



## **News Release for immediate release**

Montreal, May 6, 2005

### **Monday, May 9 at 10:30 - Elected reps and citizens to visit threatened Forêt centenaire in the Anse-à-l'Orme Ecoterritory**

#### **Rendez-vous:**

#### **Anse-à-l'Orme Road at the Hydro servitude**

**Directions:** Exit 49 from Autoroute 40, the Trans Canada; west on Chemin Ste-Marie; at the centre d'achats Place-Timberlea turn north on Anse-à-l'Orme Road; continue north to the Hydro servitude approx 1km

#### **Dignitaries are guests of Green Coalition**

Yolande James, MNA for Nelligan and Geoffrey Kelley, MNA for Jacques-Cartier and Minister for Native Affairs, will be greeted by members of the Green Coalition. Together they will tour the Forêt centenaire in the Rivière-à-l'Orme Ecoforest Corridor, an "ecoterritory" identified for protection in the City of Montreal's new Natural Spaces Policy. The Forêt centenaire is part of the Anse-à-l'Orme Forest considered by the former Montreal Urban Community to be #1 in ecological value on the Island of Montreal.

#### **But the Ecoterritory is under siege**

Pierrefonds' Antoine-Faucon Project is being fast-tracked and soon bulldozers could breach the ecoterritory and the Faucon housing development could flatten the "forêt centenaire" and its wetlands. Equally distressing is the extension of Antoine-Faucon Boulevard into the ecoterritory. The City of Montreal is prepared to pick up the \$1.2 million tab to extend the road to provide access to the building project in the forest. Then, the boulevard is slated to cut across the ecoterritory from south to north, ending at Gouin Boulevard. And a major artery, Pierrefonds Boulevard, is to extend westward through the Corridor, through rare forest, beaver marsh, deer yards and the river course. Because of the configuration of the L-shaped ecocorridor and the curving road, the highway would traverse the greenbelt not once but twice. More road building and more housing developments will inexorably follow in this exceptional natural area.

## **On a collision course; Pierrefonds' Faucon project clashes with the Environment Minister's plan for a vast new park - Lake of Two Mountains National Park**

Environment Minister Thomas J. Mulcair has enthusiastically endorsed the Green Coalition's proposal for the creation of Lake of Two Mountains National Park. As proposed, it would encompass Paul Sauvé Park, Oka, Hudson, Vaudreuil, Dorion, Île Perrot shoreline parks and the Islets. The plan would also include protection of the Lake itself and, in a first for Québec, extend National Park status to at least two important natural areas on the Island of Montreal – Cap-Saint-Jacques and the **Rivière-à-l'Orme Ecoforest Corridor**. **Pierrefonds, however, wants to build its Antoine-Faucon Projet right in this Ecoforest Corridor.**

The Lake Park is envisaged as Phase I in a Green Belt Plan to envelop the Montreal Archipelago and waterways, wetlands and forests. The scheme has enormous “Eco-Récréo-Touristique” potential, providing economic and social benefits while preserving natural milieux. MNA Geoffrey Kelley has been nurturing the park plan that grew from discussions on the possibility of creating Québec National Parks on the Island of Montreal. A decision on the park could come as early as September.

**Green Coalition applauds Park plan initiatives; calls for Pierrefonds to back off and for a freeze on development.** The grassroots applaud the plan to create Lake of Two Mountains National Park in the most ecologically distinct corner of Québec. This southern Québec region, so rich with a diversity of species and habitats, is also subject to the most unrelenting urbanization. Pierrefonds must back off: the Faucon project must not be permitted to cut a significant and critical swath from the ecoterritory before the National Park can come to fruition. There are real dangers that other boroughs, following Pierrefonds' example, will cave in to the unceasing pressures and permit even more developments in the Ecoforest Corridor and other natural spaces. The Green Coalition is adamant: a freeze on development is essential in natural areas under consideration for the Lake of Two Mountains National Park.

**Generations of neglect have taken a disastrous toll on the Island of Montreal** Just a pitiful 3% of Montreal's territory is protected natural land vs the Québec norm of 8%. The International standard is a minimum of 12% - this target is now moving up to 14% and beyond. Unchecked, construction has stripped more than 1,000 hectares of forest from the metropolis since the late 1980s. For comparison, Mount Royal Park covers 200 hectares. So few natural green spaces are left (mostly owned by developers) that quotas can only be boosted to about 6% if all the last green spaces are saved.

**The City of Montreal's new Natural Spaces Policy adopted in December is fatally flawed** The objectives of the policy to protect ecoterritories across the Island are excellent. But major development projects and road building are to be permitted within the limits of the ecoterritories – just business as usual! In addition to **Anse-à-l'Orme**, building plans are underway for other ecoterritories, at **Les rapides du Cheval Blanc**, at

**Les rapides de Lachine (Île des Soeurs), at the Le corridor écoforestier de l'Île Bizard.** And in the east-end, so deprived for green space, Autoroute 25 and Bridge to Laval threatens the **Coulée verte du ruisseau De Montigny and its off-shore islands.** To reverse this desperate situation, funding and resources from the Québec and Federal governments are needed in Montreal - now. Sustainable Development Policies must translate into collaborative action to save the last natural spaces on Montreal Island and in all of southern Québec.

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