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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rouge Park Receives Exceptional Support from Province

MARKHAM - Rouge Park received a \$2 million commitment from the Ontario government today at a tree planting ceremony in Markham. The funds will be dedicated to projects that protect, enhance and restore Rouge Park, Canada's premiere urban wilderness park.

"The outstanding support from the Government of Ontario brings us closer to meeting our natural, cultural and agricultural heritage objectives," said Gord Weeden, Chair of Rouge Park's board of directors, the Rouge Park Alliance. "These funds will be dedicated to restoring lands and historical properties in the Park, increasing public awareness of the Park's assets, and providing an enjoyable and memorable experience for our visitors."

This funding will allow Rouge Park to maintain the quality of many of the historical properties within the Park, particularly in Bob Hunter Memorial Park. It will also be used to develop a management plan for the newly acquired lands in eastern Markham, a process which will encourage public input and consider the natural, cultural and agricultural needs of the area. This funding will also support initiatives that enhance the Park's visitor services.

The ceremony was held in Markham as York Region and Rouge Park celebrated a greening partnership to increase ecological restoration work in Rouge Park.

Rouge Park is home to a variety of landscapes: forests, meadows, wetlands, river valleys and upland areas, providing a major reservoir of biodiversity in the most urbanized portion of Ontario's Greenbelt. The only working farms in the City of Toronto are within the Park and a mosaic of essential ecological restoration and sustainable farming will be maintained over the long-term. Rouge Park is committed to protecting its historic heritage, which represents thousands of years of continuous human habitation.

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