

# 5

## *Achieving Park Objectives*

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The following sections are provided to guide the Rouge Park Alliance in the future refinements of the Rouge Park Stewardship and Partnership Programs. Since an approved Stewardship Program is currently underway, the Rouge Park Alliance may combine both programs with the objective of avoiding duplication and reducing administration costs.

### **5.1 ROUGE PARK PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

Lands which could potentially be identified with this designation include those situated along the river and tributary corridors with significant open space components. These lands are not held in public ownership, but are owned by school boards, public utilities, institutions, corporations and private landowners with large tract land holdings. This designation is also applied to tableland parks, community centres, libraries and other appropriate facilities proximate to Rouge Park North. Participation in the Partnership Program designation is at the discretion of the ownership body.

The Rouge Park Partnership Program was conceived as a means to achieve park objectives, within valleylands and on outside lands immediately adjacent or linked to, the defined Rouge Park North. The benefits of implementing the Rouge Park Partnership Program include:

- The provision of opportunities to accommodate objectives related to recreation, education and interpretation outside of sensitive river corridor areas, contributing to the ecological integrity of the river system while addressing community aspirations;
- An increase in the extent of land area within which park objectives can be achieved, including opportunities to increase forest cover, provide buffers, create and strengthen linkages and mitigate impact on the resources of the park;
- The opportunity to achieve park objectives on privately owned lands including valleylands; and
- The opportunity to intrinsically link Rouge Park to the day-to-day life of area residents, thereby encouraging ownership of the vision of Rouge Park and long-term participation in the stewardship of the resources of the Rouge River watershed. By positioning schools, parks, community centres and other similar facilities within the Rouge Park Partnership Program, a tangible link benefiting the community and Rouge Park will be forged.

Lands included within the Rouge Park Partnership Program will be managed by the landowner, in cooperation and partnership with the Rouge Park Alliance. This will achieve objectives related to public access, natural and cultural heritage, recreation and conservation.

Participation in the Rouge Park Partnership Program, as with the Rouge Park Stewardship Program, is voluntary. The Partnership Program was first envisioned to include schools, parks and other facilities in the public or semi-public realm. Based upon consultations with landowners and others throughout the course of the study, it was later recommended that participation in this program be expanded to include large corporate landowners, public utilities and individuals with significant land holdings throughout the watershed.

The Partnership Program differs from the Stewardship Program in that specific management objectives and programs will be set out for each specific Partnership Program area, requiring the pro-active participation of a project partner - for example, a school board. Participation in the Partnership Program requires a long-term commitment on the part of the landowner, as well as on the part of the Rouge Park Alliance. The Partnership Program is aimed at achieving the objectives of Rouge Park through collective or community-wide participation.



The following are candidates for inclusion in the Partnership Program:

- Municipal parks and open spaces, both active and passive, situated outside of the valley corridor on tablelands adjacent to or linked to the river and tributary corridors;
- Golf courses;
- Hydro corridors;
- Public and Separate School Board properties adjacent to or linked to the river and tributary corridors;
- Trans Canada Pipeline corridors;
- Community centres, libraries, museums and other public properties linked to the tributary and river corridors; and
- Corporations and large tract private landowners.

The lands within the Rouge Park Partnership Program provide an opportunity not only to achieve the core objectives of the Management Plan, but also to strengthen the integrity and diversity of Rouge Park by:

- Mitigating disturbance to sensitive areas within the valley corridors by accommodating the demand for active recreational use on adjacent appropriate tablelands and utilizing existing facilities;
- Providing opportunities to increase forest cover and terrestrial habitat opportunities and provide buffers adjacent to sensitive resources beyond the limits of Rouge Park North;

- Providing opportunities for education, interpretation and other social activities by including facilities to support these activities within the overall context of Rouge Park;

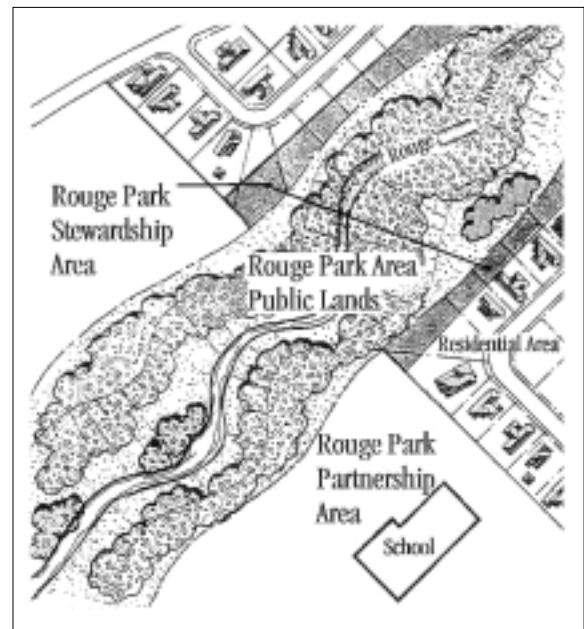


Figure 5.1: Rouge Park Partnership Program.

- Providing facilities to accommodate access, parking and servicing on lands outside the valley corridor, limiting disturbance to and fragmentation of the valley system;

- Providing for the separation and diffusion of competing uses within the park, including those related to trail use, carrying capacity and disturbance to sensitive habitats and natural and cultural features;

- Providing for the mitigation of impacts related to stormwater runoff, noise and exposure, by allowing for the implementation of stormwater management facilities and buffers on lands adjacent to and outside of the valley corridor;

- Providing opportunities to establish linkages between Rouge Park North and adjacent natural features, or to expand the width and diversity of existing corridors and linkages; and

- Strengthening the relationship between Rouge Park North and the community by creating a zone of transition, which allows for better integration in terms of both physical and social interface, between the community and Rouge Park.

The extent of the Rouge Park Partnership Program will depend upon the degree of participation by landowners and agencies. Figure 5.1 illustrates a number of sites with the potential to become involved in the Partnership Program. The success of the Partnership Program will be a product of the commitment of the Rouge Park Alliance to identify potential partners and solicit participation. The proposed framework for implementing the Partnership Program is described in the following section.

### 5.1.1 Framework for Implementation of the Partnership Program

Sites proximate to the Rouge River and its tributary corridors that have been included in the Rouge Park Partnership Program through agreements between the Rouge Park Alliance and the landowner, will be designated as Rouge Park Partnership Areas. The Partnership Program will be administered by the Rouge Park Alliance, which will be responsible for promotion and funding, and will oversee and monitor the program. To assist in the successful implementation of the program, the establishment of a Partnership Council is proposed. The Partnership Council is envisioned as a largely volunteer committee, directed by a coordinator and supported by a Technical Advisory Committee. The roles and responsibilities of these various members of the Partnership Council are provided below.

- Program Coordinator** - The responsibilities of this individual will include overseeing all aspects of the Partnership Program, including funding, promotion, orchestration of the Partnership Council and the Technical Advisory Committee, administration of agreements with landowners, maintenance of a database of participants and monitoring the success of the program. In the initial years of the implementation of the Partnership Program, the extent of the responsibilities of the program coordinator will likely be a full time commitment. However, once the program has become established and long-term agreements with partners have been executed, the coordinator's required time commitment will be reduced significantly, potentially to a part-time or occasional status. Alternatively, the Stewardship Program Coordinator could administer the Partnership Program, as a means to reduce costs.

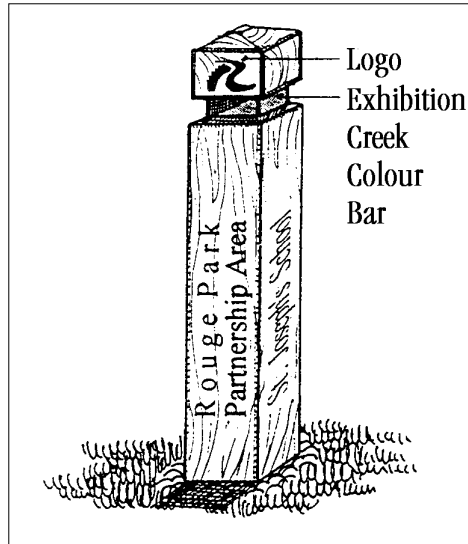


Figure 5.3: Rouge Park Partnership Program Monument.

- Partnership Council Members** - Membership in the Partnership Council will be voluntary. Council members will be responsible for promotion, identifying potential partners, negotiating partnership agreements, erecting recognition signage, undertaking restoration projects or property improvements on Partnership Areas and undertaking fund-raising initiatives. The program coordinator will determine the size of the council which, in the initial stages of the program, will likely consist of a larger body in order to fulfil the requirements of the program.
- Technical Advisory Committee** - To assist council members, the program coordinator and potential partners will form a Technical Advisory Committee which will aid in the identification of opportunities, the formulation of programs and the design of restoration and management initiatives on Partnership Areas. The Technical Advisory Committee is envisioned to be comprised of persons with specific expertise related to:

  - Environmental education and curricula;
  - Site restoration, including design, implementation and maintenance;

- Stormwater management;
- Recreation and programming facilities;
- Trail design;
- Public safety and security; and
- Habitat enhancement.

The Technical Advisory Committee is proposed as a roster of specialists available to provide advice to the council and the partners rather than a sitting committee. It will identify opportunities to implement educational and recreational programs or undertake site works to maximize the benefit to the park, the landowner and the community. Ideally, the Technical Advisory Committee would include representation from the school boards, utilities and municipalities, as well as the community at large.

Funding may be required to support the Technical Advisory Committee to facilitate the preparation of restoration plans, landscape plans and educational programs for Partnership Areas. These plans and programs possess the potential to assist the Rouge Park Alliance in achieving natural and cultural heritage objectives.

Offering various incentives to landowners will encourage participation in the Partnership Program. These include:

- **Recognition Signage**

Rouge Park Partnership Areas will be identified by signage erected at the Partnership Program site. Signage will recognize the partner's name and also identify the objectives achieved through their participation in the Partnership Program. For example, text on signage at school sites may state, "Partners in Education", while signage at municipal parks focused on active recreation may include "Partners in Recreation". In addition to the main signage at the Partnership Area site, monuments will be installed around the perimeter of the lands included in the partnership agreement. These monuments will define the limits of the Partnership Area and deter public use of lands outside of the Partnership Program boundaries.

- **In-Kind Assistance**

The Partnership Council could offer prospective partners in-kind assistance to implement programs or projects on their property. Examples include:

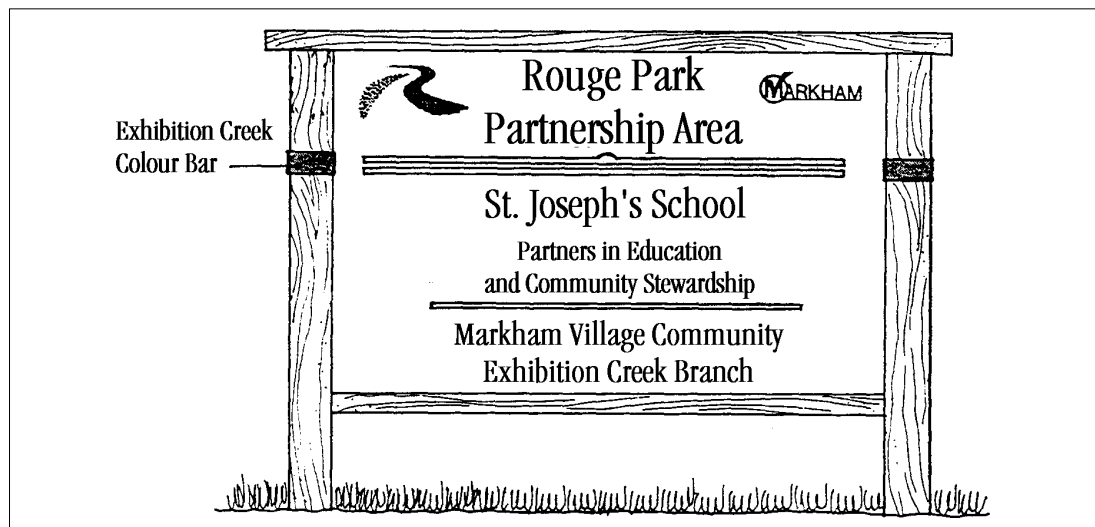


Figure 5.4: Rouge Park Partnership Program Recognition Sign Detail.

- Assisting schools to develop environmental education curricula;
- Assisting in the design of restoration projects, or outdoor education or recreational facilities;
- Assisting in the construction of restoration, education or recreation projects; and
- Assisting in the maintenance and/or management of restoration projects.

The commitment of in-kind assistance to any particular prospective Partnership Area will have to be determined by the Partnership Council based upon an evaluation of the following:

- The location of the site;
- The duration of the partnership agreement;
- The degree to which park objectives can be achieved;
- The site of the Partnership Area;
- The context of the site within Rouge Park North related to compatibility of use, ecological sensitivity, linkage and interface with the community; and
- Landowner contribution.

To be successful, the incentive program will require long-term funding support to provide in-kind assistance to landowners participating in the Partnership Program.

In all cases, participation in the Partnership Program will require the execution of an agreement between the landowner and the Rouge Park Alliance. The agreement will define the lands to be designated as a Partnership Area and will stipulate the responsibilities and obligations of each partner. Generally, the agreement should define the following:

- Land ownership;
- The limits and legal description of the lands to be included in the Partnership Area;
- The duration of the agreement;
- The provision for, and conditions of amendment and renewal;
- Objectives to be achieved;
- The incentives to be offered to the landowner;
- Permission for, and conditions of public use for park purposes; and
- Responsibilities and obligations of the partners related to maintenance, management, insurance, liability and funding.

The Partnership Program should be implemented with an emphasis on achieving long-term commitments with landowners to effectively expand the area of land dedicated to achieving the natural and cultural resource objectives of the Management Plan.

The Rouge Park Partnership Program is an effective tool to expand the area of land dedicated to achieving natural and cultural objectives while complementing publicly owned lands bearing the Rouge Park North designation.

## 5.2 ROUGE PARK STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Since a large percentage of the lands situated along the river corridors are held in private ownership, the successful implementation of initiatives aimed at achieving park objectives will be directly determined by the ability to implement an effective, extensive, long-term stewardship program. The Rouge Park Stewardship Program is aimed at involving private landowners, including owners of residential, agricultural and commercial properties ranging in size from individual rear yards to large tracts, in the protection and enhancement of the ecosystem of the Rouge Park.

The configuration and extent of the Rouge Park Stewardship Area will be determined by the degree of landowner participation in the Stewardship Program. Consequently, the Stewardship Program Area is flexible, expanding to

include all lands on which stewardship initiatives are being undertaken. The Stewardship Program Area was conceived in order to achieve the following five key objectives:

- To encourage public awareness of, and participation in, the establishment and stewardship of Rouge Park;
- To facilitate the preservation of existing natural and cultural resources and the restoration of degraded areas on private lands;
- To encourage a sense of individual and community ownership of the park, and consequently, an interest in the health and sustainability of the Rouge Park ecosystem;
- To facilitate the creation of a connected, continuous, natural and cultural heritage system, encompassing both public and private lands in the short term, which will lay the foundation for the long-term realization of Rouge Park, extending from Steeles Avenue to the Oak Ridges Moraine; and
- To facilitate the establishment of a significant zone of resource management and protection along the length of the river corridors. Where development has already occurred and the limits of the valley corridor are finite, the Stewardship Program can encourage the appropriate management of adjacent lands to mitigate the impacts of erosion, runoff and pollution while increasing the extent of canopy cover and the diversity of vegetation communities.

The successful implementation of the Rouge Park Stewardship Program is critical to the initial and long-term success of the Rouge North Management Plan, as a consequence of the large percentage of privately owned lands within the study area.

Although it will be a priority in the initial stages of implementing the Stewardship Program to focus primarily on private lands situated along or adjacent to the river and tributary corridor, the overall goal is to implement the Stewardship Program on a watershed-wide basis. This will extend the program beyond the limits of the

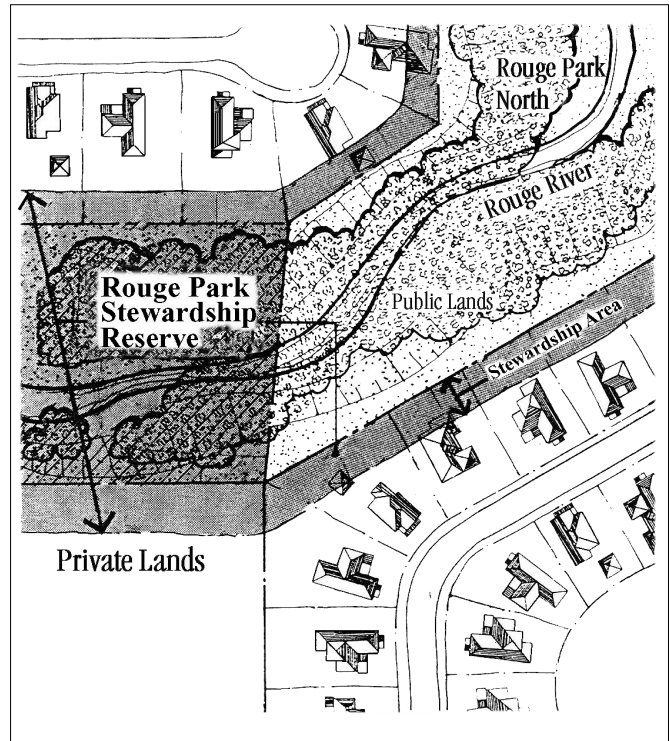


Figure 5.5: Rouge Park Stewardship Program Schematic.

Rouge Park North Study Area to include all lands within the watershed, as well as Rouge Park south of Steeles Avenue. To achieve this goal, the Stewardship Program must be a coordinated effort, which encompasses the municipalities of Markham, Richmond Hill, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Scarborough and Pickering, and the Regional Municipalities of York, Durham and Toronto, and must involve various landowner groups from across the watershed. The Rouge Park has initiated the Stewardship Program in accordance with the recommendation of the Management Plan.

### ***5.2.1 Fundamental Elements of the Stewardship Program***

The Stewardship Subcommittee of the Public Advisory Committee set out the basic framework for the Stewardship Program. A number of key considerations determined fundamental to the success of the proposed Stewardship Program were identified by the Stewardship Subcommittee. These include the following:

- The Stewardship Program must recognize the existing efforts and contributions of landowners that have, outside of any formal stewardship initiative, contributed to the health of the Rouge River system.
- The Stewardship Program must be founded on a recognition of, and a respect for, the rights and privacy of landowners.
- The Stewardship Program must be a single, coordinated effort emphasizing clear communication.
- The body responsible for implementing the Stewardship Program should include representatives of various landowner groups, including those from the agricultural community and private residential landowners. In addition, these representatives should be encouraged by the body to communicate with landowners with similar interests, issues and concerns.
- The Stewardship Program should employ various types of incentives to encourage participation and recognize landowner contributions.
- The Stewardship Program should provide an opportunity for landowners to discover and share information about stewardship and restoration initiatives, as well as affording landowners the opportunity to learn about specific techniques and visit project sites.
- The Stewardship Program should build on the efforts of, and the information available from, existing landowner groups and restoration programs, including the York Region Federation of Agriculture's Conservation Program and Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.'s Little Rouge River Restoration Project.
- The Stewardship Program must be a separate initiative from any program aimed at encouraging public access to privately owned lands.
- The nomenclature associated with the Stewardship Program must be carefully considered to discourage the perception that lands involved in the Stewardship Program are in any way 'public' lands.

The Stewardship Program for Rouge Park was initiated with these fundamental elements as its basis. The framework for the Stewardship Program is provided in the Background Technical Appendix.

Public education and clear communication with landowners, combined with a program of incentives to encourage participation, are essential for the successful implementation of the Rouge Park Stewardship Program. Incentives can range from recognition to cash compensation, with the level of incentive determined by the contribution and commitment of the landowner. A discussion of the range of potential incentives is provided below.

- **Recognition and Honorariums**

Within this type of program, landowners, community groups or corporations participating in the Stewardship Program would be recognized for their contributions to Rouge Park. All properties within the Stewardship Area would be identified with signage. Recognition could be provided in the form of certificates or awards, an honour roll or a ceremony. In addition, since recognition programs are more effective at a community scale, a signage structure could be erected within Rouge Park. Installation of signage proximate to each community, on which the names of participants and a description of the nature of their participation in the Stewardship Program are inscribed, would also help to strengthen the identity of Rouge Park within the community. This level of incentive is most appropriate for small-scale stewardship initiatives.

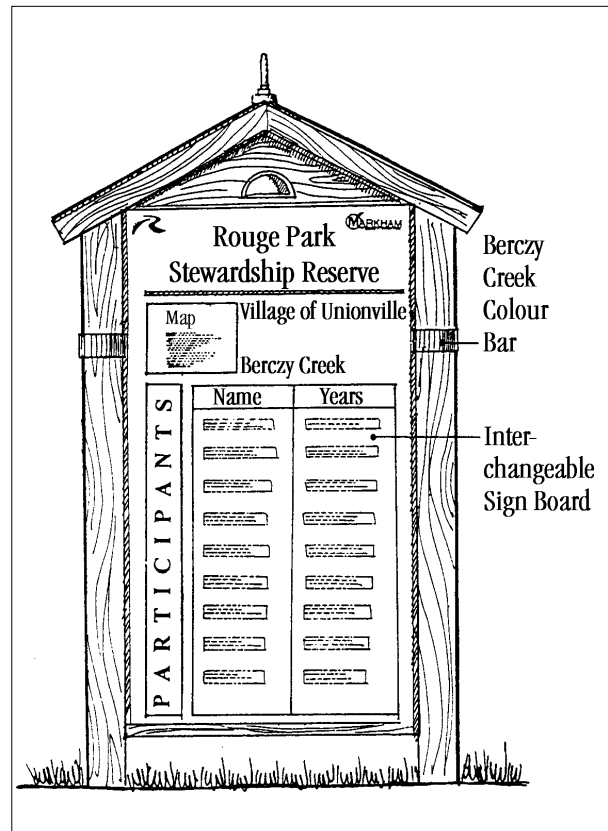


Figure 5.6: Rouge Park Stewardship Program Recognition Signage.

- **In-Kind Compensation**

Within this incentive program, restoration or erosion protection works would be undertaken on private lands, to the benefit of both the landowner and the sustainability of the Rouge River watershed, in return for long-term environmental enhancement. Examples include the erection of fencing to prohibit livestock access to the river, tree planting or bank stabilization. This incentive program would require landowners to enter into a legal agreement with the Rouge Park Alliance. Agreements would have to be drafted on a case-by-case basis for each potential site and the extent of stewardship requirements would be determined by the cost of the restoration works. The 'Little Rouge River Restoration Project' provides a model for this type of incentive program.

- **Cash Incentives**

Under this type of program, cash incentives would be offered in compensation for easements, stewardship leases or management agreements. The criteria for determining participation in a cash incentive program, as well as the logistics of financing such a program, are key issues to be addressed in the development of the Stewardship Program. A cash incentive program would require the landowner to enter into a legal agreement with the Rouge Park Alliance.

- **Tax Rebates**

A tax rebate based incentive program would be aimed at achieving long-term agreements with private landowners, with an emphasis on attaining easements over valleylands to allow for ecological restoration initiatives. This type of program would be concentrated primarily on larger tracts of land in private ownership, and would involve the execution of a legal agreement with predetermined conditions. The logistics of implementation would include the negotiation of the limits of the Stewardship Program Area, an assessment of the value of the property, the re-designation of the land



use and the definition of the conditions of easement or future use within the dedicated Stewardship Program Area.

The logistics and feasibility of a tax rebate program are difficult to determine at this time, since many of the existing applicable programs are currently being re-structured or reviewed. There are however, two viable approaches to implementing a program of this type. The first approach is to establish a new program, administered by the Rouge Park Alliance and established in cooperation with the province and the municipalities. The second approach is to utilize an existing program, modified appropriately to accommodate the Rouge Park initiative. For example, the Ministry of Natural Resources' Conservation Land Tax Rebate Program could be modified to accommodate the Rouge Park Stewardship Program in a manner similar to the way it addresses the Niagara Escarpment Natural Zones.

The logistical, administrative and legislative requirements for implementing each of the above options will require exploration once the basic approach to each program has been endorsed and the potential role of each partner agency in the implementation of these programs has been determined.

In addition to the incentive program, the success of the Stewardship Program will be a product of a successful communication program. The purpose of the communication program will be twofold: first, to encourage landowner participation in the Stewardship Program; and second, as a means of promotion to encourage sponsorships, volunteer contributions and fund-raising. At a minimum, the communication program should include the distribution of a quarterly newsletter. The Stewardship Subcommittee of the Public Advisory Committee (PAC), identified word of mouth promotion as one of the most important means of promotion in the rural area. Stewardship Program Area signage and the recognition program should be developed with an emphasis on raising the prominence and profile of the program within the community.



The immediate initiation of the Rouge Park Stewardship Program is a priority in the realization of Rouge Park North. In recognition, the Rouge Park has begun to successfully implement the Stewardship Program.

*Dedication of the Little Rouge Creek Corridor to Rouge Park.  
Source: Rouge Park (1999)*