

Pits closed, but others to open

Top doc orders spraying on city's most controversial garbage site to control 'active insect infestation'

By [DON PEAT](#), SUN MEDIA

Last Updated: 4th July 2009, 1:13pm

The dump will be closed but you can keep the garbage for now.

That's the message already frustrated Christie Pits residents are fuming over after another day of dumping in their neighbourhood park.

City of Toronto trash guru Geoff Rathbone announced yesterday that the city's most controversial temporary dump site will be closed tomorrow -- but the garbage will stay, along with as-needed pesticide spraying, until the end of the now 13-day-old civic workers strike.

After a week of protests and dumping at the Bloor St. W. park, officials announced yesterday that the site, along with the York Mills trash pile, are being closed because they are filling up, not because of protests. York Mills was set to close last night and the pits will close tomorrow night.

Friends of Christie Pits member Govind Rao said the closure is nothing to celebrate.

"The city has dumped 80 tonnes of garbage on us ... 80 tonnes is sitting there, it's going to get rained on every second day, it's going to continue to poison everyone in the neighbourhood and it's going to continue to run off into streams and the lake.

"We also are not happy that now two new parks get to be poisoned and that people there get to deal with the health effects of this."

Both Centennial Arena, at 1967 Ellesmere Rd., near Markham Rd., and Sunnybrook Park at 1132 Leslie St., enter off Leslie St. just north of Eglinton Ave. E., have been added to the list of temporary sites. They are now open to receive garbage.

Residents in the pits have been steaming since the city announced the park would serve as one of 19 temporary dump sites. The anger is evident on several signs posted around the pits including one poster that bluntly states, "Remember the tyranny of Miller and his minions on Nov. 13, 2010 (Municipal Elections)."

Maria George-Nascimide, who lives right across from the pits trash drop-off, said the whole situation is bad.

"It stinks so much," she said while tending to her vibrant front flower garden. "I want this finished right away."

The 68-year-old said she doesn't have a problem with the city spraying the trash.

"For me, it's better to put something on it," she said.

The city's top doc said the pits' garbage must be treated with pesticides.

"My staff inspected the Christie Pits site and found evidence of an active insect infestation," Dr. David McKeown told reporters yesterday, after CUPE strikers again stopped exterminators from spraying the site.

Pickets and angry residents have blocked Orkin, the private pest-control company contracted by the city, from accessing the outdoor rink storing the garbage several times since Monday.

As a result of the infestation, McKeown issued an order under the province's Health Protection and Promotion Act yesterday demanding the city spray the site.

"I urge everyone to co-operate with the city in addressing and responding to this order," he said.

Mayor David Miller said the city may need to get an injunction to prevent protesters from blocking the site.

"We would appeal particularly to the picketers for their co-operation," Miller said. "This is a health issue and we certainly understand people's right to express their opinions but we really need this health issue dealt with."

DON.PEAT@SUNMEDIA.CA