
DATE: August 6, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **2009 PEEL ECOFAIR UPDATE**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Environment, Transportation
and Planning Services

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to update Regional Council on the 2009 Peel EcoFair, and examine future recommendations and directions for the event.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The 7th Annual Peel EcoFair took place on Wednesday May 20, 2009 at Erindale Park in Mississauga.
- 278 students and 29 teachers from 16 schools participated in the event showcasing environmental student projects.
- The Region of Peel worked with Brampton Clean City, the City of Mississauga, Credit Valley Conservation, EcoSource, and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to develop programming and provide recommendations for the 2009 Peel EcoFair.
- Feedback for the 2009 Peel EcoFair and recommendations for the 2010 Peel EcoFair were collected from teachers, mentors, and steering committee members.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Peel EcoFair was created with the goals of networking, communicating, and celebrating exemplary student environmental stewardship projects from within the Region of Peel. The Peel EcoFair's main participants are students from the Region of Peel who, through stewardship, learn about and appreciate their community, local natural systems, and the related essential services upon which our communities depend. The EcoFair gathers those students and teachers together who share a common interest in increasing sustainability through conservation, restoration, and protection. The Peel EcoFair supports the Region's Strategic Plan V, specifically Goal #1 which is to "deliver citizen-focused services", and Goal #2 to "protect, enhance and restore the environment".

Since its inception in 2003, the Peel EcoFair has continued to evolve, attracting new as well as returning participants and partners. Through various forms of creative expression students present and display their projects (e.g. poetry, art, pictures, drama). The display showcases and explains the project in a way that allows other schools and community groups to understand and become engaged.

August 6, 2009
2009 PEEL ECOFAIR UPDATE

2. 2009 Peel EcoFair Details

a) 2009 Steering Committee

The following organizations partnered with the Region of Peel at the 2009 Peel EcoFair:

1. Brampton Clean City *
2. City of Mississauga
3. Credit Valley Conservation Authority *
4. Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board *
5. EcoSource *
6. Peel District School Board (and Field Centres) *
7. Peel Environmental Youth Alliance *
8. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority *

Note: * = returning partner

Representatives from Brampton Clean City, EcoSource, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and the Peel District School Board sat on the 2009 Peel EcoFair Steering Committee with Region of Peel staff. Each organization was responsible for coordinating part of the event, contributing to the planning process, and providing staff resources and onsite support for the event.

b) Participants

Students from across Peel gathered together at the 7th Annual Peel EcoFair on Wednesday May 20, 2009. In 2008, 151 students and 8 teachers, from 8 schools participated in the Peel EcoFair. In 2009, the number of participants was significantly increased. On the presentation day, 278 students and 29 teachers from 16 schools were in attendance. In addition, 16 Mentors (representing the Region of Peel and community partner organizations) and several staff participated in the event. 2009 was the largest Peel EcoFair to date.

The 2009 Peel EcoFair showcased and celebrated the environmental action projects of the following school groups. Summaries for each project can be found at www.peel-ecofair.ca :

1. Belfountain Elementary School – Benefits of Community Partnerships – Caledon; Ward 1
2. Calderstone Middle School – Greening Our School* - Brampton; Ward 10
3. Great Lakes Public School – Plastic Water Bottles: Study and Reduction – Brampton; Ward 9
4. Guardian Angels Elementary School – “Ban the Bottle” – Brampton; Ward 6
5. Heart Lake Secondary School – HEAL (Heart Lake Environmental Action Leaders) Awareness Campaign* – Brampton; Ward 2
6. Ridgewood Public School – The Ecotition: How EcoFriendly are You? – Mississauga; Ward 5
7. Roberta Bondar Public School – The Walking School Bus & The Outdoor Classroom* - Brampton; Ward 6
8. Sir William Gage Public School – Getting Started...– Brampton; Ward 4

August 6, 2009

2009 PEEL ECOFAIR UPDATE

9. Sir Winston Churchill Public School – EcoFair for Earth Day – Brampton; Ward 3
10. Springdale Public School – The Green Club – Brampton; Ward 9
11. St. Brigid Elementary School – Seeds Write Across Canada – Brampton; Ward 4
12. St. Catherine of Siena Elementary School – Litterless Lunches – Mississauga; Ward 7
13. St. Edmund Elementary School – School Energy Audit * - Brampton; Ward 6
14. St. Joseph Secondary School – Writers Unblocked – Mississauga; Ward 11
15. St. Timothy Elementary School – The Green Team – Mississauga; Ward 7
16. St. Teresa of Avila Elementary School – Eco-Police – Mississauga; Ward 9

Note: * = returning school

We chose not to limit participant numbers in 2009 as the 2008 steering committee and the Public Education and Outreach team expressed a willingness to accommodate more students to provide opportunity to more groups.

Additionally the group size was not limited to 15 participants as in previous years. This had the effect of excluding larger environment clubs or whole classes that worked on year long environmental action projects. In 2009, 3 whole classes and 6 environment clubs with more than 15 members participated in the Peel EcoFair. While the accommodation of larger groups posed some new organizational and networking challenges, it significantly contributed to both the success and the accessibility of the event.

c) Venue

This year, the Peel EcoFair took place at Erindale Park in Mississauga. This was the first time the event has been held completely separate from the Peel Children's Water Festival and outside of Heart Lake Conservation Area. Erindale Park was an appropriate choice for the Peel EcoFair, as it had a large field area for tent set up and afternoon activities, a place to plant trees, ample room to accommodate washroom facilities and an ambulance, a picnic shelter that served as a registration area, and a hill that served as seating for the opening and keynote addresses. The Credit River also runs through this urban park, linking it directly to the Peel Water Story, and providing students with an opportunity to experience the Credit River.

Both Erindale Park and Heart Lake Conservation Area (where the event has been held in past years) are viable options for the 2010 Peel EcoFair. The 2010 Peel EcoFair Steering Committee will evaluate potential venues in an effort to make the Peel EcoFair as accessible as possible for the widest range of schools in Peel.

d) Opening and Keynote Speakers

This year, the Peel EcoFair opening and keynote speakers were specifically chosen for their ability to be engaging, interactive, and fun for the students. The opening ceremony was led by the Central Peel Secondary School Drumming Ensemble, and aimed to illustrate the power of collaboration to the participating students. This year's keynote speaker was Jeff Salem, a local drumming and team building instructor. Students were encouraged to participate in both presentations which were well received.

August 6, 2009

2009 PEEL ECOFAIR UPDATE**e) Additional Activities**

During lunch, teachers gathered together for a networking session facilitated by EcoSource, with help from the Region of Peel, the TRCA, and the PDSB. Teachers were asked to bring with them a useful environmental resource to share with the group to this session. During the afternoon, teachers and students networked with their mentors in a 45 minute mentoring session. All participants were given the opportunity to participate in a suite of three stewardship activities including CVC's tree planting and TRCA's nature walk and furs and skulls activity.

f) Summary of Feedback

The following are the key recommendations compiled from the feedback collected from the 2009 Peel EcoFair participants. Teachers, mentors, and steering committee members provided suggestions for the further improvement of the Peel EcoFair in 2010.

Scheduling

- Consider splitting the Peel EcoFair into two days; one aimed at high school students and one aimed at elementary school students

Participation

- Continue to grow the Peel EcoFair to include and support more school groups
- Do not impose a limit on group size, but consider splitting large groups into smaller ones to encourage discussion and assist mentors. Discuss possibilities and challenges at first steering committee meeting

Networking and Mentors

- Continue to use "mentors" and further develop their role in the event
- Cut down on time for networking between teachers, students, and mentors, and provide mentors with more tools to better engage their assigned groups
- Re-evaluate the appropriateness of the teacher networking session for this event
- Consider other formats for session, but continue to search for opportunities to provide teachers with a space to network and interact with each other

Venue

- Continue to keep the Peel EcoFair separate from the Peel Children's Water Festival
- Choose a venue for EcoFair such as Erindale Park or the remote picnic area at Heart Lake Conservation Area for 2010. Explore other venue options to ensure that all schools in Peel have equal access to the event

Entertainment

- Continue to book keynote speakers who present in an engaging, relevant, and participatory way
- Continue to have a school group involved in the opening ceremonies.

Activities

- Ensure that activities are different from 2009 and past years
- Continue to work with community partner groups to ensure that activities are relevant, engaging, and fun

August 6, 2009

2009 PEEL ECOFAIR UPDATE

Steering Committee

- Continue to invite community partners to sit on the steering committee

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of this years' EcoFair was \$9,779.22, and was funded through the 2009 approved budget. Organizations such TRCA, CVC, City of Brampton, City of Mississauga volunteered their time. In addition, the City of Mississauga waived the site rental fee for Erindale Park.

CONCLUSION

Since its inception in 2003, the Peel EcoFair has continued to evolve, attracting new and returning participants from all over Peel region. The objective of the event is to communicate, network and celebrate environmental achievements by school groups in the community. These objectives have been met with much success. The plans for 2010 are underway and will continue to build on the accomplishments of past EcoFair events.



pr
Dan Labrecque
Commissioner of Environment, Transportation
and Planning Services

Approved for Submission:



for
D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact
Johann Manente at extension 3297 or via email at johann.manente@peelregion.ca*

Authored By: Amanda Di Battista

- c. Legislative Services
- ~~cc~~ Manager, Financial Support Unit (FSU)