proposed 2017 burn sites. Detailed notes were provided in advance indicating the site history, objectives, key species, achievements and further actions needed (if burned last year), goals of upcoming burn, etc. In general, the results of last year's burn were quite positive. A new species of sedge was noted.

There is a concern that new development north of Bloor St. could affect wind patterns and impact future burns, and therefore environmental impact needs to be considered in approval of tall buildings. Another concern is the difficulty in obtaining certain locally-sourced native plant stock. We will suggest that the City consider making special arrangements with well-established volunteer growers to meet this need.

Site Reinstatement / Plantings

Some areas need new plantings due to recent construction work or the dredging of stormwater ponds. We assume that Forestry will be preparing suitable planting plans.

One ongoing concern is that City departments are not adhering to the Management Plan's protocols regarding the use of top soil, gravel, sod, etc. For example, the area near the cherry trees by the pond seems to have been handled inappropriately, the result being that the growth of preferred High Park plant species is somewhat inhibited and/or foreign plants and soils are introduced.

City of Toronto Fishing Meeting & Ongoing Concerns

During 2016, there was a greater incidence of inappropriate fishing behavior than in 2015, the first year of the restricted fishing area and protective signage. NEC representatives participated in a 'Fishing Summit' attended by various stakeholders. TRCA has proposed a set of 'recreational nodes' along the waterfront to provide more locations for people to access the water for recreational activities like fishing. The NEC also sent the City a letter to convey our concerns. The City replied with a letter signed by Richard Ubbens, stating that "PF&R considers no further retraction of fishing <to be necessary>" and indicating that any further questions should be directed to James Dunn (Manager Waterfront Parks). We are preparing a response. (Both our letter and the City's response are posted [here](#).)

Skating at Grenadier Pond

Based on a motion put forward by Councillor Doucette, City staff will be allowing people to skate on the pond under certain conditions (the first year since 2001). If the ice is deemed safe, a yellow "skate at your own risk" flag would fly; if the ice is unsafe, a red flag will go up warning people to stay off. We have requested that the accompanying signage include ones that say 'no dogs on ice.' (Our attempts to provide input in advance were unsuccessful.)

Protecting Wildlife and Habitat in Natural Areas

Three NEC members are participating in the steering committee of ProtectNatureTO, a recently formed group which aims to protect Toronto's ESAs and other special natural areas. Progress is being made, including discussions with elected officials and key staff.

Ontario Nature Regional Meeting

NEC representatives attended the fall regional meeting hosted by the Durham Region Field Naturalists with special assistance from the Thickson's Woods Land Trust.

Christmas Bird Count

The High Park & vicinity count was held on Sunday, Dec. 18. Brown Thrasher and Common Raven were added to the all-time list. Other sightings included 2 adult Bald Eagles and an American Pipit. Total species: 48. See cumulative [results](#).

Wildlife and Habitat Monitoring

Much attention had been devoted to encouraging and monitoring the growth of certain plant species by various parties, including the City, volunteers, etc. It is not clear how effectively those changes in flora have created or improved animal habitats, and in turn how animal populations are faring. Existing monitoring projects are listed on our [Citizen Science page](#). We will discuss the possibility of more organized monitoring with the High Park Nature Centre and other contacts.

High Park Stewards

The High Park Stewards / VSP program's 20th celebration will be held on Jan. 22nd. See the High Park Nature [website](#) for details of this and other upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

High Park in Art and Stories

Two interesting projects involving High Park are the [High Park Story & Art Project](#) and the book [Stone Woman](#).