

## Weatherill, Tannis

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**Subject:** FW: Submission to Council on Rouge NU Park  
**Attachments:** 2014 Minister Duguid Rouge NU Park Letter to Federal Environment Sept 2 2014.pdf; Rouge NU Park Meet or Exceed Theme and Response to Possible Questions Sept 2 2014R4 (2).pdf; Rouge NU Park NGO Coalition Letter to Federal Government Sept 3 2014.pdf; 2007 Rouge Watershed Plan Theme 1 Expand Natural Heritage System Page v.pdf; How Much Habitat is Enough Environment Canada 2013.pdf

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**From:** Jim Robb [<mailto:jimrobb@frw.ca>]

**Sent:** September-08-14 4:50 PM

**To:** Scarpitti, Frank; Heath, Jack; Jones, Jim; Landon, Gord; Li, Joe; [burke@markham.ca](mailto:burke@markham.ca); Shore, Howard; Hamilton, Don; Moretti, Carolina; Campbell, Colin; Ho, Alan; Kanapathi, Logan; Chiu, Alex; Seaman, Graham; Bavington, Kitty; Grasser, Keely; Cowan, Anna

**Subject:** Submission to Council on Rouge NU Park

**Dear Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Markham Council:**

Events in Canada, and around the world, demonstrate that communities, ecosystems, properties and infrastructure are increasingly threatened with costly and disruptive damage from extreme storm events, unsustainable human demands and short-term thinking.

Provincial and Municipal Growth Plans, the Federal Government's Great Lakes Water Quality Improvement Plan, Rouge Park Plans, and the Rouge Watershed Plan, all rely on the restoration of large forest and wetland areas to store water and carbon and reduce the pollution, flooding, erosion and biodiversity liabilities associated with urban growth and climate change.

In 2009, the Report "Estimating Ecosystem Services in Southern Ontario" was completed for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. This report estimates the following monetary value of the flood and erosion control, water quality, air quality, climatic, recreational, aesthetic and biodiversity services provided by near urban forests, wetlands and farmlands:

Near Urban Forest \$15,000 to \$25,000 / ha / year;	Near Urban Wetland \$15,000 to \$160,000 / ha /
year;	Near Urban Farmland \$400/ha/year

**A broad coalition of NGOs and the Province of Ontario support the existing Rouge Park, Greenbelt and ORM Plan policies and the park goal of "ecological integrity".**

Contrary to some beliefs, the application of these policies will not require the re-naturalization of all the leased farmlands in Rouge Park.

Existing Rouge Park Plans and Federal Green Space Preserve Plans have identified areas for continued farming and areas for nature and parkland enjoyment.

The "ecological integrity" standard would apply to areas identified as part of the long-term natural habitat system based on existing Rouge Park Plans, Federal Green Space Preserve Plans, watershed plans and conservation science.

Unfortunately, the draft Rouge National Urban Park legislation and plan, released by Parks Canada in June 2014,

fails to give priority ecological integrity and thereby fails to honour the federal government's commitment to "meet or exceed" existing provincial environmental standards.

With Ontario Government support, many groups and citizens are asking the federal government to:

1. "meet or exceed" existing Ontario Greenbelt, Rouge Park & ORM policies;
2. give priority to ecological integrity and science-based park management;
3. implement Rouge Park's "main ecological corridor" & plans to improve habitat & water quality;
4. create a 100 km<sup>2</sup> national park on public Greenbelt lands linking Lake Ontario to the ORM.

The federal government should honour its' commitment to "meet or exceed" existing provincial policies by giving priority to "ecological integrity" within the legislation and management plan for the National Rouge Park.

With all the unsustainable demands placed on mother nature in other areas, National Parks are extraordinary public lands where Canadians justifiably give priority to ecological integrity and nature.

Sincerely,

Jim Robb  
for Friends of the Rouge Watershed



SEP 02 2014

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of the Environment and  
Minister Responsible for Parks Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

I am writing regarding Bill C-40, *An Act Respecting the Rouge National Urban Park*. As you know, our government has been very supportive of the establishment of the Rouge National Urban Park.

Over the past generation, Ontario has built policies that seek to improve the ecological integrity of the Rouge Valley and the surrounding areas. These policy directions are the result of extensive consultations with Ontarians undertaken by all political parties, beginning with the creation of Rouge Park, through the protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine, and the creation of the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

From the outset, we have been clear that it is important that the Government of Canada ensure that the park meets or exceeds the standards and policies that the province has put in place to protect green space and environmentally sensitive land. Further, we signed an agreement with the federal government dated January 26, 2013 on the basis of this commitment.

I have heard from many stakeholders in Ontario including Friends of the Rouge Watershed, Environmental Defence and Ontario Nature regarding both Bill C-40 and the draft park management plan that the federal government has released for public consultation. The legislation as it stands is silent on the Memorandum of Agreement requirement to meet or exceed provincial standards for ecological integrity.

After considering this issue carefully, I have decided that I am unable to recommend to Cabinet that it should release, extinguish or transfer any of its interests in the Rouge Park lands unless Bill C-40 is amended. In short, if these amendments are not made, I cannot support recommending steps to enable the contribution of 5,400 acres for the simple reason that I feel this land will be better protected if it remains with the province of Ontario.

Those amendments to Bill C-40 should explicitly state that Ontario's existing provincial policies and plans that enhance ecological integrity of the proposed Rouge National Urban Park will be met or exceeded. The amendments should also include a commitment that the federal government will conform to provincial policies such as the Greenbelt Plan (2005), the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the Big Move.

This is a position that I have arrived at after discussions with stakeholders, local citizen groups, and staff. They agree that these amendments are very important to ensure that the ecological integrity of the Rouge National Urban Park will continue so that future generations will be able to enjoy this unique and beautiful park.

Stakeholders have suggested a number of additional policies that they have requested the government consider. I have attached the list of additional policies requested by Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature and Friends of the Rouge Watershed for your consideration.

Ontario has worked hard to safeguard the Rouge Park lands for future generations. I look forward to working productively with you to see Bill C-40 amended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Brad Duguid', with a stylized, flowing script.

Brad Duguid  
Minister

- c. The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario  
Drew Fagan, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Ministry of Economic Development,  
Employment and Infrastructure  
Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada  
Joe Dickson, MPP, Ajax—Pickering  
Tracy MacCharles, MPP Pickering—Scarborough East  
Helena Jaczek, MPP, Oak Ridges—Markham  
Bas Balkissoon, MPP, Scarborough—Rouge River



environmental  
defence  
INSPIRING CHANGE



### **Request for Supplementary Agreement Conditions and Policies Prior to Final Land Transfer:**

We respectfully ask the Provincial Government to utilize its large Rouge Park land contribution and the MOA and supplementary agreements to require that the legislation, strategic plan and written policies for the national Rouge Park:

1. Incorporate, strengthen and implement the vision, goal and objectives of approved Rouge Park Plans (1994 and 2001), the provincial Greenbelt Plan (2005), the Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan (2007), the Rouge Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008), the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002), the Toronto Remedial Action Plan and Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and associated watershed plans;
2. Protect and restore the ecological corridors and areas outlined in the Greenbelt Plan (s.3.2.6), Rouge Park Plans (1994 and 2001), the Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan (2007), the Rouge Watershed Plan (2007), and the Rouge Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008), to create a sustainable Carolinian and mixed woodland natural habitat system which links Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine with public parkland;
3. Expand the current 57 km<sup>2</sup> study area to at least 100 km<sup>2</sup> to ensure the federal government protects its lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt and creates a sustainable Rouge Park link from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine. The expanded park area should include:
  - 17+ km<sup>2</sup> of the federal lands in the Oak Ridges Moraine and Provincial Greenbelt in Pickering which were declared part of a Federal Green Space Preserve in 2002;
  - 20+ km<sup>2</sup> of the federal lands in Pickering which are designated Greenbelt "natural heritage system" and are beyond any reasonable future Airport footprint;
  - 3+ km<sup>2</sup> of Rouge lands which the City of Markham has asked the federal government to include to connect Rouge Park and Milne Park;
  - 3+ km<sup>2</sup> of environmentally significant Rouge Valley lands in the City of Toronto which are part of the existing Rouge Park.
4. Establish the Park Advisory Board without further delay and include affected First Nations and the Friends of the Rouge Watershed to ensure that the deep community roots of Rouge Park continue to inform and influence Park planning and protection.
5. Ensure that agricultural operations in the park transition towards ecologically sound farming practices and local food production, to protect water quality and biological diversity and benefit local farmers, park visitors and surrounding residents.

Before you finalize the transfer of the priceless Greenbelt lands to the Federal Government, please ensure that Rouge Park land transfer supplementary agreements and discussions incorporate the above policies.

We are counting on your government to protect the Province's Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and

Rouge Park legacies and deliver on Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy.

We look forward to your favourable response.

Yours truly,



Tim Gray  
Executive Director  
Environmental Defence



Caroline Schultz  
Executive Director  
Ontario Nature



Jim Robb  
General Manager  
Friends of the Rouge  
Watershed

September 2, 2014

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of Environment  
Environment Canada  
Minister's Office (TLC)  
10, rue Wellington  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3  
Canada  
Via email [Minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:Minister@ec.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

**Re: Request to amend Bill C-40, draft federal legislation for the proposed Rouge National Urban Park**

We are writing to express our serious concern that the draft federal legislation to create and manage the proposed Rouge National Urban Park, Bill C-40, does not provide adequate protection for the remarkable ecological values of Rouge Park. In fact, the standard of protection in the Rouge would be lowered from its current status if the Rouge National Urban Park is established under this Bill. As a result we are requesting that the Bill be amended.

A detailed legal review by Ecojustice, concluded that Bill C-40 affords significantly weaker natural environment protection than either the *Canada National Parks Act* or *Ontario's Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*.

The biggest problem with Bill C-40 is that it does not clearly prioritize nature conservation as the primary purpose of the park, or the top priority for park management. It only requires that the Minister "**take into consideration the protection of its natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes and the maintenance of its native wildlife and of the health of those ecosystems**" (bold added) in the management of the park.

Prioritizing the protection and restoration of ecological health and integrity, through a science-based approach, is an absolute necessity if future generations are going to be able to appreciate and enjoy the park. Prioritizing nature conservation is consistent with existing federal and Ontario parks legislation, and with the definition of a protected area according to international standards.

Based on the legal review, we identified five priority areas where we recommend amendments to Bill C-40:

1. Our highest priority amendment is that ecological integrity and health must be clearly stated as the first priority of the Minister in park management (section 6);
2. Imperative language is needed in the purpose section to signify the duty to preserve the parkland for future generations, and to dedicate the park to the people of Canada for their benefit (section 4);
3. Definitions are needed in the legislation for ecological integrity and health and science-based management (section 2);

4. In the management plan section of the Bill, ecological protection and restoration language should be included in the vision and objectives (section 9); and
5. The public consultation requirements should be broadened to include the development of parks policy and regulations (section 8).

The Memorandum of Agreement signed between Parks Canada and the Ontario government for the Rouge National Urban Park requires written policies that *"meet or exceed provincial policies regarding the transferred lands..."* Bill C-40 does not meet this test. The protection and restoration of ecological integrity is the stated priority for land use and resource management within existing Rouge Park, Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Rouge Watershed and Great Lakes Water Quality improvement plans, and this is not the case for Bill C-40.

Given the significant shortcomings of the proposed Rouge National Urban Park legislation, we ask that you ensure amendments are put forward to address these weaknesses and "meet or exceed" the existing provincial policy framework. We would be pleased to share our suggestions for draft amendments with you in the coming weeks.

Please contact Leigh Paulseth, Friends of the Rouge Watershed at 416-208-0252 if you would like to meet to discuss our concerns.

Sincerely,



Tim Gray  
Executive Director, Environmental Defence



Carolyn Schultz  
Executive Director, Ontario Nature







Faisal Moola

Director General, Ontario and Northern Canada, David Suzuki Foundation



Janet Sumner

Executive Director, Canada Park and Wilderness Society Wildlands League



Jim Robb

General Manager, Friends of the Rouge Watershed





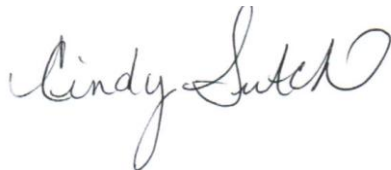
Stephen Hazell

Executive Director (interim), Nature Canada



Kristina Jackson

National Operations Director, Sierra Club Canada Foundation



Cindy Sutch

Board Chair, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition

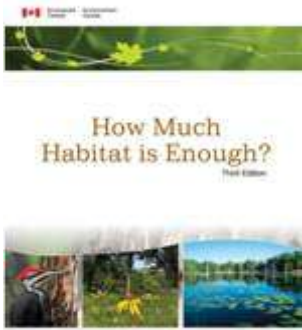


**Save The Oak Ridges Moraine**

Cc. Colin Carrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment  
Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada Agency  
Honourable Lisa Raitt, Minister of Transport  
Honourable Chris Alexander, MP Ajax Pickering

# How Much Habitat is Enough? Third Edition

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How Much Habitat is Enough? (3rd edition, 2013) describes the minimum amounts of wetland, forest, riparian and grassland habitat needed to help support populations of wildlife. The report provides an extensive literature review and 21 habitat guidelines to assist restorationists, land planners and other conservation practitioners to restore and protect wildlife habitat. Guidelines include: **30% to 50% minimum forest cover, the greater of 10% wetland cover per watershed or 40% of historic wetland cover**, 75% of the length of a stream naturally vegetated, **less than 10% impervious cover in a watershed**, and **average grassland patches sizes of greater than or equal to 50 hectares**. This publication has influenced land use planning, restoration projects and land securement initiatives across the multiple jurisdictions and **has become a standard conservation biology and landscape ecology reference**.

## Available Formats:

[PDF; 1,956 KB](#) / [HTML](#)

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- **Language of Document:** Separate English/French
- **Document Type:** Guide
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- **ISBN:** 978-1-100-21922-6
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- **Year:** 2013

## **Rouge NU Park Needs to "Meet or Exceed" existing Provincial Policies, including the goal of Ecological Integrity**

In January 2013, the Ontario Government and Parks Canada signed a "Memorandum of Agreement", requiring written Rouge NU Park policies that "meet or exceed" existing provincial policies, as a pre-condition for the transfer of provincial Rouge Park lands to the federal government for the creation of Rouge NU Park.

The federal government released the draft legislation for Rouge NU Park in June 2014. Unfortunately, the draft legislation for Rouge NU Park is critically inconsistent with the last twenty four years of provincial leadership, public consultation and scientific study, which led to the high environmental standard of "ecological integrity" within existing Rouge Park, Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans.

The Federal Government will need to significantly strengthen the legislation and management plan for Rouge NU Park to honour its commitment to "meet or exceed" the environmental policies and ecological integrity goals within existing Rouge Park, Greenbelt and ORM Conservation Plans, and Great Lakes water quality improvement agreements.

Ecological integrity must continue to be the high aspiration standard for the scientifically planned and zoned natural habitat systems of Rouge Park.

### **Possible Questions:**

#### **1. What does ecological integrity mean?**

An ecosystem has integrity when it has the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, and the necessary physical and ecological components and processes, to sustain the natural values of its eco-zone. The eco-zones of the Rouge include the endangered Carolinian and mixed woodland forest zones of Canada, home to one third of Canada's endangered species.

#### **2. Will Ecological Integrity mean that all the leased farmlands in Rouge Park will need to be re-naturalized?**

**No.** Existing Rouge Park plans already have areas zoned for farming outside of areas zoned for natural habitat systems. These existing park plans are the product of 24 years of provincial leadership, public and stakeholder consultation, and science based planning to protect broad public parkland, watershed and ecological interests.

Existing Rouge Park Plans reflect the public's interest in the protection and restoration of beautiful, biologically diverse and sustainable Rouge Park public lands which also reduce downstream flooding, erosion and pollution risks, and improve the health of our communities, watersheds, beaches and Lake Ontario drinking water source.

The Rouge NU Park proposal involves the northward expansion of the Park into federally-owned lands in the "natural heritage system" zone of Ontario's Greenbelt Plan and ORM. This expansion includes the 2003 "Federal Green Space Preserve" in north Markham. However, the current Rouge NU Park proposal fails to include crucial public lands in north Pickering which are necessary to get around Stouffville and create a sustainable ecological and trail link between Lake Ontario and the ORM. The Federal Green Space Preserve Master Plan (2003) also zones some publicly-owned park lands for farm leases and some publicly-owned lands for natural habitat systems and public enjoyment.

#### **3. Can a Park next to Canada's biggest city achieve Ecological Integrity?**

Ecological integrity is the standard for environmental protection within existing Rouge Park, Greenbelt and ORM Plans as well as provincial and national park plans. The Federal government has already agreed in writing to develop national Rouge Park policies which "meet or exceed" the existing provincial policies for Rouge Park.

Many provincial and national parks have highways, towns, railways and other infrastructure within them, and they still strive to attain the high environmental standard of "ecological integrity". There will be challenges, but the national ecological significance and potential of Rouge Park, and the integrity of the agreement signed by the federal government and Ontario, requires Rouge NU Park policies that strive towards ecological integrity.

## Rouge Park Provincial Policy Excerpts

### 2013 Rouge Land Transfer Memorandum of Agreement between Province and Federal Government

Clause 2.09 a) Parks Canada will work with Ontario to "develop written policies in respect of the creation, management and administration of the Park that **meet or exceed provincial policies** regarding the Transferred Lands, including the policies set out in the **Greenbelt Plan 2005**, the **Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan** ...."

### 2005 Provincial Greenbelt Plan

"The Natural System policies .... collectively **support biodiversity and overall ecological integrity**". (s. 3.2)

"Land use planning and resource management ... **shall comply with the provisions of both this Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan.**" (s. 3.2.6)

"**In the case of a conflict** between this Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan, **the more restrictive policies apply.**" (s. 3.2.6)

"This Plan identifies a **600 metre wide** corridor for the Little Rouge River as the **main ecological corridor**, between Lake Ontario and the southerly boundary of Oak Ridges Moraine Area ... ." (s. 3.2.6)

### 2001 Rouge North Management Plan

**Natural Heritage Objective:** "To **protect, restore and enhance the natural ecosystem of the park** by ensuring the health and diversity of its native species, habitats, landscapes and ecological processes."

**Land Use Objective:** **To ensure protection of the ecological integrity** and cultural values of the park through innovative planning, management, and land use in the park and its environs.

"The **overriding goal in creating the Little Rouge Creek Corridor is to establish a viable terrestrial corridor with interior forest habitat conditions.** .... A continuous forest corridor of at least 400 metres in width must be maintained" (s. 4.1.1.2) ... The corridor has an **average width of 600 metres** ... (s. 4.1.1.5)

The [**Federal lands**] ... **park corridor** should be designed to function as a **viable terrestrial corridor with interior forest conditions**, and consequently, should be established with a width of approximately 600m" (s. 4.1.1.6)

### 2001 Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and Plan objectives:

(a) **protecting the ecological and hydrological integrity** of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area;

(b) *ensuring that only land and resource uses that **maintain, improve or restore the ecological and hydrological** functions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area are permitted;*

### 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan (MNR and Provincial Cabinet Approved)

"**its primary focus, the continuing health and integrity of natural systems and habitats**". (s. 6.1)

**Integrity of the Park Environment :** "Uses and/or activities ... **must ensure that the park's ecological integrity**, scenic and cultural values are protected, restored and enhanced." (s.2.2.1)

"**The Province is committed to protecting the integrity of the Rouge Watershed** and the development of a regional linear park from Lake Ontario to the ORM". (s. 10.3)

..... **protecting the ecological integrity of the Rouge Watershed is a necessity.**" (s. 10.3)

in our *Scenario Modelling and Analysis Report*. The results of this work were combined with an examination of existing conditions and trends in the watershed, a review of watershed research in other areas, and the best professional judgement of a range of experts in many fields.

**What can we expect in future?** We discovered that if future development proceeds with current approaches to community design and stormwater management, it will not be possible to maintain current watershed conditions, let alone improve them. If development practices are changed to use the best foreseeable community designs and management techniques, it may be possible to maintain and in some cases enhance current conditions. However many of the new designs and technologies for sustainable urban development are still evolving and being tested so we recommend that where permitted, development should proceed with caution. Evaluation should be undertaken, with extensive and meaningful public consultation, to assess how well watershed objectives and targets are being met and recommend adjustments to development practices when necessary.

**Fortunately, the Rouge watershed offers many unique opportunities**, including the assembly and renaturalization of lands as part of Rouge Park and the continuation of agriculture on public and private lands. Watershed municipalities are already working to address the negative impacts of existing developments and are among the leaders in promoting sustainable practices. These opportunities provide valuable tools to help address concerns with current watershed conditions, manage impacts from future land use changes and adapt to the uncertainties associated with global climate change.

**The pathway to a healthy watershed** that emerged from this analysis is based on a comprehensive and inter-dependent set of strategies that will protect and enhance valued resources, regenerate damaged systems, and build more sustainable communities. These strategies encompass three broad themes:

- 1. Establish the targeted terrestrial natural heritage system:** Figure 5-2 illustrates an expanded natural heritage system that provides multiple benefits, including biodiversity and habitats, water balance maintenance and restoration, opportunities for nature-based recreation, improved quality of life, and greater resilience to urban growth and climate change. It can be accomplished by protecting existing valued assets, securing additional lands, regenerating degraded areas and improving stewardship of public and private lands.
- 2. Build sustainable communities:** We have identified more sustainable approaches to urban form, infrastructure, transportation and resource use that will contribute to overall improved quality of life. They should be applied to new communities, as well as to the intensification or redevelopment of existing ones. Some of the key features include reduced imperviousness, measures to maintain or restore water balance, design features to facilitate sustainable choices (e.g. energy conservation, reduced vehicle use, support for local agricultural products) and protection and adaptive re-use of cultural heritage features. Development, where permitted, should proceed at a pace and extent that allows sufficient time to adopt, test and evaluate the effectiveness of new technologies and to make adjustments if the results do not meet our objectives and targets for the watershed.



## Context

A 100+ km<sup>2</sup> public land assembly surrounds the Rouge River & Duffins Creek watersheds in Toronto, Markham, Pickering & Uxbridge.

This publicly-owned land is predominantly designated Greenbelt "Natural Heritage System" and it is:

- home to the endangered Carolinian forest and mixed-woodland life zones of Canada, zones with 1/3 of Canada's endangered species;
- the ancestral home of Mississauga, Huron Wendat and other First Nations;
- the last chance to create a large national park in southern Ontario - an area with 34% of Canada's population, 77% of its land in agriculture and human settlement uses and only 1/400<sup>th</sup> of its land protected in National Parks.

In June 2014, the federal government released the draft legislation and plan for Rouge National Urban Park. Unfortunately their plans have raised many concerns.



## Necessary Park Improvements

### 1. Respect Science & Ecological Integrity

- give priority to ecological integrity and science-based park planning & management

### 2. Meet or Exceed Existing Standards

- "meet or exceed" the environmental standards in Ontario's Greenbelt, Rouge Park & Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Plans

### 3. Improve Watershed and Habitat Health

- implement Rouge Park's "main ecological corridor" & plans to improve habitat & water quality in the watershed & Lake Ontario

### 4. Create a Sustainable 100 km<sup>2</sup> Park

- protect 100 km<sup>2</sup> of public Greenbelt lands to Link Lake Ontario to the ORM with enough parkland to sustain nature, park use & farming

## You can help create a "nature-first" 100 km<sup>2</sup> National Rouge Park

1. Write an email/letter to the Federal Environment Minister

2. Get involved! Visit:



[www.frw.ca](http://www.frw.ca)

[www.rougenationalparkfriends.com](http://www.rougenationalparkfriends.com)

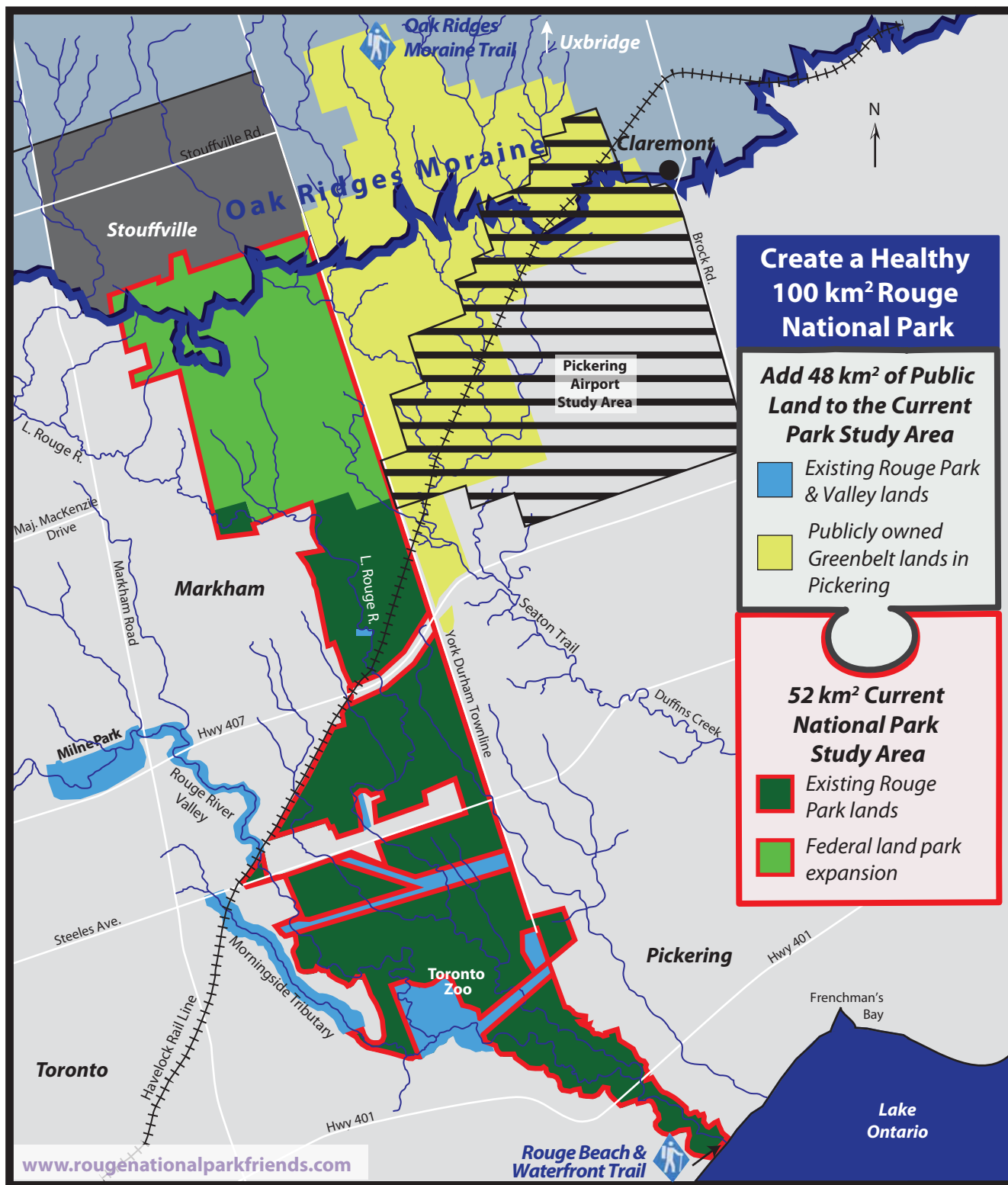
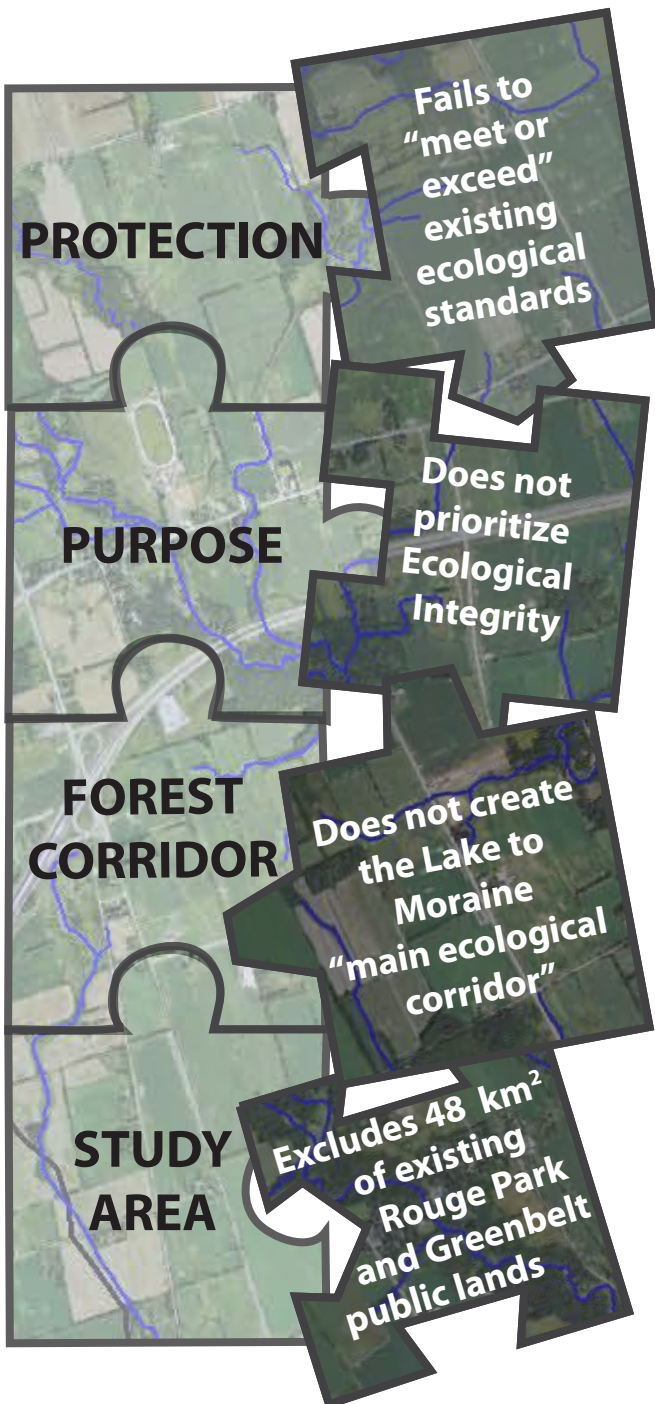
#notsavedyet #Rouge100

# CREATING A SUSTAINABLE 100 km<sup>2</sup> NATIONAL ROUGE PARK



Lake  
Ontario

# Serious Weaknesses of Federal Rouge Park Proposal





# About the Indicators

This Report Card provides a snapshot of some environmental conditions in the Rouge River watershed.

Monitoring, measuring and reporting helps us better understand the watershed, the progress we've made in protecting it and the threats to its future health. Tracking the environmental indicators used in this Report Card provides watershed residents, and the general public with the information needed to protect, restore and improve the precious natural resources within our watersheds. Where possible, an arrow is included alongside grades to show whether conditions are improving, getting worse, or stable.

## What Does this Report Card Measure?

### Surface Water Quality

**Total Phosphorous** – High levels can trigger blooms of algae that choke waterways with plant life and deplete oxygen levels in watercourses.

**E. coli Bacteria** – Indicate the presence of untreated human or animal waste.

**Benthic Macroinvertebrates (BMI)** – Bottom-dwelling stream insect larvae, snails, crayfish and clams are sensitive to many pollutants. The presence or absence of certain invertebrate species reflects the water quality conditions.

### Forest Conditions

**% Forest Cover** – Woodlands absorb run-off, filter out pollutants and increase biodiversity. They also help reduce the impacts of climate change.

**% Forest Interior** – Large blocks of forest cover provide homes for many sensitive species of birds and other animals.

**% Riparian Zone Forested** – Vegetation along watercourses keeps the water cool, prevents erosion and provides homes for many species.

### Groundwater Quality

**Nitrate and Nitrite** – These contaminants come from agricultural manure, fertilizers and leaky septic systems, and may indicate a possible health threat.

**Chloride** – High chloride levels indicate road salt may be reaching groundwater.

### Stormwater Management

**% of Developed Area with Stormwater Controls** – Systems that manage the quantity and quality of stormwater run-off generated by our communities to protect watercourses. Stormwater management consists of practices that slow down, hold and reuse water.

## Grading

A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Fair
D	Poor
F	Very Poor



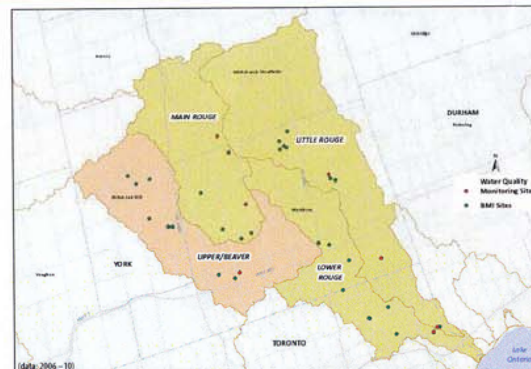
## Surface Water Quality

### Indicators

Total Phosphorous

E. coli Bacteria

Benthic Macroinvertebrates (BMI)



While water quality varies in the Rouge watershed, it is generally considered "Fair," earning it an overall "C" grade. However, data shows that water quality has declined since 2001.

The Upper/Beaver subwatershed is the most urbanized and has the lowest water quality in the Rouge, earning it a "Poor" or "D" grade, while the middle and lower portions of the watershed receive "C" grades. Higher concentrations of phosphorus and E. coli enter the waterway from a variety of sources, including overflows from combined sewers, septic systems, livestock and pet wastes, and the use of organic fertilizers. The "Poor" BMI value for the Rouge indicates more must be done to control urban run-off from entering the watercourse. The absence of stormwater management practices in older urban areas adds to water quality problems in the Lower Rouge.



## Forest Conditions

### Indicators

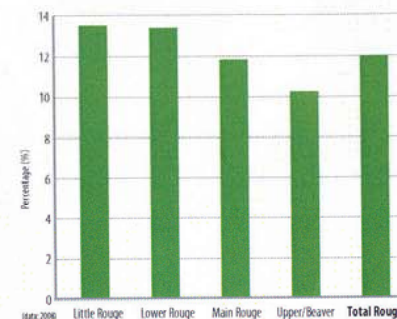
% Forest Cover

% Forest Interior

% Riparian Zone Forested



% Forest Cover by Subwatershed in the Rouge



Forest conditions in the Rouge are generally considered "Poor," earning it a "D" grade. Only 12% of the watershed is forested.

Much of the original forest cover was lost during early settlement; as urban areas expand, more stress is put on the remaining forests. Unlike much of the rest of TRCA's jurisdiction, the lower reaches of the watershed (within Rouge Park) have the highest proportion of forest cover. While less than 1% of the watershed is covered by large patches of forest, some areas of Rouge Park contain large blocks of forest with significant interior habitat. Species that are sensitive to urbanization and require large areas of forest, such as wood thrush and ovenbird, are still found in the lower reaches. Although the total forest cover is low in the watershed, approximately one-third of its current streambank riparian cover is forest, with the Lower Rouge having the highest proportion.

