



# TRAIL ALTERNATIVES FROM ROUGE BEACH TO GLEN ROUGE CAMPGROUND

FRNUP Presentation  
2021

The RNUP have proposed three trails for the south part of the Park.

East Trail - Pickering

Middle Trail

West Trail - Scarborough

## Legend

### Proposed Trail Route

Alternative 1

Alternative 2

Alternative 3a

Alternative 3b

Potential Community Trail Connection

Social Trails (to be closed)

★ Historical Chimney Location

Lookout

Bridge

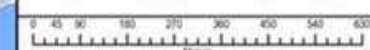
Floating Boardwalk Crossing

Property Boundary



Parks Canada

Study Area & Alternative Route Mapping



DATUM: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Scale: 1:5,364  
Source: M2017, City of Toronto  
Image: City of Toronto

Jun 11, 2019

**AECOM**

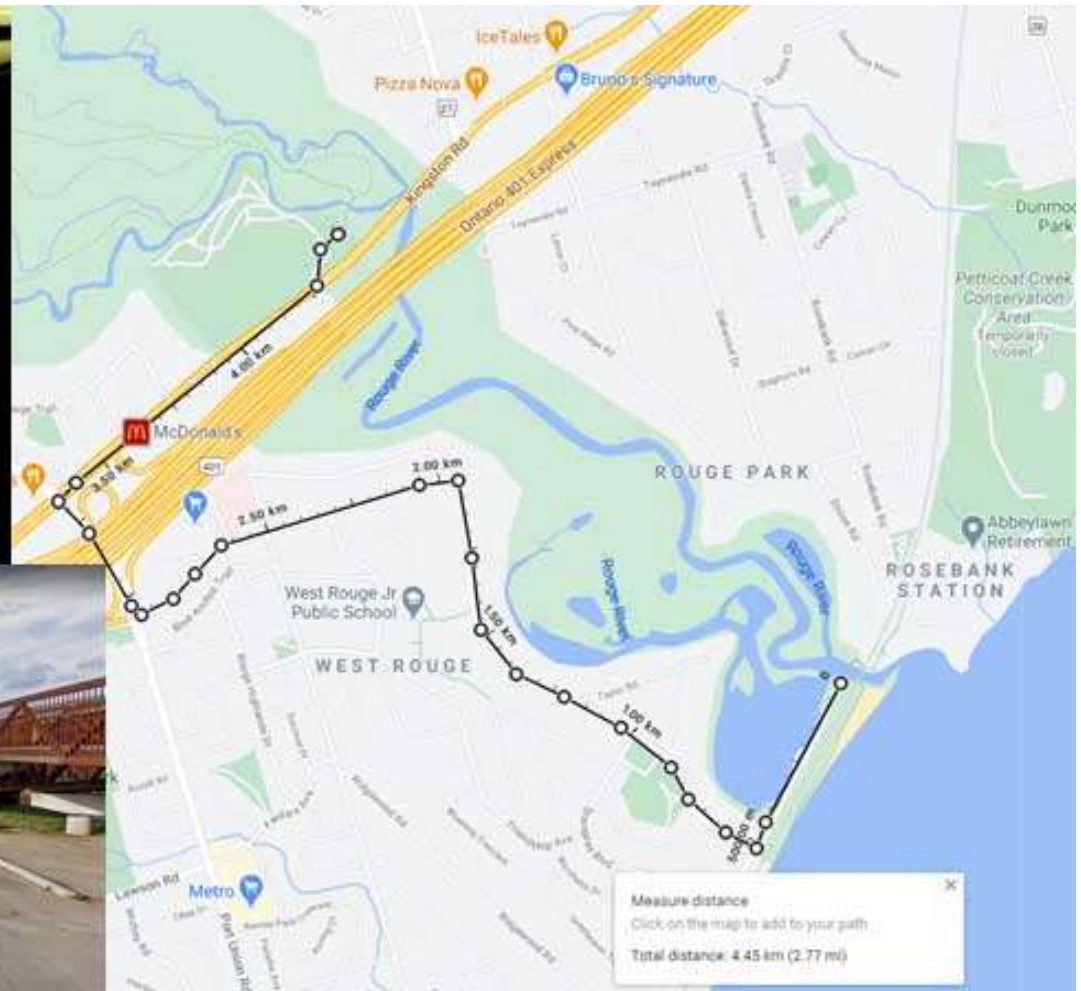
Figure #1

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The only present route is to follow city streets as shown in the map. Some of the streets have no sidewalks. This is a distance of 4.45 km.

Lets look at this route more closely.









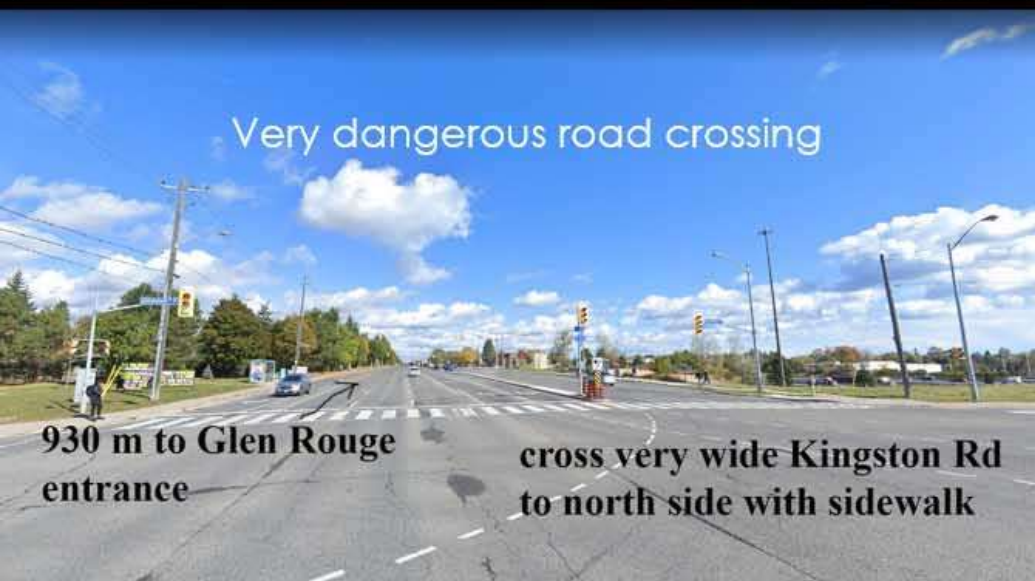
1 km to Port Union Road

No sidewalk



1,5 km to Kingston Road

Sidewalk over the 401 Hwy



Very dangerous road crossing

930 m to Glen Rouge  
entrance

cross very wide Kingston Rd  
to north side with sidewalk



Downhill to this entrance  
total distance by wheelchair 4.45 km

Obviously not many people are going to travel this road route from the beach to the campground.

Certainly:

- . no elderly person,
- . no mobility challenged person,
- . no person in a wheelchair
- . no rational person

will travel the dangerous streets to Glen Rouge Campground.

Alternative is take a vehicle to bypass this very beautiful area.

Following is a very brief look at what the neighbours to the Rouge Valley see on a regular basis and with the new trail with boardwalk component, other visitors will have a chance to enjoy.

What will be missed? Many would say the most scenic part of the entire RNUP can only be accessed by canoe or trail with board walk component.

A trail with a boardwalk component through the valley will be the only way that the vast majority of the public will be able to see this area.

**The primary purpose is not to get from B to C (beach to campground) but to get beyond the campground to the trails up through the whole Rouge. It will also allow visitors to get all the benefits of a being in a wild place and seeing everything without damaging anything.**



Some of the views for future visitors



All Canadians are entitled to



enjoy the scenes in these pictures.







And in all seasons, when safe.







## **Without a trail with boardwalk component**

There is NO PARK CONNECTION from the Rouge Beach to the trails to the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Rouge National Urban Park is a significant natural park but without this trail with boardwalk component, the public will be denied access to some of the most beautiful parts of the Park.

Wheelchair access to any of the other trails in the south of the Rouge does not exist. A trail with a boardwalk component must be built for this area to be fully accessible for wheelchairs and people with mobility issues.

This trail with boardwalk component project is important environmentally.



Major flooding in 2017 and 2019 caused much ecological damage to the beach and the marsh, as well as flooding the parking lot for months.

The pier feature will be constructed over the lower parking lot at the Rouge Beach and will alleviate the problems of the flooding and erosion at the south end of the Rouge River where it flows into Lake Ontario.

The elevated pier feature will be above the flood levels. It will be a meeting place, observation place, canoe launch site, activity location and much more.

The lower parking lot will be restored to a more natural state, which includes removing the asphalt which leaches oil and other pollutants like salt, when flooded or with major storms.



# AN ARTIST DRAWING OF THE POSSIBLE PIER FEATURE



This Pier feature will become an attraction and gathering place for special days.

## Socially Created Trails

Small samples of problems with Socially Created Trails



Unsanctioned boardwalks and bridges.



Tree houses





Severe erosion

Socially created trails often result in misuse of the trails because they are very private. These trails must be removed, cleaned up and rehabilitated.

Illegal dumping



Garbage





Access to nature without damaging it is the goal of any boardwalk, which enables pedestrians to cross wetlands and fragile or marshy land while protecting that same area from damage and giving the public a way to enjoy the beauty of nature in a place that would otherwise be impossible.

Parks Canada, Provincial Parks, Regional Parks, Ontario Nature, and other groups have experience in building Trails with boardwalks with minimal disturbance resulting in long term protection of the environment and public access for educational and health benefits.

The following pictures show a few of the locations where boardwalks were constructed to protect sensitive areas in delicate habitats.



Algonquin Park Big Pines Trail through sensitive bog habitat



Glacier National Park



Yukon Rock Glacier Trail



Jasper National Park

No evidence of construction  
But lots of evidence of conservation.



Johnville Bog and Forest Park  
Quebec



## Kouchibouguac National Park boardwalk



P.E.I. National Park floating boardwalk



Parks Canada has experience in every kind of environment and sensitive habitats. They do it right and make it to last for future generations.

## Pacific Rim NP rainforest protection



Point Pelee National Park





## Toronto & Regional Conservation Authority board walks



Lynde  
Shores



As is illustrated here, boardwalk features are common in Federal, Provincial, Municipal and private natural areas such as Ontario Nature Preserves.



Rotary Park



Irving Eco-Centre preserves and restores one of the few remaining great sand dunes on the northeastern coastline of North America - a sand dune stretching 12 km across Bouctouche Bay.

An 800m boardwalk keeps people off the sensitive and ecologically significant sand dune while allowing them to enjoy them and be educated about their importance.



Ontario Nature's Altberg Wildlife Sanctuary has boardwalks which keep visitors off sensitive ground and plants.

Ontario Nature sometimes uses volunteers to work on trails, including boardwalks over sensitive areas, such as the one pictured below.





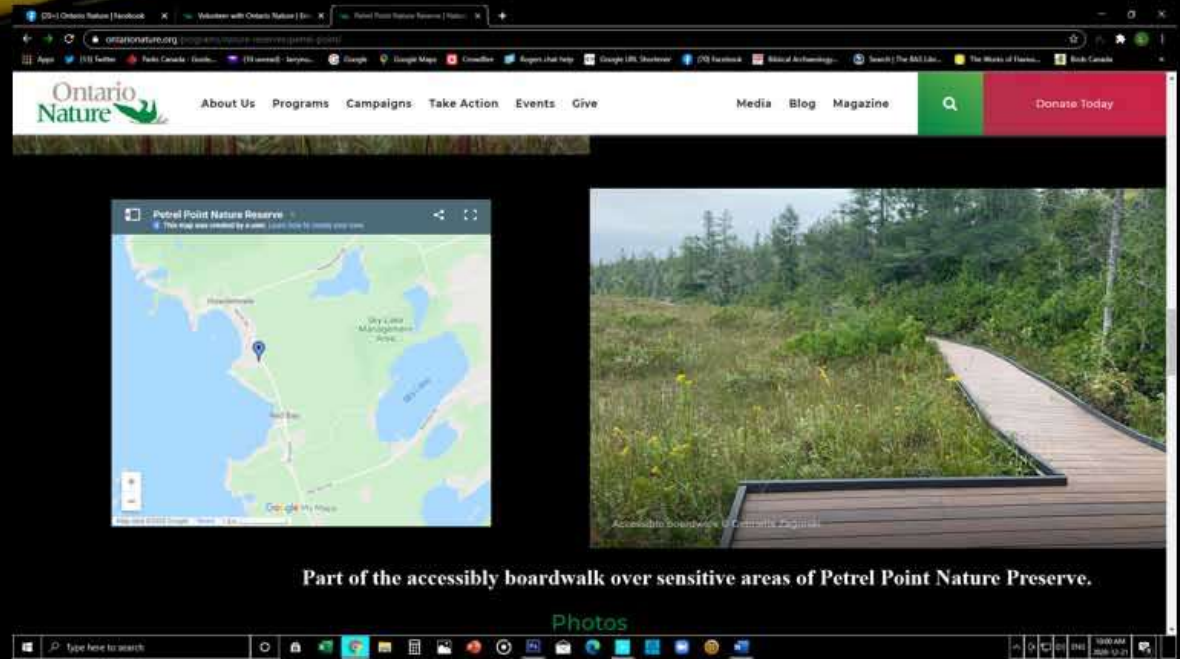
# Petrel Point Nature Preserve

## Wheelchair Accessible Boardwalk Unveiled at Ontario Nature Reserve

Published on 2018/05/26 — In Releases — by Steve Gerard



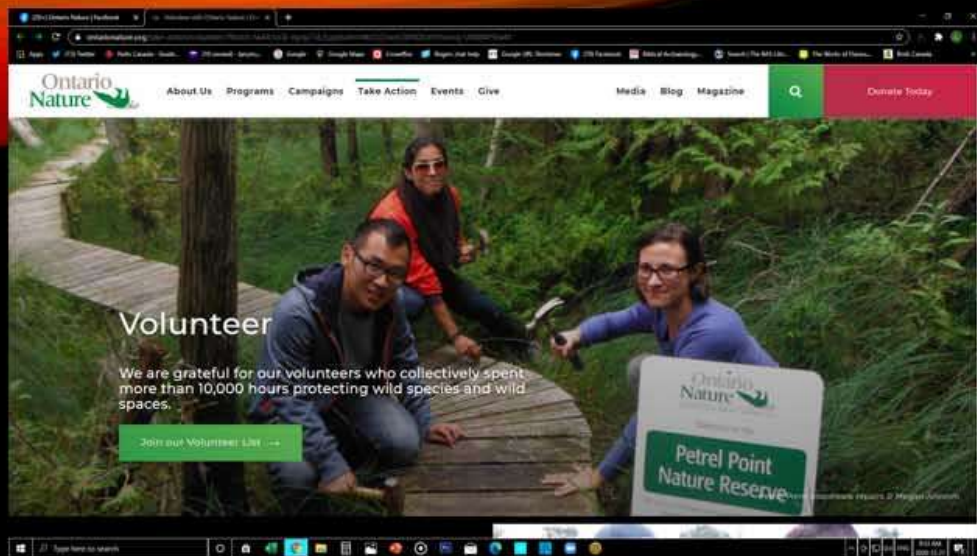
Ontario Nature has unveiled a wheelchair accessible boardwalk in advance of accessibility week at Petrel Point Nature Reserve:



Ontario Nature's Petrel Point Nature Reserve is a globally rare habitat. "To make its natural spaces more accessible, Ontario Nature opened a new wheelchair accessible boardwalk at its Petrel Point Nature Preserve which enables people of all abilities to enjoy this stunning property." ... with "a globally rare ecosystem with many rare and sensitive plants," Tanya Pulfer, Ontario Nature's Conservation Science Manager.

The boardwalk area includes sundews, pitcher plants, and showy lady's slippers, rose pogonia and grass-pink orchids. Visitors on boardwalks preserve the sensitive plant life that thrives on the property.





Ontario Nature uses volunteers to help build and make repairs to boardwalks.

"We have been working to bring many of our trails up to a higher standard of safety and recreation experience, including improvements to accessibility, so that all Ontarians can enjoy these natural spaces," Caroline Schultz, Ontario Nature's Executive Director.



Petrel Point boardwalks have interpretative signs for public education.



Ontario Nature gets Federal funding for some projects, including about \$50,000 for the Petrel Point wheelchair accessible trail.

## **Situation Now**

### **Poaching**

Many socially created trails

Vandalism

People going anywhere

Open all the time

Access for the people who know the location of the socially created trails

Eliminates all but fully able bodied

No access to people with mobility issues

No wheel chair accessibility

Flooding closes area

Feet on the ground - crushing plants

Easy access for illegal uses

Socially created trails intersecting wildlife movement

Secret access only

Socially created trails discourage nesting

## **With new trail with boardwalk component and accompanying restorations**

Controlled access and better policing with the boardwalk

One controlled trail

Better policing to prevent vandalism

Directing people away from sensitive areas

Can be closed, if necessary or when needed

Accessibility for all who keep to the trail

Open access for all people of various abilities

Universal access for all people with mobility issues

Full wheel chair accessible

Flooding not an issue with raised boardwalk

No feet on the ground

Limited access limits possibilities for illegal uses

Wildlife has freedom of movement away from people

Access for enjoyment, appreciation, education, exercise, etc.

One trail encourages nesting & animal breeding away from visitors



**The RNUP Trail with Boardwalk Project** is a lot more than simply a safe place to walk. It will restore ecosystems and improve ecological integrity by restoration work within the beach and surrounding marsh area. This will include:

- invasive species management and removal,
- expanded fish habitat,
- garbage reduction,
- protection for species-at-risk,
- increased ecological monitoring efforts,
- the addition of wildlife-proof waste management,
- enhanced safety with warden patrols,
- restoration of unofficial, or socially created trails that currently provide access to and negatively impact sensitive marsh habitat through trampling, illegal harvesting, and inappropriate uses such as partying.

The trail with boardwalk component will provide visitors with a low-impact option to experience the site in a way that is respectful of this ecologically sensitive area. Visitors will see nature without damaging it.

The project will be AODA compliant (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) including accessible washrooms on beach and on the pier feature, if possible.

## **Other Benefits**

- The Boardwalk through the marsh is a place of learning for students and the public where they can see the wonders of the marsh, wetlands and river, etc.
- The Trail with Boardwalk component is an integral link with the Waterfront Trail and the Greenbelt Trail which gives access to the Oak Ridges Moraine. Discover Ontario through these beautiful trails. The Boardwalk is the integral linkage for the trails.
- This Trail with Boardwalk component is just minutes from the Rouge Hills GO station which brings people within walking distance of the Rouge.
- This Trail and Boardwalk allows people to access all parts of the RNUP.



## Economic Benefits of the Rouge Beach Improvements Project

Trails can be associated with higher property values, especially when a trail is designed to provide neighbourhood access and maintain residents' privacy. Trails, like good schools or low crime, create an amenity that commands a higher price for nearby homes (taken from <http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-property-value-overview.pdf>).

In the case of the Rouge Beach Improvements Project, a formalized trail with boardwalk components is expected to improve both the park's ecological integrity and community safety, which in turn could lead to higher property values, providing a benefit to local homeowners as well as increasing the tax base for both the cities of Toronto and Pickering. Indeed, in the United States, the addition of trails and boardwalks have consistently been shown to increase (or have no effect on) property values, to have no measurable effect on public safety, and to have an overwhelming positive influence on the quality of life for trail neighbours as well as the larger community (taken from: <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/trail-effects-on-neighborhoods-home-value-safety-quality-of-life>).



## Accessibility

Unlike the present situation in the lower Rouge Valley, this project will allow accessibility for visitors and residents with accessibility challenges.

The RNUP Trail with Boardwalk Project is a much more inclusive and environmentally responsible approach than what exists now.

“Thanks to accessible boardwalk(s), people of all abilities will have the chance to experience the outdoor wonders,” the Honourable Kristy Duncan, former Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities.



# SUMMARY

1. Public road for getting from Beach to Campground is totally unacceptable.
2. Socially created trails in the Rouge south of Kingston Road have caused significant damage to the natural environment.
3. Community engagement for this project has been extensive.
4. The Pier feature is an excellent solution to an on-going problem of flooding & safety of the public in this area as well as removing the causes of pollution.
5. The middle trail option is the most scenic and captivating while staying away from the sides of the valley and ravine property owners.
6. The project will help to move closer to the ecological integrity goal for the park by preserving the natural environment and by the regeneration of the marsh, riparian and forest areas of the south Rouge.
7. PC has significant experience and ability to construct this unique trail and boardwalk in the South Rouge with minimal disruption.
8. The plan will create a safe and inclusive connection from Lake Ontario to the trails to the Oak Ridges moraine for all visitors.

### **Recommendations for Immediate Action:**

1. That the trail with the boardwalk component up the middle of Rouge be approved and constructed.
2. That the Public Road alternative be eliminated immediately and replaced with the proposed and practical Trail and Boardwalk project.
3. That the socially created trails be closed and rehabilitated, in order to achieve ecologically integrity in the South Rouge.
4. That the pier feature be built and the ecological restoration of the lower parking lot be initiated.
5. That restoration of the wetland habitat, beach and the removal of invasive species be initiated as soon as possible.
6. That PC use all methods available to them to mitigate any disruption caused by the construction of this trail with boardwalk.