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**La Falaise Saint-Jacques: a natural or wild green space that needs to receive officially protected status.**

Over the years I have watched two things happen simultaneously. Montrealers' appetite for green space has increased while the existing green space has diminished and areas specifically designated as green such as Mount Royal, the bike paths along the Lachine Canal and the St. Lawrence river, to give two examples, have become increasingly crowded. It is important to maximize what remaining green space we have. The heavy use of our existing green space attests to that and **designating the Falaise as a protected natural or wild space could play a significant role here.**

I am submitting this document as a private citizen, one who over the years has come to appreciate the importance of nature and green space in enriching our lives. I wish to make three points in my submission:

- Observing how heavily our present existing green space is used, it is clear that Montreal citizens want green space. The Falaise has great potential to make a contribution here if it is designated as a **protected** natural or wild space, as a kind of nature reserve so to speak. .
- Second, areas like the Falaise ,if properly managed, have an important educational potential for present and future generations.
- Lastly, taking steps to preserve and protect the Falaise Saint-Jacques as a natural area is an important step in preserving Montreal's remaining green space because its preservation could play an essential role as a key space that is part of a Montreal Greenbelt.

**1. The Falaise has great potential as a natural or wild space.** I have taken two hikes along the trails in the Falaise, one with Lisa Mintz, the other with a wild life biologist. I have seen deer poop, attesting to the presence of deer, a variety of birds including raptors and songbirds, and a number of different species of wild plants. Walking through it, one gets the definite feeling of being in a wild place even though one is so close to a commercial centre and to a major expressway. Its sloping nature makes it unsuitable as a park or recreation area but it is ideally suited to become a designated or protected natural green space. It has so much potential and much could be done to foster its development as a natural area by planting indigenous plants to replace invasive species, as is now the case on Mount Royal. It is somewhat sad to see the Falaise in its present condition. I participated in a clean up of the area last spring, so I can personally attest to the number of plastic bags, abandoned tires

and so on that litter the area. This shows that the status quo is unsatisfactory. It needs official designation as a natural space in order to protect it as a natural area.

**2. The Falaise Saint-Jacques has potential as an educational resource for future generations.** The importance of nature in the lives of our youth is often underestimated. I attest to this from personal experience. In my media classes that I taught at John Abbott College on the West Island, I would often invite a guest speaker who would come in and show the collection of slides he had taken of wildlife, foxes, deer, snakes, turtles and so on in the area of the West Island where he grew up. He would begin his presentation by saying: "You cannot save, what you do not know." At the end of the semester, the students in their course evaluation would often remark on this class, saying it had been a revelation to them to discover that so much wildlife could be found literally almost in their backyards. The Falaise could become a valuable educational area because it is a natural or wild space that is right on our doorsteps.

**3. There is very little green space left on the Island of Montreal. A lot could be done to remedy this however if we were to create a plan to link exiting green spaces as was done in Toronto into a green belt thereby maximizing what is left.** The Falaise could play a crucial role as part of a network that would include Meadowbrook, Parc Angrignon, the Parc des Rapides and Mount Royal. Recently, wildlife biologists have pointed to the importance of wildlife corridors, as these are crucial to the preservation of biodiversity of both wildlife and ecosystems. It would be great if Montreal had the vision to save the few remaining green spaces on the Island, so that we too could have a green belt and thus create a corridor and a haven for wildlife. But in order to do this, areas like the Falaise need to be protected.

To sum up, preserving the Falaise is crucial not just as part of the Turcotte make over but for the future of our city. It has a vital role to play in maximizing our remaining green space because it would serve a vital function as a wild space; it is potentially a rich educational resource that future generations will cherish; it is an essential link in the formation of a green belt. Let us hope that the Falaise does not become another missed opportunity.