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Environmentalists 'betrayed' by plan

From page 1

"It's a complete betrayal," Mr. Robb added.

The town's proposed amendment shelve a central goal of the Rouge plan, a complete natural corridor 600 metres wide through Markham along the river's Little Rouge tributary.

In good condition, the Little Rouge runs partly through provincial land, promised to the park North of Major Mackenzie Drive and south of Whitchurch-Stouffville, however, it runs through private land, which town staff argue cannot be acquired for a corridor without help from other municipalities and higher levels of government.

PRIVATE LAND 'STERILIZED'

"Put yourself in the shoes of a property owner in the rural area of Markham. In effect, your lands are being sterilized for Rouge Park purposes," planning commissioner Jim Baird said this week.

Without compensation, he argued, owners could appeal the corridor's creation to the Ontario Municipal Board. "The entire amendment could be

undermined."

The plan and Markham's amendment require the ground-breaking use of scientific criteria to protect natural features along the river in rural areas. Environmentalists want the amendment also to require the town's "best efforts" to apply criteria in urban areas where landowners still need approvals for development.

Mr. Baird rejected those suggestions, saying the amendment is a "go forward" document, but the town will continue to negotiate for added protection.

Mark Carroll, Whitchurch-Stouffville's representative on the Rouge Alliance, the municipal partnership governing the park, said he supports stronger language in Markham's amendment.

The Alliance will support the town if the amendment is challenged because the criteria are an advance in environmental protection, he said. "If we don't push the limits, how are we going to overcome our weaknesses?"

Chairperson Ron Christie said the Alliance partners want the Little Rouge corridor in the amendment. He said it will ask

the town to include what we're calling our notwithstanding clause," stating that despite anything in the official plan amendment, development and land use proposals in the town must conform to goals and objectives of the Rouge plan.

Fraser Nelson, York chapter president for the Urban Development Institute, which represents developers, said he doesn't know if his group or its members will support or oppose Markham's amendment.

'LEADING EDGE'

"It's leading edge," Mr. Nelson said, so what is done on the Rouge could be done along the Don or Humber next.

The Alliance and environmental groups have renewed their calls for the province to enshrine the Rouge plan in law, granting the river the same sort of special status the Tory government has given the moraine.

Earlier this year, Markham MPP Dave Tsubouchi said he was concerned about the plan's prospective strength. "Hopefully, we (can) deal with it and give it some teeth," he said.

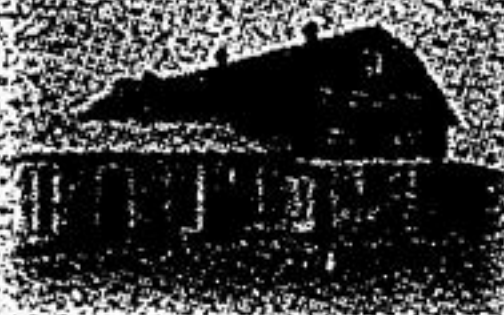
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We carry maple syrup and honey produced by small family run businesses, in fact, dealing with other family owned businesses is a prime focus for us.

Our cooking and baking is done on the premises and service in our sales centre is provided by Myra, Bud and Andrea Chepack along with home grown Jody and Stacy (local gals with pizzazz).

We serve Kawartha Dairy ice cream, delivered weekly from the Bobcaygeon dairy. Kawartha is the last family owned

dairy in Ontario. Cones and take home are available until 8:30 each evening and you can enjoy a cone on our farm porch while listening to the corn grow! Darby and Morag are our resident celebrities (Scottish Highland cattle) along with Pierre our preening peacock and an assortment of bouncing bunnies and miscellaneous creatures. It's hard to stay stressed while licking a cone and listening to a rooster crow.

Speaking of roosters our turkey pies travel way more than we do. Home baked turkey and gravy inside hand rolled pastry (no additives or preservatives) made fresh each day! These pies go to the cottage and bring people to our farm from many miles away.

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