



Rouge
National
Urban Park

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ROUGE REVIEW

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK INITIATIVE

Summer 2014



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A MESSAGE FROM PARKS CANADA

Greetings to our valued stakeholders, landholders and First Nations,

My team and I are proud to be a part of the initiative to establish Rouge National Urban Park. Our newsletter is back and is now titled the 'Rouge Review'. In this edition, we are very pleased to share a progress update on the release of the national urban park's first draft management plan and on several of our activities and programs.

As part of management planning, we have been busy:

- reviewing current plans and inventories for the Rouge
- developing a historical sketch and a cultural landscape plan
- mapping the park's natural, cultural and agricultural resources, along with visitor facilities, trails etc.
- conducting research on park visitors to determine current numbers, demographics and park use
- meeting landholders, stakeholders, community groups, and First Nations to listen, gather information and discuss future opportunities
- and participating in a wide range of community events throughout the GTA.



In parallel to park planning, work on the land assembly agreement with our municipal partners and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority ("TRCA") is nearing completion. Surveying, title searching and other due diligence activities related to land transfers are well underway on lands already committed to the future national urban park.

As the establishment process progresses, the current Rouge Park continues to be managed by the TRCA, assisted by the municipalities. The TRCA keeps Parks Canada informed of operational activities and opportunities, regularly seeking input to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the future park.

I am also pleased to report that in June, the Government of Canada tabled legislation in the House of Commons to formally establish Rouge National Urban Park. The Rouge National Urban Park Act began second reading before the House rose for the summer. Second reading will continue and the Bill will be sent to committee for review this fall.

Over the coming weeks and months, I encourage you to be a part of the ongoing history of the Rouge by providing feedback on our draft management plan – either at a community event, open house or through our online survey located at www.pc.gc.ca/rouge.

I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made in collaboration with our stakeholders, community groups, First Nations and the public at large towards the creation of Canada's first national urban park.

Thank you for your continued support and input.

Pam Veinotte
Field Unit Superintendent
Rouge National Urban Park



ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN RELEASED FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We are pleased to announce that Rouge National Urban Park's draft management plan has now been released for public viewing and feedback. To read the plan, please visit www.pc.gc.ca/rouge.

Your feedback is very important! There are many ways to let us know what you think about the plan, including completing an online survey (also at www.pc.gc.ca/rouge) or by attending one of our upcoming open houses (see dates below).

Like most areas managed by Park Canada, Rouge National Urban Park is required to have a management plan, a guiding document that articulates the park's long-term vision, strategies, objectives activities and targets.

The plan builds on a continuing and extensive program of stakeholder and public meetings, a Youth workshop, First Nations engagement, and the development of the Park Concept in 2012. Input received from nearly 10,000 Canadians and over 100 stakeholder groups was used in the development of the draft plan. In addition, the draft plan has benefitted from the input of municipal and provincial governments and other government agencies. It also acknowledges the almost three decades of citizen engagement in the Rouge Park, the legacy of past plans for various sections of the park, and current plans of the conservation authority, municipalities, and the province.

A formal public engagement process on Rouge National Urban Park's draft management plan is being undertaken in the months of July, August and September, with public open house meetings planned for the following dates and locations:

September 9 in Markham

Markham Museum
9350 Markham Road
Markham, ON L3P 3J3
7 pm to 9 pm

September 10 in Scarborough

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 2 58
45 Lawson Road
Scarborough, ON M1C 2J1
7 pm to 9 pm

September 16 in Pickering

Pickering Recreation Complex, O'Brien Room
1867 Valley Farm Road
Pickering, ON L1V 6K7
7 pm to 9 pm

September 18 in downtown Toronto

Art Gallery of Ontario, Jackman Hall
317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, ON M5T 1G4
7 pm to 9 pm

If you wish to be notified of Rouge National Urban Park news and events, please send an email to rouge@pc.gc.ca.

We look forward to hearing from or seeing you soon!



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PARKS CANADA IN THE COMMUNITY

Parks Canada has been establishing our presence in the Greater Toronto Area and getting to know our neighbours at various community events. Here are a few images and captions from events we've attended the past few months. In addition to the events below, we've also been active at events and festivals throughout the GTA such as Rouge Days, the Guild Alive with Culture, the Redpath Waterfront Festival, the Port Union Waterfront Festival, Doors Open Toronto, Tedx Rouge River, and many more. We will also be present at several more community events throughout the summer and into the fall where we will be seeking feedback on our draft management plan for the future Rouge National Urban Park. Please stop by and say hello – we look forward to chatting with you soon!

Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children

Toronto recently hosted the first ever international conference aimed at addressing the “physical inactivity crisis” among children. Parks Canada met with and led educational walks with conference delegates from all over the world, outlining how our work in the future Rouge National Urban Park aims to address the very same issues.



Parks Canada volunteer extraordinaire Nikolina Petrovska is busy applying a non-permanent tattoo of a killer whale to a zoo visitor



Parks Canada's Louis Lavoie highlighted the many benefits of a national urban park.

Teacher Day and Earth Day Celebrations at the Toronto Zoo

Parks Canada staff spent the weekend of April 26 and 27 at the Toronto Zoo with other community groups partaking in Earth Day and Teacher Day celebrations. Over 18,200 teachers, families and zoo members visited the zoo that weekend, with many of them taking part in Parks Canada's games and activities for kids and families while learning about the future Rouge National Urban Park and other Parks Canada protected areas from coast to coast to coast.



Earth Day Festivities at the Market Village Mall in Markham

Parks Canada was very pleased to take part in the City of Markham's and the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee's annual Earth Day event at the Market Village Mall. Parks Canada staff joined together with several other community groups to share information about local initiatives and to raise awareness about the future Rouge National Urban Park.



Parks Canada's Omar McDadi is pictured alongside Michelle Rich and Kristy Baidy of York Region's Environmental Services department.

The University of Toronto Scarborough Campus' 2014 Eco-Summit

We were thrilled to be a part of the 3rd annual summit which aimed to link research, teaching, and institutional practice to community initiatives that foster partnerships with government and community members in the Eastern Greater Toronto Area. The two day event featured panel discussions with faculty and community leaders, an eco fair, and networking opportunities for all. This year, several Parks Canada staff took part in the event, including Carol Sheedy, Parks Canada's Vice President of Operations in Eastern Canada, who delivered the summit's keynote address on the opening night.



Carol Sheedy, Parks Canada's Vice President of Operations in Eastern Canada, provided the summit's keynote Friday evening address.

An Afternoon at the Cedar Grove Community Centre

This past February, parks, recreation and tourism officials from across Canada gathered in Toronto to discuss ways they could work together to creatively and collaboratively inspire Canadians to experience nature through parks in ways that support their health and well-being. Members of this conference toured part of the future Rouge National Urban Park, culminating with a stop at the historic Cedar Grove Community Centre for some home-baked and incredibly delicious pie, maple syrup, apple cider and historical anecdotes.



Pam Veinotte, Superintendent of the future Rouge National Urban Park, talks with Paul Reesor. Paul's family has been living and farming in the Markham and Cedar Grove area for over 200 years



Myrna Burkholder graciously made six of her famous homemade pies for the park tour – these are even more delicious than they look!



RIVERS IN THE PARK: PETTICOAT CREEK

Submitted by Maryam Nassar, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Did you know that, despite being named for the Rouge River, the future Rouge National Urban Park is actually home to three major watercourses? Areas of land which drain into Duffins Creek and Petticoat Creek are also in the park.

Petticoat Creek, a small creek with an unusual name, is unlike most creeks and rivers in the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”) in that it begins south of the Oak Ridges Moraine and is fed mostly by surface water. The area of land drained by a creek or a river is called a watershed, and roughly 25,000 people call this watershed home.

A watershed plan was recently completed for Petticoat Creek by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (“TRCA”), a government organisation responsible for managing nine watersheds in the central GTA, including Petticoat Creek. The plan established baseline data on the physical characteristics of the stream and its ecosystems and will guide decisions on the management of natural features and functions. Findings from the plan include:

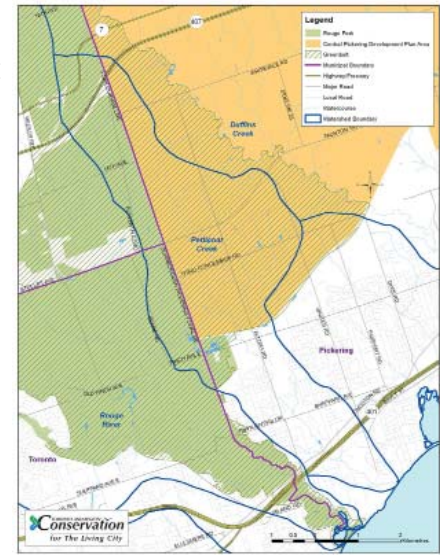
- While this small watershed is generally healthy, the impacts of urbanisation on the stream’s hydrology and ecology, the age and form of urban development, type of farming practised in the rural reaches, and extent of bisecting infrastructure such as roads and hydro lines, mean that Petticoat Creek struggles to stay healthy and function as nature intended.
- Inclusion in the park and its new national urban park status will protect the rural reaches of the stream and surrounding ecosystems. The provincial Greenbelt, Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve and conservation easements on private property, also protect the rural landscape.
- Reforestation is complete on almost 50% of the 77 hectares of the watershed in the park designated for ecological restoration in 1994. This is the most restoration work completed in the watershed.

Recommendations for next steps focus on:

- Continue monitoring programs to increase the database of physical characteristics of the watershed as part of TRCA’s area-wide natural heritage system and ecological restoration planning.
- Improving storm water management to improve water quality. Most of the problematic storm water management infrastructure in the watershed is not yet due for replacement, so water quality conditions will not improve in the short term.

You can visit Petticoat Creek in the future national urban park, and nearby at TRCA’s Altona Forest and Petticoat Creek Conservation Area. For maps to visitor areas, or to view the plan, please visit:

<http://trca.on.ca/the-living-city/watersheds/petticoat/>



Petticoat Creek Watershed in the future Rouge National Urban Park



Pickering history traces the name “Petticoat” as a variation of “Petite Côte”, used by French settlers in the 1600s in reference to the creek mouth where one bank is quite high, and the other side low and flat. Photo courtesy TRCA



BABY TURTLES RELEASED IN THE FUTURE ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

The Toronto Zoo, Parks Canada, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and Earth Rangers are working together to help recover a threatened species

On Monday, June 30, the Toronto Zoo, Parks Canada, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Earth Rangers, reintroduced 10 baby Blanding's turtles – a provincially and nationally threatened species – to a pond in the future Rouge National Urban Park.

The long-lived species, with a lifespan of up to 80 years, has inhabited the Rouge Valley since time immemorial, though its future remains uncertain. Until recently six Blanding's turtles were thought to still inhabit the park's wetlands.

This was the first reintroduction of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area and marks a significant step in 15 years of turtle monitoring and research in the Rouge Valley.

"Blanding's turtles are amazing creatures and in some ways are a poster child for endangered species – by helping them, we also help countless other wetland animals and plants, so this is a good news story," said Bob Johnson, Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles at the Toronto Zoo.

The turtle eggs were collected from a stable source population in southern Ontario in 2012 and have been raised in captivity at the Toronto Zoo over the last two years. Parks Canada, the TRCA and the Toronto Zoo believe that captive rearing and reintroduction of the turtles, along with long-term monitoring and ongoing habitat restoration, are keys to the animal's survival in the future Rouge National Urban Park.

"Healthy turtles mean healthy wetlands and Blanding's turtles can be indicators of good wetland health in what will become Rouge National Urban Park," said Pam Veinotte, Parks Canada's Superintendent of Rouge National Urban Park. "It's exciting to collaborate with our partners and to create a healthy and vibrant Rouge National Urban Park now and for future generations."

The public can help protect the turtles by avoiding their nesting areas and by contacting authorities if they observe harmful behaviour toward turtles or their habitat. The location of the pond housing the reintroduced turtles will not be disclosed at this time to help minimize disturbances and give the animals the best chance of surviving.

The Toronto Zoo and Rouge Park began collecting information on and monitoring Blanding's turtles in the park in 2000. With the area slated to become Canada's first national urban park, Parks Canada has come on board and will continue to work on a long-term turtle monitoring program.

Earth Rangers provided support for the project by building a facility to house the turtle eggs and babies at the Toronto Zoo. Earth Rangers are proud supporters of the zoo's Head-Starting Program and have signed up over 17,000 kids to help protect the Blanding's turtle through their Bring Back the Wild fundraising campaign.

Additional support for the program has been provided by The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Toronto Field Naturalists, the City of Toronto, and Environment Canada.



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

LEARN-TO-CAMP, September 13-14

Think you might want to experience the pleasure of camping overnight but just need a helping hand? Parks Canada's Learn-to-Camp events, co-presented with Mountain Equipment Co-op, may be the perfect outing for you! These affordable events are hosted across Canada and offer you the opportunity to learn how to plan and enjoy safe and successful camping trips.

Parks Canada's Learn-to-Camp features workshops on camping related skills such as how to set-up a tent or cook in the outdoors. Participants have the opportunity to enjoy fun interpretive programs and other Parks Canada activities.

The future Rouge National Urban Park is proud to once again offer Learn-to-Camp events for the Greater Toronto Area. Some spots still remain for the September 13-14 event. Call 1-888-773-8888 to book your spot. Our June Learn-to-Camp in the Rouge sold out very quickly, so be sure to reserve your spot soon.

You may also wish to download Parks Canada's popular and free Learn-to-Camp app, where you will find tips, advice and all the information you need to plan and enjoy your first camping trip. And if you are already an experienced camper, you'll love the recipes, checklists and insider tips too. The app is available on iPhone, Android and Blackberry platforms.

Call 1-888-773-8888 to reserve your spot.



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WELCOME ROUGE PARK STAFF!

Parks Canada is very pleased and honoured to welcome five former Rouge Park staff to the team.

Maria Papoulias, Michelle Holmes, Vicki Leck, Sheryl Santos and Diana Smyth all accepted offers to join Parks Canada's team in July and will continue to provide exemplary, distinguished and friendly service to the public as part of the Rouge National Urban Park initiative. All five former Rouge Park staff will continue their important work in key areas such as park ecology and restoration, resource management, volunteer programming, park stewardship and visitor experience.

Collectively, Maria, Michelle, Vicki, Sheryl and Diana have accumulated nearly 40 years of experience working in the Rouge. Their knowledge, skills, dedication and passion for this incredible place are a tremendous resource and asset to the future Rouge National Urban Park and we could not be happier to have them join our team on this most compelling and exciting project.



Welcome aboard! Left to right: Diana Smyth, Interpretation Officer; Michelle Holmes, Prevention Coordinator; Maria Papoulias, Resource Management Officer II; Vicki Leck, Resource Management Officer I; Sheryl Santos, Partnering and Engagement Officer





STAY CONNECTED!



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To find out more or to be added to our mailing list for future updates and newsletters, please contact rouge@pc.gc.ca.

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