



Execs team up for Humber cleanup

Businessmen enlist volunteers to spend a morning tackling trash along the river's bank

September 08, 2007

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Rick Crawford knows a thing or two about trash. As president of a local rubbish removal company he has seen and smelled his share of garbage.

But Crawford, an avid kayaker, couldn't believe the garbage he saw as he paddled down the Humber River. So he and Ted Cordina, a businessman who runs a canoeing and kayaking tour company on the Humber River, decided to do something about it.

The two – along with a small band of volunteers – launched their own cleanup day along the banks of the river in Kings Mill Park in the city's west end.

"I am a kayaker and I kayak on the Humber and it's always full of garbage," said Crawford, who is the head of the Toronto Division of 1-800-RID-OF-IT.

"This is the community we work in. We thought we'd try to give something back and clean up (a bit of) the Humber."

For Cordina, who runs Toronto Kayak and Canoe Adventures, the cleanup means the natural beauty of the Humber can be seen by the many paddlers and hikers that frequent the river and its shores.

The Humber is "a lot prettier without garbage," he said. "It's really scenic."

What's more, there is abundant wildlife to be seen, including deer, osprey, beaver, mink, blue heron and grey egrets.

And the river – which is a heritage river – is full of fish and frogs and turtles, which proves it's relatively clean, Cordina said.

"The salmon run is about to start. It's an amazing resource."

Crawford, Cordina and their team of about six volunteers spent two hours yesterday morning cleaning up a tiny corner of that resource. By the end they had collected about a half a dozen shopping carts, an iron garbage can from a city park, a carpet, the odd shoe or two, bottles and fishing tackle.

This is the first time Crawford and volunteers from his company have come out to clean up the river and he's planning to make a return trip next year.

As for Cordina, he is often out cleaning up the area on his own. But this is the first time the two

men have come out together.

But having Crawford on board is a big advantage.

"We've got the manpower and the facility and the know-how," Crawford said.

"We know how to dispose of the big stuff. Most of it is metal and it will be taken to a metal recycler."