

Parks Canada's Rouge National Urban Park: An opportunity to showcase Canada's true nature¹

By Anahita Khazaei, Stacia Elliot and Michael Von Massow

Introduction

National parks have been “an integral part of the Canadian identity”² and nature-based activities among the most popular forms of pastime, historically. However, in an increasingly diverse society, ensuring visitation and support for national parks has become a challenge and strategic priority for Parks Canada. The agency caters to multiple segments, each with different expectations about the type of activities they can do and services that should be offered in national parks. In addition, these sites are competing with many other options visitors have for spending their decreasing leisure time. The establishment of Canada's first national urban park in the Greater Toronto Area offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity for Parks Canada to explore strategies for adapting to new social and demographic realities and travel preferences. At the same time, the Agency faces new challenges with regard to incorporating diverse demands of a multicultural urban clientele, especially youth and millennials, while maintaining the focus on its mandate.

The National Park Governance Model

The first national parks were established in the U.S., Canada and New Zealand during the 1870s and 1880s (e.g. Yellowstone in 1872, Banff in 1885, and Tongariro in 1887). The early national parks shared three main characteristics. They were established on worthless lands or in remote areas not appropriate to use for other more economically profitable purposes; to preserve the wilderness; and, to “represent remnants of the frontier that was quickly disappearing.” Wilderness and nature formed the core of the first national parks in the New World countries. These sites were created for “elite” visitors and preferably away from local communities. However, more recent, mostly European, national parks are established in “working landscapes as opposed to protected landscapes”, where other uses need to be balanced with protection and preservation. Local culture has become a key com-

¹ This case is prepared for teaching purposes and the authors did not intend to approve, critique, or comprehensively describe the situation. The authors would like to thank Mr. Louis R. Lavoie, Senior Advisor - Corporate and Community Engagement - Rouge National Urban Park, for his contributions and Parks Canada for genuinely supporting a broader project that informed this case, through access to information and time.

² http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/np-pn/intro_e.asp

Anahita Khazaei, Stacia Elliot and Michael Von Massow are all affiliated with University of Guelph

ponent of many of the more recent national parks as a way to attract more visitors and to provide additional sources of income for local and indigenous communities (Boyd, 2004, pp. 476-477).

According to the national park model, government is the owner of resources and also in charge of managing the park or protected area. As the main source of funding is tax money, this model is dominant in countries where taxpayers are willing to contribute higher amounts to achieve “equity in public services” (p.245). The model emphasizes shared vision and consensus building. It engages the broadest range of stakeholders in the planning and management processes compared to other alternative models for parks governance (Eagles, 2009). A high level of collaboration between government, private organizations, and local communities is required for balancing conservation and visitation aspects of national parks (Jamal & Stronza, 2009).

Visitation is one of the key criteria that has been carefully measured and analyzed by park agencies. National parks are dependent on public visitation and support for receiving required resources (Eagles & McCool, 2002, p.24). There is a general consensus on the “use -> appreciation -> support mantra” (Shultis & More, 2011, p.112), suggesting that people who connect with and experience parks as visitors become more supportive of parks and park agencies in the long term. Park agencies are facing a general trend toward stagnating visitation to national parks since the late 1980s. Four major factors have been identified as reasons for this trend: low visitation by children due to the increasing use of technology, limited visitation by minorities and immigrants, an aging population, and increasing urbanization. As a result, there has been a strong emphasis on reaching out to “children, minorities, and recent immigrants, especially in urban areas” (Shultis & More, 2011, pp.118-119).

National Parks in Canada

In Canada national parks are defined as “representative examples of Canadian landscape”. The National Parks System Plan has identified 39 distinct national parks natural regions across Canada (National Parks System Plan, n.d.) and over 70% of these regions are represented by the existing national parks³.

Parks Canada is the federal agency in charge of establishing, managing and protecting national parks along with national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Established on May 19, 1911

³ <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/plans/rpp/rpp2014-15/index.aspx#sec01>

Table 1

Parks Canada Attendance 2010-11 to 2014-15⁴

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Attendance	12,548,933	12,529,627	12,722,828	12,723,434	13,520,886

as the Dominion Park, Parks Canada is the worlds' first national park service (Irish, 2011). The Agency's mandate is as follows:

"On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations."⁵

A management plan must be prepared and approved for each national park by the Minister in charge of Parks Canada (Environment Minister) within five years of its proclamation. Plans are reviewed and re-tabled with any changes every five years. According to the National Parks Act, public participation should be encouraged and facilitated during the process of establishing a national park.

Parks Canada has been affected by the same global trends toward lower visitation, especially in metropolitan areas (i.e. Vancouver; Toronto; Montreal) and among cultural communities and new Canadians. Therefore, youth, urban Canadians and new Canadians are targeted as primary audiences (Parks Canada, n.d.). The Agency's emphasis on and commitment to connecting with youth and new Canadians is captured in the following excerpt from an interview with a senior Parks Canada manager:

"... [sic] the key risk is not being relevant to new Canadians. That's the key risk long-term. Populations are changing. The nature of their experience is changing. Their support for national parks, or not support, [sic] long-term is really tied to their ability to experience these places; being touched by them; and want[ing] to protect them like their family jewels" (P7).

Table 1 shows attendance numbers for national parks, park reserves, and marine conservation areas for the past five years.

One of the six organizational priorities set forth in the 2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities is to "increase revenue through more visitors and more revenue per visitor", outlined as follows:

"Parks Canada seeks to connect Canadians to their natural and cultural heritage through positive visitor experiences. The more opportunities Canadians have to visit Parks Canada places, the more

opportunities they have to build this connection. Parks Canada places also play a key role in the tourism industry and as economic contributors to local communities".⁶

The following strategies are designed to help Parks Canada achieve this goal:

- Adopt a new strategic branding approach focused on the key target markets, that integrates market intelligence, product development and promotions;
- Expand national initiatives focused on attracting children, urban and new Canadians;
- Offer diversified accommodation options;
- Improve online planning and reservation tools;
- Improve cross-promotion of Parks Canada places; and,
- Develop local projects in areas such as camping, concessions, tours, activities and souvenir merchandise⁷.

The Learn to Camp, Cultural Access Pass and Xplorers programs are initiatives focused on Parks Canada's priority audiences. The Cultural Access Pass, offered in citizenship ceremonies and in collaboration with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, provides new Canadians one year of free access to all national parks and historic sites. The Learn to Camp initiative is a joint experiential learning program with Mountain Equipment Co-op. Participants learn camping skills and receive information about Parks Canada as well as the specific park that hosts the event. The Xplorers program is focused on connecting with children. They can explore participating national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas through engaging in a number of activities (e.g. Hide and Seek, Bingo, musical activities) specifically designed for each site and outlined in a booklet. Participants receive a certificate and a gift after finishing all activities. The increase in visitation from 2013-14 to 2014-15, as shown in Table 1, can be partly attributed to the new initiatives adopted by Parks Canada.

National Parks and Historic Sites as Tourist Attractions

For tourists, Canada's nature holds great appeal. Destinations Canada, the federal destination marketing organization, reflects Canada's natural resources in its brand positioning. Vibrant cities on the edge of nature and active adventure among awe-inspiring natural

⁴ <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/agen/chart/chartr.aspx>

⁵ http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/rech-srch/clic-click.aspx?cgj-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&page_id=61201&query=attendance&hiword=ATTENDANT%20ATTENDANTS%20ATTENDE%20ATTENDING%20attendance%20

⁶ The other priorities are: assessment of asset portfolio, conservation gains, contribution to Road to 2017, new guiding narrative for history, and Strategic and proactive branding approach for promotion.

⁷ <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/plans/rpp/rpp2014-15/index.aspx#sec01>

wonders (along with personal journeys by land, water and air; local cuisine and connecting with Canadians) are among unique selling propositions identified for Canada⁸. However, only a small percentage of visitors to Canada actually visit National Parks.

Travellers from emerging economies (e.g. China, India and Brazil) and youth visitors are identified as growing segments by Destination Canada. Therefore, there is strong emphasis on capturing these markets (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2014). In addition, a study that segments the global Canadian tourism market based on psychographic criteria identifies Free Spirits, Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers as Canada's preferred targets (Appendix A provides more details about each segment). Nature-based activities are listed among the Top 10 Most Appealing Activities for all three groups (Canadian Tourism Commission, n.d.). National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are key components of Canada's tourism product. However, Parks Canada's emphasis has been on domestic tourism, as stated in the following statement:

"Parks Canada plays a key role in the tourism industry and is the federal organization that, through its marketing reach, can influence Canadians to spend their vacation dollars in Canada".⁹

As part of its strategic plan for increasing visitation, with specific focus on national historic sites, Parks Canada has adopted a strategic and proactive branding approach for promotion. Launched in 2014, the plan includes the following initiatives:

- Reaching out to target groups in urban areas through events such as consumer trade shows and winter festivals;
- A promotional plan featuring traditional and social media; and,
- Proactive tourism media relations.

A closer look at Parks Canada's website also indicates attempts to attract international tourists. The Travel Trade link on the website leads to information on entry fees for commercial group tour operators, reservations, as well as important visitor information and a link to Destination Canada's website.

Rouge National Urban Park: the First of Its Kind

The Rouge National Urban Park is one of the most recent additions to the National Parks System. In 2009, the Rouge Park Alliance and the Rouge Park board of directors hired Strategy Corp-Hemson Consulting to conduct a study on alternative governance models and funding options for the existing Rouge Park. In 2010, the study concluded by suggesting the national park model and turning the Rouge Park into Canada's first national urban park, as a solution for the Park's governance and funding issues (Strategy Corp-Hemson Consulting, 2010).

The federal Government's plan for creating a national urban park in the Rouge Valley was formally announced in the 2011 Speech from

the Throne and on May 25, 2012 \$143.7 million was allocated to be spent over a 10 year period for its creation, and \$7.6 million annually thereafter for its further development (Parks Canada, n.d.). The Rouge National Urban Park Act was enforced and the Park was formally established on May 15, 2015.

Rouge National Urban Park is located in the largest urban area in Canada and accessible for 20% of the Canadian population free of charge (Parks Canada, 2012). Expanded over an area of 79.5 km² (7,956 hectares) Rouge National Urban Park is "19 times larger than Stanley Park in Vancouver, 22 times larger than Central Park in New York, and close to 50 times larger than Toronto's High Park". With a unique combination of natural landscapes, cultural and archaeological sites, and farms (about 50% of the park area) it will be representative of many of Canada's protected areas. The Park has been a popular filming location for years¹⁰. It is also home to 1700 different species of plants and animals (Parks Canada, 2014). Visitors can explore Rouge Park through a range of different activities including hiking, camping, swimming, canoeing, fishing, photography, group picnics, and geocaching.¹¹

There are also many volunteer opportunities ranging from participating in educational programs to guiding walking tours, collecting wildlife information and helping with clean-up initiatives. The park is located close to educational and community institutions (e.g. University of Toronto Scarborough, Malvern Family Resource Centre, Centennial College, YMCA, East Scarborough Storefront, and Dunbarton High School). Rouge Park is accessible by public transit and visitors can easily reach the Park's main interest points (i.e. Glen Rouge Campground, Glen Eagles Vista, and Rouge Beach) by busses operated by TTC (Toronto local transit), Durham Transit, and Go Transit. Campsites on the Glen Rouge Campground are wheelchair accessible and can be booked online and also by phone and email. Campground amenities include children's playground, washrooms, showers, and barbeque/fire pits. The sandy Rouge Beach is a popular swimming, fishing and canoeing spot for locals and Torontonians (motorized boating is not allowed). The boardwalk is accessible for wheelchairs, strollers and walkers and washrooms and drinking water is available on site. An easy 0.6 km-long trail leads to the Glen Eagles Vista, with a magnificent view all year round and especially in fall. Interpretive signs are installed along the way.¹²

The proposed area for the Park extends from Lake Ontario in the south to the Oak Ridges Moraine in the north, crossing three municipalities: Scarborough, Markham, and Pickering. Appendix B shows the map of lands committed for Rouge National Urban Park. Neighbourhoods adjacent to the Park in each of the three municipalities are:

- Scarborough: ward 42: Scarborough-Rouge River, wards 43 and

⁸ <http://en.destinationcanada.com/resources-industry/canada's-tourism-brand>
⁹ <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/plans/rpp/rpp2014-15/index.aspx#sec01>

¹⁰ <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/np-pn/cnnp-cnnp/rouge/new-neuf.aspx>

¹¹ <http://pc.rougepark.com/explore/adventures/geocaching.php>

¹² <http://pc.rougepark.com/explore/plan/transit.php>

Table 2**Diversity in Neighbourhoods around the Rouge National Urban Park**

	Percentage of first generation immigrants	Top five places of birth
Ward 42: Scarborough-Rouge River	64.4%	Sri Lanka; Philippines; India; Guyana; Jamaica
Ward 43: Scarborough East	52.3%	India; Philippines; Sri Lanka; Jamaica; Guyana
Ward 44: Scarborough East	47.5%	Philippines; India; Guyana; Sri Lanka; Jamaica
Markham	59.0%	China; Hong Kong; Sri Lanka; India; Philippines
Pickering	31.8%	UK; Jamaica; Guyana; Philippines; India

44: Scarborough East;

- Markham: ward 7; and
- Pickering: wards 1 and 3.

The communities living around the Park are among the most diverse in Canada with a high percentage of first generation immigrants. Table 2 shows the percentage of first generation immigrants and the top five places of birth in each neighbourhood based on the 2011 National Household Survey¹³.

Three of the areas, namely Scarborough-Rouge River, Scarborough East and Markham, have even higher percentages of first generation immigrants than the average in the city of Toronto (51.4%).¹⁴

There has been a high emphasis on engaging the public in the establishment process of the Rouge National Urban Park, also referred to as the People's Park (Parks Canada, 2012). The draft management plan for the Park was developed based on the input received from different stakeholder groups, including two youth workshops, during a formal public engagement process, implemented from November 2011 to October 2012. Appendix C shows a summary report of the youth workshops. Guiding principles for development and management of the Park are presented in Appendix D.

A Unique Opportunity

The establishment of Rouge National Urban Park is a milestone in Parks Canada's efforts to address new demographic and social trends and to increase visitation through both domestic and international tourism. Notably, Toronto is Canada's top destination for tourists. In 2015 Toronto hosted 14.03 million overnight visitors, including 2.48 million from the U.S and 1.75 from overseas.¹⁵

Considering that both Parks Canada and Destination Canada have identified youth as one of their key market segments, Rouge National Urban Park can offer an ideal platform for collaboration between the two agencies to increase youth visitation. The strategic questions that need

to be addressed at this point are how can Parks Canada accommodate the needs and expectations of tourists, specifically youth and millennials, without alienating its traditional Canadian clientele? How can the unique characteristics of the Rouge Park as well as the strength of Parks Canada brand be leveraged to increase visitation from these groups?

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¹³ Data for Markham and Pickering represent the entire municipalities.

¹⁴ <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=2394fe17e5648410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

¹⁵ <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=580b6fe8341da310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=401132d0b6d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

Profiles of Destination Canada's Identified Targets

Travel Values	Experience Appeal																						
<p><i>The Free Spirit is the traveller's traveller...they seem to love everything about travel and as in life, they embrace the experiences it offers with arms wide open.</i></p> <p>A Free Spirit will seek: Constant Comparison Travel: Love to travel – and brag about the superiority of the places they have visited Luxury: Often aspire to stay in the most luxurious accommodations and venues. Hedonistic Rejuvenation: Vacation is a time to be carefree and Indulge – they will enjoy spa, nightlife and great cuisine and other opportunities for a little pampering. Checklist Samplers: Want to see all the main attractions, but not in depth – they will employ detailed itineraries, ensuring that they don't miss anything! Shared Experiences: Attracted to groups where they can socialize and share the experience with others – using social media for sharing during and after the trip. A Free Spirit will avoid: Comfort-Seeking: Free Spirits have a higher penchant for risk, so they are not afraid to try something new or have an adventure Reluctant travel: Not content to experience the world through the Internet or TV.</p>	<p><i>Following their energized approach to life and their enthusiasm for travel, Free Spirits are more likely to find many activities appealing to do on a long-haul vacation than most other types.</i></p> <p>Free Spirits are more likely than other travellers to be interested in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shopping, Dining and Other Food-related Activities 2. Entertainment, Performing Arts and Amusement Parks 3. Accommodation-related Activities 4. Water-based Outdoor Activities 5. Festivals, Events & Spectator Sports 6. Outdoor/Nature Sports & Activities 7. Winter Outdoor Activities <p>Free Spirits are also interested in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature Observation Activities 2. Exhibits, Architecture, Historic Sites/Buildings, Museums 3. Sightseeing Activities 4. Cruises & Touring 5. Hands-on Learning Activities <p>Top 10 Most Appealing Activities Among Free Spirits:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>Marine life viewing (whale watching, etc.)</td><td>76%</td></tr> <tr><td>Seeing beautiful coastline, beaches</td><td>71%</td></tr> <tr><td>Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients</td><td>71%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting natl, prov./state park to view wildlife etc</td><td>70%</td></tr> <tr><td>Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching</td><td>69%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting aquariums and zoos</td><td>67%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting natl, prov./state park to visit interpretive centres</td><td>66%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting well-known natural wonders</td><td>66%</td></tr> <tr><td>Staying at a waterfront resort</td><td>65%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mountain and glacier viewing</td><td>65%</td></tr> <tr><td>Viewing Northern and Southern lights</td><td>65%</td></tr> </table>	Marine life viewing (whale watching, etc.)	76%	Seeing beautiful coastline, beaches	71%	Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients	71%	Visiting natl, prov./state park to view wildlife etc	70%	Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching	69%	Visiting aquariums and zoos	67%	Visiting natl, prov./state park to visit interpretive centres	66%	Visiting well-known natural wonders	66%	Staying at a waterfront resort	65%	Mountain and glacier viewing	65%	Viewing Northern and Southern lights	65%
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<p><i>The Cultural Explorer is an avid traveller who values learning and discovery while travelling. They don't want to feel like a "tourist," preferring just to blend in and have the most authentic experience possible rather than being confined to group tours and schedules.</i></p> <p>A Cultural Explorer will seek: Constant Travel: Always excited about the next trip. Living History/Culture: Love to learn about and absorb themselves in the ancient history, as well as the modern cultures of the places they visit. The Beauty of Nature: Will choose destinations that provide opportunities to experience natural beauty. Fun, Shared Experiences: Travel is a journey, not the destination, and is best experienced with like-minded companions who like to have fun while learning. Going with the Flow: Prefer a free and spontaneous approach to seeing the sights. A Cultural Explorer will avoid: Luxury/Comfort-seeking: This EQ type seeks an authentic experience and doesn't need to be pampered in commercial hotels and have experiences just like home. Group/Checklist Travel: Prefer not to be constrained to "tourist" schedules or destinations, and will chart their own courses..</p>	<p><i>Like their Free Spirit counterparts, Cultural Explorers are more likely to find many activities appealing to do on a long-haul vacation.</i></p> <p>Cultural Explorers are more likely than other travellers to be interested in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature Observation Activities 2. Exhibits, Architecture, Historic Sites/Bldings, Museums 3. Sightseeing Activities 4. Accommodation-related Activities 5. Water-based Outdoor Activities 6. Hands-on Learning Activities 7. Festivals, Events & Spectator Sports 8. Outdoor/Nature Sports & Activities 9. Winter Outdoor Activities <p>Cultural Explorers are also interested in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shopping, Dining and Other Food-related Activities 2. Entertainment, Performing Arts and Amusement Parks 3. Cruises & Touring <p>Top 10 Most Appealing Activities Among Cultural Explorers:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>Marine life viewing (whale watching, etc.)</td><td>81%</td></tr> <tr><td>Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching</td><td>78%</td></tr> <tr><td>Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients</td><td>78%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting natl, prov./state park to view wildlife etc</td><td>77%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting well-known natural wonders</td><td>76%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting small towns and villages</td><td>76%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting natl, prov./state park to visit interpretive centres etc</td><td>75%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting well-known historic sites and bldgs</td><td>73%</td></tr> <tr><td>Interacting with the locals</td><td>73%</td></tr> <tr><td>Visiting world heritage sites</td><td>72%</td></tr> </table>	Marine life viewing (whale watching, etc.)	81%	Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching	78%	Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients	78%	Visiting natl, prov./state park to view wildlife etc	77%	Visiting well-known natural wonders	76%	Visiting small towns and villages	76%	Visiting natl, prov./state park to visit interpretive centres etc	75%	Visiting well-known historic sites and bldgs	73%	Interacting with the locals	73%	Visiting world heritage sites	72%		
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Appendix A

Profiles of Destination Canada’s Identified Targets
continued

Travel Values

The Authentic Experiencer is a more learned, understated traveller. Travel is not their only interest in life, but they certainly appreciate it when they go. They prefer to do their own thing while at a destination, having control over what they see and when they see it.

An Authentic Experiencer will seek:

Living History/Culture: Love to learn about and absorb themselves in the ancient history, as well as the modern cultures, of the places they visit.

To Understand Cultural Differences: While they are not high on the trend Comparison Travel, they love to observe the difference between destinations.

An Authentic Experiencer will avoid:

Hedonistic Rejuvenation/Comfort-seeking: This EQ type does not shy away from living like the locals do. They like to be in control while they vacation, and don't need to be pampered and have everything taken care of for them.

Escape: These travelers do not feel overwhelmed by life. Travel is not about escape for them, but about personal development and learning instead.

Experience Appeal

Authentic Experiencers are more selective in the experiences they find appealing to do on a long-haul trip.

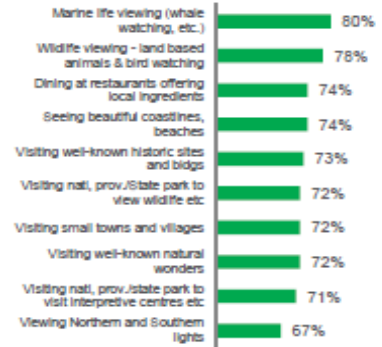
Authentic Experiencers are more likely than other travellers to be interested in:

1. Exhibits, Architecture, Historic Sites/Buildings, Museums

Authentic Experiencers are also interested in:

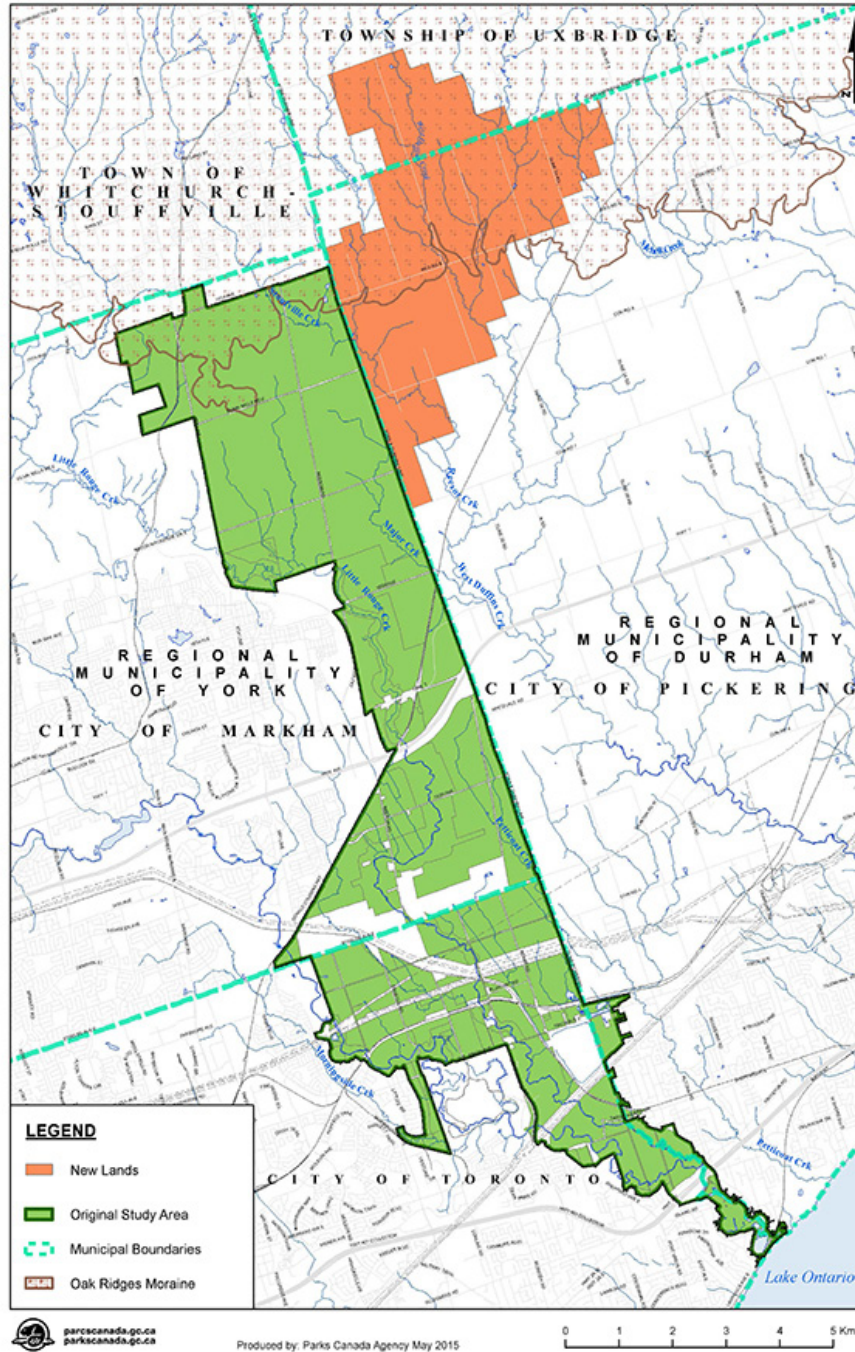
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4. Entertainment, Performing Arts and Amusement Parks
5. Accommodation-related Activities
6. Cruises & Touring
7. Water-based Outdoor Activities
8. Hands-on Learning Activities
9. Festivals, Events & Spectator Sports
10. Outdoor/Nature Sports & Activities
11. Winter Outdoor Activities

Top 10 Most Appealing Activities Among Authentic Experiencers:



Appendix B

Lands committed for Rouge National Urban Park



Youth Workshops-Summary Report

Youth Workshop - National Urban Park Concept

GOALS

Engage youth in the planning for a national urban park in the Rouge Valley in a fun and interactive way.

Discover what's important to youth for a national urban park and what will make it useful to them and future generations.

Learn about youth broad ideas and concepts for Parks Canada to consider.

Connect with youth that may want to continue to be involved in the planning and the future management for a national urban park in the Rouge Valley.

Youth Workshop

2 workshops in February 2012

Participating Organizations:

- University of Toronto Scarborough
- Centennial College
- YMCA GYA
- Madvern Family Resource Centre
- East Scarborough Storefront
- 4-H Ontario
- Dunbarton High School

Parks Canada

- 42 National Parks
- 167 National Historic Sites
- 4 National Marine Conservation Areas

Gamestorming

Used games to unleash creativity, develop unpredictable and breakthrough results. Games for visioning, idea-generation, prioritizing and storytelling.

- Grow a Tree
- Trading Cards
- Democracy
- Storyboard and Image-ination

Areas Explored

- Discovery - what youth want to learn and how they want to learn
- Experience - what activities would youth want to participate in
- Getting Involved - how do youth want to get involved
- Other - what other things should be included

What Youth Said Is Important

- Aboriginal storytelling
- History & archeology
- Different cultures & ethnicities
- Park accessibility
- Nature
- Rocks, fossils, crystals
- Animals (petting zoo, bird migration)
- Plants & trees (invasive species)
- Insects (bees & honey making)
- Gardening
- Environmental awareness
- Water & land conservation
- Farming & agriculture
- Food preservation
- Farmer's Markets
- Horseback riding
- Outdoor sports & activities
- Snowshoeing and skiing
- Skating
- Arts & crafts
- Rock climbing
- Outdoor survival strategies
- Zip-lining
- High ropes
- Outdoor cooking
- Camping
- Ice fishing
- Concerts
- Summer camps
- Outdoor theatres & museums
- Girl Guides & Boy Scout programs
- Technology
- Smart phone applications and barcodes
- Education & getting involved
- School programs (outdoor classroom)
- Training, internships, jobs
- Volunteering
- Community Involvement
- Certification programs
- Youth involved in planning

Engagement Levels

Response	Percentage
Yes, I'd like to help create a vision for the park	72%
I'd like to stay in the loop	18%
Thanks, but no thanks	10%

Themes that Emerged

- Technology in Nature
- Outdoor Classroom
- Learning about Agriculture and Farming
- Group Discovery
- Unique Experiences
- Aboriginal Storytelling

Over 60 youth participants

www.parksCanada.gc.ca/rouge

Appendix D

Guiding Principles for Establishment and Management of the Park

- Maintain and improve ecological health and scientific integrity;
- Encourage people (especially youth) to learn and connect with nature;
- Collaborate to ensure multi-modal connectivity and access;
- Foster a culture of community and youth volunteering, engagement, respect and partnership;
- Inspire people to experience this park;
- Respect and support sustainable agriculture and other compatible land uses;
- Honour diversity, local heritage, cultural inclusiveness...past, present and future;
- Environmental Leadership in Park Operations;
- Inclusive, progressive governance led by Parks Canada (Parks Canada, n.d.).

teaching note

Parks Canada's Rouge National Urban Park: An opportunity to showcase Canada's true nature

Case Summary

Recent social and demographic trends including increased diversity and urban population have resulted in declining visitation to national parks and protected areas. This case focuses on two opportunities for Parks Canada to address the issue: (1) Canada's first national urban park is being established in one of the most diverse communities in the Greater Toronto Area and close to the city of Toronto as a top Canadian destination; (2) Youth and visitors interested in nature-based activities are identified by Destination Canada as priority target markets. Rouge National Urban Park can be a gateway to Canada's national parks and protected areas for local visitors and tourists, considering that unlike other national parks, it is accessible to a large urban population. The case provides information on Parks Canada's current strategic direction with regard to increasing visitation as well as recent initiatives aimed at connecting with youth and new Canadians. The unique amenities and potential of the Rouge National Urban Park as an attraction for local visitors as well as tourists are also discussed. In addition, the case presents psychographic characteristics of the three main segments selected as Canada's preferred target markets. The information provided in the case will allow students to conduct a critical analysis of the current situation and identify strategic alternatives by adopting various tools (e.g. PESTLE, SWOT, stakeholder analysis) and theoretical concepts (e.g. unique value proposition, brand positioning, strategic partnership). The analysis will also inform the development of an action plan for implementing the most effective strategy.

Main Issue

How can Parks Canada accommodate the needs and expectations of tourists, specifically youth and millennials, without alienating its traditional Canadian clientele? How can the unique characteristics of the Rouge Park as well as the strength of Parks Canada brand be leveraged to increase visitation from these groups?

Target Audience

This case is primarily intended to be used in strategic management or marketing management courses for senior undergraduate students in recreation, leisure and tourism programs.

Teaching Objectives

Students can meet the following learning objectives by analyzing the case:

- Understand how organizations need to constantly monitor their environment and revise strategies to adapt to the changes, specifically social and demographic trends;
- Advance analytical thinking and problem solving skills by de-

veloping strategic alternatives to leverage opportunities and strengths;

- Understand the complexity of balancing the needs and expectations of different stakeholders and market segments as well as potential consequences of each strategic alternative; and
- Combine strategic thinking and long-term planning with a practical approach through developing an action plan that outlines specific steps, immediate changes and initiatives required for implementing the strategy and meeting long-term objectives.

Analysis of the Teaching Objectives and Theoretical Concepts

The case allows students to apply a range of different concepts and tools from the strategic management and marketing literature including internal and external analysis using SWOT and PESTLE models; stakeholder analysis; components of strategy (vision, mission, values, objectives); segmentation, targeting and positioning; strategic partnership and strategy implementation. The following questions will help instructors to focus class discussions on the intended teaching objectives:

- What is the main issue faced by Parks Canada? (ensuring future visitation and support)
- What environmental factors have contributed to the issue? (e.g. low visitation by children due to the increasing use of technology, limited visitation by minorities and immigrants, aging population, and increasing urbanization)
- What are Parks Canada's main strategic priorities and objectives? (One of the main strategic objectives is stated as "increasing revenue through more visitors and more revenue per visitor". In order to achieve this goal six strategic priorities are defined, as outlined in the case under "National Parks in Canada". Specific marketing initiatives include connecting with targeted groups through events and festivals; enhanced traditional and social media presence; and proactive tourism media relations)
- What are the key strengths and opportunities that can help the agency to address the issue? (e.g. Parks Canada's strong and historic brand, unique features and amenities of the Rouge National Urban Park, Park's close proximity to the GTA's diverse population and Toronto as a top Canadian destination, emphasis on nature in Destination Canada's positioning strategy, youth targeted as a key segment by both Parks Canada and Destination Canada)
- What are the strategic alternatives available to Parks Canada?
 - Would a partnership between Parks Canada and Destina-

tion Canada be a viable option? (the answer requires an analysis of strategic directions, strengths, and competencies of each organization and identifying potential areas for a win-win partnership)

- How can the establishment of Rouge National Urban Park help Parks Canada to connect with youth and millennials?
- Who are the key stakeholder groups that are affected by and/or can affect the implementation of the recommended strategy? What would be their potential reactions? (Rouge Park staff and volunteers, residents, local visitors, tourists, environmental groups, traditional Parks Canada clientele, new Canadians and youth are among stakeholder groups)
- What is your proposed action plan for implementing the strategy?
 - Does it require any changes in Parks Canada's strategic direction and organizational structure? (the current direction places very limited emphasis on the tourism aspect)

Recommended Teaching Approach

This case was used for a case analysis competition among senior tourism students. Participants, working in groups, had 3 hours to read and analyze the case, develop strategic alternatives, create an action plan for implementing their recommended strategy, and prepare a PowerPoint presentation for sharing the results. A panel of judges, including a senior Parks Canada advisor, evaluated the presentations.

Alternatively, the case can be discussed in a 90-minute class, where students work in groups of 4 to 5. A maximum of 5 to 6 groups is recommended. The case needs to be provided to the students in advance and analyzed as an individual assignment in preparation for the class. At the beginning of the class students will have 20 to 30 minutes (depending on the number of groups) to discuss and analyze the case in their groups. Then, they will be asked to share their thoughts with the class. Presentations should cover the main issue, at least two strategic alternatives (to encourage creativity), final recommendation along with a discussion on why it would be the best way to address the identified issue, and an action plan for implementing the recommended strategy. Teams will look at the issue from the perspective of external consultants presenting to Parks Canada senior managers (i.e. the rest of the class). Each presentation will take maximum 10 minutes, including the question period. Other students are encouraged to participate by asking questions or providing comments after each presentation, as Parks Canada senior managers would do. Using whiteboards or flip charts for recording ideas during the within-group discussion would facilitate presentations. At the end of the presentations the class can vote on the best strategy. The instructor may choose to adopt a more structured approach by providing students with some of the questions listed above.

Our experience shows that students may tend to over-emphasize

the use of social media in their recommendations, considering that the case is focused on attracting youth and millennials. However, it is important for students to be able to distinguish between tactics (or initiatives) and strategies and to understand that a social media campaign might not fully address the strategic issues faced by Parks Canada.

Suggested Readings

- Canadian Tourism Commission (n.d.). EQ Profiles, Retrieved 23 February 2016, from http://en.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Resources/EQ/eq_profiles_ver2_2015_eng_lowres.pdf
- Canadian Tourism Commission (2014), Marketing Canada in an Ever-Changing World: CTC Corporate Plan Summary 2015-2019, Retrieved 23 February 2016, from https://en.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Corporate_reports/2015-2019-corporate-plan-summary-with-us.pdf
- Hill, C., Jones, G., & Schilling, M. (2014), Strategic management: theory: an integrated approach, 11th Ed. Cengage Learning.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J.T., & Makens, J. C. (2014), Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism, 6th Ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Parks Canada (n.d.), 2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities: Retrieved 23 February 2016, from <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/plans/rpp/rpp2014-15/index.aspx#sec01>.