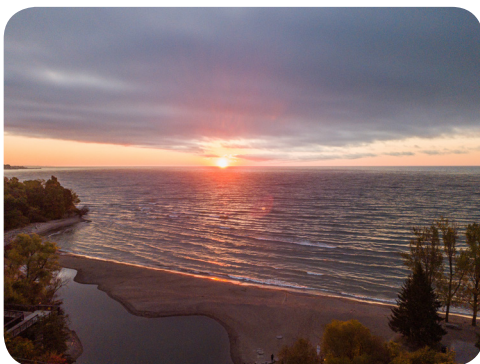




## 2019 PARK MILESTONES

2019 was a big celebration year for Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP). A number of key milestones in the establishment of Canada's first national urban park were achieved:

- **Jan. 16, 2019:** The park's foundational management plan was tabled in Parliament – the result of engaging 20,000+ Canadians and working closely with Indigenous Peoples, all levels of government, community groups, conservationists, park farmers, residents, volunteers and others.
- **June 15, 2019:** The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) announced the transfer of 18.5 km<sup>2</sup> of lands to Parks Canada for RNUP, making the park almost 95% complete!
- **Aug. 27, 2019:** The location of the park's future Education and Welcome Centre was established in a landmark agreement between Parks Canada and the Toronto Zoo.
- **September 2019:** The first Parks Canada-built trail and day-use areas in RNUP opened to the public in the Markham area of the park – a new 5km multi-use trail connecting the renovated Reesor Road Day Use Area to the newly-constructed 19th Avenue Day Use Area.



## CONTACT US!



## RESTORATION, CONSERVATION & PROTECTION

Parks Canada is a recognized leader in conservation and has been working with municipalities, Indigenous partners, park farmers, schools, volunteers, and environmental groups to restore and conserve the Rouge's ecosystems, as well as farmland throughout the park.

Since 2015, 52 ecological restoration and farmland enhancement projects have been initiated and completed. This includes restoring 60+ hectares of wetland, stream and riverbank habitat; 26+ hectares of forest habitat; as well as the planting of 108,000+ native trees, perennials, shrubs and aquatic plants.

### Highlights from 2019:

- 48 more baby Blanding's turtles were released in RNUP in collaboration with the Toronto Zoo, TRCA, and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Since 2014, this program has reintroduced 213 two-year old and 126 newly hatched Blanding's turtles into the Rouge!
- 500 metres of barrier fencing was installed and a 20 metre culvert was retrofitted to create an eco-passage for some of the park's most vulnerable species, like Blanding's and snapping turtles.

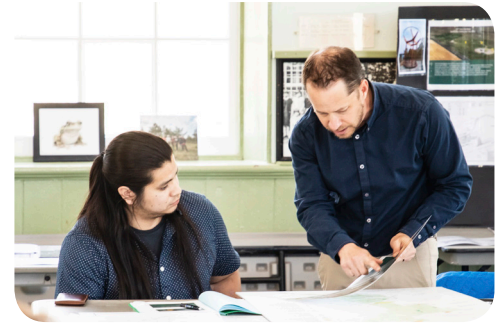
In 2019, Parks Canada Wardens initiated new patrols and responded to an increased number of service calls throughout RNUP. These in-park enforcement actions included:

- proactively monitoring species-at-risk critical habitat;
- regular day and night coverage at the Glen Rouge Campground;
- conducting natural resource compliance inspections, which consisted of several hundred fisheries checks that resulted in improved compliance at key angling locations; and
- targeting overland crayfish transportation through proactive education, warnings and charges.



*For non-urgent reporting and tips, please contact our Park Wardens at [pc.rmup-wardens.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.rmup-wardens.pc@canada.ca)*





## INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS – 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- 29 First Nations liaisons representing six nations from the RNUP First Nations Advisory Circle participated in 20+ weeks of archaeological field work.
- 6 new archaeological sites were discovered throughout the park, and follow-up work was completed on a number of previously-discovered sites.
- Continued collaborative work with First Nations partners, including moving forward on the Species-at-Risk Action Plan, and input on interpretation and signage for the park.
- Co-developed the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Earth Run with the RNUP First Nations Advisory Circle, which celebrates running in various Indigenous nations across Canada. This year's race attracted 130+ runners and paid tribute to renowned Indigenous runners Cogwagee, Fred Simpson and Albert Smoke.



*(Photo credit: G. James)*

## SPOTLIGHT ON AGRICULTURE IN THE PARK

In spring 2019, Parks Canada and a group of park farmers partnered to plant, harvest and donate 50 acres of soybeans grown in RNUP to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

- Park farmers came up with the idea as a way of managing weeds on a vacant field while giving back to the community.
- Parks Canada and the York Chapter of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association signed a partnership agreement for the initiative.
- Everything from the seed, fertilizer, tillage, planting, harvesting costs and more were donated by the farmers, and Parks Canada contributed the agricultural land for the project.

Since 2015, Parks Canada has worked very closely with the park's farming community on dozens of farmland enhancement, ecological restoration and trail-building projects. Parks Canada is proud to work with park farmers to protect large tracts of Class 1 farmland, the richest, rarest and most fertile in the country. With the protection of agriculture and the promotion of a vibrant farming community enshrined in the park's legislation and management plan, park farmland will continue to produce local food and contribute to the overall health of the park for generations to come.



## PARK EVENTS, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & VISITOR SERVICES

Accessible by transit and within an hour's drive for 20% of Canadians, RNUP provides opportunities to connect with our country's natural, cultural and agricultural heritage.

In 2019, visitors discovered and explored the Rouge year-round at free in-park events – WinterRouge, Rouge After Dark, Taste of the Trail, and the Earth Run & Fall Festival. These seasonal events attracted 4,000+ visitors and engaged 30+ local agencies, groups and community partners. Parks Canada also offered 260 free guided walks in RNUP, led by 51 of our amazing guided walk leader volunteers!

### Parks Canada's popular Learn-to Camp (LTC) program also had a busy year:



- 70+ LTC pop-ups inside/outside RNUP
- Connected with 20,000 people at 15 GTA events/festivals
- 200+ participants attended 7 overnight LTC sessions
- 45 free LTC workshops at GTA libraries/community centres

### Community connections highlights:

- Partnered with Park People to host Daniel Raven-Ellison, who's leading the London U.K. National Park City initiative, for a free talk in March, "Could Toronto be a National Park City?"
- Attended 30+ GTA community events, including Sustainable Pickering Day, Unionville Festival, Taste of Little Italy, Festival of South Asia, CBC Kids' Day, TamilFest, and more!
- TD Rouge Express Parkbus from downtown Toronto and MEC North York once again connected 1,100+ visitors with the Rouge.
- The Parks Canada/Parkbus NatureLink program connected 350+ newcomers to Canada with RNUP.
- Parks Canada and Scarborough Health Network continued the MoodWalks program. Staff and volunteers connected with 100+ youth looking to improve their physical and mental health on 14 nature walks.



### Visitor Services highlights:

- May to October, staff connected with 55,000+ visitors at our Zoo Road (Toronto) and Bob Hunter Memorial Park (Markham) welcome areas, as well as at roving visitor services pop-ups in RNUP.
- Staff and volunteers had a strong presence on park trails to address stewardship, wildlife poaching, collecting vegetation, dumping, dogs off leash, trail hazards, as well as safety and education.