



Green Coalition comments on Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue's NORTH SECTOR SPECIAL PLANNING PROGRAM (SPP)

INTRODUCTION:

The Green Coalition strongly believes that 100% of Anse-à-l'Orme must be conserved in both Pierrefonds and Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue. This conviction stems from our absolute commitment to conserving and preserving natural spaces on the Island of Montreal, to conserve them for their inestimable ecological value and their importance to Montreal's citizens. Conservation of this kind is an environmental and political imperative since we are living through an era of immense environmental destruction.

For the Green Coalition, saving the natural heritage of Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue North, its agricultural lands "en friche" and forests in the *Le Corridor écoforestier de la rivière-à-l'Orme*, has been a preoccupation since the 1980s, because the Corridor harbours the richest biodiversity in the Montreal Agglomeration.

Green Coalition insists that a Grand-parc national be created to conserve the entire Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor and adjacent nature parks, east, west and north along Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, and, that the Grand-parc become the keystone piece of the "Ceinture verte du Grand Montréal".

But, the construction of a "new city" in Pierrefonds' part of Anse-à-l'Orme threatens the survival of Montreal's most sensitive eco-zone. And now, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue's portion of Anse-à-l'Orme is under threat of development too, according to the North Sector SPP. The sacrifice of these last unprotected, ecologically important lands to rampant urban sprawl is unacceptable. Let's remember that Montreal still ranks dead last among Canadian cities for per capita green space. 100% of Anse-à-l'Orme must be conserved in both Pierrefonds and Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue.

GREEN COALITION COMMENTS AND NOTES:

Permanent Moratorium called for: Green Coalition, along with Montreal's academic and environmental community has taken a stand. A manifesto or Charter launched at the FORUM NATURE MONTRÉAL, April 16 2016, calls for a Permanent Moratorium on all development in natural and green spaces. FORUM

NATURE MONTRÉAL was a watershed event bringing together a coalition of environmentalists and academic leaders from a broad spectrum of disciplines, biology, economics, ecology, urban planning, social sciences, medicine, etc. A strong consensus was forged.

Urban sprawl: The tipping point of urban sprawl on Montreal Island has been reached and passed. It is now out of control, expanding at an exponential rate: studies record a 26-fold increase between 1971-2011 (Jochen Yeager PhD)

Build on brownfields not green - almost 10% of Montreal Island territory is brownfield or contaminated land. An exception must be made: to give access to inner city green spaces for disadvantaged communities, in particular, the rehabilitation of brownfields for conservation must be favoured over construction.

Essential habitats at Anse-à-l'Orme must be secured. Building in Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor on 185 hectares of wetland prairies (friches naturelles) in Western Pierrefonds is unacceptable. So it is also unacceptable to lose the meadows and woodlands (friches naturelles) in Ste-Anne's part of Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor to development.

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES, (February 2016) prepared for the David Suzuki Foundation on the proposed site for creating a "new city" at Anse-à-l'Orme's friches naturelles in Pierrefonds, show that an exceptional diversity of vulnerable plants and animals large and small and birds would be at risk. Connectivity loss would mean the loss of animal populations in the order of 27% across an expanded region (not just the 185 hectare site).

Additional Scientific Studies, just published December 15 2016, show that even more species of vulnerable plants and animals would be destroyed than had been expected, by the proposed development of 185 hectares in Anse-à-l'Orme in Pierrefonds. Also, the destructive impacts on surrounding terrains far beyond the 185 hectares would be considerable.

Long-term viability of biodiversity at risk: Clearly, building in Sainte-de-Bellevue's friches naturelles would signal equally grave ecological losses, further stripping away the long term viability of biodiversity in the Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor.

STATS AND ESSENTIAL INFO:

Montreal still ranks dead last among Canadian cities for per capita green space.

The Ontario Greenbelt, in and around Toronto, created in 2005, is now the largest greenbelt in the world.

PMAD (Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et du développement) adopted 2011, promises the protection of 17 % of the CMM (Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal) territory by 2020 and the creation of a greenbelt - a network of protected natural spaces throughout the metropolitan region. Only 2.5% of the entire CMM territory (en milieu terrestre) has been protected!

Aichi, Nagoya (2010) international protocols are also binding for communities to restore or rehabilitate 15% of their natural areas in addition to the 17% protection.

Montreal's Schéma (2015) sets a new goal of 10 % for natural spaces conservation on Montreal Island.

Less than 6% is currently protected. The Coderre administration has acquired only 61 hectares to date. But, more than 2, 000 additional hectares are needed to achieve the 10%!

Friches naturelles are designated as essential habitat in both the PMAD and the Schéma.

PONZI- LIKE SCHEME:

The fiscal model: For decades, real estate development projects on Montreal Island have followed a fiscal model, a growth model, that is a Ponzi-like scheme.

Developers reap the lion's share of profits from projects like those proposed for Pierrefonds West and in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue North, by a large margin, while tax revenues to municipalities represent but a sliver of those profits. Towns and cities look to such revenues to refurbish and maintain older sectors of their communities. This spiral of continual expansion and growth cannot continue because land banks are finite. This is fiscal model is ultimately unsustainable.

Long-term consequences: City administrations are unable or unwilling to demonstrate that such development projects bring long-term or multi-generational benefits to the public purse. As costs escalate to maintain aging infrastructures of these projects into the future, negative impacts fall on people at the bottom of the pyramid - they fall on generations not yet born. Again, ultimately unsustainable.

Natural assets lost: Our communities sacrifice natural assets to the growth model, losing social and health benefits of green environments for local constituents. Natural environments continue to be degraded by the development of urban infrastructures, a major driver of the loss of biodiversity. In effect, we subsidize the growth of wealth for land speculators and developers at the expense of public health and well-being.

CONCLUSION:

Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor's exceptionally biodiverse ecosystem, the richest in the region, stretches from Angell Woods in the south to Lac-des-Deux Montagnes in the north, following the course of Montreal Island's only inland river, Rivière-à-l'Orme. Here, forests, marshes and floodplains, streams, shorelines and wetland prairies offer an ecological and economic potential for eco-tourism, unique among urban agglomerations!

Green Coalition continues to call for the creation of a Grand-parc national to conserve the entire Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor and adjacent nature parks, east, west and north along Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes. Significant portions of Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor already have protected status. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' investments have been made in the conservation of the Corridor and adjacent nature parks over past decades. These investments must not be squandered by destructive new construction within Anse-à-l'Orme. The wetland prairies in Pierrefonds West, along with the meadows and forests of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue North, are essential habitat that sustains the flora and fauna of the Anse-à-l'Orme Corridor. The massive development in Pierrefonds West and that envisaged in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue's NORTH SECTOR SPECIAL PLANNING PROGRAM (SPP) should be abandoned. These invasive projects are not sustainable - either environmentally or fiscally in the long term.

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Rappel historique: Coalition Verte, 1988 - 2013, 25^e anniversaire

Fondée en 1988, et forte d'une cinquantaine de groupes citoyens, la Coalition Verte s'est bâtie une réputation solide dans la région montréalaise. Grâce à notre capacité de rallier les citoyens et convaincre les élus, nous avons contribué grandement aux

réalisations suivantes: l'adoption, en 1989, du programme de 200 millions de dollars pour l'acquisition et aménagement d'espaces verts ce qui a permis la consolidation du réseau des Parc-Nature d'est en ouest de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal; l'adoption, en 2004, de la Politique de protection et mise en valeur des milieux naturels par la Ville de Montréal qui poursuit la mise en œuvre de cette politique dans son budget; la fondation, en 2003, des Partenaires du Parc Écologique de l'Archipel de Montréal, précurseur du Mouvement Ceinture Verte, qui compte plus de 100 partenaires à l'échelle locale, incluant 17 partenaires municipaux, dont la Ville de Montréal et son agglomération; et finalement, à l'automne 2011, la Coalition mobilisait vigoureusement les citoyens afin d'exiger la création d'une ceinture verte pour le Grand Montréal et le Sud-Ouest du Québec lors des consultations publiques sur le PMAD-Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement. Approuvé le 8 décembre 2011, le PMAD s'engage à la création d'une ceinture verte ou « trame verte et bleue » et à la protection des milieux naturels sur 17 % du territoire métropolitain d'ici 2020, mais aussi à ce que les politiques de restauration atteignent 30 % du couvert forestier régional. (Power Point 25e anniversaire 2013)