**ROUGE NATIONAL PARK**

**Rouge National Urban Park** is a national urban park in Ontario,Canada. Most of the park is located in Toronto's suburban district of scarborough, while parts of the park are in the bordering cities of Markham and [Pickering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickering,_Ontario). A rich assembly of natural, cultural and agricultural landscapes, Rouge National Urban Park is home to over 1,700 species of plants and animals, some of the last operational farms in the [Greater Toronto Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Toronto_Area), rare [Carolinian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carolinian_forest) ecosystems, Toronto’s only campground, and human history dating back over 10,000 years, including some of Canada's oldest known Indigenous sites.

Since 2011, [Parks Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parks_Canada) has been working to nationalize and nearly double the size of the original Rouge Park. Parks Canada is planning to add more trails, education and orientation centres and improved signage and interpretive panels and displays throughout the park. Parks Canada introduced new educational programs to the park, including Learn-to-Camp, Learn-to-Hike, fire side chats, and other complimentary programming. Once fully established, the park will span 79.1 square kilometres (30.5 sq mi). Parks Canada currently manages or has a direct interest in 62.9 square kilometres (24.3 sq mi) of this area.

**History**

Water from glaciers melting 12,000 years ago formed ancestral Lake Ontario, which covered this entire area. A large ice lobe, roughly 20 metres thick, blocked the lake from draining eastward, leaving water levels high as the lake slowly drained south to what is now the Mississippi River. The ice lobe finally retreated, draining the lake to the St Lawrence River and forming the Great Lakes as we see them today. Glaciation occurred when average annual temperatures were only 2 - 5 °C lower than present. The small decrease to the former temperatures caused big changes to the landscape. Changes in average annual temperatures now may seem small, but they could cause major changes to the natural environment in the near future.

Outcrops of rock formed during the last glacial period found in Rouge National Urban Park are important to geologists studying seismic activity, in particular the risk of earthquakes in the GTA. Faults are visible indicating significant earthquake activity between 80,000 and 13,000 years ago.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouge_National_Urban_Park#cite_note-rougepark.com-3)

The human history of Rouge National Urban Park goes back over 10,000 years. Palaeolithic nomadic hunters, Iroquoian farmers, early European explorers, and the multicultural suburban population that one can see around the park today are all part of this history. Since humans began living in the area of the present Great Lakes-St Lawrence Lowlands in Ontario, many groups of people made the lands and waters now protected in Rouge Park their home. The river and its valleys, uplands, forests and wetlands, along with the animal and plant species that lived here, sustained small nomadic groups, and later on larger, permanent settlements long before the rapid urbanization of the 20th century altered the landscape dramatically.

Inspired by the scenery of the Rouge, F.H. Varley, one of the renowned Group of Seven painters, captured the banks of the Rouge River in Markham on canvas during the 1950s as a lasting memory of their beauty.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouge_National_Urban_Park#cite_note-rougepark.com-3) The location of one National Historic Event, and one National Historic Site is within the National Park: