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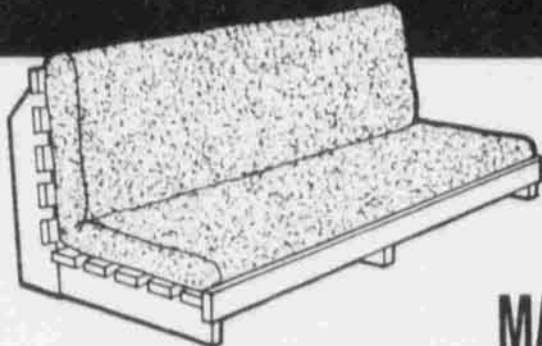
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ENVIRONMENT

With a round of applause from its creators, the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) was given life on Saturday.

About 30 environmental activists from various groups in Metro met at the 519 Church community centre to hammer out TEA's constitution and plan its first projects.

While the group was launched at a "TEA party" in December, Saturday's was the first meeting to settle business.

The date — February 20 — was significant: the anniversary of 1987's Greening of the City conference, a Pollution Probe-organized event where the idea of TEA was born.

TEA's goal is to make greater Toronto an ecologically sustainable city. The constitution dedicates members to working "toward a city that is non-polluting, protects nature, supports an abundance of natural areas and is respectful of all

life, human and non-human."

TEA has 13 member groups, including Citizens for a Safe Environment, the Sierra Club, the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Urban Wilderness Gardeners, Toronto Field Naturalists and the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society.

It also has plenty of ideas. Saturday's meeting provided a glimpse of the local environmental movement's plans for actions over the next few months. Among them:

- **The Project for Environmental Priorities (PEP)** will raise the environment's profile in municipal elections in November. The project, which polls and publicizes the positions of candidates on environmental issues, was judged problematic in its first incarnation at the municipal level in 1985 — owing largely to a lack of time and money.

It appears this year's PEP will embrace a range of issues, though some TEA members like Arni Mikelsons pointed out the advantages of concentrating on the issue of waste, which has momentum both in municipal government and in the environmental movement.

Pollution Probe has proposed a province-wide elections project on

municipal waste; and the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) is bringing garbage guru Barry Commoner to Toronto in September to speak on recycling.

Commoner, along with Citizen Action of Western New York, is trying to get Buffalo to work toward recycling 70 per cent of its waste. CELA hopes that will set the stage for a competition between Toronto and Buffalo to reach the 70 per cent target. Commoner has already proven that goal achievable with a pilot project on Long Island.

- **Environment Week**, an annual event scheduled for the week of May 30 this year, was, along with PEP, the major item being worked over on Saturday. While locally-generated activities are up in the air pending funding approval from Environment Canada, Jay Palter announced that Greenpeace is planning to bring its "North American Inland Waters Expedition" to Toronto during Environment Week.

Palter told the TEA meeting that the ship Beluga, which has a full chemical lab on board to test for pollutants, will be brought over from West Germany to tour the Great Lakes from May to August.

"The plan is to draw attention to the toxic issues in the Great Lakes and generate some political will to do something about it," Palter said.

Stops in Lake Ontario will include Toronto, Hamilton and Port Hope (the three Canadian "hot spots" designated by the International Joint Commission), as well as St. Catharines, Rochester and the Mohawk Akwesasne reserve near Cornwall.

- **Save the Rouge Valley System (SRVS)** is trying to consolidate the victory it won last November when Scarborough council voted to preserve remaining Rouge Valley lands. Lois James says SRVS is urging the province to declare the publicly-owned land an "urban provincial park."

- Meanwhile, another TEA member, **Friends of the Spit (FOS)**, is trying to reverse the January decision of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) to proceed with plans for limited recreational development of the Leslie Street Spit. The next step of the process is a provincial environmental assessment, where FOS will argue that the MTRCA scheme is a needless intrusion on the delicate spit habitat, and dumping of tainted landfill at the spit is a hazard in its own right. (The case for the latter argument is strengthened by a provincial environment ministry report released last week that found toxic hotspots throughout landfill used to build the spit between 1963 and 1986.)

Saturday's meeting also gave evidence of some network building, with representatives from both ACT Against Disarmament and the Popular Summit Facilitation Committee (PSFC) on hand.

The popular summit, held to counter the economic summit in Toronto in June, will take the Western leaders to task for their social policy shortcomings. PSFC's Frank Showler said that crimes against the environment will be among the charges made against the leaders at a people's tribunal.

"We're going to put up wanted posters urging people to arrest these leaders on sight," said Showler.

— TED MUMFORD

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