



## ROUGE PARK ALLIANCE MINUTES - MEETING #2/11 - May 13, 2011

The Rouge Park Alliance met in the Main Boardroom of the Toronto Zoo. Alan Wells, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Members:**

Alan Wells, Chair  
Hon. Pauline Browes, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corp.  
Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, City of Toronto  
Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Region of York  
Mayor David Ryan, City of Pickering  
Regional Councillor Peter Rodrigues, Region of Durham  
John Tracogna, Toronto Zoo

#### **Alternates:**

Brian Denney, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority  
Sue Gunton, Toronto Zoo  
Debbie Pella Keen, Province of Ontario  
Dr. Bill Rapley, Toronto Zoo  
Jim Robb, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.  
Carolyn Woodland, Toronto & Region C. A.

### **ABSENT**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Paul Ainslie, City of Toronto  
Hon. Michael Chong, MP, Government of Canada  
Councillor Castro Liu, Town of Richmond Hill  
André Flys, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.  
Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP, Province of Ontario  
Gerri Lynn O'Connor, Toronto & Region C. A.  
Councillor Clyde Smith, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

#### **Alternates:**

Wayne Arthurs, MPP, Province of Ontario  
Ian Buchanan, Region of York  
Mayor Wayne Emmerson, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville  
Adele Freeman, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority  
Mark Graham, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.  
Councillor Logan Kanapathi, Town of Markham  
Keith Laushway, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corp.  
Tom Melymuk, City of Pickering  
Roger Saunders, Region of Durham  
Tracey Steele, Town of Richmond Hill

#### **Staff:**

Mike Bender, Manager, Rouge Park  
Barb Davies, Manager, Policy & Administration  
Ron Dewell, Acting General Manager  
Michelle Holmes, Manager, Visitor Experience  
Izabela Kalkowski, Nat. Heritage Field Assistant

#### **Staff (Continued...)**

Vicki MacDonald, Biologist  
Doreen McCarty, Administrative Coordinator  
Maria Papoulias, Manager, Natural Heritage  
Sheryl Santos, Stewardship Coordinator  
Diana Smyth, Trail Coordinator

#### **Observers:**

Mike Adler, Metroland (Scarborough Mirror)  
Cat Beattie, Rouge Watch  
Bob Clay, TRCA  
Jim Dillane, TRCA  
Lilli Duoba, Town of Markham  
Andrew Farnsworth, Friends of the Rouge Watershed  
Lois James, Rouge Valley Foundation  
Michael Jones, BDO Canada  
Colin Lathe, Public  
Sheila Lathe, Public  
Nancy Lowes, City of Toronto Parks

#### **Observers (Continued...)**

Evelyn Lurz, Friends of the Rouge Watershed  
Marvin Macaraig, U of T, Dept. Of Geography  
Gord MacPherson, TRCA  
Andy McKinnon, "Rouge Watch"  
Faisal Moola, David Suzuki Foundation  
Ruth Rendon, Town of Markham  
Mark Schollen, Schollen & Company Inc.  
Christine Tu, TRCA  
Charlotte Wheldrake, Friends of the Rouge Watershed



**Mark Schollen, Schollen & Company Inc.**

Mark Schollen gave a presentation on the progress to date on the Rouge Park Trails Master Plan. The presentation included topics such as: the draft vision for the Rouge Park trail system; Rouge Park goal and objectives; summaries of findings of the trail assessment and the ecological assessment; significant species, sensitivity and buffer mapping; framework of the trail system/catalogue of trail types; summary of comments from stakeholders and the public; process going forward; etc.

**1. Update on Draft Rouge Park Trails Master Plan**

**KEY ISSUE**

Update on Draft Rouge Park Trails Master Plan progress with focus on plan status, guiding principles, and plan objectives.

**MOTION:**  
**Res. #16/11**

**Moved by: David Ryan**  
**Seconded by: Jack Heath**

**THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the report and presentation by Mark Schollen of Schollen & Company Inc.;**

**AND FURTHER THAT the Rouge Park Alliance direct staff to conduct additional focus group meetings, including neighbours, user groups, and additional stakeholders, and that we host an additional open house for further public consultation.**

..... **CARRIED**

**ACTION**

- Staff to take appropriate actions, and bring back recommendations on the draft trails plan to the Alliance.

**BACKGROUND**

***The Need for a Trails Master Plan***

While Rouge Park continues to grow new habitats, offer exciting visitor experiences, and protect important green spaces, the need for a trails master plan has become an increasing priority for the Park. With 7 million people living within an hour's drive of Rouge Park and with major communities right on the park's boundaries, we recognize that people will want to enjoy and experience the park's beauty. In order to accommodate the pressures of the surrounding population, and to protect the natural, cultural and agricultural assets of the Park, a Trails Master Plan will help strike an important balance between visitors and the natural surroundings.

The Trails Master Plan will be an essential tool for connecting areas within Rouge Park, and to the surrounding communities and trail systems. The trail system plays an integral role in providing our visitors with a tangible nature experience, by allowing them to see the diverse habitats and rich cultural history that Rouge Park strives to protect.

***Study Administration***

In autumn of 2009, a trail advisory committee was formed and tasked with developing the Trails Master Plan. This committee is comprised of Rouge Park Alliance partners and trail stakeholders from the Rouge Park Alliance, City of Toronto, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region, Town of Markham, Durham Region, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Transport Canada, and the Oak Ridges Trail Association

Specifically, the committee's role in the development of the Trails Master Plan will primarily be to provide direction and technical guidance, share information and give feedback to the Rouge Park staff and the consultants. The committee developed a terms of reference, and hired Schollen and Company, Inc. as the lead consultant for the project.

### **Study Process**

The Trails Master Plan study will be completed in four phases.

#### Phase One: Background Review

- Assemble and summarize background data on current Rouge Park trails, and neighbouring trail systems
- Provide input to inform potential trail locations through both mapping exercises and ground truthing
- Data from various Rouge Park and partner studies and reports were summarized to locate sensitive areas

#### Phase Two: Trail Concept, Design and Standards, Communications

- Prepare and map preliminary options and concepts of an overall trail system in the Park based on the goals
- Identify trail theme opportunities based on cultural and natural heritage assets
- Initiate the public consultation process – twin public consultation meetings were held in October 2010 in Markham and Toronto

#### Phase Three: Draft Plan and Consultation

- Provide detailed location of proposed trails, parking lots and crossings where required
- Conduct second public consultation for stakeholder, community and interest group participation
- Further consultation with partners including TRCA ecologists, Markham Development Services Committee, Rouge Park Natural Heritage Committee
- To Date · Presentation to Rouge Park Alliance
- Additional focus group meetings, including park tenants, Cedar Grove community, First Nations, and park user groups
- Open house for further public consultation

#### Phase Four: Review, Submission and Approval

- Determine and recommend the most appropriate phased approach to implementation
- Prepare detailed cost estimates for the implementation of the trail development plans
  - Prepare trails master plan, maps and phasing plan based on the recommended trail system design and standards determined in Phase 2
  - Review, revise and prepare final Trails Master Plan based on results of Phases 1 to 3
  - Presentation to Rouge Park Alliance, then affected Municipal and Regional Councils
  - Submit final Trails Master Plan for official approval by the Rouge Park Alliance

### **Proposed Draft Vision**

The vision for the Rouge Park Trail System is proposed to be as follows:

The Rouge Park trail system will serve as a means to understand and appreciate the unique natural and cultural attributes of the park through heightened visitor experiences and immersion in the landscape.

The system will offer a range of experiences and recreational opportunities to assist in meeting the needs of users of all ages and physical abilities.

The trail system will support the protection of the outstanding natural features, agricultural landscapes and diverse cultural heritage of the park by managing appropriate public access and patterns of use while providing a rewarding experience of nature.

### **Trail Master Plan Goals**

There are 3 main objectives to the plan:

- Protect important natural heritage features
  - o Protect existing natural heritage features and functions
  - o Enhance habitat connectivity, diversity and function where possible

- o Avoid fragmentation
- o Generally avoid steep slopes and areas prone to flooding or erosion where possible
- Provide a continuous north-south and east west linkage to neighbouring trail system
  - o Provide for a multi-use trail connection from the Waterfront to the Oak Ridges Moraine
  - o Provide key linkages to connect neighbourhoods adjacent to Rouge Park
  - o Provide a multi-modal trail network that maximizes accessibility and is integrated with public transit
- Respect and celebrate significant cultural and agricultural heritage resources
  - o Capitalize on interpretive opportunities
  - o Avoid sensitive cultural heritage features and landscapes

In addition, the plan is to address the need to close the dozens of kilometres of unofficial trails in the park, many in sensitive natural areas, (64km of unofficial trails to be closed south of Steeles Avenue). Visitor safety is key in all trail elements of planning.

#### ***Key Objectives for the Trail Network***

- Ensure public safety
- Protect and enhance natural features and functions
- Enhance experience of Rouge Park for trail users
- Provide access for a range of users of varying abilities
- Afford a broad range of user experiences and recreational opportunities
- Provide facilities to support trail use, (i.e. parking)
- Make the connections to regional trails, bikeways and transit

#### ***The Objectives will be achieved by:***

- Developing a catalogue of trail types
  - Utilizing the road network/internal neighbourhood street fabric
  - Linking open spaces
  - Optimizing walking distances
  - Utilizing corridors of opportunity, i.e. hydro easements

#### ***Trail Types***

The trail system will consist of a catalogue of trails comprised of a 'base' trail configuration with a subset of variants that are intended to address **site-specific conditions** or the implications of patterns of use. There will be primarily four types of trails:

- Low impact, natural surface rustic trails
- Multiuse pathways
- On road cycling routes
- Accessible trails

#### ***Trail Alignment Principles as They Relate to Natural Heritage***

Trails will be aligned to:

- Minimize disturbance to areas of 'high ecological sensitivity'
- Allow for the expansion of the natural heritage system
- Utilize existing trails where deemed appropriate from an ecological perspective
- Minimize fragmentation of existing woodlands and habitats
- Minimize interference with:
  - Natural hazards: steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, seepage areas
  - Habitats for Species of Concern and Species at Risk

#### ***Trail Alignment Principles as They Relate to Recreation***

- Trails will offer a range of experiences and challenges

- Trails within the park will be primarily used for hiking, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing and nature appreciation
- Specific areas within the park may be designated to accommodate cycling
- Bicycle routes will be located predominantly along road rights-of-way, unopened road allowances and utility corridors
- Joint use/cycling trails may be designed to link cycling routes and destinations within and outside of the park
- Motorized vehicles will be prohibited on all trails (with the exception of maintenance/service vehicles)
- The range and type of recreational use permitted within the park must be consistent with the park goal and objectives and the carrying capacity of the ecosystem
- No recreation activity will be allowed which adversely impacts the health of the park ecosystem and its special habitats and cultural features
- Any recreational park use must not adversely affect residents and local neighbourhoods within or adjacent to the park

The Trails Master Plan will be an essential tool for connecting areas within Rouge Park, and to the surrounding communities and trail systems. The trail system plays an integral role in providing our visitors with a tangible nature experience, by allowing them to see the diverse habitats and rich cultural history that Rouge Park strives to protect.

**Report prepared by:** Michelle Holmes, Manager of Visitor Experience, Rouge Park  
**For information contact:** Michelle Holmes, 905-713-6021; email: michelle\_holmes@rougepark.com  
**Date:** May 4, 2011

## **2. Ambassador/Park Watch Program**

### **KEY ISSUE**

For the protection of ecological integrity and the cultural resources of the Park, it is proposed that a volunteer based program be implemented that is designed to monitor the Park and coordinate with enforcement authorities when illegal activities are taking place as well as educate the Park's users regarding safe and permissible experience.

### **Ron Dewell, Acting General Manager, Rouge Park**

Ron Dewell presented an update on the ambassador/park watch program. He expressed thanks to the different enforcement agencies involved and Andy McKinnon for the progress made so far. Compared to last fall/spring, there has been less or no poaching in some areas, because of various actions ongoing, such as: putting up signs, communicating with the tenants and police, training ambassadors in active areas, education of volunteers and the public. He identified that Andy McKinnon will be working with Pat Doody, TRCA Enforcement Officer, and that a manual will be developed outlining policies, procedures and guidelines for ambassadors of Rouge Park. The manual would also outline the agencies responsibilities, etc.

### **Andy McKinnon, Rouge Watch (Delegation)**

Andy McKinnon said, because of the ambassador/park watch program, that he has noticed a great improvement in the park, such as, no poaching, no tree stands this fall/spring; however, there still needs to be more education on these issues and other illegal activities in the park.

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath informed the Alliance that the Town of Markham has funding available for the enforcement program (i.e., training, t-shirt, vests, etc.), and that the Alliance/TRCA may apply.

Ron Dewell informed him that TRCA/Rouge Park would apply under the Ambassador/Park Watch Program.



*"ROUGE PARK ALLIANCE APRIL 23, 2010 MEETING*

MOTION                      Moved by:        Glenn DeBaeremaeker  
Res. #23/10                  Seconded by:    Jack Heath

*THAT the Rouge Park General Manager be the point person responsible for maintaining communications and relationships with the various enforcement agencies with jurisdictions that cover Rouge Park;*

*AND THAT the number of signs in the Park informing Park users of permissible activities be increased and expanded to include the non-public use areas of the Park;*

*AND THAT Rouge Park staff continue to develop and implement a Park watch program, with trained volunteers, whose focus should be to cooperate with enforcement agencies and provide for observation and citizen patrols, with particular attention to avoid risks to staff and volunteers;*

*AND FURTHER THAT Rouge Park staff continue to communicate with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff to ensure that deer related issues in Rouge Park are dealt with consistently with the developing TRCA policy. "*

It was felt that the priority for Rouge Park was to immediately address the ongoing poaching and use of motorized vehicles (ATVs and snowmobiles) in northeast Scarborough, south of Steeles Avenue, north of Finch Avenue, between Littles Road and the Pickering/Toronto Townline, identified by Rouge Watch, while developing the comprehensive volunteer based park watch program. The following activities were carried out over the past year to address the poaching and motorized vehicle issues:

- increased patrols/presence in the Park by TRCA , Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Toronto Parks enforcement and bylaw
- established a direct reporting and communication between Rouge Watch and TRCA enforcement and property staff and appropriate follow-up
- on TRCA managed lands, TRCA/Rouge Park, in consultation with Rouge Watch installed no trespassing signs at known access points and areas of the Park frequented by poachers
- on TRCA lands managed by Toronto Parks, Parks installed additional no trespassing signs and no motorized vehicle signs
- TRCA amended agricultural leases to permit enforcement officials to access the lands without notice
- secured access points

We are pleased to report that through this integrated effort, there was no reported poaching or illegal hunting activities in this area of Rouge Park in the Fall 2010 or through the winter 2010/2011, and that the ATV activity has been significantly reduced. However, we did have snowmobiles in the Park again this winter, and this will need to be addressed next season.

We feel the reporting and communication between Rouge Watch and TRCA enforcement and property staff has been very effective and that this arrangement should be continued and formalized.

**Ambassador/Park Watch Program**

This program would be an expansion of existing activities and relationships, aimed at protection of the Park's resources. Over the past year, staff has met and consulted with Rouge Watch (Andy McKinnon and Cat Beattie), on a number of occasions and with the Park Enforcement Group to discuss the development of a program which involves volunteers in a proactive manner to address education and prohibited activities. We reviewed similar programs to this in High Park (Park Watch) and several municipalities in York Region (York Regional Police Parks Ambassadors Program).

Establishing a presence in all areas of the Park through the program will work towards the goal of protecting the Park's natural heritage. In some cases, for instance in the tenanted lands, a presence already exists that we can work with. In other areas such as public use areas and nature reserves, we will need to foster a new presence. Through relationship building and education, the ambassador program could achieve a higher

level of protection for the Park's environs and users.

In an effort to cover the entire Park, it seemed appropriate to separate the implementation techniques into distinct categories which coincide with the type and level of use as follows:

1. tenanted lands
2. Park users and public use areas of the Park
3. sensitive and remote areas.

Subsequently, we recognized that the solutions to the issues within each category are unique. Drawing on the circumstances in each category and the jurisdictions of our partner organizations and their associated enforcement agencies, we are recommending the following solutions.

### **DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE**

#### Tenanted Lands

In the tenanted areas of the Park, a more neighbourhood watch type approach is recommended. Park staff would coordinate with the Park tenants and the local Police Community liaison to initiate a watch program. This program would also function to establish a relationship with the tenants to assist with issues related to living within a Park of this nature and clearly communicate activities that are and are not permissible. It will be helpful for tenants of Rouge Park to know who they should contact, be it a bylaw enforcement issue, security issue or wildlife protection issue. Tenants will also be given the opportunity for making recommendations on improvements for prevention of illegal and inappropriate activities on and near tenanted lands. If tenants are interested in becoming involved with the remote area or public use area aspect of this program, they will be encouraged to do so.

#### Park Users and Public Use Areas

A more involved recommendation is proposed for the public use areas of the Park. In these locations we are looking to educate, and communicate the desire to prevent negative impacts on its ecological integrity and cultural resources and help ensure a positive user experience in the Park.

We propose to establish a team of volunteer ambassadors to create a peer-driven message of respect for the Park and compliance with the Park's Code of Conduct. They may likely be the first Rouge Park representative a visitor will meet, and therefore must convey a confident, inviting and informative but firm message.

Trained volunteer ambassadors create a chain of positive reinforcement through teaching, role-modeling and action. They provide a friendly welcome to Rouge Park, offering ideas for walks, providing trail and visitor area maps, information on what can be done in our public areas (i.e. canoeing at Rouge Beach) and basic nature interpretation, as well as share why Rouge Park is such a special place worth protecting and what the best ways are to enjoy the Park.

While prevention is the primary function of these ambassadors, volunteers will also be asked to observe and report on any suspect activities in the public use areas of the Park and respond to emergency situations. These volunteers will not be required to directly engage individuals partaking in suspect activities and will receive training on how to avoid conflict situations. Ambassadors will also receive first aid training which will contribute to the first aid response in the Park.

When visitors encounter and converse with an ambassador, they may be more likely to adopt responsible trail use in an area of conservation and restoration, respect plant and animal life in the Park, embrace Rouge Park's importance as a unique natural area and become active in stewardship of the Park. All these support the promotion of sustainable, self-propelled activity in a natural area. Volunteers also increase community engagement in the Park and improve on Rouge Park presence to enhance a visitor's connection with the Park.

#### Sensitive and Remote Areas (Focus but not limited to)

When considering the more sensitive and remote areas of the Park, it was determined that the use of volunteers for this component is best suited as a direct relationship between the individual volunteer and a partnership organization which maintains enforcement staff and has a direct responsibility for Rouge Park

lands. Rouge Park staff is not envisioned to have an enforcement role in the Park other than acting as a liaison with the enforcement authorities. For this circumstance, we have made an arrangement with TRCA enforcement staff through the TRCA Volunteer Policy to maintain a supervisory relationship with volunteers interested in reporting on activities in the more remote areas of the Park that may impact the integrity of the Park. Park staff will coordinate this relationship and work with both the volunteer(s) and enforcement staff on a case by case basis. Currently, we are working towards finalizing this arrangement between Rouge Park, TRCA and members of Rouge Watch. A key component to this is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Costs associated with the remote areas volunteers will be addressed through existing budget allocations. However, the estimated cost to train ambassador volunteers is \$250 per volunteer. This cost includes first aid training, outfitting and volunteer development. The target for 2011 is to train 20 volunteers. Staff is submitting a proposal for the next deadline for funding applications from Friends of the Environment Foundation. Implementation of this program will be dependent on fund raising, therefore should not affect the February 11, 2011 approved Rouge Park Alliance 2011 Budget.

**Report prepared by:** Barb Davies, Manager, Policy and Administration, Rouge Park  
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OR Barb Davies, 905-713-6022, email: [bdavies@rougepark.com](mailto:bdavies@rougepark.com)

**Date:** May 4, 2011

**Jim Robb, Friends of the Rouge Watershed** (Presentation)

Jim Robb, in his presentation, touched on several topics: tour of the Park with Hon. Pauline Browes and Hon. Michael Chong; the Conservative Government’s election platform of establishing a new National Park in the Rouge Valley; 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan; Greenbelt Plan; Section 3.2.6 of the Greenbelt Plan-The Rouge River Watershed and Park; Markham Environmental Policy Review, May 2009; Rouge North Management Plan, 2001; Fisheries Act and Plan; etc.

**MOTION:** Moved by: Glenn De Baeremaeker  
**Res. #18/11:** Seconded by: Debbie Pella Keen

**THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the presentation by Jim Robb, Friends of the Rouge Watershed.**  
..... **CARRIED**

**3. Draft Audited 2010 Financial Statements**

Michael Jones, chartered accountant of BDO Canada, and Rouge Park Alliance auditor, briefly addressed the Alliance on the draft audited 2010 financial statements. He spoke on the auditor’s report, including the management’s responsibility for the financial statements, the auditor’s responsibility, the procedures involved in performing the audit, and the auditor’s opinion.

At this point, the board lost quorum, and we were not able to proceed with any further motions, and the meeting was adjourned.

**TERMINATION**

The meeting terminated at 12:00 p.m. on May 13, 2011, due to lack of quorum.

Alan Wells  
Chair, Rouge Park Alliance

Ron Dewell  
Acting General Manager, Rouge Park