



News Release

For Immediate Release

Communiqué

CP2014-00026

Harper Government Celebrates Historic Rouge National Urban Park Act

Canada's first urban national park, the Rouge National Urban Park in the Greater Toronto Area to offer unprecedented opportunities for Canadians to connect with nature

June 16, 2014 – Toronto, Ontario – Parks Canada

Dr. Colin Carrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and Member of Parliament for Oshawa, on behalf of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, celebrated the bill to formally establish Rouge National Urban Park in the Greater Toronto Area. Corneliu Chisu, MP for Pickering-Scarborough East, joined Parliamentary Secretary Carrie for the celebration.

With the tabling of this historic legislation, the Government of Canada continues to build on its record as a world leader in conservation. The creation of Canada's first urban national park directly supports the National Conservation Plan by providing 20% of Canada's population who live within one hour of the park the opportunity to connect with nature.

The *Rouge National Urban Park Act* will create Canada's first national urban park, unique among protected areas in Canada. The Rouge National Urban Park will be 16 times larger than Central park in New York, contains stricter environmental protections, and protects an important ecosystem in the heart of Canada's largest urban centre. The establishment of this park is just another example of the Government of Canada's commitment to conserve and restore our lands and waters and connect Canadians to our natural heritage.

The Rouge National Urban Park possesses an unparalleled combination of natural and cultural features, including more than 10,000 years of rich human history, countless species of flora and fauna, and a vibrant farming community. The park's urban context brings unprecedented accessibility for Canadians to learn about the park and all of Canada's protected heritage areas, which will be enhanced by multiple access points and a strong sense of arrival and welcome.

The park's existence is witness to years of vision and hard work by citizen organizations and governments. The new park's public profile, policy framework, and management approach will build on nearly three decades of park protection and betterment by governments, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers.

Quick Facts

- Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012 provided funding of \$143.7 million over 10 years, and \$7.6 million annually thereafter, to support the creation and operation of the national urban park.
- 20% of Canada's population lives within one hour of the Rouge.
- The Rouge is 16 times larger than Central Park in New York City.
- The Rouge is a biodiversity hotspot - approximately 1,700 species of plants, birds, fish, mammals, insects, amphibians and other species have been observed in the Rouge.

- Parks Canada has involved more than 100 provincial, municipal, Aboriginal and community stakeholders and received comments from nearly ten thousand Canadians excited and encouraged by the creation of Rouge National Urban Park.
- The creation of Rouge National Urban Park supports the Government's National Conservation Plan by connecting Canadians with nature, as well as through conservation and restoration activities.
- Since 2006, the Government of Canada has added an area nearly twice the size of Vancouver Island to the network of federal protected areas.
- In just the past month, the Government of Canada has announced Canada's National Conservation Plan, tabled legislation to create two national parks (Nááts'ihch'oh and Rouge), announced funding for 85 community conservation projects across the country, and announced the creation of Canada's first-ever mandatory national emission standards for major industries which will allow Canadians to enjoy cleaner air.

Quotes

"Our Government is proud to be part of the collaborative efforts and on the ground action that helped ensure that the Rouge becomes Canada's first national urban park. This legislation provides the highest level of protection in the history of the Greater Toronto Area and is a testament to our Government's strong commitment to conserving Canada's natural spaces and connecting Canadians to nature as highlighted in the National Conservation Plan."

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada

"This is an historic day. The tabling of legislation to create Rouge National Urban Park fulfils the Government of Canada's commitment to protecting the Rouge Valley and linking Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine. Located within close proximity of twenty percent of Canada's population, the creation of Rouge National Urban Park demonstrates our Government's strong commitment to connecting Canadian families to our treasured natural and cultural heritage. This legislation will ensure that people in the GTA and Durham Region will enjoy the beauty of Rouge Valley for many years to come."

Dr. Colin Carrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and Member of Parliament for Oshawa

"With the tabling of legislation to create Rouge National Urban Park, our Government has ensured the protection of the Rouge for present and future generations and will help Canadians connect with our country's rich natural, cultural and agricultural heritage. As Member of Parliament for Pickering-Scarborough East, I encourage all Canadians to visit the park and experience all it has to offer."

Corneliu Chisu, MP for Pickering-Scarborough East

Related Product

- Backgrounder: *Rouge National Urban Park Act*

Associated Links

- [Rouge National Urban Park Taking Shape with Strong Commitments from Governments of Canada and Ontario](#)
- [Harper Government announces funding for Rouge National Urban Park in the Greater Toronto Area](#)

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