

Beach closure is 'ridiculous,' user

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"We will remediate the pond and eventually create a self-sustaining cold-water fishery — the idea is to create a place people can fish," he said. "A natural pond is better for a conservation area."

But not all residents agree with the environmental reasoning, and many remain unaware of the beach closure.

Last weekend, dozens of families packing picnics, towels, beach toys and water goggles — were turned away at the gates, learning only upon their arrival at the park that the beach is no more.

"I think it's ridiculous," said Markham resident Sherry Nagel, who often enjoyed sunny summer days with her three children on the beach.

"The kids loved it there — it's nice and close, but you felt like you were in a forest. We'd go for a swim and bring a picnic," she said. "I'm disappointed and I know they will be too. And I don't think it's right that the conservation authority didn't let anyone know ahead of time."

Gray said staff were discussing the future of the beach as early as last fall — in fact, the curtain used to separate the swimming area from the rest of the pond was not installed at all this spring.

He said the twice-yearly draining of the swimming area caused hardship for fish and other wildlife dependent upon the watercourse. And staff are working towards a more eco-friendly atmosphere park-wide.

Hospitals wonder if money or satisfaction matters more

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at this point, but I suspect they will use them. I'm pretty sure it will affect funding."

Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees could not be reached for comment.

While York Central received grades under the provincial average in patient satisfaction, Gillani pointed out it scored somewhat above average under the financial category of actual versus expected costs.

Patient satisfaction aside, the hospital also placed at the provincial average in all other areas, except for a somewhat below average rating in the area of complications patients suffering from pneumonia may experience while in hospital.

While Gillani supports the report cards for increasing hospitals' accountability to the public, she's unsure how the process will be used by the Tories to determine funding.

For example, will patient satisfaction carry more weight than financial performance?

"We are in the top five most efficient hospitals, so our cost per case is very good," she said.

"But it's difficult to say which part of the report card they will be using. Will they take patient satisfaction or financial health?"

Dr. Jim Maclean, president of Markham/Stouffville Hospital, could not be reached for comment.

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