

## Volunteers join clean-up day at Island Lake Conservation Area



By Brian Lockhart

As far as parks go, Island Lake Conservation Area is kept very clean by both guests who visit the park as well as park staff who constantly maintain the area and pick up litter.

However, by the time the winter snow melts, there's always left-over litter strewn around the park.

Some of it is left by visitors while a fair amount is blown in by the wind ? especially from the Highway 10 area.

The Conservation Area held their spring clean-up on Saturday, May 4, and welcomed volunteers who turned out to hike the trails and shoreline to pickup litter and anything that just doesn't belong in a natural setting.

?This is a spring shoreline cleanup,? explained Yasmine Slater, Island Lake Conservation Area park superintendent. ?This year, Topper's Pizza donated 30 pizzas to the first 30 people that would come out and volunteer. Anybody who wanted to come out and volunteer today could come out. This is one of our biggest turnouts. We had around 26 people come out today to help clean up the park. They're walking the trails, walking along the shore, picking up the garbage people leave behind or that blows in across the lake from the highway. There's also a lot of people who leave garbage behind when they leave the park.?

While some of the garbage is the result of wind-tossed litter, there's no reason for visitors to leave anything behind when they visit the park.

?We put garbage cans at every exit from the trail,? Yasmine explained. ?You can hang on to your coffee cup and as you leave you know there's a garbage can to toss it in. We've actually had people dump couches at the entrance to the park.?

Overall, most people respect the park and its natural environment and thanks to the park staff's efforts, the amount collected during the spring clean-up isn't that much.

?We collect around 10 bags,? Yasmine said. ?It's not a whole lot of garbage it's just spread out around the whole park. We get a lot of wrappers, a lot of cigarette butts, bottle caps, and fishing line. We try to keep the park as clean as possible. This is all accumulated during the winter. The staff are always cleaning up during the summer. This event is to get the community involved and take pride in the park and help clean it up.?

The Conservation Area will do it again in the fall when they ask people to volunteer to come out and help clean up before winter.