

## THE OAK RIDGES MORaine AS BIRDS SEE IT

People or Planes founding member, Bill Lishman, who has been fighting to save the Federal Lands since 1972, has just launched his spectacular new book, *The Oak Ridges Moraine From Above*. This is a Moraine that few (Bill and birds aside) have ever seen –



Bill and his editor – Land Over Landings' vice-chair, Pat Valentine – at the launch of his book, on Earth Day, April 22

undulating, misty, wild, secret, plundered, recovering, lived and played on, loved. Flying “low and slow” in ultralights, Bill has captured stunning, haunting, sometimes disturbing, always unforgettable images of this place of diverse moods and faces, many achingly beautiful.

But as he said on launch day, this isn't “just a pretty picture book.” He starts each section

with a page or two of personal, informative text that is gently humorous and highly readable, but never fails to pack a punch and remind the reader that this marvellous Moraine is a vital resource that we must do everything in our power to preserve.

Visit [www.williamlishman.com](http://www.williamlishman.com) to purchase your own copy.

## ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK IS REAL!

On April 1, Transport Canada transferred 4,722 acres (19.1 km<sup>2</sup>) of Federal Lands, including Moraine land, to Parks Canada. Despite the date, this was no April Fool's joke! It did happen. And with the passage of Bill C-40 last week, **25% of the land expropriated in 1972 for an unneeded airport has been protected as farmland and natural habitat forever.** We know that Parks Canada will do the land and farmers proud. For those who live and/or work there, it's a better-than-expected ending to a long and dismal chapter.

Now we're concentrating on the 13,600 acres of Federal Lands that remain – a huge tract of Class 1 soil that could deliver health and economic benefits continuously, long-term, while attracting much ancillary business (farm services, food processing, local-food restaurants, fresh food markets). A destination for visitors from all over. And (how many times do we have to say this?) since there are more of us every day and we all need food and will always need

## INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING, JUNE 11

“Inaugural,” you ask? “Haven't you been around for at least a decade?” Yes we have – and POP for 33 years before us!” But we're incorporating so as to be able to seek funding for an in-depth study on the economic potential of agriculture on the Federal Lands. We already *know* there's no business case for an airport...

June 11 marks two years since Jim Flaherty's airport announcement – two

years of non-stop effort to get the federal government to do the right thing here.



More details in the next issue and soon on our website and FB page. Membership will be free, but attending and signing up for it will give you the right to vote when we elect our board. See you in June!

## SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In our January issue we introduced supporter Reid Williamson, an undergrad at U. of Waterloo. She has just completed her thesis on “The Proposed Pickering Airport: A Case Study for Youth Civic Engagement.” She researched what motivates youth to get involved in causes – what triggers and sustains involvement and what hinders it. And she has built a framework on which youth leaders and advocacy groups can base their mobilization efforts. She writes: “Children are the future, but we must not forget the necessity for their involvement in issues and decisions today.”

food – and we have the basic ingredients (good climate, best soil) *right here* to grow it in – why is it so hard to convince those few individuals with the power to effect positive change that making the most of a rare and finite resource (instead of destroying it) is worth doing? Most other people understand this with no trouble at all.

Climate change is already affecting food output in many parts of the world, including parts we've come to rely on. It's imperative that we protect our best farmland and use it wisely, to its full potential, for our own benefit and to help others. While politicians go on about jobs that might be created by some phantom industry possibly decades down the road, they never seem to consider food production an option or solution. Why is that?! Canada's food and agriculture sector is also big business and hugely important economically, offering real, varied, long-term jobs. As a food hub, North Pickering would be an ideal neighbour for our new National Urban Park, with myriad benefits all round. *Let's do this!!*

## YOU CAN HELP ONTARIO IMPROVE ITS GROWTH AND GREENBELT PLANS

Over 200 attended Monday's meeting in Ajax to participate in the co-ordinated review of the Greenbelt, Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, and Places to Grow acts. We showed we really care!

Land Over Landings was well represented, adding our support to sister organizations such as the Greenbelt Alliance and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine by calling for stronger Greenbelt protection to keep farmland and watersheds safe from urban and other development.

You can still have your say at meetings in Scarborough, Clarington, and Vaughan. Until May 28, you can also submit your comments online at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10886.aspx> Or send an e-mail, long or short, simple or chock-full of facts, to: [landuseplanningreview@ontario.ca](mailto:landuseplanningreview@ontario.ca).

The more of us who speak up, the more we will be heard over the voices of those who would weaken the Greenbelt and Moraine protections, especially developers who want to grow yet more houses on the best farmland in the province!

## LAWN SIGNS ARE SPROUTING!



We'd like to see them sprouting everywhere, now that winter is over. (It is over, isn't it??)

Just \$15 each, including hardware and wooden post. To order, call 905-649-2433.

## ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST

The 2015 Forum was inspiring (Pennsylvania's Dept. of Agriculture has now preserved 500,000 acres of farmland) and terrifying (ongoing extreme drought in California's food-producing San Joaquin Valley). The "take-away"? Not only must we preserve our farmland and water but we must do it *now!*

A panel, including LOL's chair, discussed "Tools for communicating the importance of farmland preservation." Heather Rigby's field art of the No Fly Zone symbol was shown as one way to transmit the message on a grand scale.

The second panel, on "Farming in the Park," included Mike Bender from Rouge Park, Pam Veinotte of Parks Canada, and Mike Whittamore of Whittamore Farms. Veinotte said the RNUP will emphasize "nature, culture, and agriculture," and talked of "welcome working farms" in the Park, and of aiming for, yes, 30-year leases! Whittamore noted the excellent relationship that has developed between the tenant farmers and Parks Canada, and recalled that the "Matriarch of the Rouge," Lois James, had "never said we should save farmland so we could plant trees on it."

### Food for Thought

No one is going to look back 50 years from now and say, "we protected too much green space and farm land."

~ Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner for the City of Toronto, April 7, 2015

### Land Over Landings

Because food is a **GROWING** concern!

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