

For Immediate Release

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NEW YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM COMES TO ONTARIO

TORONTO – Wildlands League, a chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), is pleased to announce the Ontario launch of **Get Outside**, a highly successful youth leadership program started in British Columbia for youth ages 14-18.

“Get Outside Ontario is a collaborative project that brings youth into nature,” says Janet Sumner, Executive Director for the group. “We are thrilled to give teens the opportunity to learn how to camp, to learn about local nature and to get to know what’s in their own backyard,” Sumner added.

Get Outside Ontario youth will experience nature with a 4-day camping excursion to Rouge Park in July. The Rouge is slated to become Canada’s first National Urban Park. Rouge Park protects a rare Carolinian forest of southern species such as Sugar Maple, White Ash, American Pine and many more types of trees. While enjoying Rouge Park teens might see a Dragon Mouth Orchid, Dwarf Mistletoe, Bloodroot Flower, an Egret, Green Heron or a Red Shouldered Hawk, a few of the more than 1,000 species of plants and animals, including 23 species at risk, that call the Rouge home.

Successful applicants will travel to Rouge Park for the *Get Outside Ontario Youth Summit*; a four day camping and nature experience; then return to their communities to lead their own initiative and a reunion in October.

To lead this project Wildlands League welcomes Elizabeth Brouwer as the *Get Outside Ontario Coordinator*. “When I first went camping in my teens, I never thought I would be able start a campfire or learn how to put a tent up. It was pretty cool to take away so many new skills on that first trip. I remember feeling really amazed and proud of the independence that I gained.” Brouwer added, “That was really when I first fell in love with nature. I’m so honoured to be a part of the *Get Outside Ontario* program and to help youth with their own experiences in nature.”

This opportunity is for youth from across Ontario and is made possible through the financial support of The Ontario Trillium Foundation an agency of the Government of Ontario and Mountain Equipment Co-op. See www.getoutsideontario.ca for more information.