



June 15, 2019

Flooding Won't Stop *Paddle the Rouge*

Connecting Kids to Nature in the Rouge

Toronto - Today, Wildlands League is celebrating the protection of nature in the city with its 6th Annual ***Paddle the Rouge***.

Paddle the Rouge is the conservation group's annual fundraiser and increases awareness for protection of a natural gem, Rouge National Urban Park, in the Greater Toronto Area. The group offers free Learn to Paddle lessons for youth. The free lessons are wildly popular and were all booked up a couple months ago.

"We have built docks, hired an old-style fire truck (for drinking water), booked the face painter and the musicians and turned flooding into the best form of fun you could have in a beautiful natural setting while also safeguarding nature," says Janet Sumner, Executive Director of Wildlands League. "The flooding also provides us with a great local entry point to talk about several of the consequences of a warming planet," says Sumner.

Wildlands League has made canoes and kayaks available for renting in the afternoon so people can explore the park by water and see the wetland up close. "It doesn't matter whether you live in an apartment building, condo or house, Rouge National Urban Park provides an extraordinary opportunity for children and all ages to connect to nature in their own backyards," Sumner added. By renting a boat, people can not only explore, see lily pads up close and perhaps even see a heron or hear a red winged blackbird but also support an excellent cause – nature protection by Wildlands League.

The event is part of Wildlands' overall philosophy to inspire the next generation of leaders who will be here not only for Rouge National Urban Park but for all of Canada's irreplaceable wilderness areas.

"And we'd like to also thank our incredible volunteers. Over 90 of them have turned out today and many of them are helping kids paddle for the first time and ensuring the safety of all on the Rouge," added Sumner.

Today is also a significant milestone in the story of the creation of Rouge National Urban Park. The announcement of the final parcel of land being turned over to Parks Canada is expected today. Rouge National Urban Park is located in the eastern Greater Toronto Area and houses much of the lower Rouge River watershed – one of the last flowing into western Lake Ontario to remain free of urban development. It also provides an ecological connection from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario, protects a rare Carolinian forest and is home to over 1700 species of plants and animals, including 27 species at risk.

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For more information:

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