The Rouge Uncovered: Community Participation, Urban Agriculture and Power Dynamics in the Creation of Canada’s first National Urban Park

by

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Abstract

Local food production has been a defining goal of a healthy and resilient food system. In 2011 the Canadian government and Parks Canada committed to creating Canada’s first national urban park. The space in which land is used to undertake conservation efforts and develop sustainable farming is often associated with inequalities of larger society; whereby hegemonic practices of inclusion and exclusion are produced and/or reinforced. By employing an Environmental Justice framework this thesis investigates if and how small-scale farmers and community members have been included in the creation of the park, and how power, particularly in relation to the axis of difference, influences green space planning, local farming and sustainability in the Greater Toronto Area. Findings show extreme contention between farmers and environmentalists over productive parkland use and definitions of ecological integrity. This research also discloses the need for a more inclusive approach to community participation processes in green space planning and management.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The City Beautiful movement, which began in the 1890s, recognizes landscape initiatives that bring nature into cities (Heynen, 2003: 983). Frederick Law Olmsted, heralded designer of New York City’s Central Park, was driven by a strong urgency to improve the quality of life within urban areas that were “increasingly taking on dreary, unnatural, industrial forms” (ibid). Dated back to 1895, his writings assert,

Cities are now grown so great that hours are consumed in gaining the “country,” and, when the fields are reached, entrance is forbidden. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to acquire, for the free use and enjoyment of all, such neighboring fields, woods, pond-sides, river banks, valleys or hills as may present, or may be made to present, fine scenery of one type or another (Olmsted, 1895: 253 in Heynen, 2003: 983).

Now, one hundred and sixteen years later, Canada has announced the creation of Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) in the densely populated city of Toronto. Designing and creating green spaces in the anticipation of bringing nature into the city, Heynen argues, causes political and social unevenness. This transpires through the displacement of marginalized urban communities along with elite conceptions of who is an included member of urban society (Heynen, 2003: 984).

Debates regarding environmental issues are often permeated with tensions arising from centuries of colonial exploitation, racial and economic inequalities and various forms of inclusion and exclusion. In 2011, the Canadian government and Parks Canada committed to creating Canada’s first national urban park in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Geographic research on parks has been wide-ranging but there is a paucity of literature on the significance of urban agriculture in
the heart of a national park, specifically in the Canadian context. Parks have been idealized as salubrious places, which have the potential to foster active lifestyles (e.g. hiking), and increase the health and well being of urban populations by forming human-landscape interactions (Byrne et al., 2009). Cities are becoming increasingly congested and polluted (Wolch et al., 2014), and as a result urban populations resort to green spaces for interactions with nature that combat stress and increase livability.

From their inception, national parks have been marred by acts of social exclusion and uneven urban structures. Internationally, researchers have shown the extent to which green space is inequitably distributed and deeply rooted in past histories of racial oppression and discriminatory acts (Byrne et al., 2009: 365; Wolch et al., 2005). By using the RNUP as a case study, this research draws upon the environmental justice paradigm to explore how the creation of national urban parks are sites of reinforced political and social inequalities, and to see if and how Parks Canada is developing a healthy, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community.

In Ontario, as the population continues to grow, the protection of agricultural land – and the development of sustainable farming practices – is increasingly important. According to the RNUP management plan, the national urban park status offers more than just the reassurance of permanency for Ontario’s farming community; it allows park visitors to reconnect with farms and farmers, and provides opportunities to showcase new ways of farming that are effective and rewarding for the community (Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, 2014). A main focus, as outlined by the management plan, is to provide a sustainable and healthy community for Canadians through locally based food production and an inclusive planning process (2014). The objectives of this study are to provide a systematic understanding of issues related to agricultural production and community participation in the planning processes of national urban
parks. Examining all characteristics and inequalities of urban green space is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, this research seeks to add to the growing literature on environmental and urban agriculture discourses within green spaces, in a Canadian context. The creation of Canada’s first national urban park will serve as a model for future parks of its kind, and for planners to work towards more inclusive planning strategies.

1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study on Canada’s first national urban park were threefold:

- To investigate if and how small-scale farmers and community members were being included in the development of the park.

- To examine the effects of power dynamics in environmental governance, land stewardship and the creation of this park on individuals and the community.

- To explore the limitations and biases in government policies and patterns by scrutinizing the criteria used to create the National Urban Park.

The common purpose of these objectives was to look at urban food development and planning practices in Canada. In order to fulfill these objectives, qualitative research methods and theory triangulation were employed. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with park planners, Parks Canada, environmental organizations and community members. Also, textual analysis of the RNUP park concept, draft management plan, media sources and government documents was completed. Finally, field notes taken at participant observation sites (i.e. public meetings, events, forums) were used as supplementary data. In meeting those objectives, this thesis project has the potential to inform the policies and practices of planners when dealing with
agriculture, nature and community engagement. This thesis also seeks to add to the growing literature on green space planning practices in Canada, but specifically on the RNUP. By highlighting emerging themes from interviews and documents, planners can use this information as the RNUP continues to expand.

1.2 Outline of Thesis

The following chapter (Chapter Two) provides a review of literature, which relates to green space planning and agricultural production. As such, it provides an overview of environmental justice, which is a framework employed for the purpose of this research. It then focuses on the environmental governance of national parks and how parks are seen as sites that reinforce white imaginaries. This section then goes on to examine pre-existing literature on agricultural production, race and the rural imaginary in Canada. Finally, it looks at urban planning practices by highlighting green space planning, food systems planning and community participation in planning processes.

Chapter Three provides a better understanding of the RNUP by providing a brief summary of its history, and a description of the environmental organizations that have been heavily involved in the process. The last section explains the significance of farmlands within park boundaries.

Chapter Four goes on to outline the methods that were used for this thesis project and the rationale for choosing qualitative methods and theory triangulation. It also provides a description of how participants were chosen and how data was collected.

Chapter Five presents the research findings by highlighting themes that emerged from the research. This chapter includes an analysis of the interviews, documents and information gathered from observation sites.

Finally, Chapter Six summarizes how the findings of this study fulfill the research objectives and
provides a brief discussion on the emerging themes and tensions from research findings and from conducting this research. It concludes with a section on future suggestions for research.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Framing Environmental Justice in Urban Development

Environmental Justice (EJ) has been defined as a political movement, which merges environmental concerns with social justice issues such as race, class, gender and ethnicity (Teelucksingh et al., 2016; Byrne et al., 2009; Teelucksingh & Masuda, 2014). In doing so, it seeks to understand how marginalized people disproportionately experience environmental and social justice issues (Teelucksingh, 2002) and attempts to ameliorate incidents of such inequity (Bryne et al., 2009). EJ was established in the United States as a research paradigm, social movement and policy reform (Teelucksingh, 2002). Many scholars and academics have moved towards employing an EJ framework in recent years due in part to the inequitable structure found in environmental governance and community development. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), EJ is:

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies . . . achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work. (U.S. EPA, 2000 in Deacon et al., 2015: 421)

While EJ first immerged in the United States, it has been a point of reference for scholars in both the United States and Canada. However, there is a paucity of literature on EJ in the Canadian context (notable exceptions include Haluza-Delay, 2007; Teelucksingh, 2002; Deacon et al., 2015; Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2012; Teelucksingh et al., 2012). It is clear that American EJ research has played a major role in helping to create a foundation for the movement (e.g. themes, methodologies), which unites a range of local initiatives and grassroots conceptual approaches in
seeking to ameliorate environmental injustices (Teelucksingh, 2002). Scholars have argued that American EJ research is not always suitable for employing an EJ framework within a Canadian context (Haluza-Delay, 2007). That is because Canadian environmental concerns vary and Canada has different racial history, discourses and dynamics (Haluza-Delay, 2007: 559). There is a significant body of work discussing EJ in the United States, but the extent to which environmental justice is used in the Canadian context is still unclear (Haluza-Delay, 2007). Thus, the challenge for Canadian EJ researchers is to incorporate the core themes and objectives of EJ without solely relying on American literature and examples, to determine how it can effectively make a difference in Canada (Teelucksingh, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 2007; Jerrett et al., 2001).

According to Pellow (2000), many researchers use the terms environmental justice and environmental racism interchangeably without clearly defining the distinction between the two terms (Pellow, 2000: 581). In his article Environmental Inequality Formation – Toward a Theory of Environmental Injustice, Pellow argues that the main distinction is that environmental racism is based on problem identification while environmental justice is based on problem solving (2000). However, the purpose of Pellow’s article is to emphasize the importance of environmental inequality, a term that is used less frequently in environmental justice literature. Pellow argues that environmental research literature needs to move towards a deeper understanding of environmental inequality in order to understand the unequal distribution of power and resources in society as they link to environmental concerns (Pellow, 2000: 582-583). To address this, Pellow proposes the Environmental Inequality Formation (EIF) model, which emphasizes three main points: (1) “the need to redefine environmental inequality as a sociohistorical process rather than simply viewing it as a discrete event”; (2) “the need to understand that environmental inequality involves multiple stakeholder groups with contradictory and shifting interests and allegiances rather than simply viewing environmental
inequality as the result of perpetrator-victim scenarios”; and (3) “viewing the ecology of hazardous-production and consumption through a life-cycle analysis rather than focusing only on one location or site of conflict” (Pellow, 2000: 588). This model requires researchers to understand how environmental inequalities unfold and that these inequalities evolve as spatial locations, contexts and visibility changes (2000). More importantly, multiple stakeholders are involved in environmental inequalities and Pellow calls for moving beyond dyadic models of perpetrator-victim scenarios and moving more towards holistic descriptions of how it involves and affects multiple stakeholders (2000). This view is especially important in the context of national park development, as multiple stakeholders are involved but also because it affects all community members and local residents.

But beyond Pellow’s avid approach to understanding and employing environmental justice, many scholars have done research on how environmental justice has pushed boundaries beyond pluralistic conceptions of injustice, inequalities and social justice (Schlosberg, 2003, 2004, 2007; Teelucksingh et al, 2016; Holifield et al, 2010; Agyeman, 2002, 2005; Bullard, 2005; Mohai et al, 2009). As mentioned above, environmental racism is a large component of environmental justice, which emerged on the national, political and academic radar in the early 80’s (Mohai et al, 2009: 405). Many scholars and policy-makers have struggled with the concept of environmental racism and “whether it actually exists, what it is and if discriminatory patterns are simply a function of other (i.e. non-racist) forces and structures” (Pulido, 1996: 142). In the discipline of geography, many scholars argue for a deeper understanding of environmental racism and how it connects to EJ. Following Pulido’s (2000) account of environmental racism, white privilege is particularly useful in understanding the historical and spatial underpinnings of how racism operates in EJ issues. Bullard (1996) argues that environmental justice and environmental racism should not be used interchangeably, but that environmental racism is a
form of environmental discrimination which is a part of EJ as a whole. Bullard defines environmental racism as “any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color” (Bullard, 1996: 497). As such, EJ is a complex framework in which deeply rooted issues such as racism, discrimination and white privilege require more attention and critical engagement in literature (Pulido, 1996; 2000, Bullard, 1996). This literature is important because these concepts and understandings reinforce white privilege and the issues in power structures in terms of decision-making and overall use of national parks, in this case the RNUP.

Pulido (2000) investigates how racism is conceptualized in environmental racism literature (533). This directly relates to how racism is often discussed in environmental literature as a whole. Drawing on a review of thirty empirical studies, Pulido argues that only a handful of articles attempted any substantive discussion on racism itself (2000: 539). Most of the literature tends to rely on “common sense” understandings of racism (Pulido, 2000: 539). While there has been more discussion on this issue in recent years, there is still a paucity of literature that clearly defines racism and how it impacts environmental development. As mentioned above, white privilege is an important part of understanding how race operates in any circumstance. Pulido defines white privilege as being distinct from white supremacy and from individual, discriminatory acts (2000: 537). She argues,

[White privilege] flourishes in relation to these other forms. Because most white people do not see themselves as having malicious intentions, and because racism is associated with malicious intent, whites can exonerate themselves of all racist tendencies, all the while ignoring their investment in white privilege. It is this ability to sever intent from outcome that allows whites to acknowledge that racism exists, yet seldom identify themselves as racists (2000: 537).
This quote is emblematic of decision-making, planning and visitation of national parks. Specifically, this literature will be used to show how planners, policymakers and environmental organizations tend to turn a blind eye to how their actions and power in decision-making reinforces white privilege.

Many scholars have done research on the effects of white privilege and the politics of difference while discussing community participation, urban development and environmental concerns (Pellow, 2000; Agyeman et al., 2002; Wolch et al., 2005; Pulido, 2005; Gupta and Ferguson, 2007; Buzzelli, 2008; Reynolds, 2014; Brahinsky et al., 2014). However, in the Canadian context little data exists on the intersection between environmental justice, the politics of difference and city planning. Byrne et al (2009) effectively employ an environmental justice framework to discuss urban greenspace and national parks in the United States. Studies have shown that greenspace and national park access is inequitably distributed within cities (Byrne et al., 2009: 365). Accordingly, Byrne et al discuss their findings on the types of visitors to Los Angeles’ Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, which is “the United State’s largest urban national park” (2009: 365). Their findings show that most of the park visitors were predominantly white, affluent and lived nearby (2009, 365). Briefly, national parks were first created during the 1970s in the United States (2009). Park planners envisioned parks as a place that would provide both conservation and recreation benefits (2009). Several studies show that access to urban greenspaces can significantly impact the health and wellbeing of urban populations, which is why benefits included “access to fresh air, solitude and opportunities to encounter nature” (2009: 366). However, their study shows that little, if any, research has actually evaluated whether or not urban national parks provide disadvantaged communities/urban populations with such benefits (2009: 366).
While many scholars have taken on an EJ framework to look closely at the normative and political underpinnings of urban development and public greenspace, there are some findings that show mixed responses to park access. Studies of this nature have been done in Los Angeles, United Kingdom, Colorado, Georgia and Texas, which all show mixed ranges of inclusivity and park access. For instance, Comber et al (2008) did a study on accessibility for different religious and ethnic groups in Leicester, UK, which showed Hindu and Sikh groups were found to have limited access to greenspace in the city (103). Wolch et al (2005) did a similar study and found that low income areas, along with neighbourhoods of colour, had lower levels of access to parks (Sister et al., 2009: 231). In their research, Sister et al (2009) find that studies done on national parks often show mixed results and usually vary based on surrounding environments:

Talen (1997) found low access corresponding to low housing value and high percentage of Hispanics in Pueblo, Colorado, she also observed the opposite trend of lower park access in areas with high-income White residents in Macon, Georgia. A number of results from other studies, in fact, had been inconsistent with the environmental justice hypothesis, with findings demonstrating that locations of disadvantaged populations coincided with areas having relatively higher access to amenities. Tarrant and Cordell (1999) examined the socio-economic characteristics of populations within 1,500m of Chattahoochee National Forest in North Georgia and found that census block groups with higher proportions of lower income households were more likely situated in areas associated with locally desirable land uses (i.e., campgrounds, wilderness areas, and good benthic fisheries). Furthermore, results of their study indicated that race was not a significant factor in explaining the distribution of desirable or undesirable land uses. Nicholls (2001) examined access to public parks in Bryan, Texas and Lindsey et al. (2001) examined urban greenways in Indianapolis, Indiana, with both studies showing that minorities or low income groups were not systematically disadvantaged in terms of access to these resources (Sister et al, 2009: 231).

By examining park access in different countries, it allows for a better understanding of how public greenspaces are perceived and used. Since the RNUP is a new initiative and still in its development phase, park access is a significant factor in environmental justice and the inclusion of all community members, local residents and the general public. Overall, the EJ movement is a
theoretical framework used by many academics in their research, but also a part of civil disobedience, direct action, policy advocacy, and litigation to pursue three strands of justice (Rowangould et al., 2016, Cole and Foster, 2001; Sze and London, 2008). The three strands are as follows: “(1) distributional justice (ensuring that no community is over-burdened by environmental hazards and that all have access to environmental benefits); (2) procedural justice (ensuring that those suffering from environmental injustices have a meaningful voice in shaping public policy and corporate actions); and (3) recognition (ensuring that diverse kinds of knowledge are considered legitimate when shaping policies and plans)” (Rowangould et al., 2016: 151). Drawing from the EJ literature mentioned above, this framework has been employed throughout my research to tackle issues of race, power, and urban greenspace planning and development.

2.2 Environmental Governance, Power Dynamics and Boundary-setting in National Parks

“Cities seem to hold the promise of emancipation and freedom whilst skillfully mastering the whip of repression and domination” (Heynen et al., 2006: 9). The production of uneven urban environments can be seen on various levels of city planning and development. This includes the physical environment and how parks, trails, community centres and greenspaces are produced through human interference. These urban-nature relationships are driven by economic growth, demographic change and social transformation (Keil, 2003: 724; Chen & Hu, 2015: 32; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009; James et al., 2009). Ultimately, the relationship between city and nature is complex as Swyngedouw (1996) suggests,

in the city, society and nature, representation and being are inseparable, integral to each other, infinitely bound-up, yet simultaneously this hybrid socio-natural ‘thing’ called the city is full of contradictions, tensions and conflicts (Swyngedouw, 1996: 65–66 in Heynen, 2014: 599).
The city is often understood as a human invention in opposition and providing an inevitable contrast to the “natural”, the “pristine”, and the “wilderness” (Benton-Short & Short, 2008: 4). Thus, this uneven relationship between nature and society binds city planning, urban development and the construction of urban greenspaces to issues of power dynamics in decision-making processes.

Governance draws attention to the normalization of ‘environmental’ objectives and rationalities within a society, and the ways in which power – the capacity to get other people and things to align in particular ways – increasingly works through environmental rationalities (Bridge & Perrault, 2009: 484-485). There are several working definitions of environmental governance but in this context, environmental governance refers to the broader processes and institutions through which societies make decisions that affect the environment (Armitage et al., 2012). The key to understanding different forms of environmental governance are the political-economic relationships that institutions embody and how these relationships shape identities, actions and outcomes (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006: 298).

Urban cities are constantly expanding as more than 50% of the world’s population now live in cities or large urban settlements (Davidson & Gleeson, 2014). Not only does this require adequate city planning, but it also requires governance and structure to ensure all requirements are met as a whole. This includes the physical development of land, human interactions with nature, inclusivity, accessibility and equality. Further, governance, privatization, enclosure and valuation are permeated through the neoliberalization of nature (Keil, 2005: 645). Over the years, research on the profound ways in which resources, land use and nature are managed as a direct consequence of the ongoing neoliberalization of local and regional economies has flourished (Keil, 2005: 646). As such, Swyngedouw and Heynen (2003) call for greater attention to these
issues in order to “untangle the interconnected economic, political, social and ecological processes that together go to form highly uneven and deeply unjust urban landscapes” (898). Many scholars have done studies on how environmental governance plays a role in the production of uneven urban environments especially in terms of the dialectic between society and nature (see Keil, 2003, 2005; Heynen, 2014, 2016, 2017; Keil & Mcdonald, 2016; Morgan, 2015; Davidson & Gleeson, 2014; Gabriel, 2014; McLain et al., 2013; Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003; Swyngedouw, 1996; Byrant, 1992; Neumann, 2009, 2010, 2011; Rocheleau, 2008; Roger, 2005). Environmental governance is a crucial part of the RNUP initiative as decision-making is strongly influenced by the power dynamics of policymakers, planners and organizations.

Further, cities have been “described and understood as somehow separate from the so-called ‘natural world’ [and] environmental protection has been defined as meaning something outside of, and mostly unrelated to, the concerns and interests of […] cities” (Benton-Short & Short, 2008: 4). However, recently the understanding of the city and nature has shifted to form a co-existing and interrelated relationship. Swyngedouw observes this relationship as having been in practice from the very beginning and suggests that as the world continues to evolve and modernize it becomes increasingly socio-natural (1996: 68). In short, there is nothing “purely” social or natural about the city as it is a hybrid of bio-physical, political, cultural and economic processes (1996: 66). This is further highlighted and discussed in Chapter 5 as conflicts between farmers and environmentalists over natural and unnatural uses of the parklands is a significant concern.

Governing national parks and developing urban greenspaces within the city need to enhance “the democratic content of socioenvironmental construction by identifying the strategies through which a more equitable distribution of social power and a more inclusive mode of environmental
production can be achieved” (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003: 898). This notion was further emphasized in this research in an attempt to “elucidate and extrapolate the interconnected white supremacist and racialized processes that lead to uneven [development] within urban environments” (Heynen, 2016: 839). Interactions with class, race, gender, culture and ethnicity shape the ways in which power and governance are exercised, especially in urban development initiatives such as the RNUP. Peet and Watts (1996) highlight gender as a critical variable:

in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, the struggle of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods, and the prospects of any community for ‘sustainable development’ (Peet and Watts, 1996: 4 in Heynen, 2017: 2).

The gendered and racialized dynamics of national parks persist in the ongoing representation and experience of nature and nation (Sandilands, 2005: 145). Sandilands (2005) highlights the uneven constructions of national parks by describing the tensions between an “iconic national nature (coded as wild, empty, cold, white, except for a romanticized view of Aboriginal peoples, and male-homosocial) and a domestic national nature (appearing civil, secure, warm, infrastructurally complex, and feminine/family-oriented)” (145). Similarly, Baker (2002) investigates Algonquin Park in Toronto, Ontario as occupying this vigorous tension between two cultural archetypes that generate traditional, hegemonic Anglo-Canadian national consciousness: that of modern, industrial nation to that of wilderness (Baker, 2002: 198). In this case, parks serve as both nationalisms and specifically, in the RNUP mandate there is an unequivocal contradiction between a view that would preserve nature and maintain ecological integrity to that of retrofitting manmade facilities, trees, and encouraging Canadians en masse “to learn about, and relax healthfully in, the nature that signifies the nation” (Sandilands, 2005:145). This binary between the iconic national nature and domestic national nature is also permeated through boundary setting in national parks.
Boundary setting in national parks is seen as a crucial form of governance and environmental protection. In a recent study done by Keil and Macdonald, the authors argue that very few contributions have dealt directly with issues of boundary setting and that urban areas are mostly considered separate spaces away from nature and the natural environment (2016, 1518). While this notion has been consistent throughout space and time, “cities have always been built within nature, as cities are created by appropriating the natural environment to create urban environments where human populations continue to rely on nature through the practices of accumulation, consumption and reproduction” (Keil & Macdonald, 2016: 1518). In another study Gabriel (2014) evaluates urban environmental imaginaries, which are understood as “conceptual framings and systems of meaning related to urban environments, including assumptions about nature of the city and the nature of nature” (39). This includes investigating various forms of policies, human interactions with the environment and moving beyond “capitalocentric” theorizations of these human and non/human interactions (2014: 39). Heynen (2003) further investigates the relationship between nature, society and boundaries as he argues that urban forests and tree planting are “embedded and subject to a series of multifaceted power relations that circulate throughout and continually transform the urban landscape” (982).

Beyond boundaries of the physical landscape, Sandilands (2005) discusses the role of a park ranger in maintaining and creating distinct boundaries. The RNUP draft management plan emphasizes the role of park rangers as a productive and meaningful addition to Canada’s first national urban park. Sandilands explicates that historically:

the typically white and masculinized park ranger’s role was to police the boundary between the European-settler “civilization” and the supposedly uninhabited “wilderness” of Canada—educating “citizens” (white European settlers) by providing patriarchal, heteronormative, and colonial interpretations of nature, while keeping both nature and the so-called “civilization” at a safe distance from each other (Sandilands, 2005: 146 in MacLatchy, n.d.).
The history within national parks in Canada reinforces the apparent naturalness of colonialism, heterosexuality, racial disparities and gender roles (MacLatchy, n.d.). In an article titled, Lesbian Rangers on a Queer Frontier, MacLatchy (n.d.) further highlights the historical role of park rangers:

the very designation of certain areas as national parks that were “protected” from the damaging influences of human activity also involves restricting First Nations peoples from their original uses of their own land. The park ranger’s role was thus dual: on the one hand, to “protect” this wilderness by policing its boundaries and restricting First Nations access, and, on the other, to protect white settler civilization, with its feminized domestic spaces, from the incursions and dangers of the wild (Sandilands 146). Concepts of “nature” in the Canadian national narrative thus appear to be all about the naturalness and inevitability of heterosexuality and colonialism (MacLatchy, n.d. https://canlit.ca/article/lesbian-rangers-on-a-queer-frontier/).

In present day, park rangers, (as employees of the federal agency – Parks Canada) “claim a position of authority when they interact with the public, disseminating information that reflects the dominant national narrative” (MacLatchy, n.d.). Whether information is being disseminated or a park ranger is on duty to set strict boundaries, these individuals can be seen a “Canadian-Canadian” in which “their whiteness means that they project an initial impression of belonging in this place, and the legitimacy of their Canadian citizenship is never contested” (Mackey, 1999 in MacLatchy, n.d.). The dominant national narrative in the case of the RNUP is highlighted in Chapter 3 and discussed further in Chapter 5. This is also evident in the RNUP initiative through the interactions between employees of Parks Canada with the general public as well as the implementation of designated park rangers to monitor and maintain the fixed boundaries within the park.

Overall, this section connects with Bruce Braun’s (1997) notion of ‘binary staging’ in which
conflicts have been staged as struggles – in his article, he discusses the forest industry and environmentalists – of an antagonistic contest between two poles in the sort of binary logic of regulated opposition (1997: 5). The dominant narrative almost always becomes the area of focus, which leaves out many other areas that are equally important. This competing discourse is seen largely throughout this research, as the dominant narrative of the RNUP was the contention between farmers and environmentalists. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

2.3 Agricultural Production, Race and the Rural Imaginary in Canada

A large body of literature exists in relation to food production and consumption. This literature ranges from a variety of disciplines and organizations to research in international development, environmental history, feminist theory and cultural studies (Slocum, 2010: 303). There has especially been a rise in geographical research on food, “with a burgeoning literature by social and cultural geographers on the consumptions and cultures of food” (Hopma & Woods, 2014: 773). While numerous studies have now shifted towards a cultural understanding of food, how it is perceived and consumed (see Josee & Baumann, 2010; Deutsch, 2009; Elliott, 2008; Penfold, 2008; Matejowsky, 2007; Salatin, 2009; Shanahan, 2002; Pollan, 2007; Cook et al., 1998; Cook & Crang, 1996, 2000), many consumers do not understand food production or show interest in the process that goes into bringing food to the dinner table and/or supermarkets. As mentioned in the previous chapter, food production and local farming are a huge part of the RNUP initiative (see Chapter 3). Hence this section focuses on agricultural production, racialized dynamics in food production and the rural imaginary in Canada.

Food production is associated with several geographical, environmental, political and cultural implications. There is a significant amount of research that looks at and highlights inequities of
the current food system (Guthman, 2014, 2008; Slocum, 2015, 2010, 2008, 2006; Reynolds, 2015; Agyeman et al., 2002; Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014; Tscharntke et al., 2012; Hopma & Woods, 2014; Agyeman & McEntee, 2014), however, much of it is based out of the United States. Food production is directly related to racial disparities, inequities, and vulnerabilities all across the globe. In recent years, food crises have heightened the awareness of such inequities. Slocum (2010) reinforces the connections of race to the study of food as she focuses on the social and biological relationships connecting humans to food and its origins. Her research emphasizes that race tends to discursively create identities through food consumption and the act of cooking, while scholars of labour, struggle and agriculture have shown how the social process of race shapes landscapes and knowledge systems (Slocum, 2010: 305). When discussing the biological and social practices of food, Slocum refers back to Lynn Phillips (2006) as she shares her sentiment on the understandings of food, she says,

\[i]n her review of the anthropology of food, Lynn Phillips (2006) asked, ‘[i]f the ideas and practices of food mark human difference, what do current projects of food and globality tell us about who we are’, by which she means ‘what kinds of markers of food exclusion and inclusion are being created in the current situation, how are these markers maintained by global projects, and what do they imply for developing sustainable places to live?’ (Phillips, 2006 in Cook et al., 2010).

As mentioned above, recent food literature has shifted towards the cultural understandings of consumption and production (Whatmore, 2002; Duruz, 2005; Collins, 2008; Wilk, 2006; Colebrook, 2000; Dolphijn, 2004; Bell & Valentine, 1997; Danticat, 1998; Appadurai, 1988; Azzarito, 2008; Bailey, 2007; Bal, 2005). However, as cities continue to expand and develop further, more critical research is required for agricultural production, local food production and small-scale farming. There are various forms of local food production such as: small-scale farming, large-scale farming, farmers markets, and community gardens. For instance, Baker (2004) suggests that community gardens in Toronto provide an excellent example of how one
specific activity can be imbued with multiple political, cultural, social and racial meanings/interpretations that require examination (Baker, 306, 2004). Community gardens and farmlands in Toronto can be seen as places of “counter hegemonic democratic politics” (Dirlik & Prazniak, 2001: 3 in Baker, 2004: 306) whereby “the complexities of power, culture, and the economy become clear and where the intersections between food and various other social, economic, and environmental issues are revealed” (2004, 306).

Further, in an article titled, *If They Only Knew: Color Blindness and Universalism in California Alternative Food Institutions*, Julie Guthman (2008) illustrates colour-blind mentalities and universalizing impulses of alternative food discourse by analyzing farmers’ markets and community-supported agriculture. In this article, Guthman asserts that farmers’ markets are seen as “good for everyone” but as one can imagine the primary purpose of such markets is to serve farmers with a source of income and livelihood. However, “most markets are set up in areas where palpable demand exists for them [but] tend to be disproportionately white even in communities with a more racially mixed population” (2008: 392). This literature connects back to the RNUP initiative and is strongly representative of farmers’ markets set up by many of the small-scale farmers in the GTA. Local farming and agricultural production can reinforce the white imaginaries of rural spaces. For instance, Guthman observes that one can be nominally nonracist and still contribute to a racial society (390). In this article, she outlines the manifestations of whiteness that are particularly important in agricultural production, one being colour-blindness (390). Colour blindness is a form of refusing to see or admit difference in race for fear of being deemed racist, and/or Guthman suggests that for many “colour blindness or the absence of racial identifiers in language are seen as nonracist” (390).

In another article, Alkon (2008) explores farmers’ markets as sites of “discursive performance,
by which consumption of food sold there becomes a conduit through which environmental concerns, like the value placed on ‘pristine’ wilderness, are carried into the urban home” (Gabriel, 2014: 40). As such, Alkon asserts that this gives ‘urbanites’, through their most basic daily practices, a direct link to the ‘spirit of nature’ (Alkon, 2008). Although urban gardens and farmers markets are “a means to provide employment, build job skills, generate income, educate youth and adults about nutritious food, and in some cases, bring people together across difference” (Slocum, 2006: 329) they are still sites of racial struggles, white privilege and unacknowledged white privilege. In her study on anti-racist practices and community food movements, Slocum (2006) investigates small-scale farmers as an undifferentiated unit losing ground to agribusiness. Others such as Willis et al. (2016) have done research on the integration of farmers into a local food system. The authors evaluate the feasibility of introducing an “integrated marketing system that links local farmers to farmers’ markets and other local food retailers via a local food distribution system” (Ibid: 192). In a study on New York City’s urban agriculture system Reynolds (2014) describes a magazine article highlighting some of the City’s “up-and-coming urban farmers”, and some of the “most notable” urban farms and gardens (Reynolds, 2014: 240). In an attempt to broaden awareness of agriculture production, Reynolds states,

despite, or perhaps because of the reach of this popular magazine, the article angered many in New York City’s urban agriculture system (including some of the farmers that it featured) because six of the seven farmers profiled were white. Through the power of beautifully gritty photographs that professed to depict “What an Urban Farmer Looks Like”, this article did more than raise awareness about growing tomatoes or keeping chickens in New York City. By failing to acknowledge the racial and ethnic diversity of New York’s farmers and gardeners, it also suggested that urban agriculture in the city was a mostly white phenomenon (Reynolds, 2014: 240).

Similarly, Slocum (2007) did a study on whiteness, space and alternative food practice in which she investigates how “whiteness is produced in progressive non-profit efforts to promote
sustainable farming and food security in the US” (520). She describes alternative food practices as “those that advocate more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the US” (521). As such, her research looks at organizations supporting local farmers, farmers markets, community-supported agriculture, local sourcing by restaurants, buy local campaigns and agricultural policy change (2007: 522).

Furthermore, Wakefield et al., (2015) did a study on food security and health in Canada by looking at the imaginaries, exclusions and possibilities. In this article, the authors investigate the absent and distorted voices in Canada’s agricultural system. By highlighting the romanticization of an idealized rural past they compare it to the story of a prairie pioneer in the U.S. context:

This version of Canada, with its emphasis on the (white, male) prairie farmer, is prevalent in Canadian agricultural imagery—a Google search of “Canadian Farmer” images will quickly reveal a preponderance of white men tending fields of grain (often in or near large farm machinery). However, this normalizes a particular perspective on the agrarian experience in Canada, and excludes other important actors, for example women and migrant farm workers (Wakefield et al., 2015: 89).

The authors go on further to discuss the historical relationship of Canada’s Indigenous peoples to the land by describing Luby’s (2010) work on “wild” rice:

By continuing to call manomin, an Anishinaabe crop, ‘wild’ rice, we support settler assumptions of natural bounty, of the New World as Eden. We read Indigenous peoples and their actions as blips on Canada’s resource radar. [...] Through language, we erase the intention behind [indigenous] gardens, and the work behind [indigenous] crop production (Luby, 2010 in Wakefield et al., 2015: 89).

As such, Wakefield et al., along with others (e.g. Luby, 2010; Razack, 2002; Mathur et al., 2011) argue that “dominant perceptions of farmers and farm work not only serve to exclude certain
voices, but also legitimize historical and ongoing practices of exploitation and dispossession” (Wakefield et al., 2015: 89). This literature contributes to the understandings of race and the rural imaginaries in agricultural development, in the context of RNUP. The following section will review literature on how agriculture has made its way into food systems planning and urban parks within Canada.

2.4 Planning Practices and Community Participation

2.4.1 Greenspace Planning

National Urban Parks are seen as sites of pristine wilderness and untouched nature, within the city, in which humans have the pleasure of experiencing the natural world. According to a study done by Wolch et al (2014), “urban green space strategies may be paradoxical: while the creation of new green space to address environmental justice problems can make neighbourhoods healthier and more esthetically attractive” (1) it can also increase housing costs, property values and racial issues. In a study on race, space and nature, Brahinsky et al (2014) argue that concepts of nature, environment and the ordering of space are fundamentally linked to the organization of social and political life, a process in which race is central (1137). There is an increase in literature on the access to a healthy and clean environment as it is distributed by the axis of difference (e.g. power, race, class, ethnicity, gender) (Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Slocum, 2008; Alkon, 2008; Guthman, 2008, 2012; Andree et al., 2015). However, there is a lack of significant literature concerning national urban park development, accessibility, and inclusivity in the Canadian context.

Many scholars have attributed “park (non)use, especially ethno-racially differentiated (non)use, to various factors, including socio-cultural (e.g. poverty, cultural preferences, etc.) and socio-
spatial determinants (e.g. travel distance, park features, etc.)” (Byrne, 2011: 595). Bryne (2011) did a study on the cultural politics of race, nature and social exclusion in a Los Angeles national urban park. His study reveals that power relations can negatively impact the structure, residential location, property tax revenue, service provision, and park maintenance; as a result this can foster landscapes of social exclusion and violence (595). Social inclusion, accessibility and low income are among the many factors affecting park visitation (Bryne, 2011; Dahmann et al., 2010; Floyd, 2001; Roberts and Rodriguez, 2001). Bryne’s study also shows various personal, social and structural constraints, which have had an impact on park visitation. These are (Byrne, 2011: 596):

(1) personal/internal constraints (e.g. fear of crime, disability, motivation, interest, depression)
(2) social constraints (e.g. lack of companions, family responsibilities)
(3) structural constraints (e.g. time, money, poor transportation)
(4) institutional constraints (e.g. user fees, park programming)

Such factors not only contribute to general park visitation, but also to the racial structure underlying national urban parks. Others have also done studies on race and parks (Pulido, 2015; Wolch et al., 2014; O’Brien & Njambi, 2012; Kepe, 2012; Ellis, 2010; Carruthers, 2007; Boone et al., 2009; Cairns et al., 2015). The majority of these studies show that white people tend to have better access to parks – this includes accessibility, comfort, inclusivity and white privilege. Moreover, many studies have also paid particular attention to park proximity and physical activity (see Brownson et al., 2001; Gorden-Larsen et al., 2006; Diez Roux et al., 2007; Floyd et al., 2012; McCormack et al., 2010).

Overall, recent literature argues that urban greenspace planning needs to focus more on the axis of difference, public health, standard of living, accessibility and inclusivity of all community members (Zeng & Gu, 2007; Yin et al., 2009; Wolch et al., 2005; Pearsall, 2010; Wenting et al.,
2012; Stodolska et al., 2011; Lee & Maheswaran, 2011, Landry & Chakraborty, 2009; Jennings et al., 2012; Heynen et al., 2006; Heckert & Mennis, 2012; Conway et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2006). Much of national park studies have been done in the Los Angeles (LA) area. A study by Wolch et al (2013) investigates access to park space in LA by children, youth, and residents according to their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (4). This study found that “low-income and concentrated poverty areas as well as neighbourhoods dominated by Latinos, African Americans, and Asian-Pacific Islanders, have dramatically lower levels of access to park resources than White-dominated areas of the city” (Wolch et al., 2013: 4). McLain et al (2013) did a study on “green” planning in which they looked at how nature is being brought back into cities and reconnecting urbanites with nature. At the same time, citing Gobster (2007), the authors described this process as the “museumification” of nature, in which parks have become “museumified landscapes which humans can look at, recreate in, and pass through, but where harvesting is strongly discouraged” (McLain et al., 2013: 221). While there are studies discussing these issues in the United States, there is still a paucity of literature on national parks in Canada. Now that Canada has its first national urban park, more research needs to be done to address such issues and expand on already existing statistics of greenspaces.

2.4.2 Food Systems Planning

Land is complex, and globally people have conflicting views on its uses and value. While it has often been treated as a thing, resource and/or commodity, Tania Li argues, to turn it to productive use it requires regimes of exclusion that distinguish legitimate from illegitimate uses and users, and the inscribing of boundaries through devices such as fences, title deeds, laws, zones, regulations, landmarks and story-lines. [. . .] It is an assemblage of materialities, relations, technologies and discourses that have to be pulled together and made to align” (Li, 2014: 589).
Land use is directly correlated to urban agriculture, greenspaces and city development. As such, professional Planners are “concerned with community systems – such as land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy” (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000: 113). While interest in food issues has increased over the years, food systems planning is not always a key concern for professional urban planners. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) did a comprehensive study on food systems planning and found that city planning agencies are at best only lightly involved in food systems (116). Based on their research, Urban planners specified seven major reasons for their lack of involvement:

1. It’s not our turf.
2. It’s not an urban issue; it’s a rural issue.
3. The food system is driven primarily by the private market.
4. Planning agencies aren’t funded to do food system planning.
5. What’s the problem? If it ain’t broke, why fix it?
6. Who is addressing the community food system with whom we can work?
7. We don’t know enough about the food system to make a greater contribution (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000: 116-117).

The authors argue that the failure to incorporate food issues into planning practices for city development can prove to be detrimental for the surrounding local communities. Moreover, there is a scarcity of food systems discussion in planning literature (114). Soma and Wakefield (2011) did a study on the emerging role of a food system planner and how food considerations have been integrated into professional planning over the years. The authors argue that there is significant opportunity for planners to contribute to more sustainable food systems and healthier communities. In this case, a healthy and sustainable food system is one that:

provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment. A sustainable food system also encourages local production and distribution infrastructures and makes nutritious food available, accessible, and affordable to all. Further, it is humane and just, protecting farmers and other workers, consumers, and communities. (APHA, 2007, para. 4 in Soma & Wakefield, 2011: 3)
As such, the authors state, food cultivation in and for cities has either been encouraged or discouraged by urban planners (Ibid, 2011: 2). As a result, the restructuring of agricultural development has taken a toll on access to urban and peri-urban land for producers and consumers (Soma & Wakefield, 2011; Magdoff, Buttel & Foster, 2000; Redwood, 2009). Planners tend to focus on ways in which the city can yield in profit to maintain strong infrastructure. In doing so, grocery stores are often thought of as a commercial retail development, leaving the land open to market forces as opposed to being understood as an important and crucial part of the infrastructure which requires deeper attention by planners (Soma & Wakefield, 2011). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, urban consumers have become geographically and psychologically distanced from the sources of their food (Wittman, 2009; Soma & Wakefield, 2011) so when consumers see “the abundance and diversity of food available in most grocery stores, it could lead [them] to believe that access to food in urban centers is not a problem” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011: 2). As a result of this, consumers may believe there is nothing wrong with the food system; food security is threatened by an unsustainable food supply system in which profitability is galvanized instead of equity, the environment and health (Soma & Wakefield, 2011; Bunce & Maurer, 2005; Forkes, 2007; Morison et al., 2008; Xuereb, 2005; Lang & Heasman, 2004).

Carolyn Steel (2008) suggests, “without farmers and farming, cities would not exist” (p.7, in Soma & Wakefield, 2011: 2). Thus, local food production is a crucial part of city development and a strong infrastructure. Buchan et al (2015) reinforce the importance of local food as they investigate the production of lettuce. The authors suggest, “one pound of lettuce contains 80 calories of food energy, but to grow, wash, package, and transport it from a California field to an East Coast market requires more than 4,600 calories of fossil fuel energy—more than 50 calories of fossil fuel energy in for every calorie of food energy out” (Buchan et al., 2015: 4). In Canada,
the city of Toronto has become somewhat of a beacon in food policy circles (Morgan, 2013). Morgan (2013) suggests,

although the city of Toronto enjoys an international profile for its food policy achievements, it is instructive that the food strategy has never received a full endorsement from the City Council, proving that real progress is perhaps more dependent on the creation of deliberative spaces between local state and civil society than the formal imprimatur of city governments (3).

As such, in recent years, urban food development in Canada has increasingly been linked to green spaces (Guthman, 2012; Matulis, 2014; Andree et al., 2015; Wolch et al., 2014; Baker, 2004; DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). Urban green spaces (e.g. parks, forests, green roofs, streams, and community gardens) provide “critical ecosystem services while promoting physical activity, psychological well-being, and the general public health of urban residents” (Wolch et al., 2014). Thus, planners must effectively help to develop and maintain green spaces within the city. Urban agriculture scholarship has recently turned to investigating urban green space as a source of products for human use (McLain et al., 2013; Nordahl, 2009; Metcalf & Widener, 2011; Severson, 2009; Craft, 2010; Foderaro, 2011). McLain et al (2013) explore how foraging for “wild” foods in cities has become a “subversive practice that challenges prevailing views about roles of humans in urban green spaces” but also has the potential to support sustainability goals (220). Thus, green-space planning and food systems planning are interconnected and require critical attention. This is further highlighted throughout this research as urban planners have played a major role in the development of the RNUP.

2.4.3 Community Participation in Urban Planning Initiatives

The relationship between local state and civil society is a crucial part of urban development. Planners have the responsibility to engage citizens in city projects and obtain their input for development that will benefit all members of society. Green space planning processes are
gradually becoming legitimate areas of concern for urban planners (McLain et al., 2013). A study by Wolch et al (2014) shows that citizen participation in decision-making as well as avenues for raising formal complaints about environmental protection and management (Li et al., 2012) are often limited and/or obsolete. The study looks at EJ and urban development in China as the authors note that residents fear complaints bring reprisals or persecution (Wolch et al., 2014: 4; Brajer et al, 2010). For Canada, community green space and food systems planning processes require the incorporation of various actors: local citizens, stakeholders, partners, community organizations, environmental organizations, agriculturalists, farmers and Parks Canada. Thus, planners need to effectively employ an integrated collaborative approach when focusing on the issues associated with urban development.

Chris Walker (2004) suggests that parks contribute significantly to larger urban policy objectives such as job opportunities, youth development, public health, and community building (1). However, many scholars have focused on highlighting the racial disparities and injustices faced by community members in terms of community participation in urban planning (Teelucksingh, 2007; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Ornstein, 2000; Masuda et al., 2008). For instance, Gibson-Wood and Wakefield (2012) look at participation and white privilege in Toronto, Canada. The authors explore the ways in which race and environment have been considered in relation to each other and the role of community engagement in environmental discourses. They state,

community engagement and participation are generally understood as ways to actively involve citizens and give them more power in environmental planning and decision-making processes (Masuda, McGee and Garvin 2008). However, traditional models of community engagement may, in fact, serve to exclude marginalized groups from participation (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2012: 646).

In Canada, environmental groups are becoming increasingly engaged in green space planning
processes (Gupta & Chikermane, 2009; Morley, 2006; Gosine, 2003). Community participation can be complex because participants possess different characteristics and qualities: “some may lack confidence to express themselves orally in a public setting; alternatively, their contributions may not conform to the ‘rules’ and expectations of professionals, and so are seen as ‘rambling’, ‘irrelevant’, or otherwise unhelpful” (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2011: 646). While environmental organizations can be seen as activists seeking environmental justice for community projects and development, such as the RNUP in Canada, people of colour remain underrepresented in Canadian environmental organizations (Gosine, 2003). In addition, becoming an active member of an organization often involves both direct and indirect costs (Wakefield & Poland, 2005) and as a result disadvantaged community members may not always have the opportunity to participate. Another study by Bethany et al (2012) titled, “We Are Not Being Heard”: Aboriginal Perspectives on Traditional Foods Access and Food Security looks at the lack of Aboriginal perspectives on planning and research practices. Their research also highlights the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities in terms of community participation, food accessibility and inclusivity (Bethany et al., 2012). Community engagement and decision-making should be incorporated on all levels through various actors in order to maintain a strong and resilient community.

2.5 Conclusions

The first section of this chapter explained the EJ paradigm in urban development, which is important to the RNUP initiative as this thesis employs an EJ framework. The second section highlighted the importance of environmental governance, power dynamics and boundary-setting in national parks. The third section looked at agricultural production, race and rural imaginaries, which are a crucial part of the research on the RNUP as local food production and the use of
agricultural land for farmland are integral to the creation of this park. Finally, in the fourth section, I discussed planning practices and community engagement. For a newly adapted initiative in a densely populated city such as Toronto, RNUP has served as a model for planners. As such, I investigate the importance of food systems planning and green space planning by exploring relevant literature. Beyond the literature, qualitative methods were used for the purpose of this study. The next chapter provides a more in-depth discussion on methods.
Chapter 3
Methods

3.1 Introduction

The objectives of this study on Canada’s first national urban park were threefold. The first objective was to investigate if and how small-scale farmers and community members were being included in the development of the park. The second objective was to examine the effects of power dynamics in environmental governance, land stewardship and the creation of this park on individuals and the community. The third objective was to explore the limitations and biases in government policies and patterns by scrutinizing the criteria used to create the National Urban Park. The common purpose of these objectives was to look at urban food development and planning practices in Canada. In order to achieve this purpose, qualitative research methods – including document analysis, interviews, and observation of meetings - have been employed. The remainder of this chapter discusses methodological considerations, methods and the rationale for why these particular methods were used for this research. Before discussing the specific methods employed throughout this research, I provide a brief description of my positionality.

3.2 Getting Personal: Self-reflexivity and Positionality

Research represents a shared space between the researcher and participants (Bourke, 2014; England, 1994). The motivations and perspectives that shape the researchers object of inquiry often create ambiguities, productivities and difficulties for the research problem. As such, Bourke (2014) states, “the identities of both researcher and participants have the potential to impact the research process. Identities come into play via our perceptions, not only of others, but
of the ways in which we expect others will perceive us. Our own biases shape the research process, servicing as checkpoints along the way” (1). The researcher should therefore engage in critical reflexivity, which is a self-conscious awareness of the research problem and the researcher’s positionality in the research process (Dowling, 2000; Bourke, 2014; Pillow, 2003). Pillow (2003) outlines four common trends in the use of reflexivity: “reflexivity as recognition of self, reflexivity as recognition of other, reflexivity as truth, and reflexivity as transcendence” (175). In this section, I briefly discuss my positionality and reflect on how power intersected the research process.

As a woman of colour, born in Canada to immigrant parents from India, my relationship to this research was informed by various influences. My father and his parents owned farmland in India, which they depended on for their livelihood. Stories of their lived experiences, struggles and hardships were a part of our daily discourse in the home. Additionally, I have lived in and called Toronto home for over twenty-five years. Specifically, I have lived in the Rouge Park area for many years, which has only elevated my relationship with and knowledge of the community. During my undergraduate studies, much of my research was on the City of Toronto’s planning practices, cultural/social geography (e.g. looking at issues around the axes of difference: race, gender, ethnicity, power, etc.), and urban/rural agriculture. As a result, my experiences both academically and personally (e.g. my family’s stories) have shaped my identity and approach to this specific research project.

Ultimately, research is a social process, which is structured around interactions among society, the researcher and the researched (Hay, 2005). Positionality is “determined by where one stands in relation to ‘the other’” (Merriam et al., 2001: 411). This is closely tied to the insider/outsider concept. This concept has become more prevalent in critical and feminist theory, postmodernism,
multiculturalism, participatory and action research (Merriam et al., 2001: 405). Being cognizant of one’s positionality vis a vis the axes of difference (race, class, gender, culture, power, etc.) offers a better understanding of the dynamics, biases and influences of researching across one’s culture (Merriam et al., 2001: 405). All of my participants (15), with the exception of four, were white. Moreover, the majority of individuals that attended the farmland conferences, forums and information sessions were also predominantly white. This shaped my experiences as a woman of colour conducting these interviews and attending events. As Saldanha notes,

the phenotype of humans can be shown to play an active part in the event called race. When understood as immanent process, it becomes clear that though contingent, race cannot be transcended, only understood and rearranged…Far from being an arbitrary classification system imposed upon bodies, race is a non-necessary and irreducible effect of the ways those bodies themselves interact with each other and their physical environment…(2006:1110 in Slocum, 2007:524).

In discussions related to the environment and food practices, Slocum (2007) argues that, “Whiteness emerges spatially in efforts to increase access to healthy foods, support farmers and provide organic food to consumers” (526). She also contends,

…While the ideals of healthy food, people and land are not intrinsically white, the objectives, tendencies, strategies, the emphases and absences and the things overlooked in community food make them so. […] Community food thrives on a culture of food that has been made white. How this food is produced, packaged, promoted and sold—engages with a white middle class consumer base that tends to be interested in personal health and perhaps in environmental integrity. […] The connections among property, privilege and paler skin are evident in alternative food practice. There is a physical clustering of white bodies in the often expensive spaces of community food—conferences, farm tourism, community supported agriculture and alternative food stores… (Slocum, 2007: 526).

During my research, many questions ran through my mind as I felt mixed emotions in regards to being an outsider in many of these conversations, but also an insider by having lived in the community for several years. Age was also a factor when considering how the interviewee
perceived my position, as I was always younger. The dynamic between my participants and me varied for each interview and at times consisted of feelings of discomfort or personal anxieties about my own positionality in the interview. Specific conversations that further heightened issues related to the axes of difference between the participants and I will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

### 3.3 Qualitative Research

According to Strauss and Corbin (1988) qualitative research is “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 10-11). In contrast, quantitative research is expressed in numbers and statistical models (Gerring, 2017: 18). It uses deductive approaches to test relationships between variables, numerical data and statistical models (Strauss and Corbin, 1988). For this reason, a quantitative approach was not deemed fit or employed for this research. Further, researchers whose work is qualitative “are more likely to believe that knowledge of the world is embedded in theoretical, epistemological, or ontological frameworks from which we can scarcely disentangle ourselves. They may also identify with the phenomenological idea that all human endeavours, including science, are grounded in human experience” (Gerring, 2017: 17). Qualitative research is effective in obtaining intricate details about substantive areas in which little is known, this includes analyzing feelings, thought processes, and emotions which cannot effectively be obtained through other conventional research methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1988: 11). As such, qualitative research is done through interviews, participant observations (ethnography), and analyzing documents, records, and film (archival work) (Strauss & Corbin, 1988; Gerring, 2017). Qualitative research methods were chosen for the purpose of this thesis project.
Tracy (2010) outlines eight criteria of quality in qualitative research:

1. **Worthy topic** – the study is: relevant, timely, significant, interesting
2. **Rich rigor** – the study uses: theoretical constructs, context(s), data collection and analysis
3. **Sincerity** – the study is characterized by: self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher; transparency about the methods and challenges
4. **Credibility** – the research is marked by: triangulation or crystallization, multivocality, member reflections
5. **Resonance** – the research influences particular readers or a variety of audiences through: aesthetic, evocative representation, naturalistic generalizations, transferable findings
6. **Significant contribution** – the research provides: conceptually/theoretically, practically, methodologically
7. **Ethics** – the research considers: procedural ethics (as human subjects), situational and culturally specific ethics, exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)
8. **Meaningful coherence** – the study meaningfully interconnects: literature, research questions, findings, and interpretations with each other (Tracy, 2010: 840).

Throughout this research, the abovementioned criterion was used as an underlying foundation to ensure rigor, transparency and a meaningful execution of my study. This research was conducted through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and media and document analysis.

### 3.3.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is “looking at the same phenomenon, or research question, from more than one source of data. Information coming from different angles can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research problem. It limits personal and methodological biases and enhances a study’s generalizability” (Decrop, 1999: 158). There are four types of triangulation techniques: (1) data triangulation; (2) method triangulation; (3) investigator triangulation; and (4) theoretical triangulation (Depcrop, 1999; Carter et al., 2014). Data triangulation involves using a variety of data sources such as primary and secondary data (1999). This includes interviews, various documents (e.g. books, promotional materials, minutes of meetings, newspapers, etc.), and pictorial material (e.g. pictures, film, etc.). Method triangulation uses multiple methods to study
a single problem, for instance in this case qualitative and quantitative techniques can both be employed together (1999). Investigator triangulation is concerned with having two or more researchers studying and interpreting the same body of data. This allows for multiple observations, conclusions and perspectives. This type of triangulation is recognized for taking “a lot of extra effort and time” (Decrop, 1999: 159; Carter et al., 2014). Lastly, theoretical triangulation involves the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data (1999).

Given the challenges and potentials of doing research on urban greenspaces, theoretical triangulation was employed in order to develop a comprehensive and meaningful understanding of the research objectives (Carter et al., 2014; Patton, 1999, Archibald, 2016). According to this triangulation technique, using mixed methods are seen to have several distinct benefits such as: “increasing the accuracy of research findings and the level of confidence in them” (Kelle, 2001; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006: 47); “generating new knowledge through a synthesis of the findings from different approaches” (Foss and Ellefsen, 2002; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006: 47); “hearing different voices and bringing into play multiple constructions of the phenomenon” (Moran and Butler, 2001; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006: 47); “reflecting the complexity and multi-faceted ontology of a phenomenon” (Boaler, 1997; Coyle and Williams, 2000; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006: 47); “or logically implementing a theoretical framework” (Bowker, 2001; Coxon, 2005; Nash, 2002; Pawson, 1995; Moran-Ellis, 2006:47). Qualitative methods such as data collection, semi-structured interviews and participation observation were conducted using triangulation in order to effectively carry out the goals of this research.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, EJ has been defined as a political movement, which merges environmental concerns with social justice issues such as race, class, gender and ethnicity to understand how marginalized people disproportionately experience environmental and social
justice issues (Teelucksingh, 2002). The purpose of employing an EJ framework was to move towards a deeper understanding of environmental inequality in order to recognize the unequal distribution of power and resources in society as they link to environmental concerns (Pellow, 2000: 582-583).

3.3.2 Research Design: Case Study

This research was conducted in the form of a case study, informed by a mixed methods approach. Case studies focus on one particular phenomenon “with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes” (Denscombe, 2010: 52) that are specific to that case. Due to the scale and scope of this research, a case study approach was seen as the most appropriate and effective strategy to investigate RNUP. Further, Denscombe (2010) asserts, “the case that forms the basis of the investigation is normally something that already exists” (54). It is meant to be a naturally occurring phenomenon, which “exists prior to the research project and, it is hoped, continues to exist once the research has finished” (Denscombe, 2010: 54, Yin, 2009). This approach also ensures a concrete, narrow focus of the case study while enhancing rigour and cogency. The case study design “facilitates the validation of data through triangulation [. . .] as it captures the complex reality under scrutiny” (Denscombe, 2010: 62). A case study design allows for the possibility of generalizing the planning practices and development of the RNUP for future and/or existing green spaces, especially urban national parks. However, generalizing from a case study has been helpful in some instances, but it has also been critiqued. In this case, there are three specific arguments for why this study can be a model (or generalization) for future green space planning practices. Denscombe outlines the three arguments (2010: 60-61):

1. Although each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a
broader class of things.

2. The extent to which findings from the case study can be generalized to other examples in the class depends on how far the case study example is similar to others of its type.

3. Reports based on the case study include sufficient detail about how the case compares with others in the class for the reader to make an informed judgement about how far the findings have relevance to other instances

- In this case, the RNUP is a model for green space planning and urban development. This is especially the case because it is Canada’s first national urban park, which includes farming and agriculture within the park mandate. Thus, this research is unique but it is also an example of national parks, green spaces and urban agriculture as a whole.

- While RNUP may be a first for Canada, it is similar to the ways in which national parks have been established over the years. Thus, this study is quite comparable to others of its type while allowing for new findings, results and discussions for various aspects of the park.

- Not only does research on RNUP have several characteristics that compare to many green spaces across the globe, but also the purpose of this research is to provide context, comparisons, and suggestions for green space planning and agricultural development.

Furthermore, the case study design allows for the concentration on one specific site for a small-scale research project (Denscombe, 2010: 62) but also has the potential to make an impact on a wider scope.

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and media and document analysis. The following section will provide a detailed description of each method, with a brief section on Positionality and self-reflexivity during the research process.
3.4.1 Participant Selection, Recruitment and Semi-structured Interviews

There were several steps that took place before the interview process began for this research project. To start, ethical considerations had to be taken into account before I contacted any potential interviewees. Lincoln and Guba (1989) outline three ethical levels/guidelines that must be maintained when dealing with respondents during an interview process for research purposes. The following three guidelines were taken into consideration during all stages of the interview process: (1) fully informed consent; (2) protection of privacy and confidentiality; and (3) no deception (1989: 222). That is, fully informed consent is when the interviewer provides the respondent with full information about the research project, which in turn, allows the respondent to make informed decisions about participation. Protection of privacy in the case of informed consent ensures the interviewer maintains all privileged information in a manner that protects the respondent. Finally, no deception ensures fairness, privacy and it is imperative that the interviewer and respondent are on the same page during the interview process.

In order to ensure the abovementioned guidelines were maintained, I sought ethics approval before the interview process. This was approved in May 2015. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling. As such, participants were selected by conducting an Internet search for individuals holding various roles related to RNUP (e.g. planning process, farming, any type of involvement) and organizations that have been associated with the RNUP. A purposive sample strategy was used intentionally to maximize the variation in perspectives brought forward (Esterberg, 2002). I generated a recruitment script, which I used to reach out to potential participants via email and/or telephone (see Appendix A). In a few instances, my email was forwarded over to someone the initial contact found more suitable and willing to be interviewed.
for my research. Further, I was able to attend several events and/or forums related to the RNUP initiative, which gave further insight on potential interviewees. During recruitment, several of the contacts I had reached out to did not respond, did not have the time or were not interested in participating. Ultimately a total of 15 participants were interviewed. All interviews were done in English and I did not set out to investigate a certain demographic, ethno-racial group or gender. Participants were chosen strictly based on their relationship to the RNUP initiative.

Interviews were done in coffee shops, office buildings and/or outdoors on farmland property. Before beginning the interview, participants were given a letter of information and consent (see Appendix B). The participants were asked to review this document and they were encouraged to ask any questions if they were unsure about any of the information that was provided, and then sign the consent form. At this point all participants were informed, via the consent form, that they are under no obligation to participate in this research and can withdraw at any time by contacting me up until the final report is completed. All participants agreed to have their interviews tape-recorded.

In order to facilitate a productive and meaningful interview, an interview guide was created (see Appendix C). The purpose of this guide was to keep the questions organized, succinct and meaningful for the duration of the interview. Using a semi-structured format allowed for more flexibility and fluidity for the direction of the interview. As such, probes were created in the master copy of my interview guide, and it helped to stay rigorous in weeding out any duplication or irrelevant questions (Denscombe, 2010). According to Denscombe (2010), there are ‘open’ and ‘closed’ questions that interviewers tend to pose to their participants. That is, open questions give the participant freedom to provide responses that reflect the “full richness and complexity” of the views held by the participant (165). Whereas, closed questions structure the questions to
fit into “categories that have been established in advance by the researcher” (166). In this case, my questions were all open-ended and allowed participants to express their perspectives, views, feelings freely. Also, because of the semi-structured format of the interview the order in which the topics were considered and discussed varied in each interview. After the first interview, I was able to reorganize the questions in a more suitable manner. In all interviews, the participants were encouraged to give their ideas on the topic and speak more widely on the issues raised in the questions (Denscombe, 2010).

My interview guide was divided into three main sections which focused on: (1) participants role; (2) planning and engagement process; and (3) local food production/urban agriculture. The first section was to gain a better understanding of how and why the participant has been involved in the RNUP initiative, and what their thoughts are on the expansion of Rouge Park into Canada’s first national urban park. The second section inquired about the green space planning and community engagement process for the park. This included questions about the general knowledge of the initiative, inclusivity and accessibility. This allowed for participants to provide their own account of the RNUP and how they felt community members have been included and/or left out. Further, the third section focused on local food production within park boundaries and how that can impact the GTA as whole.

For the purpose of my research, it was important to reduce and/or entirely eliminate participants’ fears of being identified among other members of community organizations, government, policy developers, gatekeepers, farmers and/or the general public. Thus, to maintain anonymity the identity of my participants has been kept confidential and is not revealed in this thesis project. As specified in the consent form, the names of participants were not used in any report, presentation or at any stage of this study. However, direct quotes and organization names (where applicable)
have been used. In order to keep all interview material confidential, data (i.e., notes from the conversations) was stored on an encrypted drive on my personal computer. These files did not include the full names of the participants, and generics (e.g. “meeting with community members” was recorded rather than naming names), and acronyms/initials were used to identify individuals and organizations wherever possible without a loss of meaning. Further, all consent forms were locked in a filing cabinet and interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed into word files.

3.4.2 Participant Observation

In order to gain more insight, I attended events and forums pertaining to the RNUP initiative. The purpose of attending such events was to observe the type of demographic that was in attendance and ascertain who seemed to have the strongest voices in the room. As a part of my research process, I subscribed to receive emails from various environmental organizations. This allowed for a better understanding of their goals and vision, but it also provided me with information on certain community events and forums that were taking place. As a result, I was able to attend the Ontario Farmland Trust’s annual forum, which allotted time to discuss the RNUP and local food production in the GTA community, and RNUP events (i.e. Learn-to Camp, Winter Bird Count, Port Union Waterfront Festival, booths at CNE, in Pickering and Markham).

Attending these events also allowed for unscripted conversations with community members and, in the case of the forum, farm owners who drove in from different cities to attend. During the presentations, I took down extensive notes, which would later prove beneficial for the thesis project. Many conversations that took place were with individuals that had no idea what the RNUP was and how it might benefit food production and urban agriculture. In these cases, the individuals were at the forum for various other presentations/conversations but gained the
opportunity to learn about the RNUP in the process. Also, I did not record the conversations during these events verbatim, but I was able to make general notes on the types of questions I was asked and the comments that were made. I was also able to pick up flyers and pamphlets on the RNUP at these events, which was productive for the document analysis portion of my research.

3.4.3 Media and Document Analysis

In addition to the interviews and participant observation, textual analysis was employed as a source of data for this thesis (Denscombe, 2010). The following content has been analyzed for this research: government documents and official statistics, newspapers, magazines, minutes/records of meetings, website pages and the Internet. In order to complete an accurate media analysis of the type of coverage the RNUP was receiving, I accessed three of Canada’s most popular newspaper databases through the University of Toronto’s Library Database. I focused on articles published by The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and National Post.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the RNUP was first announced in 2011. Therefore, many meetings and public consultations have already taken place. The records and minutes of these meetings were important for my research as they maintained two qualities: (1) the content contained a fairly systematic picture of things that have happened; and (2) the documents were publicly available (Denscombe, 2010). In order to obtain these records, I searched the Internet to go through government documents, RNUP information pages on the Parks Canada website, and the full copies of the legislative Bill(s) which were passed for this park. By accessing these public records, I was able to better understand the context and examine if there were potential gaps in the types of conversations and information that was being projected. Additionally, participants provided me with certain documents they had in their own files in order to enhance
my research findings.

After attending the Ontario Farmland Forum and three Parks Canada events, I was able to make primary contacts and learn more about various environmental organizations that are closely tied to the RNUP initiative. In order to better understand how these key organizations shaped the RNUP initiative, I undertook a thorough investigation of the goals and visions of such organizations and their perceptions of the park. The qualitative nature of this data allowed for a better analysis of the research objectives.

3.5 Analysis

As mentioned above, this research project included data from media sources, documents, interviews and participant observation. I transcribed the interviews verbatim using playback software, which made it easier to slow down the interviews to avoid inconsistencies and/or any missed information. Once my interviews were transcribed, I began using NVivo 11 qualitative software for coding and analysis. Following Esterberg’s (2002) advice, I assigned each interview a number as I conducted the interview. After each interview was transcribed – the transcriptions, field notes and interview guide were all placed in respective folders, which corresponded with the initial code number assigned to each individual interview. This kept the interviews organized and separate for analysis purposes. Further, I used a combination of open coding and focused coding to analyze my data.

Once a researcher begins to immerse him/herself in the data, coding helps to make sense of the vast information. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that coding procedures provide the researcher with the “analytic tools for handling masses of raw data” (13) while allowing them to build rather than test theory (13). Open coding consists of working intensively with data, line by line,
to identify themes and categories (Esterberg, 2002). During this stage, I remained open minded with the data as it was the first step in the coding process. As patterns and commonalities began to immerge, I was able to move to the next step, focused coding. Like open coding, “focused coding entails going through your data line by line, but this time you focus on those key themes you identified during open coding” (Esterberg, 2002: 161). Some of the open coding categories I used throughout were: farming, agriculture, ecological integrity, community, urban planning, outreach and accessibility. These categories also helped when I did line-by-line analysis. As a result, I was able to do focused coding on recurring themes and commonalities within the data. In order to effectively and accurately represent the data, I provide direct quotes to illustrate conversations, themes and tensions voiced by the participants and articulated in the document, media, and participant observations.

3.5.1 Limitations, Credibility and Communication of Results

Since the RNUP initiative is still developing and expanding, little research has been done on this green space. Also, due in part to the RNUP being Canada’s first national urban park, literature on national urban parks in the Canadian context was also extremely limited or nonexistent. RNUP is a large-scale initiative with many different elements. Because the current state of the park is still in its initial phase of creation and management, it would be nearly impossible to cover all areas that require attention. As mentioned in previous chapters, the focus of my research has been on agricultural development, community engagement and green space planning. Thus, my objective was to highlight emerging themes and perceptions of community members and farmers who have not been included in the decision-making process. However, the greatest limitation I encountered during the research process was recruiting participants. While I had imagined more civil society actors, organizations and/or planners would be willing to spare time for an interview
or would at least want to share their ideas and perceptions of the park, many of the individuals I reached out to did not respond and/or were too busy to participate. Thus, the sample size for this research project was relatively small (n=15), and does not reflect the entire community nor can generalizations be made for all individuals residing in the GTA. Another limitation was not being able to access the results of certain surveys and community outreach that was done during the initial phase of the RNUP. Some of the website links did not work so I could not access certain databases. There was potential to enhance my research had these limitations not existed.

As mentioned above, triangulation was employed throughout this research. Despite the limitations, I was able to analyze media records, official documents, interviews and participant observation. Each type of evidence brought forth different strengths and weaknesses, which further enhanced and balanced my research (Esterberg, 2002). In order to ensure credibility, I attempted to bring justice to the conversations I had with the participants by providing direct quotes to complement my research. By using the data (interviews, media records, government/planning documents) and analysis in tandem, it helped to ensure credibility was maintained throughout (Bryman & Bell, 2016).

In order to effectively communicate the results of my study, I will provide the participants with an opportunity for member reflections. That is, all participants will have the chance to read through the parts in which they have been represented. Due to the fact that participant information is confidential, all participants will be contacted privately and spoken to directly about their responses. All participants will also have the opportunity to read through the full thesis. Further, the RNUP is a current and ongoing initiative as it continues to develop and expand in the GTA. My thesis project seeks to assist city planners, environmental organizations and local farmers to better understand various aspects of urban agriculture, and the planning and
outreach process. As such, this research has the potential to contribute, holistically, to the planning and development process of the RNUP. Therefore, it will be shared with the City of Toronto and Durham Region.

To conclude, qualitative research methods through mixed methods triangulation were employed for this study. The purpose of this thesis was to understand how Parks Canada and political decision-makers have been implementing strategies for the creation of the urban park. By analyzing various documents, observing meetings and conducting interviews, I was able to meet the objectives of this study. The following chapter provides the context of RNUP, which is then followed by the results and discussion.
4.1 Rouge Park

In 1994, the province of Ontario released the Rouge Park Management Plan. The main goal of this park was to “protect, restore and enhance the natural, scenic and cultural values of the park in an ecosystem context, and to promote public responsibility, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage” (Rouge Park Management Plan, p. 3, 1994). The draft management plan outlined six key park objectives: preserving natural heritage, cultural heritage, land use, overall management, interpretation and recreation (1994). The focus of these objectives was to ensure the Rouge be protected in terms of the health and diversity of its native species, habitats, landscapes and ecological processes while maintaining the cultural values of the park (1994).

Rouge Park, approximately 47 km² in size, was divided into two sections, a southern section and a northern section (1994). The southern section, extended itself from Lake Ontario to Steeles Avenue, consisted of well-defined valleys of the main Rouge River and the Little Rouge Creek, with a sizeable area of tableland (Figure 1). The northern section from Steeles Avenue to the Oak Ridges Moraine centered on valley systems of the main Rouge River, Berczy Creek, Bruce Creek, Little Rouge Creek, along with a small portion of Morningside Creek (1994). While the green space accommodated a wide variety of land uses, lands surrounding this park were publically owned or leased. The management plan specified privately owned lands would not be a part of the Rouge Park. The park is home to more than 762 plant species (over one quarter of Ontario’s flora), 225 bird species (123 breeding species), 55 fish species, 27 mammal species, and 19 reptile and amphibian species (Wilson, 2012). Situated in a densely populated city, the
Rouge Park was bound by political disputes over its management. It is important to note that environmental and political groups have since been arguing over the protection of this greenspace. As such, Table 1 provides a concise outline of significant moments in the history of the Rouge Park. The RNUP is an extension of the Rouge Park, thus this background information is fundamental to understanding the creation of Canada’s first national urban park.

Figure 1: Map of Rouge Park (http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/community/blogs/summer-reading-series/saving-rouge-canadas-largest-urban-park)
Table 1: Brief History of Rouge Park (http://www.rougepark.com/about/history.php)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Province of Ontario announced its intention to create a park to protect the Rouge River and adjacent lands in Pickering and Scarborough. It established an advisory committee to prepare a management plan for the area and recommended actions for extending the Park into York Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>The remains of a Seneca village from the 1600s are designated a National Historic Site. Known as &quot;Bead Hill&quot;, this archaeological site later became part of Rouge Park. It becomes another of the Park's National Historic resources, along with the eastern branch of the Toronto Carrying Place Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The Rouge Park Management Plan was created by the Province of Ontario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Rouge Park was created. The Ontario government appointed Ron Christie as Chair of the Park's board of directors, which eventually became the Rouge Park Alliance. Gord Weeden was hired as the first General Manager to lead the Park's own professional staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The Rouge Park Alliance approved a management plan for the area of the Park in York Region. The City of Toronto recognized Rouge Park's importance to the health of the City's natural environment when studying its ecological assets, as part of revising its Official Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Park created an Implementation Manual to guide the use of innovative ecological and cultural heritage criteria for assessing watercourses and habitat protection in newly urbanizing areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>The Ontario government donated over 1400 hectares of land, bringing the total size of Rouge Park to 3800 hectares, or 38km². Rouge Park was recognized for its rare Carolinian habitat by the Carolinian Canada. A plaque commemorating this natural legacy was placed at Glen Eagles Vista in the Park in Toronto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The Province of Ontario included a special section on Rouge Park in its groundbreaking Greenbelt Plan. It recognized the Park's management plans and Implementation Manual as key planning documents, as well as the Park's role of protecting a major biodiversity reservoir for the Toronto area. Gord Weeden, the Park's former General Manager, was appointed as Chair of the Rouge Park Alliance by the province of Ontario. The Ontario Parks Association recognized Rouge Park's achievements with its prestigious Protecting Tomorrow Today award. The Town of Markham amended its Official Plan to implement the criteria for protecting new Rouge Park lands in this rapidly urbanizing municipality. Rouge Park's first Park Map &amp; Visitor Guide was created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ontario government dedicated a new natural area to honour long-time environmental activist and journalist, Bob Hunter. The new 202-hectare area of park land in Markham is adjacent to Rouge Park and became part of the &quot;Rouge Park Family&quot;, bringing the total size of the Park to 40km².</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rouge Park awarded Premier Dalton McGuinty with our highest recognition for his government's outstanding support of the Park, a benefit to all residents of Ontario. Celebration Forest opens in Toronto to commemorate the lives of supporters of Rouge Park and those who contributed to the natural and cultural legacy of the area prior to the Park's formation.

2007 Recognizing Rouge Park’s value as “green infrastructure” for the Toronto area, the Ontario government dedicated 600 hectares of land in east Markham. This welcome addition of natural lands helped to bridge the barrier of Steeles Avenue East, and make the Park 47km² in size.

4.2 Rouge National Urban Park

In 2010, the Rouge Park Alliance, an overarching organization consisting of 13 other organizations (i.e. different levels of government, agencies, not-for-profit groups), commissioned a governance and financial review (Wilson, 2012). It was through this report that it became evident a new model of organization, funding and governance was required for Rouge Park (2012). Members of the Rouge Park Alliance include: Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, Region of Durham, Region of York, Town of Markham, City of Pickering, Town of Richmond Hill, City of Toronto, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Zoo, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corporation, and Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. (Foundations of the Rouge Park Alliance, n.d.).

In 2011, the Canadian government and Parks Canada committed to creating Canada’s first national urban park: Rouge National Urban Park. The RNUP management plan was drafted in June 2014. This plan outlines four key strategies for developing a national urban park: (1) A Canadian First – Fostering a new way of thinking about protected heritage areas in an urban setting; (2) A Dynamic, Cohesive Rouge – Managing change in support of a healthy and resilient
park landscape; (3) *A connected and Relevant Rouge* – Forging emotional and physical connections with the park; and (4) *Success through Collaboration* – Nurturing strategic relationships to advance shared objectives (Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, 2014). Additionally, according to this management plan, national urban park status offers more than just the reassurance of permanency for Ontario’s farming community, it also allows park visitors to reconnect with farms and farmers, and provides opportunities to showcase new ways of farming that are effective and rewarding for the community (Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, 2014). Thus, a focus of this initiative is to provide a sustainable and healthy community for Canadians through locally based food production (2014). In later chapters, there will be a larger focus on farmland and local food production in the RNUP.

Linking Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine, this park is close in proximity to a large and diverse network of not-for-profit, public, corporate and community organizations (Parks Canada Concept, 2012). Not only is the RNUP initiative expected to be a huge conservation achievement in one of the most heavily populated and developed regions within Canada, but it has also been referred to as the ‘People’s Park’ for this very reason (Parks Canada, 2015). By referring to this park as the ‘People’s Park’ in a highly dense metropolitan area, the management plan suggests that it “offers engaging and varied experiences, inspires personal connections to its natural beauty and rich history, promotes a vibrant farming community, and encourages [people] to discover Canada’s national treasured places” (Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, p. 11, 2014).

The effort to create an urban park of such magnitude requires a collaborative effort by multiple stakeholders, community members, First Nations, environmental organizations, the general
public and partners. Parts of this thesis also explore how these key players have been involved in the decision making process, who has been left out, and the disagreements that are occurring through various levels of governance and public input. A point of reference for political and environmental organizations is the legislation for preexisting greenspaces. While RNUP is situated on already existing lands of the Rouge Park, legislation for this greenspace needs to be redefined to fit the criteria of an urban national park. Ontario’s Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan have been heavily referenced by environmental organizations in political disputes over the protection and management of RNUP. The following section provides a brief overview of these Acts.

4.2.1 Ontario’s Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

The Greenbelt gives permanent protection to agricultural land, natural heritage and water resource systems within south-central Ontario (The Greenbelt Plan, 2005). Rouge Park is the only place where the Greenbelt reaches Lake Ontario in the Greater Toronto Area (Rouge Park, 2015). The goal of the Greenbelt is to enhance urban and rural areas along with the overall quality of life (The Greenbelt Plan, 2005). The Greenbelt Act is governed in collaboration with The Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow Act, and the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan (Nature on the Edge, 2013). Together they work to protect natural areas, farmland and provide clean air, water and local food while attempting to accommodate new settlement where possible (2013). The Golden Horseshoe is located in southern Ontario and is a densely populated area in Canada, with about 25% of the population residing there (2013). Based on this, the main objective of The Greenbelt Plan is to focus on: agricultural protection; environmental protection; culture, recreation and tourism; settlement areas; and infrastructure and natural resources (The
Greenbelt Plan, 2005). With this kind of protection, the Greenbelt works to delineate and protect prime agricultural and rural areas (2005). With a focus on environmental protection, Ontario’s Greenbelt seeks to protect and maintain natural heritage, hydrologic and landform features, including the protection of flora, fauna and species at risk (2015).

Community members and environmental organizations have often referred to the Greenbelt Plan when discussing and trying to make sense of the RNUP Management Plan. These groups have argued for RNUP to maintain the same level of protection that the Greenbelt provides to its surrounding communities. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan is a part of the Rouge Park’s history and focuses on long-term protection and management of its vital natural resources (Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2001). Along with supporting the health and well-being of the region’s residents and ecosystems, the main purpose of the Oak Ridges Conservation Plan is to provide land use and resource management direction to provincial ministers, ministries, and agencies, municipalities, municipal planning authorities, landowners and other stakeholders on how to protect the ecological and hydrological features of the Moraine (Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2001).

Starting at the Oak Ridges Moraine and flowing south to Lake Ontario, the Rouge River Watershed spans 336km² and includes all the lands that drain in the Rouge River and Little Rouge River (Rouge River Watershed Plan, 2007). The Rouge Watershed and the Little Rouge River are a crucial part of Ontario’s Greenbelt because they serve as the ecological corridor linking environmental systems of Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine in the GTA (The Greenbelt Plan, 2005). This area of the Rouge must comply with Ontario’s Greenbelt Plan for land planning and resource management (2005). While the Greenbelt Plan does not protect the
RNUP as a whole, the park must adhere to some of the terms for Rouge Watershed and Little Rouge River.

4.2.2 Environmental Organizations, Community Groups and Parks Canada

In Ontario, through the authority of the Provincial Government, local and regional municipalities manage land use planning and city development (Whitelaw et al, 2008). As a result, the role of environmental movements in urban planning has increased over the years. Through public participation, collaborative processes, and advocacy, environmental movements continue to act as agents of policy transformation and environmental stewardship (Whitelaw et al, 2008; Hunsberger, 2004). There are varying notions of what, where and how environmental organizations make a difference in city planning. As the RNUP initiative continues to make history as Canada’s first national urban park, several environmental organizations have been at the forefront fighting for environmental protection and trying to ensure ecological restoration remains a priority of the park. There are several organizations that have been involved in the RNUP initiative. Each organization is unique and has been pushing for change through grassroots activism, lobbying and petitions. The following section provides a brief description of Parks Canada and the environmental organizations that have played a role in shaping the RNUP legislation.

Parks Canada:

Parks Canada, also known as Parks Canada Agency, is operated under the Government of Canada and is in charge of protecting and presenting nationally Canada’s natural and cultural heritage, fostering public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.
(Government of Canada, 2015). According to the Parks Canada Charter, the Agency takes on the role as guardians, guides, partners and storytellers, while they remain committed to protecting, presenting, celebrating and serving Canadians (2015). Parks Canada plays a major role in the RNUP initiative as the urban park remains under their supervision, direction and control. Parks Canada is expected to represent, manage and protect all Canadian National Parks. In order to carry out these responsibilities for the RNUP, Parks Canada has collaborated with: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Wildlife Centre, Toronto Zoo and University of Toronto Scarborough (2015). The Agency is in charge of RNUP and the ways in which the land will be taken care of and protected. As such, Parks Canada released a document outlining the top ten conservation benefits of the urban park (see Appendix D). On a larger scale, the agency is responsible for developing a complete system of national parks that is representative of the diversity of Canada’s landscapes. This thesis looks closely at how Parks Canada works to achieve the outlined goals for a healthy, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community. This includes maintaining financial and ecological responsibilities while ensuring community members, regardless of their axis of difference, are included in the decision-making process. The findings from the research will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

*Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS):*

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is Canada’s only nationwide charity dedicated solely to the protection of public land and water (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 2011). CPAWS takes a lead role in trying to ensure nature is protected within all park boundaries so present and future generations can experience “Canada’s irreplaceable wilderness” (2011). According to their mission statement CPAWS envisions “a healthy ecosphere where
people experience and respect natural ecosystems” (2011). Collectively, they expect to achieve this by:

- protecting Canada's wild ecosystems in parks, wilderness and similar natural areas, preserving the full diversity of habitats and their species
- promoting awareness and understanding of ecological principles and the inherent values of wilderness through education, appreciation and experience
- encouraging individual action to accomplish these goals; working cooperatively with government, First Nations, business, other organizations and individuals in a consensus-seeking manner, wherever possible (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 2011).

Before industrial development forecloses the chance to protect fertile and rare land in Canada, it is CPAWS mission to advocate for environmental justice and to protect the “untouched nature” within park boundaries (2011). Based on this, when it was first announced that Canada was in the process of creating its first ever national urban park, CPAWS wrote letters, blogs and recommendations to policymakers about how the funding should be used efficiently to benefit the nature and the general public.

**Environmental Defence:**

“Defending clean water, a safe climate, and healthy communities” – (Environmental Defence, 2015).

Environmental Defence is an organization working to achieve a “greener, healthier and prosperous life for all” (2015). This organization focuses on three main goals: (1) empowering Canadians to take action in their own daily lives; (2) working with industries to build a clean, prosperous economy; and (3) encouraging government to enact policies to protect Canadians’ environment (2015). Over the years Environmental Defence has advocated and petitioned for stronger protection of the Greenbelt and to get rid of the toxic and unnecessary microbeads that are fouling Canada’s lakes (2015). From signing petitions, to lobbying for the ecological integrity of the RNUP, Environmental Defence has been at the forefront when it comes to the
environmental justice of RNUP. In 2012, this organization discovered Enbridge’s Line 9 pipeline had been unsafely exposed in the Rouge River for over three years. Based on this, Environmental Defence began advocating to let community members know Enbridge is trying to send tar sands oil at high pressure through its aging Line 9 pipeline (Environmental Defence, 2015). The purpose of creating attention on this matter was because it would cause negative environmental consequences for Canada’s first National Urban Park – especially in terms of the quality of water for consumption. In order to stop the reverse pipeline expansion, Environmental Defence took on a leading role in the *Paddle to Protect the Rouge* event, which took place on September 22, 2013. The organization has attempted to gain media attention whenever possible to ensure the appropriate levels of protection are met.

*Ontario Nature:*

Ontario Nature is a charitable organization committed to protecting wild species and greenspaces through conservation, education and public engagement (Ontario Nature, 2015). The organization was first established in 1931 as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (2015). “From spearheading the creation of a wilderness area in Algonquin Park in 1934 to working tirelessly for the creation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in 2001; publishing science-based research for scholars and education materials for young naturalists; advocating for Ontario's original Endangered Species Act in 1971 to pushing for its timely revision in 2007, Ontario Nature has been at the forefront of the conservation movement in this province. Today, Ontario Nature's voice is sustained by a Nature Network of more than 150 member organizations and 30,000 members and supporters” (Ontario Nature, 2015). Ontario Nature has been advocating through media for better protection and preservation of the nature found within RNUP. In later
chapters, there is a more in-depth exploration of how Ontario Nature has played a role in the development process.

*Friends of the Rouge Watershed*

Friends of the Rouge Watershed (FRW) is an organization committed to protecting and supporting healthy forests, farms, meadows, flora, and fauna (Friends of the Rouge Watershed, 2015). The organization seeks to form relationships with schools, community groups, religious organizations, businesses, landowners, municipalities, government agencies, community leaders, foundations and environmental groups (2015). This organization seeks to:

- protect, enhance and restore ecosystem health and beauty and fish and wildlife habitat within the Rouge River watershed and surrounding watersheds;
- protect watersheds, air sheds and biodiversity through scientific research, biomonitoring, planning, environmental assessment, communication and accountability to the public;
- encourage productive conservation linkages between many partners, including communities, schools, businesses, governments, and environmental groups;
- foster individual and community environmental awareness, education, involvement and ethics through pro-active programs which encourage environmental leadership and voluntarism and which lead by example (FRW should walk the walk);
- address regional (e.g. smog) and global (e.g. climate change) environmental challenges by developing and implementing community environmental action plans and conservation agreements, as outlined in Agenda 21 of the UN Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1992);
- raise funds and in-kind resources for investment in the health and productivity of our ecosystems, communities and youth (Friends of the Rouge Watershed, http://www.frw.ca, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the Rouge Park Alliance played a major role in the revitalization, redevelopment and expansion of the Rouge Park. In doing so, the Alliance also provided funding to the FRW to hire and train University graduates to educate community volunteers on the importance of ecological restoration, conservation methods and how the RNUP has the potential to be a huge achievement for Canada (Friends of the Rouge Watershed, 2015). This organization also plays a major role in planting trees within park boundaries. This is discussed in detail in
Chapter 5.

David Suzuki Foundation

The David Suzuki Foundation is an organization committed to protecting the diversity of nature, climate and the environment (The David Suzuki Foundation, 2014). From writing books, reports and making presentations to assessing the true value of greenbelts and sustainable practices for businesses, the David Suzuki Foundation continues to play a major role locally in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, and globally across the world (2014). As such, this organization has been a strong advocate for the creation of RNUP. In order to ensure the new RNUP legislation reflects and maintains ecological integrity, the David Suzuki Foundation has petitioned, lobbied and written letters of concern to government and policymakers.

Nature Canada

Nature Canada is a national nature conservation charity in Canada. Over the years, this organization has helped protect parks and wildlife areas (Nature Canada, 2015). Along with being a founding member of the Green Budget Coalition, a group seeking to provide sensible and viable solutions for federal funding aimed at environmental sustainability, growth and development, the main focus of this organization is to make a positive change for issues of national significance (2015). This includes, but is not limited to: citizen science initiatives, urban nature initiatives, building a national network of conservation organizations, building a network of volunteers to care for critical natural habitat sites across Canada and being a voice for nature at the federal level (Nature Canada, 2015).

Specific to RNUP, Nature Canada has been a strong advocate for the sustainable development of
the park. The RNUP has been holding bird watching events over the years, especially since the expansion was first announced. As a result, Nature Canada has been advocating for the Eastern Bluebird conservation, for example the organization has been fighting to end the cut-down of old trees in the park. According to the organization, “standing dead trees and rotting logs provide habitat for [the Eastern Bluebird] species; but the human compulsion to cut down such trees and clean up ‘messes’ of rotten wood runs counter to the interests of bluebirds” (Scott, Nature Canada, 2015). The organization has been working on petitions to ensure the ecological health of RNUP is a priority so that bird species are not harmed. As a whole, the organization has been focused on gaining media attention to help conservation methods for RNUP.

4.2.3 Parklands and Infrastructure

In 1994 when the Rouge Park was first created, the federal government made several commitments to ensure the development of this park. To begin, the federal government provided $10 million in seed money to assist with the conservation efforts of the park. At this time, it was made mandatory for Parks Canada to be lead on the federal department of this project. Through the provision of technical expertise and advice, Parks Canada was expected to create a resource inventory to assist in:

- planning, restoration of natural and/or cultural resources
- development of interpretative programmes and infrastructure (this could include a park visitor centre and exhibits)
- a limited amount of land acquisition, consolidate existing archaeological collections for inventory, cataloguing and assessment – these materials are used to interpret the history of human occupation of the Rouge Valley in scientific publications
- ground water and stream flow monitoring and remediation
- establishment of a native plant nursery to support of vegetation restoration
- development of a vegetation management plan
- establishing long-term ecological objectives for each vegetation community

(Foundations of the Rouge Park Alliance, p. 3, n.d).
Furthermore, funding for Rouge Park was given on a one-time basis (Foundations of the Rouge Park Alliance, n.d.), which meant that financially the park was fairly restricted. Based on these financial constraints and lack of funding for the park, it was difficult to meet the set goals of its management plan. In August 2009, the Rouge Park Alliance retained StrategyCorp Inc. in collaboration with Hemson Consulting Ltd. to provide a review of the park and make recommendations on leadership and financing in order to fulfill its vision (Rouge Park Governance Review, 2010). This governance review also illustrated that the Rouge Park had been lacking: “a consolidated, well defined land base, a comprehensive master plan, a funded implementation strategy, a functional governance model, [and] an articulated park brand (what it is, what it does, and who it is attracting)” (Rouge Park Governance Review, 2010). It is important to note that the Rouge Park Alliance is a political movement and with the “[…] exception of the Chair, appointees to the Rouge Park Alliance sit in a representational capacity, whereby they represent the organization that appointed them. The Alliance is an Advisory Body, not a true decision-making board of directors for the Rouge Valley Park” (Rouge Park Governance Review, p. 10, 2010). Thus, by using this report the Rouge Park Alliance was able to take action and fight for a new model of governance and funding. It was in the 2011 Speech from the Throne that the government of Canada officially announced the creation of Canada’s first national urban park (Public Engagement Report, 2012). Subsequently, on May 25, 2012 during a Budget announcement the Government of Canada committed to $143.7 million over 10 years, from Canada’s Economic Action Plan, for park development and interim operations (Parks Canada, 2015), and $7.6 million annually thereafter to support the national urban park (Public Engagement Report, 2012).
In order to effectively develop and maintain the RNUP, it is evident that a strong financial model and unbiased governance is required. In 2012, the David Suzuki Foundation did a study on Canada’s wealth of natural capital and its economic incentives, with a focus on Rouge Park. In this case, natural capital is described as the land, water, atmosphere and resources associated with greenspace (Wilson, 2012: 9). The findings show that Rouge Park and its surrounding watersheds provide the GTA with an estimated $115.6 million in non-market economic benefits for residents, but the RNUP alone is expected to provide at least $12.5 million in annual benefits (2012). This report emphasizes the financial value of such services, which according to the Suzuki Foundation, tend to be undervalued in market economies, despite being worth trillions of dollars per year, globally (2012: 9). Based on this study, RNUP needs to have a logical economic plan that will work to keep the park alive while it benefits the surrounding communities.

The creation and management of such a large national urban park requires more than just sufficient funding. The RNUP is a protected area established under federal and provincial government. The legislative foundation for RNUP is protected under the Canada National Parks Act which means it remains clear of industrial development including, but not limited to, mining, forestry, oil and natural gas exploration and development, and hydroelectric development (McNamee, 2015). Commercial extractive activities (e.g. sports hunting) are also forbidden on national parklands (2015). Under the Canada National Parks Act public lands are described as:

lands, including submerged lands, that belong to Her Majesty in right of Canada or that the Government of Canada has the power to dispose of, whether or not such disposal is subject to the terms of any agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of a province (Canada National Parks Act, 2016)

These public lands are also subject to the Expropriation Act where applicable. Land rights are an
important part of the RNUP as it covers a significant portion of land in the GTA. In 1972, the Government of Canada acquired 18 600 acres of land within the municipalities of Pickering, Markham and Uxbridge (Canada Gazette, 2015). These lands are known as the “Pickering Lands” (see Figure 2). The expropriation of the Pickering Lands was done in order to develop a major 6-runway international airport.

The Pickering airport lands are an important part of the RNUP history. More recently since the announcement of the RNUP, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that 21 square kilometres in Pickering and Uxbridge are being added to the park (Honderich, 2015). This land is a part of the expropriated land from 1972 and is expected to increase the park boundaries by thirty-six percent (2015). On April 1, 2015, Transport Canada formally transferred 4 722 acres of the western portion of the Pickering Lands to Parks Canada for the creation of RNUP (Transport Canada, 2015). Further, on July 11, 2015 the Harper government announced that Transport Canada would transfer an additional 5 200 acres in the northeast portion of the Pickering Lands to Parks Canada (2015). Of the 18 600 acres expropriated in 1972, Transport Canada is retaining 9 600 acres in the southeast portion of the Pickering Lands for economic development (2015). This development is also set to include a potential (smaller) airport site, but Transport Canada is working on amending regulations to ensure that any development around this airport site will not create a hazard to aviation (2015). See Figure 3 for an outline of the history of Pickering Lands.
Figure 2: Newly Identified Land Uses for Pickering Lands (Canada Gazette, 2015).
In 1972, the Government of Canada acquired approximately 18,600 acres of land, located 56 kilometers northeast of downtown Toronto, for a future airport. Since that time, these lands, typically referred to as the Pickering Lands, have been managed by Transport Canada.

The Government of Canada is taking a balanced approach to the management of the Pickering Lands, ensuring environmental, community and economic demands are being met. As part of this approach, Transport Canada has transferred a significant portion of the lands to Parks Canada for Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP).

On April 1, 2017, Transport Canada formally transferred 21 km² of the northwest portion the Pickering Lands to Parks Canada to extend the RNUP. This is in addition to the 19.1 km² acres of the western portion Transport Canada transferred to Parks Canada in April 2015.

Transport Canada has retained a smaller portion (approximately 35.2 km²) for potential future development.

As a result of the transfers, Transport Canada is in the process of updating the Pickering airport site designation and the Pickering Airport Site Zoning Regulations to reflect a smaller potential airport site.

These regulations aim to protect the smaller site for potential future aviation needs by ensuring land use and development adjacent to and in the vicinity of the airport site does not interfere with safe aircraft operations.

It is important to note that no decisions have been made to develop an airport on the Pickering Lands. Any decision on the development of the Pickering Lands will be based on a sound business case and updated data on aviation demand and capacity.

A needs assessment study based on 2010 data predicted that an airport would be needed between 2027 and 2037. That data needs to be updated.

Transport Canada has initiated an aviation sector analysis to obtain updated aviation demand and capacity data. The work is expected to be completed in 2018.

In 2015, Transport Canada also mandated an Independent Advisor to carry out targeted stakeholder consultations on the economic development of the Pickering Lands.

The 2016 report of the Independent Advisor, along with the aviation sector analysis, will help inform future decisions on the economic development of the Pickering Lands.

Furthermore, housing in Canada’s first national urban park is also expanding, with the potential to bring in economic revenue in the GTA. While there are many preexisting residential areas in the Rouge Valley, five custom residences are currently developing directly on the RNUP lands.

According to the custom builder’s website:

Every home was custom crafted for its specific home site to maximize enjoyment of the spectacular views and exquisite natural atmosphere of this rare gem of a location on the edge of Canada’s largest urban park. Expansive windows can be found throughout the oversized dining rooms, designer kitchens and lavish family rooms. Master suites provide a truly refined standard of luxury design with walk-in closets and lavish ensuite bathrooms. Throughout every room,
discerning homebuyers will be pleased to discover the finest premium features and finishes. Starting from $1,695,000, these exclusive homes will range in size from approximately 3,219 – 6,577 sq. ft. An opportunity this rare will not last long (At the Rouge, Glen Rouge Homes, 2015).

Beyond aesthetic appeal and some small increase in tax revenue for the city, there is no benefit, and certainly no environmental benefit, from creating five profligate houses on the RNUP land. However, the main purpose of the housing development is to allow residents to enjoy the view of a national urban park. These homes also allow the “urban Canadian” to enjoy nature within the comfort of their own backyard. It is expected to increase the economic value of RNUP.

4.3 Local Food Production: Farming in the RNUP

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, according to Parks Canada and city planners, national urban park status will offer more than just the reassurance of permanency for Ontario’s farming community. It will allow park visitors to reconnect with farms and farmers, and provides opportunities to showcase new ways of farming that are effective and rewarding for the community (Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, 2014). One focus of this initiative is to create a sustainable and healthy community for Canadians through locally based food production (2014). Agriculture has been a part of the park mandate since the initial announcement. There are unique and unprecedented opportunities for conservation and farmland protection in the RNUP (Ontario Farmland Trust, 2014). Not only does the RNUP contain some of the most rare and fertile soil in all of Canada, but it also gives the Ontario an opportunity to increase local food production.

The RNUP has diverse agricultural and natural features, but most notable is its rich soil. Much of
the land in RNUP comprises of Class 1 soil – the most rare and fertile soil found in all of Canada. This prime agricultural land is very difficult to find, especially because of the increase in commercial and residential development over the years. However, Class 1 soil is found in many areas of the RNUP and is the last of its kind. Even areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine do not contain such rare and prime agricultural land. Thus, it is crucial that this land be protected for present and future generations. In the RNUP tenant farmers rent the majority of farmland. An objective of this thesis is to examine farmland and local food production within the park. These findings are discussed further in the next chapter.
Chapter 5
The Rouge Uncovered

In this chapter, I use the data collected from media sources, documents, interviews and participant observation that were conducted for this thesis project to answer the research questions. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 3 (Methods), the objectives of this study were threefold. The first objective was to investigate if and how small-scale farmers and community members were being included in the development of the park. The second objective was to examine the effects of power dynamics in environmental governance, land use and the creation of this park on individuals and the community. The third objective was to explore the limitations and biases in government policies and patterns by scrutinizing the criteria used to create the National Urban Park. The common purpose of these objectives was to look at agricultural development and planning practices in Canada. As such, in the first section I provide textual analysis, which looks at media coverage, documents, letters and the legislation for RNUP. The second section will discuss political disputes and the effects of power dynamics between various civil society actors and the government. The final section provides the results of this research that relate to community engagement and participation in the GTA.

5.1 Textual Analysis

5.1.1 Framing Media Narratives

The role of media has become an important source of information, knowledge and pleasure. Media sources are a direct channel to providing people with the latest information on various topics worldwide. However, the type of information that is broadcasted can also affect peoples’ perceptions of issues and generate specific emotions and evaluations about politics (Vreese,
There are several media sources that can be used to convey a message to the public. For example, this includes: television, radio broadcasts, print media (e.g. magazines, newspapers, etc.), social media, stage shows, plays and dramas (Milind et al., 2013). In the case of the RNUP, an important strategy for government organizations and Parks Canada is to use media as a platform to inform community members of changes that occur within the community, new developments, and information about the designated parklands. Canadian policymaking involves a range of social actors, including members of government, political parties, businesses, social/environmental movements, and research institutions (Stoddart and Tindall, 2015: 401). In order to understand the impact of power dynamics in city planning, decision-making and community involvement, I refer back to the EJ framework to critically analyze how media has played a role in the RNUP initiative.

As mentioned in the Chapter 3, I was able to access all newspaper articles published by The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and National Post through the University of Toronto’s online library database. Before narrowing my search, news articles published as early as 1988 – when the idea of a Rouge park was first proposed – were also accessible. The purpose of this research was to focus on the creation of RNUP, thus any news coverage on Rouge Park was not used in this study. While the initiative was introduced in 2011, I began analyzing articles published in 2010 to gauge how informed the public was on changes coming. Table 2 shows the number of articles that were published under each newspaper source from 2010-2016.
Table 2: Number of articles published on RNUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper Source</th>
<th>Number of Articles published in relation to RNUP from 2010-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Toronto Star</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globe &amp; Mail</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Post</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 135 news articles were analyzed in order to understand how these news sources provided coverage to residents and other local actors. Of the 135 articles, some provided very little information on the RNUP and ephemerally mentioned the park. National Post provided the least amount of coverage on the RNUP. Many of the articles that showed up under National Post did not speak directly about the park. It seemed the National Post searches were modified to identify “rouge” “national” and “park” respectively, rather than together. As a result, only eight articles from the National Post were ultimately useful for the purpose of this study.

According to Conway and Jalali (2017), “to date, little research has considered the role of news media in shaping public knowledge, attitudes and actions related to [green space planning and management], yet local news coverage can increase awareness of a topic and influence how people think about an issue” (Conway & Jalali, 2017: 254). There was a clear focus in majority of the articles published in these newspapers. Through focused coding, three major themes were identified: 1) political disputes over land transfers (including the Pickering airport lands), 2) allocation of farmland within park boundaries, and 3) not enough protection - the fight for ecological integrity.

News coverage is a product “of the public relations mills of political leaders, government agencies, businesses, and other organizations” (Berger, 1998: 165). This was made clear in the
media because most of the coverage was strictly related to political issues over land transfers and not enough protection of the park. There were no news articles published in 2010 that mentioned any significant information about a potential national urban park in Canada. In 2011, all three newspapers provided coverage stating the federal government announced the expansion of the existing Rouge Park in order to create Canada’s first national urban park in the heart of GTA.

From 2011-2012 the Globe and Mail published sixteen articles: most articles expressed excitement for a national urban park in Canada, which was seen as having the potential to boost tourism. For instance, an article published in the Globe and Mail in 2011 quotes the Minister of Environment, Peter Kent: “What we’re trying to do is catch the imagination of the tens of thousands of Canadians who travel abroad every year to go to Kilimanjaro or the Serengeti or Bora Bora and remind them that there are equally spectacular and fascinating and magnificent Canadian places to get to” (Globe and Mail, Galloway, 2011). From 2011-2012, the Toronto Star published 25 articles, which included concerns over funding and land transfers from the federal government to the province. In 2012, the Toronto Star published an article highlighting the need for RNUP to remain under provincial control. The news message was as follows:

The Rouge Valley park should stay under the control of the province. The Harper Conservatives made an election promise to create the Rouge Valley National Park when they knew the federal government owned only one-third of the land. They were expecting the province to foot the rest of the bill. This is just one of many Conservative initiatives that requires the province to bear the cost. That the province has to use this Harper initiative to force the federal government to fulfil its past promises of infrastructure cash is a sad testament of how Ottawa fails to fulfil promises when they are off the public radar. With Stephen Harper on an unflinching drive to cut down the size of government, it will be foolhardy for Ontarians to trust that there will be federal money to sustain this first urban national park (Lee, The Toronto Star, 2012).

In June 2014, Parks Canada released the draft management plan for the park. From this point onwards, more concrete information was being published though various media outlets, and
newspapers began to provide more coverage of the park. As mentioned above, the main themes from all sources were political disputes, allocation of farmland and park protection. However, the political disputes almost always focused on how individuals and organizations that were dominantly involved in the process felt about the productive land use and land transfers for the park. This reinforces conceptions of environmental justice and the normative approaches to park planning. It also relates to the binary staging of the main disputes over the RNUP.

Furthermore, upon examining the newspapers in order of the dates in which they were published, it appeared the language used in these articles maintained a voice of authority. By only focusing on the perspectives of government officials, news coverage on the park was biased and almost always highlighted political disputes. In 2015, the Globe and Mail published an article, which outlined the progress of the park in relation to legislation issues. The article begins by showcasing Mr. Pearce’s (a member from Wildlands League), support for the RNUP when it was first announced but quickly shifts to say, “now, people such as Mr. Pearce, who cheered when the federal government proposed a national park for the GTA, are actively fighting it” (Merringer, 2015). Results from the media analysis show that articles overall tend to shift from full support of the park to a primary focus on either the political disputes over funding and land transfers between federal and provincial governments or on the fight for more protection. This will be discussed in the next section.

While political understandings are important for a newly established greenspace of such magnitude, the media fails to account for many other elements of the park. Another finding shows that newspapers are a popular source for access to city projects and developments, but not all people have access to the newspaper. Results from this research highlights that many community members have a difficult time accessing newspapers due to several reasons such as:
affordability, accessibility, and/or language barriers. According to several participants, there were no newspapers written in their primary language which detailed the RNUP initiative. Further, in contrast to the abovementioned findings, during an interview with an avid community member of the GTA, the participant expressed great frustration with the Toronto Star. Not only was he unhappy with how the news was framed in the media, but also because he was being ignored as an involved member of the GTA community that has been a part of the RNUP initiative in many ways. When asked about his thoughts on how local residents have been informed about this plan and what information seems most accessible to community members, he says,

Unfortunately, I don’t think its got enough publicity. The newspaper, many of them publish it, but they don’t have the mechanism to get it around. People have talked. They say, “what Rouge National Urban Park?” People that can easily walk to it. They say, “what is it?” Can you believe that? The coverage in the newspaper has been abysmal…Well the Toronto Star has coverage…But I have sent them literally dozen of letters when they publish something. I say check this out. Here’s what you say but here are the facts, here are the quotes to prove it, here are the so and so. You know what you put in the article or editorial is not correct. But they have never published anything of mine.

In another interview, the participant expressed similar frustration as he talks about his family’s farmland, he says,

I just feel like so much has happened to our farmland but none of it was effectively brought to anyone’s attention. There was no news on it. It was a big deal.

Based the concerns and frustrations voiced by several of the participants, news sources are seen as lacking authenticity and inclusivity in their articles. Results suggest that the media needs to play a bigger role to effectively give voice to community members “with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies” (U.S. EPA, 2000 in Deacon et. al, 2015: 421).
5.1.2 Legislation: An Act Representing RNUP (Bill C-40 vs. Bill C-18)

The RNUP is Canada’s first National Urban Park; therefore it does not fall under the jurisdiction of National Parks Act. The Act was introduced to the House of Commons on June 13, 2014. It was described as a stand-alone Act representing the new Federally protected lands (Becklumb & Williams, 2014). While the Act provided an understanding of park goals, targets and objectives, according to environmentalists and not-for-profit charity organizations it failed to use adequate language to ensure ecological protection of the park. This Legislation demonstrated a shift in the creation of the RNUP. It epitomized a longstanding debate between policymakers, planners and environmental organizations to ensure protection of the environment. The draft management plan and Bill C-40 created political tensions and media frenzies over the creation of, as an environmentalist described, “Weak Park”. This legislation can be found in the Library of Parliament database. During this time, newspaper coverage, magazines and online environmental blogs turned their focus on highlighting the lack of protection and “ecological integrity” in the RNUP mandate. The news headlines read “Political Games over the Rouge National Urban Park”; “Rouge Park stuck in Political Battle over Environmental Protections” “Ontario Pulling out of Plan to create First Urban National Park” (Toronto Star, Globe and Mail). An article in the Globe and Mail states,

Ontario Infrastructure Minister Brad Duguid sent a third letter to federal Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, demanding Parks Canada better protect the ‘ecological integrity’ of the future park. Ms. Aglukkaq has said prioritizing ecological integrity is ‘simply unachievable in an urban setting,’ arguing it would lead to the eviction of farmers (more than half the proposed park is agricultural). Conservative MP Peter Kent told Parliament that prioritizing ecological integrity would mean letting wildfires, pest outbreaks and erosion proceed unchecked (Merringer, 2015).
Environmental organizations sent letters to government and policymakers demanding the park take on a science-based approach in order to ensure present and future generations are able to appreciate and enjoy the park. However, there have been conflicting views on the extent to which ecological integrity needs to be maintained. In an interview with a highly involved community member, the participant states:

National Park Acts include ecological integrity. They allow forest fires and do not put them out unless they are out of control and start approaching the city because it’s a part of the natural process, you know? So adding ecological integrity to an urban park, which is located in the city, is just going to be totally ridiculously insane. I just don’t understand it.

But environmental organizations have remained in conflict with Parks Canada, city planners, policy makers and farmers. In the fight for ecological integrity, letters were collectively sent by several organizations such as: Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature, David Suzuki Foundation, Wildlands League, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, Nature Canada, Sierra Club Canada and STORM Coalition. Upon discussing these letters with a participant from Ontario Nature, she explains:

…we [environmental organizations mentioned above] reached an agreement. We had a lot of discussion of what the key issues and priorities are in terms of the amendments needed. So these documents represent the general consensus of the amendments needed. Though, I mean there are disagreements on other points. Different issues get brought up at different times.

Despite the complexity and structural differences among certain environmental organizations, collectively all agree that ecological integrity be a main focus of the RNUP Act. Letters sent to the Minister of Environment, Leona Aglukkaq requested that amendments be made to Bill C-40. The following excerpts from the letters demonstrate the urgency with which environmental organizations refuted Bill C-40:
“We are writing to express our serious concern that the draft federal legislation to create and manage the proposed Rouge National Urban Park, Bill C-40, does not provide adequate protection for the remarkable ecological values of Rouge Park. In fact, the standard of protection in the Rouge would be lowered from its current status if the Rouge National Urban Park is established under this bill”

“The biggest problem with Bill C-40 is that it does not clearly prioritize nature conservation as the primary purpose of the park, or the top priority for park management. It only requires that the minister ‘take into consideration the protection of its natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes and the maintenance of its native wildlife and of the health of those ecosystems’ in the management of the park”

“Bill to create Canada’s first national urban park remains flawed”

“Prioritizing the protection and restoration of ecological health and integrity, through a science-based approach, is an absolute necessity if future generations are going to be able to appreciate and enjoy the park. Prioritizing nature conservation is consistent with existing federal and Ontario parks legislation, and with the definition of a protected area according to international standards”

-- Collective quotes by Environmental Organizations (names mentioned above)

As a result, these organizations provided recommendations for the amendments they required for the park:

1. Require that ecological integrity be the first priority of the Minister in park management (section 6)
2. Imperative language is needed in the purpose section to signify the duty to preserve the parkland for future generations, and to dedicate the park to the people of Canada for their benefit (section 4)
3. Definitions are needed in the legislation for ecological integrity and health and science-based management (section 2)
4. In the management plan section of the Bill, ecological protection and restoration language should be included in the vision and objectives (section 9)
5. The public consultation requirements should be broadened to include the development of parks policy and regulations (section 8)

Several different letters went out from organizations, however they similarly argue for the ecological integrity of the park. For the sake of brevity, the main recommendations have been provided above.
Ultimately, Ontario refused to transfer lands to the Federal government because of the lack of protection for the environment. This political dispute was the raging topic of discussion when it came to the RNUP in media. As a result of the letters, petitions and controversial statements made to media sources, the House of Commons agreed to amend Bill C-40. As a result, Bill C-18: An Act to amend the Rouge National Urban Park Act, the Parks Canada Agency Act and the Canada National Parks Act was created. This Bill is currently being investigated further before its third and final reading.

Overall, the data suggests that ecological integrity has been a key point of contention in the creation of RNUP. The fight has caused political disputes among government, environmentalists and farmers. The next section discusses agriculture and how the disputes over ecological integrity have impacted farmers.

5.2 Agricultural Development: Local Food for Local People?

The RNUP is located in a densely populated urban hub. At the same time, the park offers a redefined meaning of greenspaces through agriculture within park boundaries. As mentioned in previous chapters, RNUP is the first of its kind in Canada. This park is still in its initial phase, and consists of new elements that are not common in Canadian parks. The first objective of this research was to see how local farmers were being included in the community and whether their voices were being heard. Another objective was to understand how power dynamics operate in green space planning, especially in terms of the environmental governance of land allocated to small-scale farmers. The results from this study have the potential to highlight key areas of local food production for the GTA in Canada’s first urban national park. By employing the EJ framework, conducting interviews, attending farmland events and coding my data, I was able to
identify three major themes that emerged from this research in relation to the RNUP initiative. The following section highlights and elaborates on these research findings.

5.2.1 Tales of the Field: Political Conflicts between Farmers and Environmentalists

Environmental issues are often permeated with tensions arising from centuries of colonial exploitation, global economic inequalities, and the challenges of accepting different ways of knowing and valuing nature (Martin, McGuire & Sullivan, 2013). This was clearly demonstrated in this research project. As mentioned above, environmental organizations had a strong viewpoint on the importance of ecological integrity of the park. While this was a priority for environmentalists, these organizations did not directly oppose agriculture in the park. In an interview with an environmentalist, the participant states:

…depending on the rules and the way the whole agriculture piece is handled, it could be an amazing opportunity to promote sustainable agriculture. I mean that’s what I would like to see. The agriculture piece. Local sustainable food production. That’s what I think would be worth showcasing in a National Park. I mean it will be a part of the world where we could have agriculture and nature side by side. But only through ecologically sustainable methods of farming and using the environment.

For the most part, environmentalists have dominated news media and attracted the attention of planners, policymakers and government through letters, documents and the fight for amendments to government legislation of the park. Findings from my research and conversations with farmers show that they have opinions that are in opposition with environmentalists. During an interview with a farmer, he expressed anger towards environmental groups as he said:

…Us farmers do not get along with environmentalists. Put us in a room together and we just won’t get along…we have yet to attend a meeting together in the same room. That’s why Parks Canada meets with farmers alone. You see…they
make so many claims about the environment but don’t understand the importance of agriculture.

One of the many activities Parks Canada promotes and encourages is tree planting on RNUP lands. This is an activity that allows youth to “experience nature” but also gives environmental groups, in support of the RNUP, the chance to get involved on a different scale. While this research finds that environmental justice has been at the forefront of political disputes in the creation and management of RNUP - social production (i.e. tree planting) can be seen as the production of uneven urban environments and environmental injustice (Heynen, 2003: 980).

According to Heynen (2003), tree planting is done through a myriad of natural and societal processes and as such “trees within the urban built environment exude urban power relations as much as any other marker of class” (983). Referring back to the literature on environmental justice it is clear that tree growth is related to natural and social processes and where they grow/are allowed to remain depends heavily on the power differences and the political economy (Heynen, 2003). In the case of RNUP, tree planting was a communal issue raised by all farmers that were interviewed, as discussed below.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, most of the farmland on RNUP lands is classified as Class 1 soil: the rarest, richest, most fertile soil in all of Canada. It is also the most endangered soil. This is further emphasized in an interview with a farmer as he argues,

…whether you plant a tree or build a house on class 1 agricultural land, the productive capability of that land is lost. And that’s what I was really pushing in 2011…if we decide years from now that there is a food shortage and we want to go back and farm that land…well you can’t because once it’s destroyed it can’t be farmed on.

His frustration links directly to tree planting and retrofitting manmade elements to the park. He goes on to say:
...listen, I’m not saying don’t ever plant a tree on class 1 land, but there’s so much land here that is 3rd and 4th class land, lets at least work on all that first and then think about it. I honestly think that people sat in a room for the most part and looked at maps and said oh this looks like a nice place here, lets plant here, put swamps here, etc – they didn’t really walk every farm and say oh that doesn’t make sense. I mean they added a pond…a manmade pond…which doesn’t necessarily follow the guidelines for ecological integrity, especially since they’re fighting so much for it…but I guess they built it because they wanted to create habitat which is fine but don’t build that on class 1 agricultural land – that’s my only point. There are lots of other places to do it.

In another interview, the farmer shared the same sentiment as he says,

…they stated that they wish to maintain a farm and agricultural base and presence, but what they don’t seem to realize is that with farming, as with many other lines of work, it’s a matter of scale. You cannot make a living on 100 acres, you need a wider base – the equipment is so expensive it has to be spread over a much wider base. And one of the disservices they did was to plant trees on operating farmland. [A family member] lost some of his very best farmland to tree planting. Mind you I’ve been planting trees all my life, I’m a great promoter of planting trees. But if only it could be limited to marginal land. That’s all I ask.

The discussion of ecological integrity appeared to be a frustrating conversation among farmers.

Additionally, in an interview with a farmer and active member of an organization (which has remained anonymous to maintain confidentiality upon the participants request), the participant says,

In the civil areas of the Rouge, the human disturbance is significant. Especially in the cultural areas. On Beare road trail…on the south end…we went bird watching. Nothing there is natural…its all been man made in the last several years. But I guess people view it differently. Give it 100 years and it will develop an ecosystem but right now it’s just a landfill. I just don’t understand ecological integrity. I’ve been noodling around the Parks Canada website for the past couple of days just trying to figure out what ecological integrity is. Recently, I finally made a comment at a public meeting with Parks Canada. I said it sounded to me as if it were an aspiration. It’s saying ‘I commit to living a life without sin’…you know? But everybody can say that and everybody recognizes that it’s aspirational…it’s not possible for any human being to do that. It’s just a lot of politics where it didn’t need to be.

These reported examples are reflective of the concerns raised by all farmer participants in terms the emphasis on ecological integrity. The fears, frustrations and anxieties over losing rare and
valuable farmland have become a growing concern among farmers in the GTA. According to my findings, farmers believe that little has been done to ease these tensions. Instead, the general consensus was that farmers felt their voices were not being heard because ecological integrity took the lead on the entire RNUP initiative. Overall, through my research it seems that Parks Canada only took notice of the most demanding and vocal organizations when attempting to implement changes in the management plan. For instance, ecological integrity became the main priority after environmental organizations strongly advocated for it, and for farmers tenant/lessee agreements were the primary focus. On the one hand, farmers felt a great sense of relief that Parks Canada was in talks to extend lease agreements, but on the other hand they still felt that the fight for ecological integrity was destroying their farms. As mentioned in the literature review, the binary staging of environmentalists and farmers became the main focus because these were the conversations that kept recurring when conducting my research. These competing discourses are further highlighted in findings on land disputes and tenant-farming agreements as discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 Disputes over Land

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Pickering lands have been a key component in the creation of the RNUP. In conversations with farmers, they expressed deep distress caused by the expropriation of 1972. Land disputes over this airport have been ongoing for many years now. In an interview with a farmer who lost his land due to the expropriation, he says,

…my parents owned fifty acres of land and they got expropriated. After the expropriation there was a big recession, an oil crisis, a whole bunch of things happened politically so they decided not to build the airport at that time. Now the government had 38 000 acres that they needed to do something with…along that time there was a movement from Scarborough from some environmental groups, particularly one lady, Louis James, who kept saying we need to preserve
farmland... So there was a lot of pressure from Scarborough to sell the land back to developers and rebuild it... After some time in 1994 Rouge Park was created. All along there was a public consultation process but never was there a voice for agriculture at any of those meetings. They would invite you to the public meetings but there was never someone making decisions for agriculture. When the Bob Hunter Park was created in the Rouge Park some of the most rare and fertile lands were forested on. We [farmers] lost a lot of land.

In another interview, a farmer shared his personal experience relative to the expropriation as he states: “the expropriation changed my life forever... it really affected my parents. It took a great toll on my family”. The farmers explained that after expropriation, the land was too expensive to repurchase. Thus, majority of the farmers have been leasing farmland (in most cases the same farmland that was once owned by their family members) in the GTA. However, Farmers expressed an equal sense of relief and gratitude towards Parks Canada for working on extending the lease agreements for working farms on the RNUP. One participant explains the importance of lease agreements:

... tenant farming is a challenge because of the whole length of the lease time. That’s the single biggest thing and no provision for cancellation. If there is a provision for cancellation then the lease is only as long as the provision for cancellation. They always talk about a 5-year lease but it was always a 1-year lease because they could have you out in a year. This basically says that we can have you off this property in a year so it makes it very difficult for agriculture. Agriculture is the most capital intensive industry there is a huge amount of capital that goes into it... so if you’re going to have a career in agriculture which is typically 30-35 years you need to have land security or land tenure. There’s no point of my kids or grandkids taking over the farm if they don’t extend the lease because it’s just not worth it... there’s no incentive...

The reason Transport Canada had short-term lease agreement for tenants was because the government was unsure of how to best use the land. Farmers felt vulnerable as they were concerned they could be told to get off their farmland at any point and there was nothing that could be done. The farmers all shared the same sentiments as they showed deep frustration when explaining that a 1-year term for farming means that they cannot make lucrative investments in
During an interview with a community member heavily involved in the RNUP initiative, the participant says,

…it’s no secret that farmers won’t invest their money in expensive equipment because they’ve only been given 1-year leases. I’ve been to meetings where they have said that we’re not putting 10 000 dollars in a draining system that protects the head waters there if we are going to be kicked off the land next year.

The political disputes over land stewardship and environmental governance have been on going. Furthermore, crops grown on the farmlands designated to RNUP are also very limited. Berries, sweet corn, soy and wheat are the main crops dominating these farms. Again, farmers disclosed that this was directly correlated to the lack of extended lease agreements. However, in one instance, an interview revealed the creation of a tropical garden in 2005. This was expressed in a personal story told by a participant about his farm. He explains that his children had a “Filipino nanny” growing up who often stayed with the farmers’ family. As such, one day the “nanny” and her husband requested if they could use a small portion of the land to grow vegetables. In turn, this resulted in a small family owned tropical garden. The description of the garden suggested the farm was “a simple idea, hobby and pastime to fill a craving for tropical vegetables” (2013). This tropical garden is the first of its kind in the GTA, operates seasonally, and opens to the public on Saturdays from 9am to 11am. The garden features the following produce: calalou, eggplant, bitter melon fruit, Chinese water green, squash flowers, squash leaves, field tomatoes, long beans and yellow zucchini. This small tropical garden is reflective of the different types of produce and crops that can be grown on Class 1 agriculture land within the RNUP. However, as of yet, there is very little diversity in the range of farmers’ and the types of crops that they grow.

As a result, Parks Canada is currently working on providing farmland tenants with 30-year leases. Based on the conversations I had with farmers, this will enhance local food production by allowing them to make more investments and grow more crops.
5.2.3 Lack of Diversity

Through participant observation during public meetings on the RNUP, farmland forums and interviews it became evident that the initiative lacks diversity. When participants were asked about the type of crops being grown and the diversity of farmers – both questions received a blank stare or a blunt no. In an interview discussing local food production in the GTA, the participant says,

…come to think of it, there are no ethnic farmers that are farming the land. Well there’s Judy’s Tropical Garden, which opens every Saturday. It’s attached to Whittamore’s Farm. It’s the only one. You should take your parents there, they’ll probably like it.

The last comment made by the participant shifted the conversation into an uncomfortable racialized dynamic which, based on my own evaluations of the conversation, further reinforced the ways in which race operates as a form of difference in the way an individual is perceived. In this conversation, it seemed rather obvious that the comment was directly correlated to the colour of my skin. As a woman of colour, a personal objective of this research was also to understand the ways in which individuals are being included/excluded in the decision-making process of the park. In another interview with a member working closely with Parks Canada, questions were asked about the diversity in the planning and agricultural elements of the park and this participant (white, male) said:

…see to me you’re white. I don’t know. I wouldn’t classify you as anything else. But if you don’t consider yourself white…then sure I’ve seen many like you visiting the park and on hikes…

This incident was a clear example of colour-blindness as mentioned in Guthman’s article. While there seemed to be no overt racist intent, this participant’s refusal to see/admit race difference for the potential fear of being deemed racist further perpetuates notions of injustice. As I was
analyzing and coding my data, I looked through my field notes during site visits for meetings, events and forums. I noted that I was the only person of colour at four out of the six events. These events were specifically related to farming and agriculture. Also, all farmers’ interviewed for this research were white males (which seemed typical of the farming community in the area). Findings suggest that most farm lessees and owners are predominately white, male and over the age of 35. This was also confirmed in multiple interviews with farmers: one participant says, “There are no ethnic farmers…nope can’t think of any”. Referring back to Chapter 2, this further illustrates Wakefield et al’s description of the absent and distorted voices in the agricultural system. In this case, the dominant perceptions of farmers and farm work excluded certain voices at these meetings and by doing so it legitimized historical and ongoing practices of exclusionary acts (2015). This emphasizes the need for public engagement and outreach to community members that are unaware of the farmlands within the RNUP.

In addition, during the interviews, when asked about the diversity of crops that were being grown in the GTA, the main crops reported by participants were: soy, wheat, berries and sweet corn. These findings emphasize a need for the GTA to farm crops, vegetables and fruits that have the potential to enhance food security and local food production in the community. As such, the diversity in crops can satisfy the needs of a wider demographic which in turn would allow for more locally produced food to be distributed within the GTA.

Since the RNUP is still in the process of land transfers and boundary-setting, there are several vacant areas within the park that can be leased out to potential farmers. Currently, findings show, that there are no measures in place to engage the public (e.g. community members, newcomers) with information on how to lease farmland and grow diverse crops. During an interview with
Parks Canada, I asked the participant how community members and local residents have access to farms if they want to lease the land (e.g. small-scale farming). The participant’s response was:

…we’re still working out our leasing strategy so I don’t have all the answers for you. We want to provide opportunities to people, so when farmland becomes available we would love to open that up so people have opportunities. Open it up so that people are aware that there is an opportunity to farm this small piece of land whether that’s done through a competition or a bidding process, we aren’t sure. We are just trying to figure that out right now…

When asked if the participant can provide an example of this, he says:

…so for example we could have a piece of land that’s farmable that opens up, we would then advertise that we have X amount of land that’s a part of the RNUP and we would like to have this grown or we would like to see this kind of farming…

I then asked the participant why Parks Canada feels responsible for choosing/determining what kinds of crops can be grown on the farmlands and whether this was a factor in deciding whether the farmland would be given to individuals. As such, the participant responded by saying,

I’m just saying theoretically, it could just be that we have this land and submit your proposal and we will review it.

Thus, on the one hand, park planners and Parks Canada have suggested that they have followed an all-inclusive approach to meetings, discussions and decision-making of the RNUP development; and on the other hand, through observation sites and interviews with a small group of individuals, it became apparent that this was not the reality of the situation and many people felt left out or unaware of what was really happening in terms of land allocated for farming in the park. The RNUP needs to move beyond normative understandings of national parks in order to ensure environmental justice and inclusivity on all levels. As mentioned in Chapter 2, urban greenspaces continue to expand and as a result, planners have shifted towards
a better understanding of food systems planning. With farming as a new addition to the urban park, community participation is important for understanding and implementing effective planning strategies (i.e. greenspace planning and food systems planning) that can have the potential to include more community members of the GTA.

5.3 Community Participation and Outreach

The creation of RNUP went through two distinct phases before a newly defined legislation was created to meet the needs of a national urban park. Phase one was a park concept, a document created in order to explain the new park to community members and gain public input. Phase two was the draft management plan, which was a complete final draft of the park objectives, strategies and goals.

In June 2012, Parks Canada released the RNUP Park Concept. The Park Concept was a broad overview of how the RNUP would be established, protected and managed (Parks Canada, 2012). There were nine guiding principles developed by stakeholders: “(1) foster a culture of community and youth volunteering, engagement, respect and partnership; (2) inspire people to experience this park; (3) environmental leadership in park operations; (4) collaborate to ensure multi-modal connectivity and access; (5) inclusive, progressive governance led by Parks Canada; (6) respect and support sustainable agriculture and other compatible land uses; (7) honour diversity, local heritage, cultural inclusiveness... past, present and future; (8) maintain and improve ecological health and scientific integrity; and (9) encourage people (especially youth) to learn and connect with nature” (Parks Canada, 2012). This park concept, according to the description provided by Parks Canada, was developed from ongoing discussions with federal, provincial, municipal, Aboriginal and community stakeholders and partners (Parks Canada,
2012). However, through my interviews, several participants expressed that they were not informed about meetings or surveys that were conducted for public input.

Parks Canada has been clear on its attempts to engage youth in park activities and bring youth out to more events. In order to receive their input, on February 24, 2012 a youth workshop was held at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus. Participants came from various organizations located near the RNUP such as: University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, 4-H Ontario, Malvern Family Resource Centre, Centennial College, YMCA GTA, East Scarborough Storefront and Dunbarton High School. Many experiences, outlooks and interests were discussed by youth through “gamestorming” (Agora, 2012). The results from the games outlined what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it, the experiences they wanted to have in the park and how they want to get involved. In terms of general knowledge of this workshop, however, not all youth had the opportunity to attend because “information was not as widely spread as it should have been” (Interview, Community Member).

On May 25, 2012 Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment, launched a public engagement report to follow-up on the Park Concept. According to the engagement report the results were as follows:

Almost half of the survey respondents were between 30-60 years old, with the remainder split evenly between the 18-29 and 60 plus age categories. Only 23 people under the age of 18 completed the on-line survey. More than 70% of respondents lived within 2 hours of the existing park, with the remainder being from outside Ontario or Canada. Of the 4% of respondents living outside Canada, responses came from the United States, South Africa, Australia, Brazil and Germany. When asked whether they had visited the existing park, 59% of respondents said yes. 99% of all respondents indicated that they would consider visiting Rouge National Urban Park. Almost half of the 41% of respondents that have not visited the existing park live within 2 hours of the park (Public Engagement Report, 2012).
During an interview with a Planner, public engagement was described in detail as he told me what had been done before the draft Management Plan was created. He says,

…so we have had public consultations on two documents, one was a Concept document to kind of give you the overall, where we see the park what we see the park being and that was based on a lot of input and involvement between stakeholders, partners, governments, NGOs and First Nations as well. And then we took that out to the public in the summer of 2012. We had public meetings with municipalities so Pickering, Scarborough, Markham and also Downtown. But we also attended, I’ve done I dunno how many presentations to you know clubs, rotary clubs, environmental groups, Pickering Field Naturalists, high schools, and then also we made sure we had a community event. So for example the West Rouge, they have a great festival we had a booth, a weekend booth there. The Markham fair – we had a booth there for years as well. So that was in 2014.

By providing this description, he went on to explain that they did significant amounts of outreach to ensure most community members were included in the process. However, this was not the reaction of participants when asked about the outreach process during my interviews. In these interviews, mixed reviews suggested that there could be better ways to reach out to the general public about the park and to hear their input. For instance, there was not a lot of sustained decision-making with the communities that were adjacent to the park (i.e. Malvern community).

While Parks Canada created events for the general public and youth, results from various participant observation sites and interviews suggest that there are still gaps and inconsistencies within their public engagement process. For example, in an interview with Malvern Family Resource Centre, the participant voices frustration when asked about the public engagement process. The participant says:

I do believe efforts were made to engage people from the community. While a fair number of voices were heard from Scarborough and areas surrounding the Rouge, I haven't seen many from the Malvern area being engaged.
Additionally, through participant observation at various events, I was able to make observations on how the community members were being engaged. In the summer of 2016, Parks Canada had a booth set up at the Canadian National Exhibition place. This was a great opportunity to engage individuals from all over the GTA and to help immigrants become familiar with the RNUP initiative and how it can influence their daily living (a goal as mentioned in the draft management plan). In order to effectively make field notes on this public event and understand how Parks Canada engages with the public, I stayed near the booth for approximately 2-3 hours. During this time, I was not there for the entire duration as it was a small booth in a crowded area. Due to proximity and traffic, I was forced to move around to remain out of the way. The booth was set up with pamphlets and brochures on the role of Parks Canada as a whole. There were various booklets on National Parks across Ontario. There was also information on the RNUP. The primary focus of this booth was to engage individuals (and from what I noted, mostly children and youth) to come to the booth and get “environmental tattoos”. While this was a great strategy to attract individuals to their booth, the information about the RNUP did not seem like a priority. During the time that I spent near the booth, conversations were geared towards tattoos and the excitement children felt upon receiving it, with less time spent on explaining the RNUP initiative to individuals that may not have a sense of the park. This was noteworthy because public consultation reports provide numbers of people that go to the booths, but it suggests that overall this is not a good metric for gauging consultation efforts.

Thus, results gathered from several interviews and through my own observations at public events, show that Parks Canada is making attempts to reach out to the public and receive their input. However, more needs to be done to reach out to communities and individuals that may not be able to attain information through other modes. Following the Park Concept and Public Engagement Report, the RNUP draft management plan was drafted which outlined the final
goals and vision of the park while explaining how these goals would be achieved.

In my interviews with Park Canada staff, participants made it a point to constantly remind me that RNUP is not categorized under *National Parks* in Canada, as it is a *National Urban Park*. As such, it requires its own legislation and regulations. The draft Management Plan became public in June 2014. The overall approach of the plan was to integrate “four cornerstone elements of the park concept: conserve natural heritage, connect people to nature and history, support a vibrant farming community, and celebrate the cultural heritage character of this special place” (Draft Management Plan, 2012: 7). While the plan provides strategies, objectives, actions and targets for the park, figure 4 shows the main strategies and objectives of the plan.
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<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Canadian First</strong>—Fostering a New Way of Thinking About Protected Heritage Areas in an Urban Setting</td>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 1:</strong> Rouge National Urban Park is a cohesive and evolving mosaic of diverse landscapes, demonstrating national leadership in the management of protected heritage areas in an urban context.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 2:</strong> The concept of a National Urban Park is understood, supported, and celebrated.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 3:</strong> Rouge National Urban Park is a gateway for urban Canadians, encouraging discovery of national conservation initiatives and the network of protected heritage areas in Ontario and across Canada.</td>
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<td><strong>A Dynamic, Cohesive Rouge</strong>—Managing Change in Support of a Healthy and Resilient Park Landscape</td>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 1:</strong> The health and resilience of the park’s ecosystems and cultural resources are enhanced through conservation.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 2:</strong> A sustainable, vital park lessee community is built on community relationships, economic viability, diversification, and environmental stewardship.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 3:</strong> A dynamic, adaptive management system facilitates well-informed decision-making to improve the health and resilience of the park’s natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Connected and Relevant Rouge</strong>—Forging Emotional and Physical Connections with the Park</td>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE 1:</strong> Visitors, outreach audiences, and stakeholders from inside and outside the GTA feel a new and strengthened connection to the park.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 2:</strong> The Park’s welcome areas offer visitors a warm arrival and are accessible by various means.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 3:</strong> An evolving and diverse spectrum of activities and experiences enables visitors to develop personal connections with the park in a safe environment.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 4:</strong> Park users of different backgrounds and abilities move easily through the park via a connected network encompassing different travel modes.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>OBJECTIVE 5:</strong> Visitor experience is enriched by a Park trail network that supports ecosystem connectivity and health, cultural heritage conservation, and park farming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the plan consists of 45 pages of information on the RNUP strategies, objectives, actions and targets, there are many issues related to this draft. In an interview with a planner, I asked the participant to elaborate on the management plan by describing his or her own perceptions. The participant responded,

Well we’re working really on a new model of park. That’s one reason we have a legislation, it’s not a National Park so that’s been a really interesting and actually quite fulfilling challenge I think just as a planner because over 2/3rds of the park right now is in agriculture. But in a National Park not only do you not see that but also you are not allowed to have agriculture in a National park. So also at the same time in a National Park we have cultural heritage but it’s given a very secondary role. Here, this park has such a rich cultural history both under the ground and on top of the ground now and just the communities that are there as well…And a good example is the farming community and that’s where all the public comments that we have received have seen farming as an opportunity to connect people with food…So it’s been a challenge from a planning standpoint to do that. How do you do that and the management plan is not prescriptive in terms of where that will necessarily follow on from that but it really establishes a very strong framework for that. So that was really written in inspiring language…But inevitably when you have this many people living next to a park they bring concerns about how many people should the park accommodate,
would it be loved to death, is nature being given enough of a priority, that sort of thing…but of course you get people with varying perspectives and all of them help, you know? People might think it’s this against that but no it’s really understanding and recognizing what’s important to people and working to integrate their things in a way that we’re not kind of losing one thing in order to favour another.

While this participant clearly supports the integration of a variety of roles and uses for the park, environmental groups have argued against the draft management plan suggesting that it makes “vague” claims throughout. In an interview with Ontario Nature, the participant voiced frustration when saying:

The management plan is fairly weak in a number of key areas and we’ve provided public documents because this is not acceptable, you know?

Many environmental organizations have voiced their opinion on how important it is for the management plan to be revised. During this interview, I was able to view documents and letters that were sent out to planners and Parks Canada staff in order to address the key areas requiring amendments. The following section is an outline, taken directly from the letter, of the comments and recommendations suggested by Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence:

(1) Need to prioritize ecological integrity and biodiversity conservation
   - draft management plan fails to prioritize ecological integrity and the protection and restoration of the park’s outstanding natural values
   - the statement “cohesive and evolving mosaic of diverse landscapes” (see Figure 4 above) is vague and seems meaningless
   - the target in the plan is also week and inadequate in terms of the direction needed to drive positive change (e.g. “the park features a mix of natural, cultural, and agricultural resources”)
   - in comparison, the 1994 Rouge Park management plan seems clearer and prioritizes the protection of nature

Recommendation: Provide clear management direction by prioritizing ecological integrity and the conservation of biodiversity. In the vision statement, consider incorporating language from the longstanding vision of the Rouge Park Management Plan, which prioritizes ecosystem...
protection.

(2) Need for strong targets and identified deadlines
- draft plan consists of long, disorganized list of actions and vague targets with environmental considerations sprinkled throughout
- there are a few deadlines associated with actions to be undertaken
- the plan lacks a cohesive framework with well-defined, measurable targets and set deadlines that will drive the achievement of specific environmental outcomes in a timely fashion

Recommendation: Provide a more coherent framework for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation including specific, measurable targets and set deadlines. Consider including a table which sets out all this information in one place so that the logic of the plan with respect to protecting wildlife and ecosystems is readily evident.

(3) Need to clearly state agricultural priorities
- plan needs to provide clearer direction about the type of farming that would be deemed compatible with the protection of ecological and community health and that would be worthy
- troubling that the plan states that Parks Canada will take action to promote sustainability in farming (p. 21) and yet the two actions outlined make no mention of the natural environment whatsoever
- plan emphasizes diversity of farm types, sizes, and crops but to what end is this increase in diversity intended, and what should it consist of?

Recommendation: Provide greater clarity regarding agricultural priorities to ensure that farming operations on public park lands transition over time to focus on ecologically sustainable local food production that is compatible with the protection and improvement of water quality, biological diversity and the health of the Park and surrounding communities.

(4) Need to meet or exceed provincial policy
- in 2013, governments of Ontario and Canada signed a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the transfer of Provincial lands to the Federal government. Clause 2.09 in the agreement requires Parks Canada work with the Ontario Government to develop written policies that “meet or exceed provincial policies, including policies set out in the Greenbelt Plan 2005, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe 2006 and the Big Move”
- ecological integrity is not even mentioned in the draft management plan

Recommendation: Acknowledge and set out specific objectives, actions and targets intended to meet or exceed provincial policy commitments with regard to ecological integrity and the
creation of a 600 metre wide ecological corridor connecting Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine

(Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence, 2014)

Furthermore, the organizations also took the strategies and objectives (see Figure 4) and provided specific comments under each. For instance, objective two in the second strategy states, “a sustainable, vital park lessee community is built on community relationships, economic viability, diversification, and environmental, and environmental stewardship” and as a direct response to this objective, the organizations argue:

This objective lacks the contextual information needed to make sense of the proposed objective and actions. There is no information provided about the type of farming that is currently occurring, nor the lease arrangements that are currently in place. It is thus difficult to understand what the public interest is with respect to ‘the continuation of current farming practices’ and the implementation of a ‘comprehensive long-term leasing strategy’ (Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence, 2014).

This probed questions such as:

- Are current farming practices ecologically sustainable? Do those who lease the lands pay a fair market price? What kind of diversity currently exists? Will long-term leases include requirements to operate in ways that are compatible with the protection and improvement of water quality, biological diversity and the health of the park and surrounding communities? (Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence, 2014)

While these environmental organizations believed the RNUP provides unique opportunities for agricultural heritage (e.g. community-based agriculture, incubator farms, community gardens) and ecological approaches to farming, they felt that there was still work that needed to be done to maintain the health of the environment. Participants that were interviewed who were affiliated with these and other environmental organizations shared the same sentiments overall.

Specifically, in the letter given to key policymakers, Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence argue:
the strategy around [agricultural heritage], including a defensible rationale that would guide park managers, is lacking. We are concerned that these options will be facilitated only on an ad hoc basis, ‘when and as lands become available,’ (p.21) especially if long-term leases are granted to current farming practices which may be unsustainable and less desirable from a community and/or environmental perspective. We are also concerned that, according to the transition strategy, Parks Canada may enter into discussions about leases and farming in the park without involving conservation organizations and other stakeholders. The plan only mentions consulting with lessees and the local agricultural community (p.38) about these issues. Such an approach would be unacceptable from our perspective given the potential adverse environmental impacts that this particular land use may have and the broad public interest in the park” (Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence, 2014).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, through triangulation and focused coding I was able to go back and forth between various data sets for analysis. Interviews with planners show that they recognize environmental organizations are having a difficult time with the draft management plan. In an interview with a planner, the participant says,

Well…I think they are misreading it…[laughs]…I think we are not…you know what, I heard that we will allow anything…[laughs]…which is absolutely untrue. We have committed to meet or exceed the Greenbelt policies. And you know not all environmental groups are saying that, there are just a few quite vocal ones that are saying our focus has been on integration and obviously certain areas and certain interests will predominate in certain areas but we will always be thinking about the environment. [In terms of the comparing the RNUP Management Plan to the Greenbelt plan] it has different perspectives…our management plan is not worded in the same way…it’s a different type of document than what you would see in the Greenbelt Plan. Parks Canada’s management plan model is kind of half corporate plan…it’s a plan for Parks Canada to guide its actions in the park as well as a plan for the park. Whereas the Greenbelt plan is primarily a policy plan so it is very detailed and it’s more detailed than what management plans would normally be and that’s why we would be doing follow up planning. So…yeah…I think that it’s probably the fact that they aren’t seeing the same level of detail and you know that’s not providing them the reassurance. Those elements seem to be creating friction politically.

Findings from this research show political friction as being a leading cause of the “slower than normal” creation and progression of RNUP. As mentioned in earlier sections, these disputes worsened as the RNUP legislation was created.
Community engagement is a process closely linked to social and experiential forms of knowledge for local residents (Eagles & McCool, 2002). Whether community members partake in park planning or visit green spaces is also reflective of “broader patterns of marginalization underlying people’s opportunities to participate or not” (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 641). An objective of this study was to examine how community members were being included in the park planning and management process. Since urban agriculture is a new and flourishing part of RNUP, participants were also asked food-related questions in order to find out if they were informed about agriculture and local food production in the park. While research on RNUP is limited, a focused study done by Khazaei (2015) examines immigrants’ engagement in planning, using RNUP as a case study. This study argues that literature on the engagement of immigrants and minorities with parks and protected areas is almost always focused on their role as visitors and observers (21). Because the larger focus of my research was on agricultural development and planning practices, I draw on Khazaei’s study of immigrants’ engagement with RNUP for a better understanding of how local residents have been included/excluded from the planning and management of the park. This study showed that Parks Canada tends to rely on its partner organizations for connecting with primary audiences. “Yet, there are many untapped potentials for a deeper and more effective collaboration between the agency and organizations that work with local and immigrant communities (Khazaei, 2015: 94).

These findings are also evident in my research as interviews with planners and Park Canada staff demonstrated that community outreach was associated with telling local residents about the RNUP plan rather than taking it as an opportunity to learn and understand their perspectives. In an interview with a planner, the participant explains that park planners were taking lead on the public consultation processes for the park concept and draft management plan. “Finding appropriate methods for reaching out to community groups and keeping them engaged at
different stages of the planning process is a challenge for planners, and is even more complicated when working with diverse immigrant populations” (Khazaei, 2015: 17). As such, the participant seemed to express relief when informing me of a recent outreach team that had been created in Parks Canada to reach out to community members. The participant says, “…and this way we can focus on other areas of the park while the outreach team deals with the community”.

During an interview with Parks Canada about community outreach, the participant states: “we have a specific target demographic: urban Canadians, new Canadians and youth”. Parks Canada heavily focuses on incorporating youth into the park. Through my interviews, it was made clear that Parks Canada feels youth provide a “fresh” and “new” perspective on the park. One participant explains the strategies employed to attract their target demographics:

…we have a lot of events happening at the RNUP. We do a winter bird count, hoot and howl, frog watch, moth night and Learn-to-camp. There’s opportunities to learn how to fish too.

During the summer months, Parks Canada held a Learn to Camp event that I attended as one of my participant observation sites. During this time, I was able to observe the demographics and conversations that were taking place. A member of Parks Canada explained the event and the importance of “teaching kids how to camp in the great outdoors”. During an informal conversation with Parks Canada staff, one member explained that an outreach goal was to bring in new Canadians to experience the park. He went on to say that during Learn to Camp, Parks Canada brings out a bus and many “Chinese people” come out, as they like to learn how to fish. In this sense, he suggested that there was a lot of diversity in the park. It became clear that these were not “consultation” events at all – they were essentially a form of “nature training” in which Parks Canada is (re)embedding assumptions about what the park is, how it should be good and how to be a good Canadian. This is also an example of Sandiland’s (2005) account of the
tensions between iconic national nature and a domestic national nature as mentioned in Chapter 2.

The RNUP focuses on integrating nature and society through community based events and social media. This is also another way in which Parks Canada has gravitated more towards the inclusion of youth. For instance, the Parks Canada outreach team has been focusing on the importance of social media and Wi-Fi in the park. In an interview, the participant says,

…I mean how cool is it that you can be in a park, in the middle of all these trees and have Wi-Fi. We are really working on a new model here. We are building our Instagram, Facebook and Twitter pages. In the near future maybe we can even have a coffee shop somewhere around here for the hikers to take a break or just get a drink…

Further, when asked how information is disseminated about events and/or public consultations for community input, participants explained that social media was the number one method to provide local residents with information. In an interview with a participant from Malvern Family Resource Centre, when asked about community outreach and who had been left out, the participant says:

…general community members who did not have the opportunity to come out to the consultation sites due to general accessibility issues…to better reach out to communities they need to come out to the community, as opposed to having community members go to the consultations.

Also, in an interview with another member of this organization, the participant explains that community members from the Malvern community have not had the opportunity to get involved in the RNUP initiative as they much as they could have because of reasons such as being unaware of the consultations, not being allowed to attend meetings (i.e. meetings with farmers, and/or environmental organizations), and/or accessibility issues. In order to be a part of the
RNUP initiative, Malvern Family Resource Centre has established a community garden within
the parklands in order to take part in park management. This can be seen as a countermovement
to ensure that the Malvern community members stay involved in the development and creation of
the RNUP. From the interviews, it was clear that participants actively took the initiative to be a
part of the RNUP, because they felt a sense of neglect from Parks Canada and planners.

5.4 Conclusions

To conclude, this chapter focused on three major themes of this research: land disputes,
agricultural development in the park and community participation and outreach. There are clear
tensions between farmers and environmentalists, which further highlight Braun’s conception of
binary staging as the dominant form of park decision-making. That is, park planners and Parks
Canada have focused on the voices of environmentalists and farmers but in turn have
marginalized other voices of labour, local communities, and minorities. For instance, in an
interview with Parks Canada, when asked about the First Nations organizations that are
described in the draft management plan and if I could get an interview with a member, the
participant said: “well we just got that organization up and running, the person in charge is new
and just started about a week ago and I don’t think [she/he] would be comfortable doing an
interview right now”. As a result, I was unable to get an interview with someone in order to
understand how Indigenous peoples were being included in the park planning process. This also
showed that the First Nations organization was not a priority of the park as it was created long
after the park was announced – despite the fact that it had been written as a priority in the draft
management plan. Overall, this research highlights two prevailing ideologies in the creation of
the RNUP. That is, the environmentalists seem to be wedded in the normative understandings of
nature and continue to fight for the ecological integrity of the park. While the farmers are
fighting to preserve Class 1 soil in order to increase local food production. In between both binaries are voices that have been marginalized, distorted and left out.
Chapter 6
Conclusions

This thesis provides a systematic understanding of agricultural development and community engagement in the production of Canada’s first national urban park. The study examined the RNUP in order to explore the issues of local food production and greenspace planning practices.

Planners tout the creation of greenspaces in order to increase the economic value of cities. The political relationship between natural environment and urban-built environment poses challenges for planners as they try to maintain ecological integrity, urban agriculture and employ public engagement strategies for local residents and individuals to support the park. Harvey (1999) argues that the urban built environment, “functions as a vast, humanly created resource system, comprising use values embedded in the physical landscape, which can be utilized for production, exchange and consumption” (Harvey, 1999: 233 in Heynen, 2003: 986). Findings indicate contention between farmers and environmentalists over varied perceptions of ecological integrity and the appropriate use of land. Farmers’ argue that urban-built environments are destroying Class 1 farmland, which would generate the highest value for farmland. While both farmers and environmentalists believe “ecological integrity” should be maintained, they appear to have very different understandings of what this is and how to go about maintaining or enhancing it. Interviews with farmers suggest that they feel environmentalists are not following the appropriate guidelines for actually maintaining ecological integrity in the park (i.e. planting trees in agricultural areas, building man-made ponds). Conversely, environmentalists argue that farming in the park needs to be done in a more sustainable manner to preserve the environment. Interviews with environmentalists showed that they do not recognize the implications of planting trees on Class 1 soil.
Furthermore, this research shows how parks are seen as sites of white imaginaries. In this case, national parks are a microcosm of what Canada is supposed to be and it seems that Parks Canada has been relying on these conceptions in order to emphasize specific perceptions of Canada and nature among community members and newcomers to Canada. The Anglo-normative approach to sharing information about the park shows that it is not about the consultation process or shared decision-making but it becomes more about how Parks Canada and planners can educate people about nature and how to best use the park to be a good Canadian. While farmers and environmentalists are advocating for the park, white subjectivities are continuously reinforced through all the voices that are missing in the park planning and decision-making process. This is also an example of how there is an attempt made on paper (i.e. draft management plan) but it is not executed in the same manner during public events, consultations and/or meetings. In certain events (i.e. CNE) it became apparent that the RNUP was not even being discussed. Thus, according to my findings, it seems that the consultation process was not necessarily about drawing out ideas about what the RNUP should be, instead it gave Parks Canada the opportunities to present ideas and raise awareness about the park.

Overall, I argue that Parks Canada needs to employ a more inclusive planning process, which allows for various perspectives and experiences to be included in the planning processes. The RNUP is situated in one of the most diverse cities in Ontario. Thus, park planning processes and urban agriculture in the park need to reflect various perspectives. As such, Parks Canada needs to adopt and maintain an approach, which allows for the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Deacon et. al, 2015: 421). This will create opportunities to enhance sustainability, growth, and inclusivity in the GTA. A huge part of that can be done through community
outreach, which as a result, will increase community participation. The following section provides suggestions for future research as the RNUP continues to evolve.

6.1 Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides insights to the role Parks Canada and planners play in shaping the creation and management of RNUP. Given that this park is the first of its kind, it offers a new area of enquiry and discussion. Research on the RNUP can be done on the various dimensions of the park. As such, due to the scope and scale of this research, in-depth analysis was not conducted. It would be interesting to do a comprehensive study on how local food is being distributed across the GTA in a few years from now. In discussions with farmers, almost all voiced their concerns over lease agreements. As such, they did not find it beneficial for their children and grandchildren to take over their farmland in the future. Thus, agriculture continues to expand in the park, a comprehensive study on farmland could prove to be beneficial for future researchers and academics. Further, insights can be gained through research conducted on park visitors and tourists. It would be interesting to see how the RNUP boosts tourism in Canada. Finally, this research and future considerations will allow planners and Parks Canada to provide equal opportunities for local residents and individuals in decision-making processes related to the park.

6.2 Final Conclusions

In conversations with Parks Canada staff, an emphasis was placed on future protection of the park through connections with nature and the environment. By targeting youth groups, Parks Canada staff believes there are opportunities for better connections with nature and the park for the future. Based on their target demographics, interviews with community members and through
participant observation, findings indicate that community members need to be more included in
the park planning process. Umemoto and Igarashi (2009) argue that planners need to adopt a
communicative planning strategy in order to engage diverse populations. An anecdote, on
communicative planning and collective action, by Healey (1999, 117) is quoted in Umemoto and
Igarashi’s article. She states:

The normative challenge for collective action in multicultural contexts is
then to find ways of intercultural dialogue through which to reflect on
meanings and understandings, to “explore the cage of our consciousness”
(Douglas 1992, 267), in forms that offer respect to individual and cultural
differences. Public policy-making may thus be re-conceptualized as processes
of inter-subjective communication in the public sphere, through which dynamic
mutual learning may take place (2009: 42).

The communicative planning strategy is an effective strategy to engage new Canadians in park
planning processes instead of trying to solely focus on park events that they can attend. Each
group has the potential of bringing in new and productive perspectives and ideas that can help
develop the management strategies of the park. As Gibson-Wood and Wakefield (2013) argue,
“it is important to emphasize the heterogeneity among different communities’ experiences…[in]
Canada, and even within one ethnic ‘community’” (648). Thus, findings show that planners and
Parks Canada staff need to employ a communicative planning approach to all community
members and local residents in order to understand different perspectives and allow for a long-
term relationship among policymakers and community members. As a whole, this thesis provides
findings that can help planners and Parks Canada employ different strategies for public input in
decision-making of the park. It also investigates the friction between farmers and
environmentalists, which highlights issues such as tree planning, and preserving Class 1 soil. As
a result, it can also help to resolve such issues and enhance local food production in the GTA.
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Appendix A: Recruitment Script

Hi! My name is Jina Gill, and I’m contacting you because you have played a role in the Rouge National Urban Park initiative. I’m a researcher with the University of Toronto, and I’m doing research to evaluate the project. I want to know how you think the project is working out so far, and in particular I want to understand more about how diverse local communities are being included in the establishment of the park, and how agriculture and food issues are being discussed in park planning.

I’m guessing it will take about an hour to go through all my questions. I will use what you say to talk generally about how the project is going, and what’s worked and what hasn’t, particularly in relation to my areas of interest. I don’t plan to identify you by name, but I will want to say what organization you represent if that’s okay with you.

Do you think you’d be interested in talking with me?

[if yes (if corresponding by email, this would take place in a follow-up email)] Where would be a good place to meet? I can come to you, or we can meet somewhere? [make arrangements]
Appendix B: Letter of Consent

Rouge National Urban Park Development Plan

CONSENT FORM

What is this study about?
This research will help me learn how the Rouge National Urban Park development initiative is working. I would like to know your thoughts on how the project is going and how to make it better.

Whose study is this?
Jina Gill (a University of Toronto graduate student and Toronto resident) is doing this study with the support of her supervisor, Dr. Sarah Wakefield. The purpose of this study is to help improve the national park development plan and future projects like it.

What will I do?
You will be asked some questions in a one-on-one interview, to find out:

a) How you think the development plan is working so far
b) How diverse local communities are being included or excluded throughout the planning process, and,
c) How agriculture and food issues are being discussed in park planning

The interview will take about an hour to complete.

What will you do with my answers?
The interview will be tape recorded, as long as that is okay with you. Only Jina and her supervisor will have access to your answers. When Jina does a report on the study, the issues you mention will be talked about in general terms. Your name will not be used in any report or presentation that comes out of this study. However, Jina will use direct quotes from your interview, including organizations, program names or other specifics.

Do I have to participate?
You don’t have to be interviewed. You can refuse to answer any questions, and you can stop the interview at any time. You can also ask to take out information you have given, if you change your mind, up until my report is finished.

How will I benefit?
The study will be used to try and improve the development of Canada’s first national urban park. The final report will be accessible to the public and has potential to help create a healthy and inclusive community.

Who do I talk to if I have more questions?
If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please email me (Email: manjot.gill@mail.utoronto.ca), or contact my supervisor (sarah.wakefield@utoronto.ca). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can also contact the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics, ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. ___
I am willing to have this interview tape recorded. ___
I am willing to have my organization and role identified ___
I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records. ___

Participant signature ___________________________ Date________________
## Appendix C: Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Probes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal context and role</strong></td>
<td><strong>Probes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have you been involved in the development process for the Rouge National Urban Park?</td>
<td>Role/level of involvement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Length of time/Approx. start</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How you got involved?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Connection with planning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interaction with policy developers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not that involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you wish to be more involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions of Planning Process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Probes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you hear about this development plan?</td>
<td>How was the information made accessible to public?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are you interested in this plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you think of the development plan overall?</td>
<td>Process good?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome (plan) good?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Probes</strong></td>
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<td>How has the implementation been going?</td>
<td>Quick or slow?</td>
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<td>Different from expectations?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is their focus on the right aspects?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are there any issues?</td>
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<td>Are you satisfied with the speed of progress?</td>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you think has led to, or held back, progress?</td>
<td>Is this something that you are keeping up to date with?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussing Plan with others</strong></td>
<td><strong>Probes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you approached city staff, community organizations and/or city councillors regarding this development</td>
<td>Why? / Why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Were you successful in building these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan?</td>
<td>Relationships?</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Do local residents discuss this plan among each other?</td>
<td>o What did these relationships accomplish?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Did the person/people you approach take time and listen to your concerns/ideas?</td>
<td>o Did the residents express any emotions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Were you successful?</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of Inclusiveness and Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Has a diverse group of people and perspectives from your community been brought into the development process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o What efforts were made?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o “Representative” of community? (In which ways?)</td>
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<td>o How involved? (Formal, informal; part of committee, attending meetings etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Planning and/or implementation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Were community meetings made accessible?</td>
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<td>o Were community meetings well informed to the general public?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o If you knew about these meetings ahead of time and in an approachable manner, would you attend? Why/why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Who has been left out?</td>
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<td>o race, gender, age, ability, language; types of stakeholders (e.g., residents, organizations)</td>
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<td>o Why? (Barriers to</td>
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<td>Perceptions of the Park</td>
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<td>• What could be done to better reach out to a broader range of communities/individuals/farmers?</td>
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<td>• Is this something you have discussed with others?</td>
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Appendix D: Top Ten Conservation Benefits of Rouge National Urban Park

**Top 10 Conservation Benefits of Rouge National Urban Park**

**Strongest ever protections in the Rouge's history – no urban park in the world will be as well protected**

The Rouge National Urban Park Act, is a tailor-made approach for protecting the Rouge. It complements Ontario's Greenbelt Act and obligates the Government of Canada to protect the Rouge's natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes, to maintain native wildlife and to ensure the health of those ecosystems. Simply put, there is no other urban park on the planet with protections as strong as those proposed for Rouge National Urban Park.

**Year-round law enforcement will ensure wildlife, ecosystems, cultural landscapes, water, fossils and artefacts are protected to the full extent of the law**

For the first time in the Rouge’s history, dedicated park wardens will have a year-round presence in the park to enforce laws and stop poaching, dumping, pollution and other issues. Wardens will patrol the park and work with local police on a variety of enforcement measures to keep visitors safe and the park’s farmland and other resources well-protected. Also for the first time in the Rouge’s history, harmful activities such as poaching, polluting, dumping, theft of fossils, harassment of wildlife, hunting and mineral extraction will be directly and specifically prohibited under the Rouge National Urban Park Act.

**A focus on restoring native ecosystems, wildlife and landscapes**

While more than 75% of the current Rouge Park landscape has been altered or disturbed, Parks Canada is committed to restoring the Rouge’s native ecosystems, including Carolinian forests, marshes and meadows. Parks Canada has already begun working on restoration projects with municipalities, environmental groups and local farmers by reintroducing endangered turtles, making it easier for wildlife to cross park roads, and enhancing the health of agricultural wetlands.

**A strong science program**

Parks Canada will apply its rigorous, award-winning and innovative scientific approach to the management of Rouge National Urban Park. Leading-edge science will be used to recover endangered species and eliminate invasive species. Parks Canada will ensure the health of park ecosystems and native wildlife with a full suite of monitoring, assessment and reporting tools specifically developed for the Rouge.
Canada will protect a much larger park
Rouge National Urban Park will become one of the largest urban protected areas in the world. The park will be larger than Bermuda, Monaco and Gibraltar and 16 times larger than Central Park in New York. By expanding the size of the current protected area, Parks Canada will achieve the long-standing conservation goal of connecting Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine, thereby linking communities and ecosystems throughout the entire Greater Toronto Area.

Parks Canada brings its world-renowned park management approach to the Greater Toronto Area for the first time
Created in 1911, Parks Canada is the world’s first national parks service dedicated to conservation. Parks Canada will draw on over one-hundred years of experience to protect the Rouge’s natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes, maintain native wildlife and ensure the health of those ecosystems.

First ever dedicated legislative protection for Bead Hill National Historic Site
The Rouge features over 10,000 years of human history and is home to Bead Hill National Historic Site and the Carrying Place National Historic Event. Parks Canada is working closely with First Nations to ensure their living history becomes an important part of Rouge National Urban Park’s story.

Record financial investment in the Rouge’s conservation
The Government of Canada’s 2012 funding announcement of $143.7 million over the first 10 years of park establishment and operations is the most significant conservation investment in the Rouge’s history. This unprecedented financial commitment will allow Parks Canada to make investments in conservation, restoration, education, endangered species recovery, visitor experience, and community-driven stewardship initiatives in Canada’s first national urban park.

The park will protect nature, culture and – for the first time in a Canadian federal park – agriculture
Farms have become an endangered species in urban areas across much of the world. Rouge National Urban Park will protect large tracts of Class 1 farmland, the rarest and most fertile in the country. Park farmland will continue to produce local food while at the same time providing visitor experiences and contributing to the overall health of the park.

These lands will be protected forever
Now is our chance to get things right for the Rouge. Once under the care of Parks Canada, park lands will be protected in perpetuity for countless future generations of Canadians to enjoy. Parks Canada’s plan also provides the ability to add more lands to the park in the future should the opportunity to do so arise.