

metropolitan area and is now lying in the path and face to face with the concrete steel and asphalt of urban development.

There are at least two major categories of reasons why the Rouge Valley must be preserved. The first has to do with the intrinsic value of its natural attributes. The second category relates to where we stand in time and in relation to man's future and his ability to grow and develop.

On the first count, the Rouge Valley is the last significant wildlife area remaining in metropolitan Toronto. As my colleague from Scarborough Centre has reviewed, it is home to approximately 78 species of birds, 35 species of fish, and 63 identified archaeological sites. It has metro's last Class II wetland and its largest continuous forest. There are many, many cogent reasons for preserving the Rouge Valley.

In relation to the second class of reasons I would like to start by saying that historically the presence of a natural environment or a vulnerable species has rarely stopped man before from plundering what stood in his way. The list of endangered and extinct species is long but, more important, the list can start right in our own backyard.

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They include the whooping crane, the bison, the Labrador duck, whales and many others.

However, we have reason to believe that we are capable of continuing to grow and develop without degrading, killing and adulterating everything that stands in our path; that we are capable of pursuing long run development in a manner that is compatible with our global environment and the interdependent ecosystems which comprise it. We call that sustainable development.

In the early years of this century, in Toronto, there was no need to distinguish between the Don River, the Humber River, Etobicoke Creek and the Rouge River. We had lots of clean rivers, lots of ecosystems intact, but when only the Rouge River is left, maybe we can understand that if this one goes like all the rest, then there will be none left.

These are some of the reasons why the Rouge Valley must be saved, not just because it is the last chance to preserve a river valley in metropolitan Toronto, not just because of the natural assets contained in it, but also because we must prove to ourselves in North America that we can pursue a sustainable development process,

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that we are in fact in control of our destiny and that we are in control of our planet's future.

We have here an opportunity to make that statement. Standing face to face with one of the hottest, most expensive, aggressive and possibly the meanest urban development market in North America, I want that statement to be made by my city, by my province and by my federal government.

There is another facet of this initiative that cannot be overlooked. The Rouge is not just a piece of real estate or a greenbelt. It is an ecosystem. Every facet of life within it is affected by what man does nearby. The headwaters must be protected. The table lands are also an integral part of that same ecosystem. That is why there is opposition to the provincial proposal to build an expressway over these lands and across the valley, when an alternative is available.

That is why there is opposition to the construction of housing on these lands. As if to create a theatre of the absurd, metropolitan Toronto recently proposed that a portion of the Rouge lands be dedicated as a new dump site.

If the Rouge Valley ecosystem is to be saved, it must be protected from all of the man-made, adverse environmental threats surrounding it. The initiative to create a park and preserve the Rouge Valley is now in the hands of government which already owns about 80 per cent of the involved land. The federal government has made a financial commitment. The city of Scarborough has imposed compatible zoning criteria. It is now up to the Government of Ontario to take the necessary steps to achieve that objective. Block the expressway and the housing, abandon the dump, dedicate the necessary land to the park and commence the planning and implementation.

I urge this House to adopt this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to offer my appreciation and congratulations to the hon. member for Scarborough Centre for giving us an opportunity to debate this issue. Several weeks ago, the hon. member for Scarborough Centre, the member for Scarborough—Rouge River and myself had an opportunity at the initiative of the hon. member for Scarborough Centre to host a gathering here on the Hill for those residents who are very concerned about what is happening to the Rouge River Valley and to