

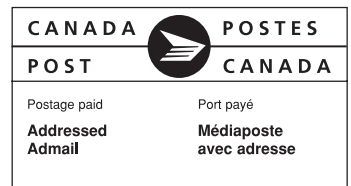
Love The Rouge

Rouge Park is located on the eastern boundary of the City of Toronto and houses much of the lower Rouge River watershed—one of the last in western Lake Ontario to remain free of urban development. It protects a rare Carolinian forest, is home to over 1,700 species of plants and animals, including 23 species at risk, and provides the only protected ecological connection for wildlife between the Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Ontario.

Rouge Park was slated to become part of Canada's first National Urban Park. However, the initiative stalled when the previous federal government failed to prioritize nature conservation in law. All is not lost. A commitment by the newly elected federal government to work with Ontario and to improve the legislation means we have a chance to get it right in the Rouge. The remarkable ecological values here deserve no less.



Photographer: Jacqueline C. Waters



Paddling The Rouge

This past June we held our 2nd annual Paddle the Rouge event, and this year we added a free instruction and paddle for youth. The goal - to help youth who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience nature in a fun and active way. For many this was their first try at paddling a canoe or kayak and they had a blast!



Photographer: Jacqueline C. Waters



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While some were initially nervous about getting out on the water, once they received instruction and spent some time on the water, they did not want to leave. After an hour and half, they returned to shore confident and full of joy. Wildlands League staff and volunteers were just as excited about the opportunity to share our experience, passion, and love of nature and paddling with them.

Here is some of what we heard...

"Jenn! Jenn! Can I try going in a kayak now?!?" Kevish, a first time paddler, who after canoeing for an hour and a half came back to shore and went right out again in a kayak with his brother.

"Thank you! I had so much fun learning to paddle! I had never been in a kayak before, so this was a really cool chance for me!" Angie

"That was so much fun! I can't wait to try it again!" - Giordano



Photographer: Jacqueline C. Waters

Standing up for species that don't have a voice

When Ontario's new Endangered Species Act was ushered in in 2007, we applauded it as the gold standard in North America. It's something we worked really hard on. Protecting endangered species and their habitat is part of our core mandate at CPAWS Wildlands League.

But things changed just six short years later. When a government turns its back on its own legislation and on its endangered and threatened species, is when you can count on CPAWS Wildlands League to jump into action. We won't allow the Ontario government to gut protections for species just to save a few bucks and to make life easier for business.



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Timeline:

May 2007	➡	New Endangered Species Act (ESA) passes.
March 2012	➡	Province introduces omnibus budget bill with crippling ESA amendments.
June 2012	➡	Following public outrage, amendments removed.
July 2013	➡	Province guts ESA with sweeping exemptions for major industries.
September 2013	➡	Wildlands League and Ontario Nature sue the government to defend ESA.
December 2013	➡	We file evidence including reports by scientific experts.
April 2014	➡	MNR lawyers cross-examine our experts.
Summer 2014	➡	Our lawyers submit written arguments to court.
January 2015	➡	Final hearing. Three judges hear the case.
May 2015	➡	Divisional Court upholds provincial regulation that exempts major industries from Endangered Species Act. Wildlands League and Ontario Nature consider options.
July 2015	➡	Our lawyers file a motion to seeking leave to appeal to Ontario Court of Appeal.
September 2015	➡	We win right to appeal.

Stay tuned for more updates from court!

Barn Owl

Fast Facts

By Dave Pearce

With its nocturnal habits, dark eyes, heart-shaped face and extraordinary range of unusual and creepy calls, the barn owl is likely responsible for a good number of scary stories associated with old and abandoned buildings. But the real story of the barn owl is only scary to those who value biodiversity. The barn owl is found on all continents except Australia. Although widespread, it is not abundant. It has been extirpated from Michigan and only 5 breeding pairs are known in Ontario.

The main threats to this owl are the loss of nesting sites coupled with a loss of grassland habitats. Originally nesting in hollow trees adjacent to grasslands, this adaptable species switched to barns and other buildings as European agriculture became the dominant land use in its Ontario range. Now, more intensive agriculture with modern, 'bird-proof' buildings and urbanization are forcing it from its last abodes. The good news is that it will nest in shelters constructed specifically for its needs. An owl box program, together with grassland preservation provides hope for this charismatic owl.

Some of the species at risk in Rouge Park include:

- Barn Owl
- Northern Bobwhite
- Bank Swallow
- Bobolink
- Eastern Meadow Lark
- Barn Swallow
- Blanding's Turtle
- Butternut



Paddle The Rouge!

It's official! CPAWS Wildlands League is proud to announce our 3rd annual Paddle the Rouge event. I know, we've kept our cards close for the last two years, but that was to work out the kinks! We will host the event in late **Spring 2016** and we'll be sending the date out in a couple of months so you can mark it in your calendar!

It's a FUN way to support our work and conservation. Get family and friends to sponsor your paddle. We have great prizes for top fundraisers! Does your company have a matching gift program? If they do, think about asking them to match the money you raise. Or perhaps they'd be interested in being a sponsor? We hope to see you in the spring for a really fun day!

Tweet #lovetherouge



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