



# Release

E-mail: [rougepark@rougepark.com](mailto:rougepark@rougepark.com)

Web: [www.rougepark.com](http://www.rougepark.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 April 2004

## Rouge Park receives major donation of land from Province

*Toronto* – Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, announced the Province of Ontario's donation of roughly 1400 hectares of land for Rouge Park purposes, an area six times the size of the Toronto Islands. These new lands contribute to Rouge Park's status as one of the largest natural environment parks in an urban setting in North America. The Greater Toronto Area's Rouge Park is approaching a size of 15 times that of New York City's Central Park, five times that of London, England's Hyde Park, or five times that of Toronto's Downsview Park.

Roughly 660 hectares are immediately adjacent to the Little Rouge River in York Region. Other parcels in Toronto and Pickering equal 770 hectares. The lands are a mix of rural agricultural and natural areas. Their important natural heritage values will help Rouge Park to provide a continuous ecological corridor, including a 600-metre wide band of interior forest habitats, stretching from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. Future public uses will include a network of hiking trails linking regional trail systems such as the Oak Ridges Trail and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail.

Human heritage values of the donated property include the remnants of a significant 300 year old Seneca village, now designated as a National Historic Site and a variety of historic homes and farmsteads. It is Rouge Park's intent to encourage ecologically sound, productive agricultural uses. Maintaining contact with the farming community to balance restoration work with its long-term goals will be key to maintaining the rural character of the area.

"This significant donation of land means that Rouge Park will protect and restore a large portion of the Little Rouge River, a significant tributary and one of the most ecologically healthy streams in the Greater Toronto Area," observed Ron Christie, Chair of the Rouge Park Alliance, the board of directors for the Park. "This is the largest addition of land since the Park was created nine years ago. We are very grateful to the Province of Ontario for this contribution, and we look forward to the possibility of additional public lands to strengthen Rouge Park's role in the GTA Greenbelt in the future."

Rouge Park will assess the lands along the Little Rouge River corridor north of Steeles Avenue to identify opportunities for ecological restoration to create a variety of habitat types, such as meadows, forests and wetlands. Net revenues from properties currently leased to residential and agricultural tenants will be used to fund restoration work and other Park programmes, including the creation of trail network over the longer term.

Rouge Park was established in 1995, after years of citizen support for the preservation of the Rouge River valley. Land and start-up funds from the Provincial and Federal governments along with on-going planning and management support from municipal governments, other public agencies and one not-for-profit group all contribute to Rouge Park's success as a partnership park.

-30-

**For more information, contact:**

Maryam Nassar

Manager, Interpretation and Communications

Rouge Park

office: 905.713.6007

cell: 647.298.6613

[maryam\\_nassar@rougepark.com](mailto:maryam_nassar@rougepark.com)