

Open Hearth Park Selected as Name of Reclaimed Tar Ponds Site

Sydney Tar Ponds Agency

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Students from an elementary class in Dominion turned to Cape Breton's proud steel-making heritage as their name for the new park taking shape on the site of the former tar ponds in Sydney.

Open Hearth Park was chosen during a national online vote after being submitted by Rob Sinclair's Grade 6 class at MacDonald Elementary School.

"Providing students with the opportunity to name the new park gave them a meaningful role and voice in helping to shape the community's future," said Deputy Premier Frank Corbett during the official naming ceremony today, June 14.

"Many of the names submitted through this campaign not only honoured the area's proud past, but also provided a fresh perspective on how today's youth and tomorrow's leaders want Cape Breton to move forward with themes of rebirth, innovation and a greener and more prosperous future."

The Sydney Park Project campaign was launched in March and invited Cape Breton students to submit a name for the park and explain why they chose it in an original essay, song, photo, video or work of art. There were more than 200 names and submissions and more than 8,000 votes cast online.

"Many students and teachers from across Cape Breton used this campaign to learn about the history of the steel plant, the diverse cultural backgrounds of the men and women who worked here, and the importance of protecting and preserving our environment and Canada's natural heritage," said Senator Michael MacDonald on behalf of Rona Ambrose, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. "The name, Open Hearth Park, is a fitting reflection of our community's proud steel making heritage."

Open Hearth Park was one of five finalists in the online voting.

"When we found out about the opportunity to name the park, we jumped at the chance," said Brian Doue, principal, MacDonald Elementary School. "Mr. Sinclair and his 14 students felt very strongly about the name Open Hearth Park and how it would keep our community's legacy of steel making alive."

Mr. Corbett said the new park will officially open on Labour Day weekend. The event will kick off Friday, Aug. 30, with a formal announcement. It will be followed by two days of activities including, a multicultural festival, a Mi'kmaq cultural village, musical performances from some of Atlantic Canada's top musical acts, a family picnic and fireworks.

The park will provide Sydney-area residents and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy new sports fields, an outdoor stage, a playground area, dog park, skating area and trails.

The overall project remains within its budget and ahead of schedule.

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Deputy Premier Frank Corbett says providing students with the opportunity to name the new park gave them a meaningful role and voice in helping to shape the community's future.

The park will officially open on Labour Day weekend following a 3-day community event that includes a family picnic, multicultural festival, music and fireworks.

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