



ROUGE PARK ALLIANCE MINUTES MEETING #4/11 - SEPTEMBER 16, 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 9:05 a.m.

PRESENT

Members:

Alan Wells, Chair
Councillor Paul Ainslie, City of Toronto
Hon. Pauline Browes, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corp.
Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Region of York
Councillor Castro Liu, Town of Richmond Hill
Regional Councillor Peter Rodrigues, Region of Durham
Councillor Clyde Smith, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Alternates:

Debbie Pella Keen, Province of Ontario
Dr. Bill Rapley, Toronto Zoo
Jim Robb, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Carolyn Woodland, TRCA

ABSENT

Members:

Hon. Michael Chong, MP, Government of Canada
Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, City of Toronto
André Flys, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP, Province of Ontario
Councillor Logan Kanapathi, Town of Markham
Gerri Lynn O'Connor, TRCA
Mayor David Ryan, City of Pickering
John Tracogna, Toronto Zoo

Alternates:

Wayne Arthurs, MPP, Province of Ontario
Ian Buchanan, Region of York
Councillor Colin Campbell, Town of Markham
Brian Denney, TRCA
Mayor Wayne Emmerson, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Adele Freeman, TRCA
Mark Graham, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Sue Gunton, Toronto Zoo
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, Acting General Manager
Michelle Holmes, Manager, Visitor Experience
Vicki MacDonald, Biologist

Staff (Continued...)

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

Observers:

Mike Adler, Metroland (Scarborough Mirror)
Tom Boudreault, City of Toronto Parks
J-P DeCouvreur, Durham Mountain Biking Assoc.
Jim Dillane, TRCA
Lilli Duoba, Town of Markham
Andrew Farnsworth, Friends of the Rouge Watershed
Sheila Lathe, Public
Jason Murray, International Mountain Biking Assoc. (IMBA)

Observers (Continued...)

Gord MacPherson, TRCA
Andy McKinnon, Rouge Watch
Kevin O'Connor, Friends of the Rouge Watershed
Alastair Patterson, Toronto Off-Road Bicycling Assoc.
John Pisapio, Ministry of Natural Resources
Ben Ryzebol, City of Toronto Parks
Elizabeth Wimmer, Town of Markham
Lora Woolner, IMBA Canada

MOTION:
Res. #32/11

Moved by: Jim Robb
Seconded by: Peter Rodrigues

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance Chair writes to the federal Ministers of Environment Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans (DFO); provincial Ministers of Natural Resources, and the Environment; the Premier of Ontario; all municipalities in the Rouge River watershed, asking them to utilize their legislation and policies to give legal force to, and help implement, the Rouge River Fisheries Management Plan in the interests of clean water and healthy fish and aquatic habitat.

..... **CARRIED**

ACTION

- Staff to take appropriate actions.
- Deputy Mayor Jack Heath requested staff to report back on mitigation of barriers to fish passage.

1. Draft Rouge River Watershed Fisheries Management Plan (2011)

KEY ISSUE

An updated Fisheries Management Plan for the Rouge River watershed has been prepared by staff of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), with technical input from staff of the Rouge Park Alliance, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Lake Ontario Assessment Unit. The final draft of the Rouge River Watershed Fisheries Management Plan (2011) will be posted on the Ontario Environmental Registry and comments will be received and incorporated, as appropriate, prior to the Plan being finalized.

MOTION:
Res. #33/11

Moved by: Jack Heath
Seconded by: Peter Rodrigues

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive this report.

..... **CARRIED**

BACKGROUND

Fisheries Management Plans play an important role in supporting watershed management, including land use planning, restoration and stewardship activities. They provide background information on the state of aquatic ecosystems, set management objectives and recommend strategies for protection and enhancement.

An updated Fisheries Management Plan for the Rouge River watershed has been prepared by staff of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), with technical input from staff of the Rouge Park Alliance, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Lake Ontario Assessment Unit. The final draft of the Rouge River Watershed Fisheries Management Plan (2011) will be posted on the Ontario Environmental Registry and comments will be received and incorporated, as appropriate, prior to the plan being finalized.

The new Rouge River Watershed Fisheries Management Plan will replace the 1992 version, incorporating important updates on the state of the watershed, new legislation, and current approaches to watershed management. The new Fisheries Management Plan recognizes the critical linkages between land use changes in the watershed and impacts on aquatic systems, a concept which is key to managing aquatic resources in a rapidly urbanizing landscape. As a result, this document takes a much more prescriptive approach to land use planning. It includes elevated technical coverage of threats and impacts to aquatic habitat and species, as well as management recommendations to prevent and mitigate these impacts and ultimately improve the resilience of aquatic systems. Furthermore, the Fisheries Management Plan addresses the failure of "status quo" measures to maintain flow regimes, water quality and native biodiversity, and makes specific

recommendations on how to manage these resources more effectively. There is a strong emphasis on addressing cumulative effects on a watershed and sub-watershed basis, maintaining flow regimes and water balance pre- to post-development, restoring natural hydrology, increasing the connectivity of natural systems and preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Also new to this Plan is a section specific to Redside Dace management, including guidance on Redside Dace protection under the Endangered Species Act (2007). Given the high concentration of this endangered species in the Rouge River watershed, it has been identified as a priority for protection and management in this Fisheries Management Plan. Most of the extant Redside Dace populations in the Rouge River watershed are located in the rapidly urbanizing upper and middle reaches and therefore, the Plan includes detailed technical recommendations for land use planning and construction management to protect existing Redside Dace habitat. A strong emphasis is placed on maintaining thermal targets and controlling cumulative stormwater contributions in subcatchment areas supporting this species. The Plan also recommends that stocking of salmonids (primarily Rainbow Trout) be discontinued in reaches that support Redside Dace. The recommendations for protection of Redside Dace habitat embedded in this Fisheries Management Plan build upon and overlap with many of the existing stream protection requirements.

The Plan was developed using a sub-watershed approach, with ten Fish Management Zones (FMZs) identified based on subcatchment drainage areas, hydrologic, geologic and thermal regimes. For each of these Fish Management Zones, target species and specific management recommendations were developed. This approach provides a strong basis for protection of the aquatic resources specific to each subcatchment area and improvements targeted to areas that have been degraded. For each FMZ, the Plan provides a list of Implementation Project Opportunities (IPOs), intended to provide guidance on types of restoration and rehabilitation projects that would be beneficial in each area. These Implementation Project Opportunities are not intended to be an exhaustive list of projects that could be undertaken in the watershed, but rather are meant to provide a short-list of suggestions to assist groups wishing to undertake beneficial actions.

Report prepared by: Maria Papoulias, Manager, Natural Heritage, Rouge Park
For information contact: Maria Papoulias, 905-713-6308; email: maria_papoulias@rougepark.com
Date: September 1, 2011

PRESENTATION/DELEGATIONS (Continued...)

Jason Murray, International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)
Lora Woolner, International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)
J-P DeCouvreur, Durham Mountain Biking Association (DMBA)
Alastair Patterson, Toronto Off-Road Bicycling Association (TORBA)

Jason Murray led the presentation and introduced his associates. Lora Woolner spoke about her working relationship with Parks Canada on mountain biking. Other associates spoke on their specific area of interests.

Mr. Murray talked about the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), its affiliates, members, partnerships with Parks Canada, municipalities, local communities, businesses, and other stakeholders. He mentioned the history of mountain biking in Rouge Park since the early 1980s, and said that at the first two open houses for the Trails Master Plan that he attended, the Plan had included a trail specifically designated for mountain biking and a bike park on the Beare Road landfill site, but at the third open house, all mention of this was removed. He discussed some challenges and solutions of mountain biking, namely environmental impact, unauthorized trails, liability and risk management, and user conflict.

In concluding, Mr. Murray asked that the Alliance consider his organization's requests: "mountain biking be accepted as a permitted activity in the park on all existing and future trails; political and financial support for a community bike park on the old Beare Road landfill site; representation for mountain biking as a stakeholder at the Rouge Alliance".

1.2 Projects will focus on the restoration of previously existing wetlands and natural hydrological patterns. Wetland restoration techniques should mimic, as closely as possible, the natural processes of wetland formation that historically occurred on the landscape. Wetlands in the Park have historically been formed by runoff filling depressions, natural sediment deposits that create small dams along intermittent streams and through activity of beavers. There are no known natural mechanisms that have formed wetlands through deep excavations in the Rouge Park management area. Pit and mound excavation intends to mimic the small depressions created when large old-growth trees are uprooted by wind. Such depressions are not natural in young forest stands and develop naturally as a forest matures.

1.3 Creation of wetlands by excavation where there is no evidence that wetlands once existed will be undertaken only in exceptional situations where there exist clear, specific wildlife and ecological management reasons, as determined by Rouge Park and TRCA staff.

1.4 Conversion of one wetland type to another is to be avoided. For example, ephemeral wetlands will not be converted to permanent wetlands. Exceptions will be where restoration of natural hydrology (tile drain removal, etc.) allows more permanent wetlands or where water is held on the land with very low-head dams along field ditches or intermittent streams that mimic natural wetland creation processes.

1.5 Decisions on sites of wetlands, particularly small and ephemeral wetlands for which historical locations may be difficult to determine, must be addressed within a larger, landscape-level habitat context.

1.6 All wetland project proposals will include detailed design criteria, including construction drawings, site plans, survey maps, etc. that account for intended functions and consider the habitat needs of plants and wildlife. Evaluation measures and a monitoring plan must be in place for all restored wetlands to ensure that intended functions are being achieved.

1.7 All wetland projects require the approval of Rouge Park (RP), TRCA and other relevant approval agencies, and will respect federal, provincial, municipal and TRCA regulations.

1.8 Hydrologic and soil assessments must be completed at each proposed wetland site to ensure that basin soils are wetland appropriate and impermeable.

1.9 All restoration projects must ensure that no harm is done to existing natural systems, native species, habitats and drainage patterns. No alteration of hydrology that negatively affects existing swamps will be allowed, given that existing swamps are rare and very sensitive to hydrology.

1.10 All constructed improvements on TRCA lands, regardless of how they are funded, will be owned by TRCA and their management will be the responsibility of the TRCA and Rouge Park.

2.0 Construction Sites

2.1 All wetland management proposals that require use of heavy equipment to implement must provide detailed site plans, including topographical surveys, approved by RP, TRCA and all other required approval agencies.

2.2 All construction sites where heavy equipment is used must be supervised by an experienced site supervisor approved by TRCA and RP. The Ontario Health and Safety legislation requires employers (including those contracting for work) to ensure that 'competent' supervisors are appointed who are (in part) 'qualified through knowledge, training and experience'.

2.3 All construction sites where heavy equipment is used will conform to the applicable TRCA, federal, provincial and municipal regulations. This includes having in place approved public, operator and employee safety practices, liability and other insurance coverage appropriate for the work being done, WSIB certification and such other legislative or regulatory requirements as may apply. It is the responsibility of the project proponent / contractor to ensure compliance with all construction standards.

2.4 All people attending work sites will wear approved safety equipment and the site supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring compliance.

2.5 Contracting for heavy equipment shall conform to the procedures and policies of RP and TRCA.

Report prepared by: Maria Papoulias, Manager, Natural Heritage, Rouge Park
For information contact: Maria Papoulias, 905-713-6308; email: maria_papoulias@rougepark.com
Date: September 1, 2011

3. Progress Report of Habitat Restoration at Bob Hunter Memorial Park in 2011

KEY ISSUE

Report the progress of habitat restoration at Bob Hunter Memorial Park in 2011.

MOTION: **Moved by: Jack Heath**
Res. #37/11: **Seconded by: Peter Rodrigues**

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the progress report of habitat restoration at Bob Hunter Memorial Park in 2011.

MOTION..... DEFERRED

ACTION - Staff to bring back complete report on all work done at Bob Hunter Memorial Park.

BACKGROUND
(See attached report)

ATTACHMENT **2011 Habitat Restoration Progress at Bob Hunter Memorial Park**

Habitat restoration in Bob Hunter Memorial Park began in the spring of 2010 with the planting of 12 ha of native grass meadow. Later in the year, woody material, salvaged from development projects near Bob Hunter Memorial Park (BHMP) was placed throughout the 2010 meadow to create the atmosphere of a large glade in a woodland setting. By year's end, a 1 ha wetland had been added and site preparations for 2011 work had begun. All the restored habitats showed excellent development by summer 2011.

In 2011, following on this progress, a total of 40.6 ha of habitats was restored. Key accomplishments include:

1. Planting of 23.3 ha of forested habitats in southern parts of BHMP, which have been set aside primarily as nature reserve areas, occurred with over 3000 volunteers during events organized by 10000 Trees for the Rouge Valley and Friends of the Rouge Watershed. In addition, 300 volunteers worked with Rouge Park and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority staff to plant trees in 4.8 ha of riparian area.

As of September 6th, we have approximately 225 participants registered. These participants have the choice of five different routes: 12km, 25km, 50km, 75km, and for those who are feeling really ambitious, a 100km route. There are plenty of exciting stops along the way, from Whittamore’s Farm, where participants can purchase a freshly baked pie for after the race, to a discovery stop at the restoration site on the northeast corner of Reesor Road and Old Finch Avenue, where riders will discover a thriving wetland habitat, and learn about some of the wildlife that call the area home.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation has been a generous sponsor of the event, with a grant of \$53,000. Additionally, we have received financial support from the Town of Markham, and many other partners have provided in-kind support, specifically, the Toronto Zoo, who has given us one of their overflow lots to hold the event, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the City of Toronto who will be assisting with some of the day’s logistics and materials. Also, where we have purchased supplies, many corporations have offered us generous discounts. Many Registrations of \$60 for adults, is bringing in nearly \$10,000 to date.

We anticipate that the success of this event will lay the groundwork for future fund raising events in Rouge Park.

Report prepared by: Michelle Holmes, Manager, Visitor Experience, Rouge Park
For information contact: Michelle Holmes, 905-713-6021, email: michelle_holmes@rougepark.com
Date: September 7, 2011

5.1 Celebrating Biodiversity with Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

KEY ISSUE

Our partnership with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) who has generously funded a viewing platform, and our fall series of guided walks.

MOTION: Moved by: Debbie Pella Keen
Res. #39/11: Seconded by: Jack Heath

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the report for the Ontario Power Generation partnership update;

AND FURTHER THAT members of the Rouge Park Alliance be invited to attend the opening of the viewing platform, October 8, 2011.

..... **CARRIED**

ACTION - Alliance members to be invited to opening of the viewing platform.

BACKGROUND

Once again, Rouge Park has partnered with Ontario Power Generation to celebrate biodiversity, and the International Year of the Forest. OPG has generously provided \$50,000 to the Heritage Appreciation and Visitor Experience program.

Half of these funds are slated for the development of a multi-level viewing deck offering a spectacular valley view from along our Vista Trail. The location of this trail is particularly important, as it has posed a serious safety concern with visitors often venturing off trail to the edge of the eroding bluff to capture the breath-taking scenery. The viewing platform will promote a safe visitor experience, protect the slope, and include fencing and restoration planting at the site to help stabilize the slope. Join us on Saturday, October 8, 2011 to celebrate the opening of the platform!

The second half of the funds will be used to host a chapter of the OPG Hikes Series, celebrating the International Year of Forests. There will be 60 hikes in total, each offering an exciting theme, and often including a guest expert to share ideas, knowledge and nature appreciation. Some example themes include: Fall Bird Migration, Archaeology in Rouge Park, and Getting Ready for Winter. Funds will cover project management, as well as training a new batch of volunteer leaders. Our leaders are Hike Ontario Certified Hike Leaders and trained by the Canadian Red Cross for Standard First Aid, and all bring their own skills, a generous spirit, and vast appreciation for the park to the team.

Rouge Park is pleased to partner with Ontario Power Generation in helping to promote nature appreciation and exciting outdoor adventures, and we are hopeful that this evolves into a long-term partnership.

Report prepared by: Michelle Holmes, Manager of Visitor Experience, Rouge Park
For information contact: Michelle Holmes, Manager of Visitor Experience, Rouge Park
(905) 713-6021, email: michelle_holmes@rougepark.com

Date: September 7, 2011

6. Rouge Park Trails Master Plan Update & Rouge Park Alliance Workshop on October 21, 2011

KEY ISSUE

As the Rouge Park Trails Master Plan is nearing completion, the Rouge Park Alliance is invited to attend a workshop to review, comment and provide further direction on the plan on October 21, 2011.

MOTION: Moved by: Bill Rapley
Res. #40/11: Seconded by: Carolyn Woodland

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the report for the Rouge Park Trails Master Plan update.
..... **CARRIED**

BACKGROUND

Study Administration:

In autumn of 2009, a Trails 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 has been 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.

Trails Master Plan Goals:

There are 3 main objectives to the plan:

- Protect important natural heritage features
 - Protect existing natural heritage features and functions
 - Enhance habitat connectivity, diversity and function where possible
 - Avoid fragmentation
 - 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
 - Provide for a multi-use trail connection from the Waterfront to the Oak Ridges Moraine
 - Provide key linkages to connect neighbourhoods adjacent to Rouge Park
 - Provide a multi-modal trail network that maximizes accessibility and is integrated with public transit
- Respect and celebrate significant cultural and agricultural heritage resources
 - Capitalize on interpretive opportunities
 - 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.

Study Process:

The project has completed the first three phases of development:

- Phase One: Background Review
- Phase Two: Trail Concept, Design and Standards and Communications
- Phase Three: Draft Plan and Consultation

The fourth and final phase of the project is currently underway:

Phase Four: Review, Submission and Approval

To Date



- Determine and recommend the most appropriate phased approach to implementation
- Prepare detailed cost estimates for the implementation of the trail development plans
- Prepare trail 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

Next Steps:

A workshop will be held on October 21, 2011, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Main Boardroom, Toronto Zoo, 361A Old Finch Avenue, Scarborough. Alliance members will have an opportunity to review the Trails Master Plan in detail, examine a variety of maps, discuss feedback and outcomes from our three information sessions, and share comments. This workshop will be followed by a 60-day public and agency review period prior to the report being finalized. A final presentation of the Trails Master Plan will be presented to the Rouge Park Alliance in early 2012 for approval.

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: September 7, 2011

