



BOIS-DE-SARAGUAY – THE FORGOTTEN NATURE-PARK
Brief presented at the Sommet de Montréal, April, 2002

This document is a proposal to the new City of Montreal to open Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park. The park was acquired more than twenty years ago: there are no services to welcome the public.

This appeal is urgent, lest the site suffer further degradation at the hands of vandals or fall prey to developers.

Saraguay Citizens Group has been spurred to prepare this proposal because vandals have set fires to park buildings three times (one of the buildings was then demolished) and because Manoir MacDougall has been targeted for mega development projects – twice – since 1998.

Kindly consider this document to be a work-in-progress. It will be revised, translated and circulated to interested groups and individuals for input and endorsement. Maps showing forest eco-systems, trails and points of interest, as well as photographs will be added. A bibliography will be completed and a brief profile of Saraguay Citizens Group annexed. When the work is complete, the proposal will be formally presented to the City.

The purpose of this proposal is not to supplant the volumes of work already done on the “Le dossier Saraguay”. Rather, its intent is to offer an update from a layman’s standpoint; from a group with the intimate knowledge of their own backyard – the Bois-de-Saraguay.

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BOIS-DE-SARAGUAY - THE FORGOTTEN NATURE-PARK

Part 1 Introduction

Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park was acquired more than 20 years ago in 1981 by the Montreal Urban Community, for 6.5 million dollars. This Nature-Park still has no facilities to welcome the public. Riverfront portions of the park remain fenced off, inaccessible to the public.

Three heritage buildings graced the parklands in 1981 - the Georgian-style Manoir Macdougall, the stately Manoir Ogilvie and its Gatehouse. Manoir Ogilvie had been damaged in a fire set by vandals in 1979. Its massive stone walls still stood after a second fire, but the MUC demolished the building in 1985. There was no public consultation. In the 1990's, the Ogilvie Gatehouse was also fired; it is now boarded up. Manoir MacDougall stands vacant and needs repair. The general air of abandonment of whole park leaves the site a target for further vandalism.

Bois-de-Saraguay – Bijou of Montreal's green-spaces

In 1977, a massive project was planned to develop the entire Saraguay Forest for housing and highrises, Twin Towers on Gouin, Port-Plaisance **Marina on the waterfront**. During the ensuing struggle to save the exceptional site from destruction, the Bois-de-Saraguay came to be regarded as the bijou of Montreal's green spaces - a pristine forest on the northern shoreline – an example, miraculously preserved, of the forest the first European settlers found covering the Island of Montreal.

Battle for Bois-de-Saraguay was catalyst for creation of Regional Parks Network

The furor over Bois-de-Saraguay piqued the interest of Quebec; in 1979, the Government granted the MUC the mandate to acquire, manage regional parks (now called Nature-Parks). Quebec injected \$10.5 million to start the acquisition program. "The campaign to conserve Bois-de-Saraguay was the catalyst for the creation of the regional parks network." André Bouchard, Jardin botanique de Montréal

The Quebec Government decreed the forested areas of the park to be an **Arrondissement naturel** under the aegis of the Cultural Affairs Ministry in 1981. No trees may felled. No other Nature-Park has this special layer of protection.

Unique park to have unique mission – Public Hearings 1979

Hearings had been held by the Commission des biens culturels in 1979. Three principles to guide the park were called for; **Conservation and Education; Public Access;** and there should be "...un centre d'interprétation de la nature et de l'histoire régional semble toujours souhaitable puisqu'il serait difficile de remplir adéquatement le rôle éducationnel du parc en absence d'un tel centre." (Ministère des Terres et Forêts, 1977)

A Master Plan for the park by the Jardin botanique de Montréal (commissioned by the MUC in 1990) espoused the same guiding principles. The plan was not implemented.

Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park is now a target for developers as well as vandals

Due to an ill-conceived “**Parks for Profit**” policy adopted by the MUC in 1996 – 18 buildings in various Nature-Parks were placed on a **bâtiments rentables** list. Manoir MacDougall in Bois-de-Saraguay is on the list and has been targeted for mega development projects – **twice**. Both projects threatened to amputate Manoir MacDougall and its waterfront from the Nature-Park.

In 1998, MUC planned to lease the Manoir for 20 years, option 10 more, for a Hotel/ Restaurant project; the plan was soundly trounced at public hearings. Alleging he had an agreement in principle, the developer sued the MUC. **The case is still in court.**

In 2001, the old City of Montreal planned to acquire the Manoir for multi-purpose use unrelated to the Nature-Park – Concerts acoustiques, La Roulotte, Concerts Campbell, exhibitions, visual arts demos, outdoor and nature programs - Exhibition and meeting rooms, poste d’accueil, administrative, other offices, library, cafeteria (inside). Outside: café-terrace, “aire de spectacle,” parking, picnic spots and **Marina on the waterfront** – all to be run by a commercial enterprise. Fortunately, the election and formation of the **new mega-city halted the process – for now.**

Lost opportunities

Sadly, since the park was acquired in 1981, the general population has forgotten the Bois-de-Saraguay. A generation of students has missed the opportunity to carry out nature study in the park. Apart from cinema crews who exploit the delightful Manoir MacDougall site for film shoots, only a small proportion of local residents continue to enjoy strolling and skiing through the forest.

The Solution - Open the Park now

Establish the **Centre d’interprétation de la nature et de l’histoire régional at Manoir MacDougall**, accueils, trails prepared to cushion visitor impact. (details follow in Part 3)

The Jardin botanique’s Master Plan called for the Nature and History Centre to be housed in a **reconstructed replica of Manoir Ogilvie**. However laudable and even desirable it would be to restore the magnificent structure, the estimated cost of the park plan - \$6 million (in 1990) proved prohibitive. The Moratorium on the Acquisition and Aménagement Program (1992) put a halt to all plans – except those for commercial exploitation of parks – eg: the Hotel/ Restaurant plan for Manoir MacDougall.

Shared Stewardship With the lifting of the moratorium (spring 2002) it is to be hoped that the new City of Montreal will soon formally open Bois-de Saraguay Nature-Park – more than 20 years after its acquisition. Saraguay Citizens Group is examining possibilities of funneling private sector funds and/ or services through a foundation to augment public funds for the purpose.

Part 2 Planning for Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park

Location in the “Pôle Centre” of the Nature-Park network

The Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park, together with its companion park, Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park, forms the “**Pôle Centre**” of the Nature-Park network. The Pôle Centre is located between highway 40 and Rivière des Prairies and between Dollard des Ormeaux and Cartierville. The two parks, all but contiguous except for the tiny Village of Saraguay that lies between the two, are a parkland bio-mass **larger than Mount Royal Park**. The Mountain park covers 200.33 hectares: Bois-de-Liesse Park covers 165 hectares; Bois-de-Saraguay 97 hectares. Ile aux Chats, on Rivière des Prairies, is part of the latter.

An examination of the two parks, their affinities and differences and how they complement each other can provide a context for planning Bois-Saraguay Park.

The existence of both parks is the legacy of the industrial barons of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile. By 1900, they had established large country estates, gardens and farms in Saraguay and environs; these properties were later acquired as regional parks. Human impact on the sprawling **Bois-de-Liesse** that stretches from Highway 40 to Rivière des Prairies has been considerable. But its varied terrain – forest, creek, old farmlands, gardens and peninsula on the river, make the site ideal for **recreation and nature-appreciation**. Thousands enjoy robust outdoor activities. The huge size of the park readily absorbs large numbers of visitors, so that they can also enjoy the serene splendors of Bois-Franc Forest that is, for many, evocative of a Cathedral and the other natural beauties of the park.

Bois-de-Saraguay by contrast, has survived with little human impact: the size of its area, the integrity of its bio-mass, the quality and diversity of its eco-systems all intact in a natural state - in an urban environment - is miraculous. Saraguay Forest has attracted the attention of the scientific community and numerous reports have been published on its exceptional scientific value. “**La végétation et la flore du boisé de Saraguay**” (Bouchard et Lacombe 1978) provides the definitive list of types of vegetation – 35 species of trees, 45 types of shrubs and 275 species of herbaceous plants; in addition, a dozen other vegetal species considered to be rare. Three amateur ornithological societies (Ducharme 1979) listed the birds of Saraguay – 129 species. “**La végétation et l’aménagement du park régional du Bois-de-Saraguay**” par Gérald Domon et André Bouchard (1981) - This treatise not only examines the vegetation, geology, glacial deposits, topography and soils, but also unravels the history of the forest from human traces left in the forest fabric. The work includes a thoughtful and comprehensive plan for the park. For a time, because of these attentions, **l’érablière à Caryer du Bois-de-Saraguay became Montreal buzz-words!** The present proposal relies heavily on this source as well as on “**Mission et Orientations – Bois-de-Saraguay**” (1990) by Gérald Domon, Gilles Vincent and André Bouchard.

Conservation – First Principle - Bois-de-Saraguay and the Arrondissement Naturel

Conservation of the Saraguay Forest is the keystone upon which all planning notions for the park must build. Though unfrequented and forgotten, the forest has its own mechanisms of self-defence; the vigorous growth and density of the forest understory each summer serves to repel intruders, and so does the ubiquitous mosquito! But Man's implacable impacts continue. Human builders fail to replicate natural drainage systems. Since 1977, housing development north of the forest within the elbow of Jean-Bourdon Street, has caused some forest species to die. The development drainage is inadequate, so that parts of the forest are too wet for these species. Perhaps more study of this forest can help us get things right.

Activities at Bois-de-Saraguay are to be **extensive**, in the idiom of park planners, having light impacts and unlike Bois-de-Liesse, to be contemplative in nature.

Education about our natural and cultural environment is the second principle

The general public can be introduced to the rudiments of nature-study and the next generation of budding biologists, ecologists, entomologists, geologists, ornithologists, – students of environmental and forestry engineering, of forest fauna, of urban planning, architecture, history and others – **all can benefit from this living laboratory – the Saraguay Forest.** A fully appointed Nature Interpretation and Regional History Centre to match the superlative quality of the Saraguay Forest, as well as the rich architectural and cultural heritage of the region, is essential. Essential, so that the Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park may realize its potential and promise for education. (details – Part 3)

Public Access – Controlled Access is the third principle for Bois-de-Saraguay

Some purists of the scientific community have held the opinion that Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park should be dedicated exclusively to conservation, being fearful of upsetting the delicate balance of the forest's eco-systems. **Bois-de-Liesse Park experience is valuable and should reassure the purists.** Since its aménagement carried out in 1990, thousands enjoy walking, cycling and skiing there each year. Visitors keep most scrupulously to the prepared trails. The **Bois-Franc Forest quality has improved** – of the many paths that had been worn in the forest over generations, only a few were selected for special preparation to prevent erosion and withstand visitor impact for the next fifty years – the rest have been successfully reforested.

Park visitors are vigilant park defenders. The presence of park users at Bois-de-Saraguay would be an effective deterrent to more vandalism. Note that local residents were present en masse at the public hearings to defend "their park": they prevented the parcelling off of Manoir MacDougall for the Hotel/ Restaurant.

The existence of Bois-de-Liesse controls access to Bois-de-Saraguay. Without this park, the purists might be correct to ban public access to Bois-de-Saraguay.

(see Skiing – below)

Activities common to Bois-de-Saraguay and Bois-de-Liesse; other affinities

Skiing – Skiing has long been considered an acceptable activity for Saraguay Forest having a light impact on the forest environment; many generations have skied in the forest. But modern skiers prefer the network of groomed trails, chalets with ski racks and large parking areas at Bois-de-Liesse. These amenities for skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts divert visitor pressure from Bois-de-Saraguay. The existence of **Bois-de-Liesse controls access to Bois-de-Saraguay. Such amenities should not be provided at Bois-de-Saraguay.**

Local lore — No swimming in the “Back River” at these two parks

All along the shoreline of both Nature-Parks the treacherous current of Rivière des Prairies has carved a vertical shelf that plunges to the river depths. Just off-shore, it's called **“The Drop”** by locals; swimming is inadvisable at either park. Residents, in earlier days, used to go by canoe or row-boat to swim from the western point of Ile aux Chats; the mosquito prevented them from disturbing the island interior.

No Marinas for these parks – Marinas promote the proliferation of power-boats harmful to the riverine fauna of both parks- beaver, muskrat, the heron, ducks and other shore-birds. Power-boats, their noise and pollution, are anathema to Saraguay residents, given their long-standing traditions of keeping Saraguay serene and beautiful. They rejected a Marina in 1977 and in 2001 they rejected another one. (see Annex: Historical Notes)

A Physical Link between Bois-de-Saraguay and Bois-de-Liesse

A green corridor between the two Nature-Parks would allow visitors to move from one to the other, on foot, on skis, and bicycle. The new path, starting from the end of Bois-de-Liesse trails, would go just 300 meters beside Maple Street to join Hydro's dirt road that borders the southern limit of Saraguay Forest alongside the CN line. From there, visitors would turn north into the forest on the old Polo Road leading towards Manoir MacDougall. The link along Maple Street and the Hydro road is approximately 1.5 km.

Cyclists could travel from Dollard des Ormeaux to Cartierville through two Nature-Parks avoiding Gouin Boulevard using the link. Residents who live near the eastern part of Saraguay Forest favour the link; they fear for the safety of cyclists on the narrow part of Gouin near their homes. Hot-shot racers would continue to use Gouin, needing the paved surface for their road bikes. But, for families with young children, the link would be a boon, allowing them to turn from the Polo Road onto the **“Réseau Cyclable”** on quiet streets through Cartierville and to points east. (see Part 4 : Notes)

Opening the link from Bois-de-Liesse should not appreciably increase the numbers of skiers in Bois-de-Saraguay : only the most intrepid skiers would complete the loop to Saraguay Forest and back.

Management of the “Pole Centre” – Due to their close proximity, and for economy, efficiency and coherence, Bois-de-Saraguay and Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Parks should have the same Management. Support staff should have skills and aptitudes appropriate to each park.

This concludes the examination of how the two parks fulfill different roles, yet complement each other.

Part 3 Bois -de-Saraguay Nature-Park - Four Sectors - Aménagement

The Nature-Park is composed of four distinct sectors; l’Ile aux Chats; the Saraguay Forest; the Ogilvie Domain; and the Manoir MacDougall sector.

1. L’Ile aux Chats

Isolated as it is in the middle of Rivière de Prairies, the island remains inaccessible and by virtue of the Arrondissement naturel, designated solely to conservation, the study and monitoring of the evolution of its vegetation. The island has three distinct vegetal zones; stands of hemlock-spruce, maple-hickory groves, and silver maples. The Island covers 12.5 hectares. Its expropriation was complete in 1990. (\$1.7 million)

2. The Saraguay Forest

The largest portion of the forest is located south of Gouin Boulevard. A smaller forest portion lies north of Gouin along the waterfront to the west of Manoir MacDougall. The Saraguay Forest, like Ile aux Chats, is to be conserved in its entirety; the delicate nature of its diverse eco-systems and their sensitivity precludes indiscriminate access. However, existing trails through the forest permit the general public to enjoy the forest’s beauty.

Un sentier de randonnée is designated in the Jardin botanique’s Master Plan. Two old dirt roads cross the forest. The MacDougall family’s Polo Road goes south through the forest from the riverside Manoir on Gouin. Hugh Paton’s Road is parallel to the Polo Road. (see Annex : Historical Notes) Paths join the two “en forme de boucle”. (2.0 km)

Sentier unidirectionnel d’interprétation du milieu naturel The Master Plan also calls for the creation a trail to wind through each of the diverse forest eco-systems, expressly for close study purposes. The Jardin botanique stipulated that an analysis of the technical feasibility and an impact study precede the implementation of this trail. Also, the permission of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is required as Quebec retains authority over the Arrondissement naturel. (1.05 km)

3. The Ogilvie Domain

The Ogilvie property and Manoir MacDougall sites on the waterfront are the sectors that show the most impact of human habitation. Thus, these sectors are much less fragile than the forest proper and visitors can be accommodated.

Stunning Views – From the charming turreted Gatehouse on Gouin, the long driveway takes a surprising plunge downwards and over the hump-backed bridge that crosses the lowland creek that drains the forest’s wetlands. Then onwards the drive goes to the former site of the Manoir Ogilvie – a site on the riverside that commands stunning views of Ile aux Chats and vistas of the sweep of the river to the west. These views are equal to any found on the Island of Montreal.

Keep the magic - The truly magical quality of Ogilvie Domain must be guarded. No structure should ever be built on any part of the sector, unless it be a replica of the Manoir. Montreal lost an important piece of its architectural heritage when this stately home was demolished.

Activities and Comportment of Visitors – Visitors should be encouraged to come for relaxation, repose and enjoyment of the site – and to leave their ghetto-blasters at home. A few discreetly placed picnic spots would be acceptable. **Open-air classical concerts** may be occasionally compatible with the environs if deemed appropriate by residents of the neighbouring seniors' home – Résidence l'Amitié. Visitors could help restore the **English gardens** to this property and to the MacDougall site.

Sentier de premier contact avec les éléments du milieu naturel – This trail, envisioned by the Jardin in its Master Plan, is to introduce the general public to the wonders of our natural environment. The creation of this trail is subject to Quebec's approval. (0.9 km)

Accueil – Ogilvie Gatehouse will be the accueil for the western part of the park and serve as the control and surveillance post for the Ogilvie Domain.

Parking – Many people agree with the Société d'horticulture et d'écologie du nord de Montréal that **no expanse of parking should blight the Ogilvie property**. Instead, an old stretch of Gouin to the west of the Gatehouse, that was by-passed to eliminate a curve, was proposed for parking. There is room for about 30 vehicles. Cars would be screened by the trees along Gouin from the view of passers-by. The old bit of road is called "**Lovers Lane**" by locals. Parking may also be possible at l'Amitié and at Collège Ste-Marcelline when school's out; of course, permission must be given by these neighbours.

4. The Manoir MacDougall Sector

The classic Georgian-style Manoir MacDougall has twenty-six rooms; built in 1930, the Manoir was the property of H.C. (Tommy) MacDougall. The stone structure stands shaded by large trees on the shore of Rivière des Prairies. The property covers 2.7 acres. Terraced gardens are retained by low stone walls on the steep slope to the river. From this site, visitors can enjoy views of the river, Ile aux Chats, and Ile Paton. High stone walls screen the tranquil site from Gouin Boulevard. This sector is the only portion of the park not protected by the Arrondissement naturel; it is not forested.

Manoir MacDougall is ideal for contemplative use. The property is small, on a narrow, busy road – Gouin Boulevard. Care must be taken not to overload the capacity of the site or add to congestion on Gouin. Programs must be designed to attract visitors in moderate numbers throughout the year rather than en masse for special events. The scale of installations is important; a modest accueil, small hall, limited parking will minimize visitor impact. Mega-projects, like those proposed in 1998 and 2001, are inappropriate. The Manoir, serene behind its high stone walls, with forest adjacent east and west and the river flowing before it, offers every attribute to promote repose, relaxation and reflection. In short, the site and Manoir are ideal for the Accueil and the Nature Interpretation and Regional History Center. **The Manoir is close to the only existing trails in the park.**

Nature Interpretation Center - a fully appointed, state-of-the-art centre to match the superlative quality of the Saraguay Forest is needed to realize the potential this park has for education about our natural environment. Resource and reference material on the natural attributes of the Saint Lawrence Valley, with special attention to Saraguay Forest, is essential. Jardin botanique envisioned cameras, installed in the most sensitive and inaccessible parts of the forest and underwater, capable of transmitting live **video images of nesting cycles of birds and riverine wildlife** to the centre, as well as audio equipment to transmit bird song – an exciting prospect. Study rooms and rooms for group discussion are needed and a small hall for visiting Natural-Science lecturers and traveling Natural-Science exhibits would be appropriate.

Regional History Center – The rich architectural and fascinating anecdotal history of the region (that is rapidly being lost as old-timers die away) is an important part of the fabric of our cultural heritage. Resource materials, artifacts and memorabilia, available for perusal at the Manoir, can promote education of our historical and cultural identity. **The Archives of the Fifty Years of the Village of Saraguay 1914 – 1964** should have a niche. (see Annex : Historical Notes)

Madame Catherine Talbot of Pierrefonds has an interesting suggestion - that several **rooms be redecorated in manner of the period** – that of the Barons of Montreal's Golden Square Mile, to enhance the center's historical ambience.

Manoir MacDougall - Other uses – G.U.E.P.E. (Groupe uni des éducateurs pour l'environnement) has provided excellent year-round Nature-Study Programs for children at Bois-de-Liesse; hopefully, the group will expand operations to Bois-de-Saraguay; they may need a pied à terre at the Manoir. Such groups can be accommodated as space permits.

Village of Saraguay residents, as a special concession, should be able to use the small hall for Village meetings that might take place once every few years. Villagers have no other place to meet.

Manoir MacDougall space must not be rented nor programs designed for any other purposes but those of the Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park. No commercial exploitation of the site, risking heavy impacts, is appropriate.

Accueil – Manoir MacDougall can serve as accueil for the eastern portion of the park. **A flashing yellow light would slow traffic** and help visitors to cross Gouin to the trails (as was done at Bois-de-Liesse). Timed to turn off at nightfall, it would not be an annoyance to residents nearby.

A Footpath to the Polo Road – Joseph Saucier Avenue has replaced a short stretch of the Polo Road. To restore a narrow walking path from Gouin to the Polo Road is desirable. From the Manoir, visitors would cross Gouin, then stroll along the footpath through the parkland west of and parallel to Joseph Saucier, where the MacDougall family's stables and farm used to be. Quebec's approval is needed for the footpath.

Parking – The elegant sweep of the circular driveway to the Manoir, as well as existing spots alongside the building's east façade can be used for parking: both need repair but should not be paved.

Part 4 Additional Notes and Conclusion

The Nature and History Center was to have been housed in Manoir Ogilvie, then, after its demolition, in replica of that building. It is practical to put the facility in Manoir MacDougall for several reasons. It is extremely doubtful that public funds will ever be allocated to rebuild Manoir Ogilvie. (The Acquisition and Aménagement Program is under pressure with many green-spaces still to be acquired). To continue to plan the restoration of Manoir Ogilvie is to retard the opening of the Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park even longer. Installing the center at Manoir MacDougall, a fine building in its own right, avoids leaving the property under-used for park services and an easy target for more inappropriate development projects.

Lemesurier Park – This Municipal Park is located adjacent to Manoir MacDougall to the east. The site, about the same size as the Manoir's, belonged to Mrs. H. B. MacDougall (the mother of Tommy MacDougall); her home stood there many years ago. The land is forested now. The developer of the Hotel/Restaurant project wanted to “Clean up the site”: he also wanted the land for his parking lot. The project was rejected at Public hearings. Then the old City of Montreal wanted to annex the Nature-Park's MacDougall property to add it to Lemesurier Park for its own mega-plan. Local citizens petitioned against the plan, its multiple programs and marina that would have impacted heavily on the Nature-Park and the neighbourhood.

A better idea is to leave Lemesurier Park in its natural state and annex it to the Nature-Park! – Especially because less than 6% of the Island of Montreal is forested and we are scrambling to plant trees! Nearby residents don't want the site “cleaned up”; they fear it would become a “hang-out” tucked away behind its high stone walls that match the Manoir's.

Trail Preparation – The trails in the park can be prepared with an annual application of wood chip mulch, as visitor impact is expected to be benign: this is the most inexpensive method. – Only the Polo Road would require the more rigorous preparation used at Bois-de-Liesse – a polyurethane membrane covered by gravel, topped by a sandy mix to withstand bicycle impact.

Cycling in Saraguay Forest on the Polo Road may conflict with the Park Mission, but advantages of this short trail outweigh principle. (.75 km)

Families will cycle from Cartierville to Dollard des Ormeaux through two Nature-Parks, the Bois-de-Saraguay and Bois-de-Liesse, **in safety avoiding Gouin Boulevard, and be able to join the “Réseau Cyclable” from Bout-de-l'Île to Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue** on designated bike paths. Cycling should be permitted through the Saraguay Forest, but only on the Polo Road (.75 km), so that the “Pole Centre” will take its place in the system that links Pointe-aux-Prairies, l'Île-de-la-Visitation, Bois-de-l'Île Bizard, Cap-Saint-Jacques, Anse-à-l'Orme, Bois-de-la-Roche and other green-spaces in a veritable “Réseau Vert”.

Calendrier de déploiement

1. In a first phase, Manoir MacDougall and Ogilvie Gatehouse must be refurbished and brought to code; the Accueil-est established at the Manoir and Accueil-ouest, control and surveillance post at the Gatehouse.

The “Sentier-boucle” looping the Polo and Paton roads together and the trail linking the Bois-de-Saraguay and the Bois-de-Liesse parks should be completed.

Then, Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park can be open and functional.

2. The Nature and History Center, Saraguay Archives can be equipped while awaiting Quebec’s approval for completion of the nature-trail in the forest, the trail in the Ogilvie sector and the footpath from Gouin to the Polo Road.
3. Auxiliary parking – Jardin botanique stipulated a small unpaved, parking area, 400 meters square, be placed opposite Manoir MacDougall (angle Gouin, Joseph Saucier) This should only be done at a much later date, if needed.

Toponymy – The Polo Road and The Paton Road should be identified by discreet signs in the Saraguay Forest. The legacy of the Barons of the Golden Square Mile, mainly of Scottish descent, who once owned and protected the forest, is not reflected in new street names nearby. No trace is left of such names as Molson, Reford, Black, Gault and Gordon.

Cost : - Manoir MacDougall Mega-project - City of Montreal budget **\$1.5 million (net)**
(not including cost of acquisition)

(Début – Printemps 2002; Fin – Printemps 2003
PROGRAMME TRIENNEL D’IMMOBILISATIONS - juillet 2000)

Cost : Our Proposal

\$2 million

- A rough estimate for **installations, trails in all park sectors**
- A professional estimate will be needed.
- Saraguay Citizens Group is initiating discussions re **Shared Stewardship** with developers who live in Saraguay and who have profited from housing developments near the Saraguay Forest. **The purpose is to seek funds and/ or services – building skills and materials to refurbish Manoir MacDougall and Ogilvie Gatehouse** and bring them to code, in order to help defray costs.

Public Consultations and caring for the legacy of Bois-de-Saraguay

Any plans for Bois-de-Saraguay must be scrutinized and approved at public hearings prior to implementation. It is essential that interested parties form a committee (Les amis du Bois-de-Saraguay, perhaps) to oversee present and future management, so that Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park may fulfill its promise for Conservation, for Education and for the enjoyment of all.

April 16, 2002, Sylvia Oljemark

Annex : Historical Notes

1914 Incorporation of the Village of Saraguay as “a separate village municipality” by property owners to maintain its unique rural aspect. Commercial development was outlawed. By 1900, the industrial barons of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile had established large country estates and farms in Saraguay for use during the summer. Their estates were managed as feudal fiefdoms with tied cottages to house retainers – farmers, grooms, chauffeurs, butlers, cooks.

The Paton Road through Saraguay Forest - Hugh Paton was the first Mayor of the Village of Saraguay. He had established his suzerainty on Ile Paton; he also owned Ile aux Chats. The boundary of the new Village of Saraguay encompassed both islands. The Mayor regularly crossed Rivière des Prairies to the Saraguay mainland on his ferry, “Lord of the Isles”; from there, he went by horse and carriage through Saraguay Forest on his own Private Road that took him to his place of business in town.

The Polo Road through Saraguay Forest was used by the MacDougall family to ride from their riverside “Manoir” to the Montreal Polo Club (1910 - 1940). The Club was in Saraguay on the Bois-Franc or St. Louis Road. The southern limit of the Village of Saraguay was the mid-line of that road. The Polo grounds were to be found where Nouveau Saint-Laurent is being built today. The western limit of Saraguay was close to present-day Highway 13; the eastern one in line with the current Albert Prévost Avenue.

1951 The First Democratic Election The Village of Saraguay was run like a private country club. But the old feudal order was crumbling. Service-men returning from World War II were not returning to their posts as faithful retainers on Saraguay estates; they were opting for taking up jobs in the city and for building modest homes on a tract of farmland previously owned by Marcel Martin. Newcomers were also settling in the village center – called Shack Town by the wealthy estate owners. Villagers were demanding a say in how Saraguay was run. In 1951, “commoners” were invited to join slates running for Council posts in the first election that followed due process. The Tom Jackson, Adrien Lecavalier, Hartland Campbell (Tommy) MacDougall slate, running on the platform “Keep Saraguay Beautiful”, carried the day. E. Van N. Leipoldt was elected Mayor – he was fated to be the last Mayor of the Village of Saraguay.

1964 Merger – Saraguay votes to join Montreal upon Mayor Drapeau’s promise – The Village of Saraguay would maintain its “caractère champêtre et villageois.” (pop. 427) The village lacked water, sewage services; fire and police protection. The irony was that, just a few years later, Saraguay could have received those services as a member municipality of the Montreal Urban Community when it came into being in 1970 and The Village of Saraguay could have kept its autonomy – for a time.

1967 By-law 3470 – Saraguay is zoned unifamilial residential, entrenching the merger promise. The charter of the Village of Saraguay is revoked.

1967 Sell-out – Saraguay estate owners begin to sell off their land holdings – to developers.

1977 Zoning change proposed – Entire Saraguay Forest is targeted for housing and 14 high-rises, 2 shopping centres, Twin Towers on Gouin, Port-Plaisance Marina on waterfront. Eighty-five (85) hectares, at least half of Saraguay Ward to be developed; a major road –

de Salaberry – to cut through Village and Forest. Saraguay citizens invoke Mayor Drapeau’s merger promise, wage media, letter-writing campaign. More than 95% of proprietors sign petition. The zoning change is dropped: de Salaberry shelved.

- 1977 - 81 Jardin botanique de Montreal’s André Bouchard establishes exceptional ecological value of Bois-de-Saraguay.
Société d’Horticulture et d’Ecologie du Nord de Montréal - works tirelessly to create “Park Naturel Urbain” – conserve forest; open park to public; establish Natural Science and Regional History Centre; fulfill needs for education about the natural environment.
- 1979 Furor over Bois-de-Saraguay piques interest of Quebec – Provincial Government grants MUC the mandate to acquire, manage regional parks; injects \$10.5 million to start acquisition program; and an additional \$2 million towards Saraguay purchase in 1981.
- 1981 Bois-de Saraguay Regional Park (later Nature-Park) created by MUC – 97 hectares - sectors are Ile aux Chats, Saraguay Forest, Ogilvie Domain, Manoir MacDougall \$6.5 million
- 1981 Arrondissement naturel - Quebec Decree protects forested parts of park. No trees may be felled.
- 1985 Ogilvie Mansion demolished by MUC after fire by vandals – massive stone walls still stood. Mansion to have been Park Center. There is no consultation.
- 1990 Ile aux Chats expropriation complete \$1.7 million
- 1990 Plan Directeur for Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park - by Gérald Domon, Gilles Vincent, André Bouchard of Jardin botanique – Park to have three-fold mission-Conservation, Education; Public Access. Centre d’interprétation de la nature et de l’histoire régional to be housed in reconstructed replica of Ogilvie Mansion. Plan not implemented by MUC.
- 1998 MUC plans Hotel/Restaurant for Manoir MacDougall in Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park – to be leased for 20 years, option 10 more. Plan rejected after “consultation” – 150 people – 40 chairs; 70 sign for question period – one-third are heard, briefly. Vast majority opposes plan; calls for Park to be opened, Manoir to be set up for Nature-Park use. Promoter, Pierre Mantha, alleges agreement in principle with Mayor Pierre Bourque for Hotel project; sues MUC.
- July 2000 Programme Triennal - Montreal planning to buy Manoir MacDougall
“Le maire et le conseiller M. Legault ont déjà initié des démarches auprès de la CUM en vue de l’acquisition du bâtiment et du terrain pour réaliser le present projet.....” “Coût Net – Coût d’acquisition non inclu – 1.5 (million)”
- Sept. 24, 2001 MUC Public Hearing – Montreal to acquire Manoir MacDougall via “protocole d’entente” for multi-purpose use unrelated to Nature-Park – Concerts acoustiques, La Roulotte, Concerts Campbell, exhibitions, visual arts demos, outdoor and nature programs; exhibition and meeting rooms, poste-d’accueil, administrative, other offices, library, cafeteria (inside). Outside: café-terrace, “aire de spectacle,” parking, picnic spots and Marina on waterfront. Commercial enterprise to manage facilities and programs.

Public Hearing cancelled (3 days before meeting) – official reason – deferred until megacity in place. In fact, MUC Executive Committee rejected plan. Petition continues to circulate condemning Montreal scheme.

2002 Bois-de-Saraguay Nature-Park is more than 20 years old. There are no services to welcome the public to the Nature-Park.

April 16, 2002