

ROUGE NATIONAL PARK EVENT, JUNE 16

Since our baffling invite to the announcement of Bill C-40, the Act to create the Rouge National Urban Park, what had seemed terrific news at the time has become muddled, to say the least. In an ominous echo of the airport announcement of June 11, 2013, no invitations went out to those volunteers who had worked and fought so tirelessly for decades to have this important watershed protected in perpetuity.

Quick action by Land Over Landings ensured that Lois James, Jim Robb, and others were present and acknowledged. But why would the “saviour of the Rouge” and other Friends of the Rouge Watershed be made to feel as if they were “enemies” of the government? Could it be because the Act requires that the health of the Park’s ecosystem and wildlife merely be “taken into consideration” rather than protected? Groups such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) are now calling on the new Ontario Liberal Government to hold onto its portion of the land until stronger guarantees are put in place.



From left: Markham Ward 4 Councillor Carolina Moretti, and Friends of the Rouge Watershed members Gloria Boxen, Kevin O'Connor, Lois James, and Jim Robb.

It’s still worth noting that fully one-third of the Federal Lands and a large chunk of the Provincial Lands, both expropriated in 1972, are now a park. Without the actions of People or Planes 42 years ago, none of the lands would be there to protect. And without the actions of Lois James and others, there would be no Rouge Park. This Park is a monument to civil action and volunteerism over nearly half a century.

WHAT’S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?!

The Huffington Post reported in June (http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/06/16/canada-food-trade-deficit_n_5498907.html) that while Canada’s agriculture commodities are a booming business, we ship a whopping **60%** of our food abroad for processing before it finally makes its way to our grocery store shelves! This practice is leaving us with a \$6.8 billion deficit in food trade.

It also leaves us with a lot of questions. Food processing is, by value, the top manufacturing sector in our food-producing nation. Our governments claim to be on a tireless quest to create more jobs here. Yet food processing jobs keep on being lost to overseas suppliers. Why is that?

How can food be shipped elsewhere on the planet, be processed there, and be shipped back to us at less cost than if we processed it ourselves? How fresh and reliable is food sent abroad for processing before we can buy and eat it? What will we do if such outsourcing becomes economically (and ethically) unfeasible in a world that’s struggling to reduce CO₂ emissions in an attempt to reverse, or even just delay, climate change? What plans have our federal and provincial governments put in place to ensure Canadians’ food security into the future?

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

Stouffville Strawberry Festival

What a super way to showcase local food! Mother Nature agreed and delivered the perfect day for Stouffville's 30th Annual Strawberry Festival. Main Street and Park Drive were lined with booths of all kinds, the crowds kept pouring in, and by special invitation of parade organizer Justin Altmann, Land Over Landings was there in the big parade that kicked things off.



We had a great turn-out of volunteers to wear our t-shirts, carry our banners, and hand out hundreds of fliers celebrating locally grown strawberries and all the other foods that the Lands could and should be growing. Young people, young parents were particularly interested. They know that the future is theirs, and that *they* will benefit or suffer from the decisions we make today. What's more important for future generations? Fresh and reliable food or an airport and industrial park?

Our Song, "The Land," Is Now on YouTube!

In the past year, many people have offered to write songs for our cause. Harpin' Norm Lucien wrote one for us last summer. And now, Claremont's own singer-songwriter, Peter Byberg, has recorded the song he dedicated to Land Over Landings and performed at our open meeting in Claremont last October. We've made a video of it. The spectacular images of the Lands were contributed by members, and the video was created by our Volunteer Coordinator (and much more) Lexi Whalen. Thank you one and all. We hope all our supporters out there will love it as much as we do. Pass on the link to friends and family and ask them to do the same: <http://youtu.be/3L0fIub7Z2U>

**We don't need another airport, we don't need another way to fly
We want the crops to grow with sunlight to the sky
We all want the best for Mother Earth and we're dreamin' now in real time
So take your big box plans and build 'em where the sun don't shine...**

DON'T MISS "FARM TO TABLE"

Celebrating agriculture, sustainability, and the rural way of life, this multimedia exhibition is wowing kids and adults alike. A fascinating journey through Markham's agricultural history, it shows how farming equipment and operations evolved, how a farming area became urbanized, and how these changes significantly altered where our food now comes from (often great distances) and the type of food we eat.

Heather Rigby, artist and member of Land Over Landings, has a particularly thought-provoking installation at the exhibition.

To August 25 at the Markham Museum.
For more info, visit markhammuseum.ca
or call 905-294-4576.

Food for Thought

Mirabel airport could not have been built if the background papers had been made public at the time. [...] Pickering airport could never have been started if the public had known how the forecasts were compiled, how the site was chosen, and what the planners, consultants, and politicians were saying to each other in private papers.

~ Walter Stewart, Paper Juggernaut:
Big Government Gone Mad

Land Over Landings Because food is a GROWING concern!

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