



A fresh air festival on wheels.

Attention: News / Recreation / Travel & Tourism / Environment / Farming Editors and Reporters

**News Release**

May 22, 2008

## **Greenbelt Foundation invites Ontarians to a family fun 'green' adventure across the Greenbelt**

### ***Tour de Greenbelt*-- a 'fresh air festival on wheels'**

(Toronto) – The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation today announced the first *Tour de Greenbelt*, an innovative and exciting opportunity for Ontarians and visitors to bicycle their way through open air adventure in Ontario's Greenbelt. This family-oriented cycling *Tour* is both accessible and affordable to all, with numerous attractions and special events. Described as a 'fresh air festival on wheels,' the *Tour* will take place over four distinct routes in the early fall this year – September 20 & 21 and September 27 & 28. Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), Canada's leading outdoor retailer, has joined with the Greenbelt Foundation as the presenting sponsor of the *Tour*.

The *Tour de Greenbelt* provides unprecedented support for bicycling in Ontario with 100% of *Tour* pledge monies going directly to participating cycling clubs to support an active and safe cycling network in Ontario.

The *Tour* costs only \$30 per person per day to register and is free for children 14 and under who are accompanied by an adult. Riders can register online at [www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca](http://www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca) or call 1-888-960-0030.

What is the *Tour de Greenbelt*?

It's not a race. Instead, it's a great opportunity for recreational riders and families to explore the beautiful fresh air countryside. The four marshaled and paved routes (detailed below) are from 30 to 65 kilometres in length and vary in difficulty. Each route winds through a different part of the countryside in Ontario's Greenbelt. The routes are designed to allow riders to participate in activities involving the local communities. Arrangements are made for on-route experiences at farms, farmers' markets, wineries, fall fairs, and historic sites on each of the *Tour's* routes. There will be fresh local food lunches and evening barbecues in the company of friends and celebrities. Best of all, riders will share their own stories about their day getting to know Ontario's Greenbelt.

**Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation**

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**Possibility grows here.**

“Ontario is home to the largest and most diverse Greenbelt in the world,” said Burkhard Mausberg, President of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. “What better way to experience this region of bountiful farmland, cultural heritage and stunning natural beauty than by cycling, seeing and eating our way through the Greenbelt on this ‘fresh air festival on wheels.’”

Remember the carefree feeling of a leisurely bike ride? The *Tour de Greenbelt* is your chance to take your bike out of storage and pump up some new memories. This outdoor adventure is inspired both by the new passion for 'living green' through environmentally friendly recreation and by the recent surge of interest in bicycle touring in Ontario. It's also a chance for Ontarians and visitors to get to know the Greenbelt. Ontario's Greenbelt is 1.8 million acres of protected land that wraps around the Golden Horseshoe and encompasses the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine, Rouge Park, some 7,000 farms and hundreds of rural towns and villages.

“We are delighted to be part of the *Tour de Greenbelt*,” said David Labistour, CEO of Mountain Equipment Co-op, which will contribute expertise, volunteers and funding support to the four-day event. “MEC exists to support people in the pursuit of outdoor recreation—support that includes grassroots cycling initiatives like the *Tour*. Events like this help people get outside and realize the many benefits that cycling provides.”

The *Tour de Greenbelt* is carefully organized to support all riders. Special transport is available for those who do not wish to complete the full day's ride. Bicycle repair support is also available.

The routes for the *Tour de Greenbelt* are:

**Saturday, September 20... Rouge Valley looped route.**

This is a family day tour through farm country; difficulty rating of 1.5 (on a scale of 1-4); a gentle, mostly flat ride over a relaxing 30 km distance. This will be the *Tour* kickoff day and media event, starting and ending at the Toronto Zoo; with celebrities, barbecue, corn-roast and plenty of on-route activities. The day ends with live concerts and camping in Rouge Park.

**Sunday, September 21... Newmarket to Lake Simcoe, point-to-point route.**

This is a ‘Ride to the Lake’ starting in Newmarket and ending on the shores of Lake Simcoe. This leg of the *Tour* emphasizes on-road safety, as we partner with York Region in support of their recently approved Bikeway Network Plan. Enjoy the calming beauty of a marshalled ride past horse farms and lakeshore vistas. Difficulty rating of 2.0 as it is a longer route at 50 km. The route is family-friendly with a mostly flat ride and some rolling hills. An end of ride barbecue and celebration will take place at the Briars Resort. Buses will be available to return riders to the start point.

**Saturday September 27... Burlington to Ball's Falls Conservation Area, point-to-point route.**

This day has been named ‘Sea to Sky – Ride the Escarpment’ and is the most challenging of the routes. With a difficulty rating of 3.0, this is the longest route of the *Tour* at 65 km. The ride begins

at the Burlington lakefront at the new MEC store. The route drops down to the Waterfront Trail along Lake Ontario. Fuel up with fresh local food before challenging the Escarpment. A sag-wagon is available to riders requiring assistance. After traveling the rolling landscape, the route returns to the mostly flat and picturesque ride past farms and wineries, carrying on to Ball's Falls Conservation Area for a barbecue. Camping and local accommodations are available. Buses will be available to return riders to the start point.

**Sunday, September 28... Niagara-on-the-Lake and district, looped route.**

A 'Wine Country and *Tour de Greenbelt Party*' concludes the four days of the *Tour*. This is a relaxed, flat-surface 30 km route starting and ending at Niagara-on-the-Lake. It takes in local wineries, Fort St. George, Queenston Heights, the Brock Monument and other historic sites. The day will end with a special wind-up party featuring live music and wonderful local food prepared by celebrity chefs.

Further details on the routes, accommodations, community activities, special events, prizes, and celebrity participants in the *Tour* are available at [www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca](http://www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca) Information will be updated throughout the summer.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation began its work in June 2005 as an independent, charitable foundation with a mandate to fund organizations in support of farming, the environment and rural communities located in Ontario's Greenbelt.

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*For further information and promotional material, please visit [www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca](http://www.TourdeGreenbelt.ca), and contact: Peter Hart, Manager, Tour de Greenbelt Manager, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, (647) 224-0634, [phart@tourdegreenbelt.ca](mailto:phart@tourdegreenbelt.ca)*

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