

# National Urban Parks



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Creating and expanding urban parks to conserve nature, connect people with nature, and advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

### About national urban parks

Parks Canada is collaborating with partners, including Indigenous peoples, to create a network of national urban parks in Canada's large urban centers.

Each national urban park will be unique and created through partnerships. Together, these parks will create a network with a shared vision of **conserving nature, connecting people with nature and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.**

These three elements are the foundation of the emerging national urban parks policy, and they help guide the work at each of the program's candidate sites.

Rouge National Urban Park is the first national urban park in Canada.

# Government of Canada invests \$130 million to work with partners to create a network of national urban parks

From: [Parks Canada](#)

## News release

*Network will help ensure that all Canadians have access to green space*

August 4, 2021

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Parks Canada Agency

In Canada and around the world, there is growing awareness of the importance of urban parks as essential places for conservation, recreation, learning, and mental and physical wellbeing. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the key role green space plays in the wellbeing of Canadians and their communities was brought into stark relief. However, most Canadians, nearly 72 percent of the population, live in urban centres – where access to the benefits of nature and wildlife can be limited.

**Expanding access to and protection of nature in urban centres pays real dividends.** Nature-based climate solutions – increasing protection as we are announcing today, planting trees, protecting and restoring wetlands and grasslands and other carbon pools -- have the potential to provide up to 30 percent of global climate solutions. Nature acts as a buffer against extreme weather events; it absorbs and traps carbon dioxide; protects against flooding; and can prevent the loss of biodiversity.

The National Urban Parks Program will contribute to Canada's commitment to protect biodiversity and conserve 25 percent of land and inland waters and 25 percent of marine and coastal areas by 2025, working toward 30 percent by 2030. And beyond the percentage targets, we are committed to addressing the rapid loss of biodiversity globally, and nature in Canada, in our urban centres where it is most at risk. Canada's National Urban Parks Program is part of a broader southern strategy of restoration that includes natural infrastructure, tree planting and regeneration of wetlands, and is vital in the fight to stem the tide of rapid biodiversity loss. This program will be supported by Budget 2021's historic investment of \$2.3 billion in Canada's Nature Legacy to address the biodiversity crisis, protect and conserve nature, and create jobs in nature conservation, with up to \$130.9 million specifically toward this effort.

The network will include areas managed under a range of flexible governance models, including federally administered places, third party administered places, and partnership models.

Parks Canada will also work closely with Indigenous partners to ensure national urban parks provide space for Indigenous stewardship, promote Indigenous voices and stories, and offer opportunities for connections to lands and waters based on Indigenous knowledge and values. These parks will be readily accessible to people in Canada's urban centres and provide opportunities to connect to, and learn about, local nature and culture.

In addition to the Meewasin Valley, Parks Canada has signed statements of collaboration with the municipalities of Winnipeg (MB) and Halifax (NS) and Windsor (ON), and is working with others to identify potential urban park sites at various locations, including the greater Edmonton area (AB), Colwood (BC), and Montreal (QC).

# An exciting opportunity for London!

- Growing urban community
- High amount of biodiversity
- National leader in natural heritage protection
- Budgets struggle to keep up with costs of managing so much natural land

# Benefits of a NUP for London

- Access to federal funds to restore and manage parkland
- Increased legal protection for the natural environment
- Ecotourism and outdoor recreation
- Support with tree canopy targets
- Opportunities to advance reconciliation with urban Indigenous population and First Nations
- Advance CEAP Area of Focus 6: Implementing Natural and Engineered Climate Solutions and Carbon Capture
- Opportunities for storytelling and engagement

# Site Selection *(tips from Guelph)*:

- Choose an existing protected area to expand, e.g. an ESA
- Can be a site for restoration, a site with existing natural heritage for protection, or a combination of both
- Local community engagement is key
- What can be accomplished by establishing a NUP that the City cannot otherwise do on its own?
- Consider habitat connectivity corridors (e.g., connection to the river)
- Equity - where do people in London currently lack access to green space?
- Where can a NUP create the most access? (e.g., aligned with existing transit capacity)

# WILDLANDS LEAGUE

Wildlands League is a not-for-profit charity that works *in collaboration* with:

- communities,
- governments,
- First Nations,
- scientists and
- progressive industry

to protect nature and find solutions that work for the planet and all.

