

Toronto, 9/22/2023 – Four distinguished grassroots organizations, [SwimOP](#), [PaddleOP](#), [Ontario Place for All](#), and [Waterfront for All](#), are coming together in a critical endeavor to save the Michael Hough Forest at Ontario Place West Island, currently under the threat of development by Doug Ford and Kinga Surma. They have signaled a potential breach of law, with plans to remove 846 mature trees integral to Michael Hough's renowned creation of Toronto's cleanest beach and forest.

Event Highlights:

The collaborative effort aims to gather approximately 300 people, converging forces to symbolize their dedication to preserving Ontario Place. Participants will enjoy a day of paddling and swimming, standing united on the beach to express their support. This event is an embodiment of direct action, with all organizations putting their "boots on the beach" in the spirit of Jane Jacobs's "eyes on the street."

A Quote from Steve Mann:

"Ontario, holding a significant portion of the world's freshwater, makes Toronto the freshwater capital of the world and an essential role model for freshwater stewardship. The unauthorized proposal to remove mature trees from West Island threatens not only our local ecosystems but also has potentially international repercussions on our invaluable freshwater resources and the Great Lakes' national security."

A Call for "Ontario Placemaking":

Jane Jacobs coined the term "placemaking," advocating for the "eyes on the street" concept of citizen ownership of streets. In homage to Jacobs, the involved organizations propose "Ontario Placemaking," emphasizing citizen ownership of Ontario Place and vigilance over its preservation, echoing the sentiment with the hashtag #EyeOP.

How to Support:

The community, media representatives and anyone interested in the cause are invited to join the organizations and support the preservation efforts. Participation in the event and spreading awareness of the cause will be instrumental in the fight to save the Michael Hough Forest and Ontario Place from detrimental developmental pursuits.

Press inquiries:

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About Ontario Place West Island

Ontario Place West Island houses the Michael Hough Forest, renowned for its clean beach and robust forest ecosystem. It is a symbol of nature's grandeur within the urban landscape of Toronto, serving as a refuge for city dwellers and wildlife alike.

About Ontario Place for All

Ontario Place for All is a grassroots organization that wants to ensure Ontario Place redevelopment follows the core principles of waterfront revitalization.

About SwimOP

SwimOP is an organization dedicated to the preservation and betterment of aquatic environments in Ontario. It has been instrumental in various community projects aimed at aquatic conservation.

About Waterfront For All

Toronto's waterfront is more than our city's edge along Lake Ontario - it's a destination and second neighbourhood for every Torontonians to enjoy. We've come a long way in revitalizing our waterfront, but much more work lies ahead.