

Brief on the proposed Cour Turcot Nature Park Presented to the Office de la consultation publique de Montréal

From: Rev. Neil Whitehouse, member of the Board of the Green Coalition, member of the Board of the Green Church Network, minister of Westmount Park United Church.

I wish to express my strong support for La Falaise St Jacques to be made a Nature Park. It is no coincidence that the south of Quebec has both the largest concentrations and numbers of human beings and the highest biodiversity. We have to learn to live together better. Unfortunately, despite designations of being an eco-territory (2003) the Falaise St Jacques continues to be treated aggressively with trees cut for human 'needs' (2015). Designation as part of the Grand Parc is therefore much needed but also especially valuable.

This should mean:

1. Renaturalisation of the entire length and breadth of the park because it represents a tremendous opportunity when there are very limited options so close to centres of high population density. Tree cutting is not permissible as part of renaturalising.
2. Ensuring access to this nature park with key entrances;
3. Limiting cycle paths through the park to north-south passage, with the Dalle-Park over the Turcot interchange.
4. Re-establishing the natural water flow that originally made a lake (we know this is especially valuable to enrich biodiversity).

The Cour Turcot Nature Park will have an importance above its size because:

1. It is visible because it is adjacent to millions of vehicles in traffic of the Turcot interchange and it is an escarpment that is easily appreciated from a moving vehicle.
2. It is close to dense population centres like NDG whose citizens do not have other natural spaces, like the Mount Royal, close to hand.
3. The Cour Turcot Nature Park will have a role in connecting other natural spaces, thereby supporting biodiversity on the island of Montreal and beyond (This is known as Connectivity).
4. This visible, accessible, valuable Nature Park can be THE talked about Nature Park for Le Grand Parc, as it demonstrates:
 - a) what 'Connectivity' is and why it is important to safeguard biodiversity.
 - b) we are changing the way natural spaces are valued and we can integrate a respect for nature into urban planning.
 - c) it is possible for concerned citizens and The City of Montreal to work together to live sustainably and achieve the stated targets for percentages of preserved natural space, particularly the restoration of 'brownfield' areas (Aichi 15 target of 15%). We can and we will succeed together.

THANK YOU.