

Volunteers comb Don River for litter during cleanup
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Fifty used tires, seven cement steps, discarded syringes and a refrigerator were just a few of the items awaiting cleanup crews at the Don River on the weekend as Toronto celebrated Bring Back the Don Day.

The volunteer cleaning crews carried green garbage bags and light blue recycling bags to collect everyday litter and the refuse from illegal dumping along the banks.

Robin Osborne, who spent all day Saturday at Moore Park Ravine, was disgusted by some of the garbage she found, including two discarded needles.

"I found a can of campfire liquid, (with) some still in it," she said.

"I look at the Don whenever I go by and it looks awful," Ms Osborne said. "Being down here it's so beautiful." She said she was amazed to see so many birds, butterflies and flowers around the polluted area.

Yesterday was declared Bring Back the Don Day by Toronto Mayor Arthur Eggleton to acknowledge the increased interest in the pollution problems plaguing the 38-kilometre river. Volunteers, though, were out both days.

Mr. Eggleton said he would like to see the cleanup repeated each year.

A task force has been set up to decide the best method for cleaning the Don, which flows into Lake Ontario. The city draws its drinking water from the lake.

"To allow the contamination of our watersheds is a danger to our health," Mr. Eggleton said.

John Laing, of the City of Toronto Public Works Department, said it is "just laziness" that makes people sneak down to the river at night to dump garbage, despite a possible \$1,000 fine. He said he could not understand why people did not just take advantage of the city's regular garbage service.

"You put it out in front of your house; we'll pick it up," he said. The city will even pick up bulky items such as the refrigerator, Mr. Laing noted.

In addition to the cleaning, volunteers and city officials planted approximately 1,000 trees and shrubs in Riverdale Park along the Don, and organized tours of the river.