

FRIENDS OF PETRIE ISLAND
AMIS DE L'ÎLE PETRIE
www.petrieisland.org

Report to the City of Ottawa for the 2007 Summer Season
November 2007

This was the Friends of Petrie Island's tenth year of operation and our third with the new beach open. The City provided lifeguards and daily maintenance. The construction of a beach building was delayed and temporary washrooms, lifeguard office and storage were provided. There was no food concession this year.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Low E. coli counts resulted in few beach closures (6) this summer.
- Funds generated included: \$5900 in grants, \$400 in donations and a value of \$ 20,650 in volunteer labour for a total of \$26,550
- Worked with S.P.I.R.I.T. to develop programs at the Island for a third year. The camps were run from the Grandmaître property
- Participated in Canada Day and River Day (with Ottawa Riverkeeper).
- People from around Ottawa and area are discovering Petrie Island, showing this is a regional, not just an east-end facility.
- Participated in the Petrie Island Advisory Committee (PIAC)
- The Friends of Petrie Island and the Ottawa Stewardship Council completed a second year of turtle nesting study
- FOPI developed a Stewardship plan
- Several large group picnics occurred in the picnic area but the practice of taking reservations was discontinued by FOPI, the City does reservations in two areas, the rest is on first-come, first-serve basis
- Junior nature program was started by Dawn Kerr
- Participated in the City proposed 3P partnership to build the beach building
- Opening of the East beach with lifeguards was started in mid summer. The area was also used for sailing lessons and camps for a one-week period

PARTNERSHIP

- Continued contacts with various associations: Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club (OFNC), Ottawa Duck Club, Ottawa Stewardship Council, local community associations, Ottawa Riverkeeper, SHELL (Turtle Club), Team Ottawa-Orleans, Sonshine Families (S.P.I.R.I.T), Petrie Island Outdoor Club (PIOC), Petrie Island Advisory Committee (PIAC).

SITE IMPROVEMENTS – FOPI

- Improved the Nature Centre, including new displays. The City installed new flooring and new lights and completed the new porch in late fall of 2006. FOPI completed new security screening on the window
- New enlarged storage and work building was completed to replace the original shed which came with the cottage
- Majority of work was done on Wednesday mornings; many groups also participated in general cleanups
- Built new picnic tables and garbage containers

OPERATIONS

- Daily cleanup and monitoring of the picnic area and trails was provided by Friends of Petrie Island, using volunteers and students hired with City grant money - \$7,124, along with an HRSS grant of \$5,900. Additional City funds of \$3,000 went to adding wire mesh on the windows to improve the security of the info center.
- Monitoring is important to protect the environment and for public safety and has led to reduced levels of vandalism and damage
- FOPI again worked with City staff and volunteers to protect selected trees from beavers (wrapped trees with wire mesh)
- The City provided approximately 20 portable rental toilets (5 months) for picnic and beach area, maintenance, materials and grass cutting as well as daily garbage collection and beach grooming
- City provided regular lifeguards from mid-June to the end of August for the three beach areas
- The beach was closed 6 days due to high E. coli readings - see Table 2
- Parking –The number of days when over 350 cars were parked was only one in 2007, as compared to 6 in 2005. Many visitors are still confused about parking fees and this year's additional weekday fees were poorly publicized.. FOPI is concerned about reduced attendance, due to parking charges, especially early mornings. FOPI does not feel fees should be charged when lifeguards are not on duty before 11 a.m. and after 7 p.m., or during prolonged inclement weather.
- Regular dragging of the sand areas should be reconsidered - in addition to creating dust on windy days, it disturbs turtle breeding and the clean sand is now mixed with stones and other garbage. The sand areas were cleaned to bring them back to their original state.
- There was less spring flooding this year and access to the park was not closed, and the period when the nature trails were closed was reduced
- FOPI picnic area reservations for groups in the picnic area was discontinued in July due to overly large groups and excessive noise, and too much of a hassle for the money collected

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance increased slightly over 2006 despite cool weather in July. June, August and September were higher than last year
- Figures do not include Canada Day – estimate 18,500
- Attendance figures are based on car counts multiplied by 2.5 persons in May/June and 3.0 persons in July/August – figures represent person-hours of use.
- Figures are found in Table 1 and Appendix A. The attendance was based on the use of the entire park area, busy days this figure was adjusted to include cars parked outside the park area.
- More detailed Petrie Island use in Appendix B

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Jim Robertson's slide shows were presented to 12 public groups.
- Regular dispatches on Petrie Island wildlife and plants were sent out throughout the season.
- A Junior Naturalist program was held once a week during the summer and fall, led by Dawn Kerr, 143 participants attended 11 theme days
- Opened the centre daily in July and August and on weekends in May, June and September, over 300 people visited the centre on busy days
- Seven theme days were held with nature displays, including an 8th Wildflower Walk and a seventh annual Turtle Day and a second River Day
- Gave tours to Scout, Seniors and school groups
- Various FOPI events and articles on Petrie Island have been featured in local media, but there was poor reporting of the good E. coli counts and few beach closures
- Served on steering committee for Sonshine Families and assisted in operation and training of staff, to run summer day camps

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- FOPI members continued Turtle counts on Turtle Bay

- RVCA conducted a Butternut study and found 192 trees, most with cankers. FOPI will participate in planting healthy butternut seeds in 2008
- A second turtle nesting study was conducted in cooperation with the Ottawa Stewardship Council and a report was prepared by Richard Burnford of FOPI.
- Wood duck boxes (Ottawa Duck Club) were again well used. Eleven of thirteen boxes were occupied
- A more detailed study of the number of people using the nature trails on hot summer days when the beach area was full is shown in Appendix B
- FOPI continues to participate in the Riverwatch program for Ottawa Riverkeeper on the Ottawa River. Friends of Geoscape Canada produced information on many of the rocks used to prevent beach erosion which was highlighted in an interpretive sign
- The largest amount of damage continues to be from beavers felling or damaging mature trees
- Increased monitoring of trails occurred this year due to increased staff from HRSS grant
- A Petrie Island stewardship plan was prepared in March 2007 and reviewed by different organizations and will be presented to the City in November.

FOPI SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING:

- That the City install additional signs for beach, trails, parking and picnic area. Most of the signs are symbols rather than written, causing some confusion. More detailed signs with wording need to be installed at the Island and park entrance, especially emphasizing **“No Dogs”, curfew hours and “No Alcoholic Beverages”** FOPI continued to recommend written signs as opposed to symbols.
- Completion of the beach park plan with amenities such as playgrounds, food concession, picnic shelters, adequate washrooms, etc. but has concerns about over commercialization which 3P might bring
- The long term use of the island should be studied and a plan developed that allows public use while protecting the environmental integrity of the island, priority should be given to non motorized, natural uses
- Use of the downstream bay (Cumberland Bay) for canoe, kayak and dinghy launching, as well as shore fishing and small sail boat instruction and use and swimming. Appropriate facilities for these uses are required
- We strongly oppose an interprovincial bridge at Petrie Island
- The banning of dogs on Petrie Island and increased enforcement of regulations re: boats, feeding of animals, and 9:00 p.m. curfew, although we feel there should be better signage, i.e. spelled out as opposed to using symbols
- We support the stationing of staff along the entrance road on weekend days to control access and inform public of rules
- Expansion of the surface treatment of the main access (Trim) road, for dust control and pedestrian/cyclist safety. This should also include the parking lots
- The addition of a bicycle lane along the access road to the causeway
- Regular bus service or a shuttle to Petrie Island during the summer
- Review of sand maintenance procedures

PROPOSALS FOR 2008

- Improvement in E. coli and beach status notification for the general public is required
- The importance of an entrance sign explaining the rules, especially the hours, the no-dog rule, the status of the beach and explanation of the parking times and fees
- Development of long-term plans for Petrie Island
- Continued support of Police and increased Bylaw Enforcement presence to keep area safe
- Continue to improve cottage/info centre and programs
- Development of expanded environmental programs on the island for youth
- Continued wildlife studies, including turtle nesting
- Raising the road by 1' in the low spots to ensure year-round access, for safety (fire, police), convenience and better pedestrian and bike access

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Board of Directors

Friends of Petrie Island
Financial Statement
As at Jan 1, 07 – Oct 16, 07

Bank Balance as at 31 December 2006 \$5992.93

Revenue

Membership	225.00	
Donations -	50.00	
HRDC - employment grant	4450.00	
Rentals	210.00	
Copy Rights	50.00	
City grants – (QHRA)	8373.40	
Misc Revenue (Pop, water,etc)	494.42	
Tours	20.00	
Sub Total	13872.82	19865.75
Expenses		
Administration	241.04	
Maintenance	906.73	
Interpretation	689.75	
Bank Charges	42.20	
Web Site	10.60	
City of Ottawa Insurance	250.00	
Phone	228.00	
Misc. (Pop, water, etc)	60.07	
Donation	100.00	
Monitoring	7636.81	
Receiver General	691.31	
Children's Prog	65.01	
Computer	965.57	
Volunteer Appreciation	236.68	
Sub Total		12123.77
Bank Balance as at Oct 16,07		7741.98

TABLE 1									
PETRIE ISLAND ATTENDANCE									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
MAY	4089	5,084	4,185	7,703	6,294	16,165	17,270	21,365	
JUNE	4617	9,517	9,479	20,198	14,436	71,213	52,920	55,411	
JULY	10,974	18,672	26,062	25,934	48,137	115,072	93,243	70,160	
AUGEST	9,881	19,674	26,417	26,363	57,718	60,063	43,916	61,960	
SEPT	4,500	8,456	13,044	12,056	27,304	21,860	12,500	23,760	
TOTAL	34,970	60,403	79,187	92,254	153,889	284,377	219,849	232,656	
CANADA DAY						24,000	24,000	18,500	
TABLE 2									
BEACH OPERATION									
Days when Ecoli values over 100 in BOLD									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
BRITANNIA	30	19	18	2	4	2	2	2	2
WESTBORO	25	12	21	9	14	22	22	14	14
MOONEYS B	12	3	5	1	1	27	12	2	2
PETRIE ISL.			8	8	6	17	48	6	6
SAMPLING DAYS									
CITY BEACHES	58	61	84	83	65	75	75	74	
PETRIE IS.			50	53	65	75	75	74	
TABLE3									
VOLUNTEER HOURS									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
WORK	658	479	739	437	925	721	593	757	
MONITORS	806	919	453	344	370	433	343	364	
ADMINISTRATION	110	120	160	220	253	260	346	314	
INTERPRETIVE	250	530	210	370	567	323	308	590	
TOTAL	1,824	2,048	1,592	1,370	2,115	1,737	1,630	2025	
PAID HOURS	385	400	810	544	780	550	850		
TABLE 4									
DONATIONS AND GRANTS in Dollars									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
DONATED MATERIAL	1,100	3,751	2,700	600	400	400	300	400	
DONATED LABOR	12,768	14,336	11,144	9,600	21,150	17,370	16,300	20,250	

TOTAL DONATED	13,968	18,036	13,844	10,197	21,550	17,770	16,600	20,650
TRILLIUM GRANTS			11,700	6,700	4,900			
H.R.S.S.					2,500	3,000	6,000	5,900
PARTNERSHIPS with	Ottawa Stewardship Council				5,000	7,000		
TOTAL GRANTS			11,700	6,700	12,400	10,000	6,000	5,900
TOTAL \$ VALUE	13,968	18,036	25,544	16,967	33,950	27,770	22,600	26,550