

Chapter 3

Foundations of Rouge Park's HAVE Program



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Foundations for the Rouge Park HAVE Program

HAVE at Rouge Park

The review of Rouge Park’s Foundations (Chapter 1) and the Foundations of the Alliance Partners (Chapter 2) indicate very strong mandates for community action and involvement in conservation and restoration of park lands and in life-long learning. In contrast the traditional interpretation model used by some older park agencies emphasizes the delivery of information to target audiences, using a variety of techniques including drama and the performing arts in evening amphitheater presentations.

This approach can do well in covering the initial steps of the interpretive learning process—awareness, appreciation and to some extent, understanding. The weakness is that there is little emphasis on active learning such as discovery/experiential learning or the application of new knowledge, skills and attitudes to specific issues. As such, its ability to empower participants to become involved is limited, as is its ability to inspire independent stewardship action. Traditional interpretation approaches will not deliver the desired results.

Message-Only HAVE Services Outdated

Traditional programs and services were based on a simple sender–message–receiver model. Here, messages were disseminated to visitors, and language functioned like a conduit, transferring thoughts directly from agency staff to an audience.

Message-focused delivery is mostly single-direction communication (from staff to site visitors). This alone is not consistent with many of the mandates of Rouge Park, with current best practices in HAVE service delivery, or with current learning theory.

Two-way Communication, Action-based HAVE Services Model Needed

Words such as community engagement, involvement, volunteerism, participation, stewardship and contribution were found again and again in the foundations. Traditional message-only services will not facilitate these outcomes at higher levels of the Stewardship Development Model (see sidebar: A Stewardship Development Model on following page). What is required instead are more interactive and conversational learning experiences. Most of today’s audiences are ready for higher level critical thinking and questioning skills. And most North Americans already care about the environment and can recall plenty of facts. They want to experience, to compare and connect ideas, to apply

their prior learning to interesting and relevant questions and projects, exercise their skills, generate and test ideas, to share and discuss their findings, conjectures and meanings with others, and to make a difference through their direct actions. These visitor wants complement the language of the foundations beautifully (see Chapters 1 and 2).

A Revised Model

A review of the Park’s foundations and those of its key partners has revealed a need to move forward to meet a mandate that includes traditional interpretation and education services, but more importantly seeks to empower visitors to make hands-on discoveries, develop and follow interests, communicate and share their discoveries with park staff and their peers, and contribute to park initiatives and relevant initiatives of members of the Rouge Park Alliance. There is a desire to:

- positively influence visitor behaviour to prevent/ reduce negative impacts on the park
- to also involve park neighbours (landowners and other citizens) in conservation, restoration and sustainability issues and projects as well as involving traditional park visitors in heritage appreciation programs
- to develop the overall environmental literacy of park visitors, park neighbours and adjacent communities
 - this includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes citizens need to sustain their environment, lifestyles and communities for the foreseeable future
 - a key part of this will be to better understand and cope with the interactions of their built communities with the park and other natural landscapes that they hold dear
 - they will also develop fuller understanding of the initiatives of the park and its partners
- reach audiences outside park boundaries
 - including people who do not currently visit the park

Conclusion

A holistic HAVE service delivery system must clearly contribute to park foundations, and to relevant foundations of members of the Rouge Park Alliance. To do this, HAVE services must address the full range of audience interests, needs and abilities. HAVE services will incorporate current best-practices of interpretation, environmental education, inquiry learning, and

Stewardship Development Model

Leads

- exemplify stewardship
- effects change in awareness, appreciation understanding and behaviour in others

Behaves

- voluntary contributions to stewardship initiatives
- tangible stewardship actions

Values

- considers the environment to have intrinsic worth
- the environment becomes an important part of her/his identity

Understands

- has in-depth knowledge
- precisely grasps meanings
- able to interrelate concepts

Appreciates

- can comment on the content and importance of specific environmental components

Aware

- has learned something about the natural and cultural environment
- can remember some elements

Unaware

- not equipped with specific or general knowledge

Unsupportive

- behaves in ways that do not support environmental and cultural stewardship

**Fan
the
Flame**

*Engage in
Stewardship*

**Light
the
Spark**

*Traditional
HAVE
Approaches*

Based on Environmental Education and Heritage Interpretation Task Force Report, Parks Canada, March 1992.

experiential education, where HAVE staff facilitate discovery and encourage questioning through hands-on activities, and perhaps longer-term workshops and courses. They must also provide opportunities for two-way communications where participants can ask questions and share their discoveries, experiences and expertise with HAVE staff and other participants. Finally, the new delivery system must offer opportunities for citizens to become involved and to contribute, usually through projects and opportunity for learning to emerge. With these principles in place, HAVE staff can craft offerings that are appealing, enjoyable and satisfying to their audiences, as well as interesting and intellectually challenging, inspiring higher levels of stewardship, leadership and contribution.

The Challenge

Blending current delivery techniques with new approaches will not happen over night. The new model is more complex. It does not rely on being only entertaining, and cannot rely on a passive audience. The new model is based on a merging of interpretation and education with engagement. One of the tools for understanding and applying this new approach is the new Stewardship Development Model.

Stewardship Development Model

This model was adapted by EcoLeaders Interpretation and Environmental Education from various sources to aid other clients to extend beyond traditional territory. It was included in our proposal, and the foundational review confirms that it will be of significant use in future chapters of this HAVE plan.

The model focuses on levels of understanding, support and action in the fields of environmental stewardship (see sidebar: Stewardship Development Model).

The model represents a learning progression in environmental stewardship ranging from unsupportive and unaware, through levels of awareness, understanding, to changing values and behaviours all the way to leadership in the community. The model recognizes that learning is not usually a linear progression. Rather, many people can be at various points on the scale at the same time. For example, a park visitor may support the park's efforts to preserve rare and endangered habitats, but not be aware of all of the habitats that are protected in the park. This model is best used to reflect audience segmentation, or categories of learners and contributors, rather than individuals (audiences can be analyzed in other ways as well, and will be in future chapters).

Applying the Model

HAVE staff can use the Stewardship Development Model to assist in creating effective HAVE offerings; first, by identifying where the target audiences may be currently on the scale, and second, by identifying at what level they wish target audiences to be at after they have participated in the HAVE offering.

Combining Interpretation and Environmental Education

There are many definitions of interpretation and environmental education in the literature. For the purposes of this plan, EcoLeaders has chosen the following definitions:

Interpretation: Lighting the Spark

“Any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to the public, through first-hand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape or site”
(Interpretation Canada, 1976).

Environmental Education: Fanning the Flame*

“Environmental education seeks to promote an appreciation and understanding of, and concern for, the environment, and to foster informed, engaged, and responsible environmental citizenship. Effective environmental education incorporates problem solving, hands-on learning, action projects, scientific inquiry, higher order thinking, and co-operative learning, and employs relevant subject matter and topics that actively engage students in the educational process.” (Shaping Our Schools Shaping Our Future. Environmental Education in Ontario Schools: Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education. 2007. www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/shapingSchools.pdf).

Environmental Literacy*

“Environmental literacy is an important outcome of environmental education. An environmentally literate person will have the knowledge and perspectives required to understand public issues and place them in a meaningful environmental context. Thus, environmental literacy requires a mix of knowledge, vocabulary, key concepts, history, and philosophy.”

(Shaping Our Schools Shaping Our Future. Environmental Education in Ontario Schools: Report of the Working Group on Environmental Education. 2007)

* Note that many sources do not limit environmental audiences to schools. We suggest that all people at all ages and many settings can participate in environmental education.

Environmentally literate individuals understand both ecological and social-political systems and have the inclination to apply that understanding to any decisions that pose consequences for environmental quality. This understanding includes four strands:

- knowledge of environmental processes and systems
- skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- personal and civic responsibility
- questioning and analysis skills

Stewardship: Tangible Actions

Stewardship of natural and cultural heritage is a cornerstone of the park’s mission. Involving park visitors and neighbours in stewardship of Rouge Park and perhaps the greater Rouge Watershed will therefore be a key activity of the HAVE Program.

The Land Stewardship Centre of Canada (www.landstewardship.org/learnabout.asp) provides a basic working definition of land stewardship which can be applied to all forms of stewardship in the park:

“The practice of carefully managing land usage to ensure natural systems are maintained or enhanced for future generations.”

The centre also names and describes four guiding principles of land stewardship:

1. Caring for the system as a whole - understanding the fundamental roles and values of natural systems, building up biological fertility in the soil, incorporating an understanding of the ecological cycles on the landscape (water, energy, nutrients) and how land-use practices can either benefit, be in harmony, or negatively impact these cycles and other land-users, flora and fauna.
2. Resource conservation - maximizing efficiency and striving to reduce the one-time consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources; aiming for long-term optimization versus short-term maximization of production.
3. Maintaining, building and enhancing stability in Nature - maintain and encourage natural biological diversity and complexity; maintaining natural areas and functions on the land (a.k.a. wildlife habitat conservation).
4. Cultural values and ethics - caring for the health of the land for future generations and long-term economic stability; the link between civilization, urbanization, and the land-base and ecosystems that are vital to survival; the intrinsic value and right to exist of all life on Earth.

A Blended Model

In the Stewardship Development Model, interpretation, environmental education and stewardship are blended together. Interpretation is focused on capturing people's interest, or "lighting the spark" which:

- applies mainly to the awareness, appreciation and understanding levels of the Stewardship Development Model
- is very effective with first-time visitors
- includes a tourism aspect

Building on the lighting the spark activities, "fanning the flame" takes people's interest further into the life-long learning arena and linking more directly to the park's long-term environmental stewardship mandate.

Fan the flame:

- applies mainly to the Stewardship Development Model's levels of: values, behaves and leads
- focuses on return visitors and on community outreach
- has a life-long learning aspect

Light the spark and fan the flame are part of the same continuous progression.

The Importance of the Stewardship Development Model

This model reflects Rouge park's foundations, and the foundations of the members of the Rouge Park Alliance. As such it provides a solid framework for HAVE service planning.

HAVE Program Goals and Objectives

Why HAVE Goals and Objectives?

1. Parameters for Developing HAVE Services

Goals and objectives are the guidelines that set the parameters for content of HAVE programs. They are drawn from the foundations examined in this chapter. HAVE staff will use these to determine what programs they will develop for which audiences/participants. Program objectives and themes will relate to specific goals in a clear and logical way.

2. A Filter for Selecting Collaboration/Partnership Programming

There are many individuals and groups that would like to deliver programs and services within Rouge Park. It is often difficult to decide which of these are appropriate—which should receive sanction? These goals and objectives can be used as a filter to decide which of these outside programs and services fit Rouge Park’s HAVE initiative.

The proposed goals and objectives of the Rouge Park HAVE Program are listed below order of priority.

Goal 1. Light the Spark of Discovery

Objectives:

- 1.1 Aim to address park visitors at each of the lower levels of the Stewardship Development Model
- 1.2 Focus on basic interpretation—e.g., awareness, appreciation, understanding of natural and cultural heritage of the park aimed at park visitors and located within the park
- 1.3 Assist in the management of visitor impacts and foster proper park use
- 1.4 Enrich visitor experience, providing enjoyment and supporting health and wellness
- 1.5 Include school classes among HAVE audiences, facilitating programs that fit the park’s mandate as well as being designed to meet specific curriculum-based learning outcomes as dictated by the Ontario Ministry of Education
- 1.6 Strengthen local communities by identifying, celebrating and sustaining locally significant places and stories (develop a sense of place)

Goal 2. Fan the Flames of Stewardship

Objectives:

- 2.1 Develop advocates for Rouge Park and the values under management
- 2.2 Enable engagement by removing barriers and providing information, facilities and viable alternatives, and developing skills and capacity of participants
- 2.3 Provide learning opportunities at each of the upper levels of the Stewardship Development Model (*Values, Behaves, Leads*)

- 2.4 Build on audience interests and knowledge of the park’s natural and cultural heritage initiated by light the spark activities or already present in some individuals

Goal 3. Engage and Involve Citizens in Stewardship

Objectives:

- 3.1 Engage park visitors and other interested parties to become involved in the park’s stewardship activities, such as restoration and monitoring, through co-productions with community groups, deliberative fora (discussion/conversation/meetings) and personal contacts, using existing networks where possible
- 3.2 Encourage on-going and additional involvement and other contributions from park visitors, individual citizens and community groups through recognition and rewards (the counterpoint of regulations and enforcement), perhaps including expenditures such as micro-grants
- 3.3 Develop collaborations and partnerships with groups and agencies to deliver appropriate HAVE services to park visitors

Goal 4. Promote Best Practices in Natural and Cultural Heritage Stewardship

Objectives:

- 4.1 Lead by example
- 4.2 Use these examples in HAVE offerings, ensuring that they are visible, accessible, and interpreted
- 4.3 Assist immediate park neighbours to identify with the park and to manage their properties in a sympathetic manner as per greater park ecosystem concept
- 4.4 Assist other landholders within the Rouge watershed to restore and enhance the natural ecosystem attributes of their properties

Goal 5. Deliver Information/Orientation about the park

Objectives:

- 5.1 Assist park users, park neighbours, local media and decision makers, Rouge Park Alliance members, participating community groups and all Rouge Park staff to be able to:
 - sketch the location of the park on a map, including its boundaries and size
 - mark the locations of key park infrastructure (e.g., trails and visitor facilities)
 - describe some of the park uses and regulations associated with them, including learning and participation opportunities
 - locate access and enjoy park features and experiences
- 5.2 Provide orientation and information needed for safety
- 5.3 Promote upcoming HAVE services and events and take program registration when appropriate

Goal 6. Support Tourism and Marketing

Objectives:

- 6.1 Attract visitors from further afield or encourage them to lengthen their stay
- 6.2 Maintain and increase the profile of Rouge Park as a positive, co-operative community asset

Goal 7. Build Trust and Teamwork

Objectives:

- 7.1 Support the Rouge Park Alliance and other park partnerships by developing trust and facilitating co-operation among Rouge Park staff, Alliance members, partners, collaborators, community groups, researchers and the public through the friendly, positive, co-operative tasks of providing HAVE services
- 7.2 Be a positive, visible presence in the community