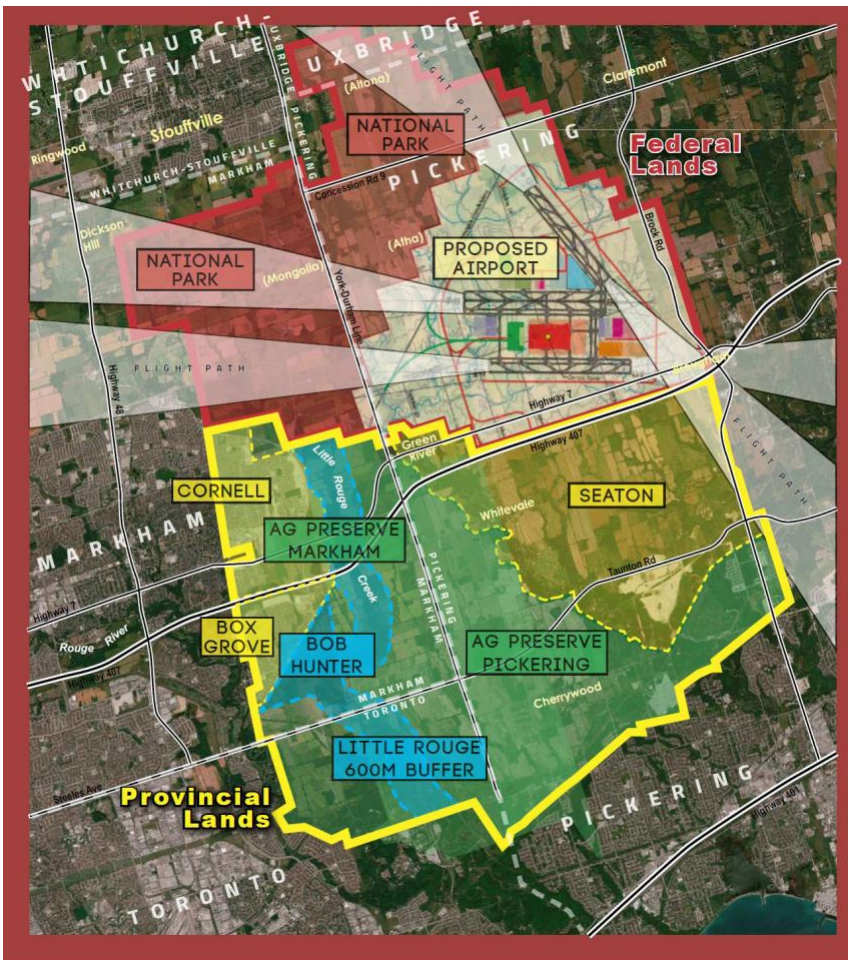


Newsletter January 2024

Our newsletter gets compiled when there is something to say. There are a few great things we'd like you know about.

Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve: Bill 136 (the "Greenbelt Statue Law Amendment Act") received Royal Assent on December 6, 2023. Passage of this Act reinstated the agricultural easements in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve exactly one year to the day from their removal in 2022. Municipal clerks including the City of Pickering, were sent a letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated December 20, 2023 which states:

"By reinstating the protections provided by the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve easements and covenants, the Ontario government recognizes the importance of this agricultural land and ensuring its sustainable use for present and future generations."



GDA recommended that the easements be held not by City of Pickering but by another body such as Rouge National Urban Park. The legislation passed in December does not include our recommendation but we'll take this option for now! We continue to monitor the situation. There are tremendous pressures on these lands which we expect will continue.

During our intense efforts to protect these agricultural lands from development last year, we came across this map which might interest you. It shows what happened to the lands which were expropriated by the federal and provincial governments back in the 1970's .

(Credit: Expropriated lands map; D. Tuley/On The Road Again, Vol.2 #3 (official monthly for Whitchurch Stouffville)

Parking near the trails: If you are a GDA member you are entitled to use a code which exempts you from paying the parking charges near the trails in the south part of Uxbridge Township. This exemption recognizes the strong partnership and support given by GDA to the Township and other partners. This year's code is **GREEN2024** and is effective up to December 31st.

You may recall that GDA has been subsidizing the TRCA's mowing budget for a number of years. The funds helped them keep the trails in a better state than they could otherwise manage. These mowing costs are now being supported by the parking charges.

Chainsaw safety training: GDA will sponsor another one-day chainsaw training course this fall. We are partnering with Uxbridge Township and Ontario Parks to deliver this great course. As in the past, GDA will cover the registration costs for anyone who wishes to take this practical one day course. In exchange, your name will be added to list of trained chainsaw volunteers who help keep the trails clear of fallen trees. Stay tuned for the date, and the course will be held locally on October 7. Get in touch if you are interested and we'll hold a spot for you.

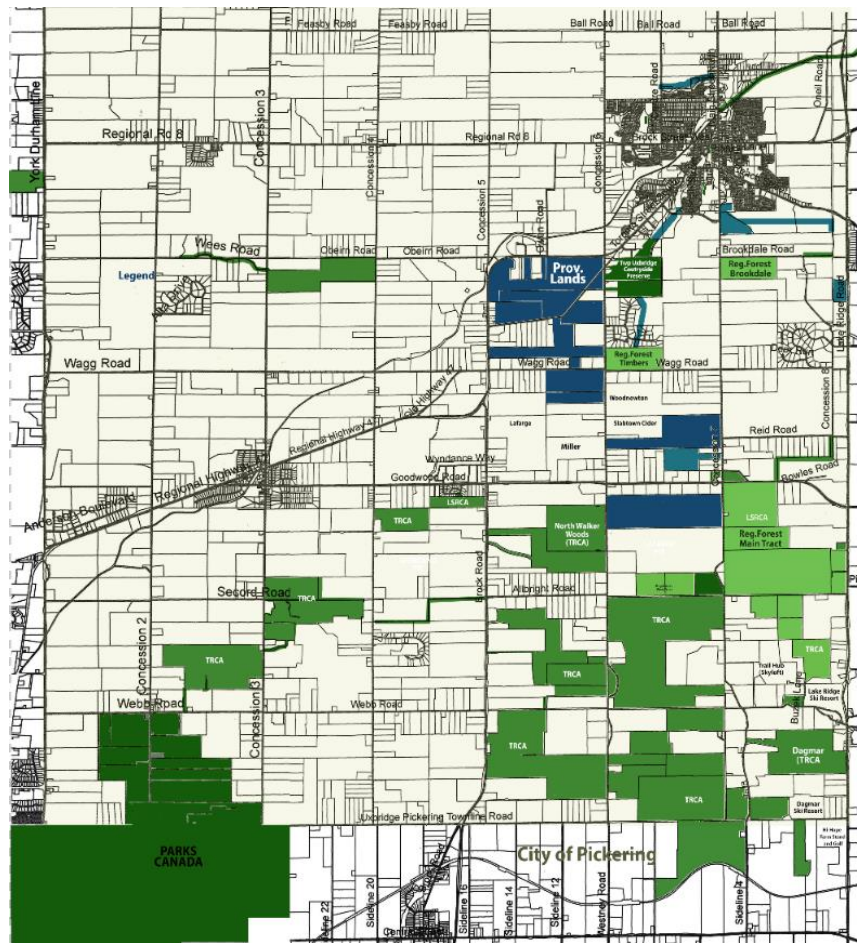
Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park: It's been a whirlwind since the Park was announced last year. GDA is part of the planning committee along with partners from Nature Conservancy, Schad Foundation, Region of Durham, Township of Uxbridge, TRCA, LSRCA, and Ontario Parks.

These partners have been meeting every 2 weeks since that momentous rainy day last April, and twice so far for all-day face to face meetings. The pace is ambitious, the mood is high, and it is a privilege to be playing a central role in this legacy project.

The Park is to be made up of individual parcels of lands, starting with six provincially owned parcels, totalling 532 hectares (1,315 acres). The map to the right shows those lands in blue; you might recognize them as what we called the "Tannenbaum lands" at every AGM for two decades.

The ministry is also looking for opportunities to add publicly or privately owned lands, in and around the Uxbridge area to expand the park in the future (within the study area). This map shows some of those potential lands in various shades of green. GDA is leading the land acquisition team, recommending and securing key links to improve connections between the various parcels of land and create a strong link to the Rouge National Urban Park (darker green, lower right in map above). We are implementing the vision first developed in 2002 in partnership with several organizations and presented by then-Mayor GerriLynn O'Connor to the public for feedback.

You can follow the progress of the birth and development of this new Park by visiting this website from time to time for updates: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/proposal-create-uxbridge-urban-provincial-park>



Recognizing some of our members: A special topics course this winter in the Rural Planning and Development program at the University of Guelph is exploring agricultural land preservation. The purpose and anticipated outcome of the course will be a framework that municipalities can adopt to develop local agricultural preserves. A case study in this course will be the history, creation, strengths, and challenges of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve. Brian Buckles and Ian Attridge, the lawyer who acted for GDA years ago in getting the easements in place, have been invited as guest speakers. Their intimate knowledge of DRAP's creation will enhance students' learning and contribute to the development of a practical framework for creating agricultural preserves.

You likely know that Susan Fleming serves on GDA's board of directors. Susan is also a talented and award-winning documentary filmmaker. Her latest film will screen on the CBC on February 1st.



**PLEASE TUNE IN TO SEE
THE FASCINATING STORY
OF THE FIRST RIVER IN
CANADA TO GAIN LEGAL
PERSONHOOD.**

**PREMIERES ON CBC "THE
NATURE OF THINGS"
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 1st
at 9PM LOCAL TIME (9:30 NT)
and on CBC GEM!**

Produced by 1000244925 Ontario Inc. & Terre Innue Productions Inc. in association with the CBC/Télé-Québec/ARTE/ZDF with the participation of Canada Media Fund, Rogers Documentary Fund, Rogers Telefund, SODEC, Ontario Creates and the Canadian Film & Television Tax Credit. ©2024

The darkest day of the winter season has passed and the days are getting longer.

We thank you for your support – your words of encouragement and your donations of time and of money keep us forging ahead. Here's to 2024!