



PEACEFUL
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COALITION

For Immediate Release - May 23, 2008

Leslie street Spit Cormorants at the Mercy of Decision this Friday

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority - Executive Advisory Management Board Meeting

Friday, May 23, 2008

9:30 AM, Black Creek Pioneer Village (1000 Murray Ross Parkway), South Theatre

Toronto – On Friday, May 23, 2008, staff of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) will be presenting to their Executive Authority a proposal to kill nesting Double-crested Cormorants through egg destruction at Tommy Thompson Park, also known as the Leslie Street Spit. If the Authority approves the project, egg destruction will begin immediately.

The City of Toronto currently suppresses all its colonial waterbirds except Caspian Terns and Black-crowned Night Herons. Since 1984, the TRCA has killed over 100,000 Ring-billed Gulls through egg destruction, and the Authority recently approved continued egg destruction of Canada Geese because the birds cause 'severe aesthetic impairment'.

"I had to double-check the current year and century because I thought somehow I had been catapulted backwards to some archaic time when I learned Toronto has a wildlife kill policy for creating an ugly mess" says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition.

What's worse, these sorts of decisions do not seek a public mandate. When asked why the program to kill Ring-billed Gulls was not periodically publicly reviewed, the TRCA responded that an extensive public consultation occurred in the early 1980's - almost thirty years ago. Apparently, that's good enough for them.

And it is no different for the proposal to kill Double-crested Cormorants. No one knows the details to this proposal. It is an ad hoc project devised when the TRCA failed to secure public support to manage the cormorant colony at the Leslie Spit. "What they failed to get through the front door, they are now trying to sneak through the back door," says Valastro. The TRCA and Dr. Gail Fraser from York University, who has been contracted to use her students to begin destroying cormorant eggs, have refused to release the details of the project stifling public participation at the executive level.

"Cormorants are being killed by government agencies throughout their nesting habitat across the Great Lakes. Tommy Thompson Park remains one of the last safe refuges for these birds. The last thing these birds need is another layer of ignorant politicians causing them harm. The Peaceful Parks Coalition believes that the City of Toronto has an obligation to protect the Double-crested Cormorant colony at the Spit, and allow it to evolve naturally without human manipulation," says Valastro.

press release

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