

Draft policy
respecting the protection and enhancement
of the natural environment



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naturally

Direction des parcs et des espaces verts
Service du développement culturel
et de la qualité du milieu de vie

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Montréal 



Dear Fellow Citizens:

Montreal is a city that stands out internationally by the exceptional quality of life it offers to its citizens. This quality of life is further enhanced by certain unique features, such as the island setting, the Mont Royal and a mosaic of natural landscapes. The presence of a rich and diverse plant and animal life in an urban environment is a remarkable advantage that we must protect and enhance.

Montrealers highly value the protection and enhancement of this natural heritage, and the city chooses to place this issue at the heart of its priorities. Last October, by signing a statement of principle, sustainable development has become *the choice for Montreal*. This statement ranks the protection of our heritage among its essential elements.

The increased rhythm of development leads us to pay immediate attention to the protection and integration of areas of special ecological interest within the urban fabric. Under the draft policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, it is our goal to double the size of protected areas, thereby maximizing the biodiversity in wooded areas, existing parks and shorelines throughout the island. This policy focuses on the areas where citizens make contact with nature. Other initiatives, such as the Urban Development Plan, as well as the Heritage Policy, the Tree Policy and the Sustainable Development Strategy, will support this action and contribute additional guidance in order to respond to the many other issues raised by green and blue spaces.

This policy has been designed to optimize both the ecological and the economical value of natural areas. Our focus is on careful engineering, planning and urban design within a concerted and multidisciplinary process.

Last December, the city announced in its budget that \$36 million over three years have been allocated to implement this policy. We hope that our government partners as well as private corporations will recognize the intrinsic value of our natural environment for the community and will support the city in its efforts.

By submitting this draft policy plan to public consultation, we hope to raise the interest and participation of all Montrealers. We also hope that this consultation will allow us to submit a final draft to council that reflects the will of citizens and a wide spectrum of interest groups.

Montreal is a city that we must build together.

Gérald Tremblay
Mayor

Rich natural heritage deserving of protection and enhancement

The City of Montréal is particularly well endowed in terms of natural landscape and green spaces. The waterways surrounding the island, natural wooded areas, tree-lined streets, and abundance of parks and green spaces all form a part of the island's green and blue heritage, and together lend the City of Montréal a singular identity.

Each of the aforementioned elements of the natural landscape is important and merits special attention by the municipal administration. The City of Montréal has accordingly instigated a number of initiatives: Urban Development Plan, Heritage Policy, Tree Policy, Sustainable Development Strategy, and green and blue network projects. Each defines action the object of which is to protect and enhance the varied components of Montréal's natural heritage.

The drafting of the Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment is one of these initiatives. The thrust behind the policy is to preserve and expand island biodiversity, enhance the quality of the island's living areas and boost Montréal's overall power of attraction.

The Island of Montréal enjoys a broad diversity of natural spaces inside and outside existing parks which together form a mosaic made up of open fields, tracts of unimproved land, wooded areas, lakes, waterways and wetland marshes and bogs. These spaces ensure and sustain animal and plant biodiversity, and can be distinguished from other green spaces by their physical and biological characteristics which provide for the survival of living organisms and constitute habitat where wildlife can feed and reproduce. Thus although a grassed property planted with trees may be considered a green space, it does not qualify as a component of the natural environment.

Under the Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, the City seeks to protect major wooded areas of high ecological value. These wooded tracts of land represent core areas of biodiversity which are home to rare species of plantlife. These areas also constitute prime habitat for island wildlife given the integrity of the three strata of vegetation present, namely herbaceous plants, brushwood and trees.

Tributary of Rivière à l'Orme running through woods at Sainte-Anne de Bellevue

City seeking to protect major wooded areas of high ecological value





Stand of sugar maple and beech in woods at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue



Rivière des Prairies shoreline in vicinity of Cheval Blanc Rapids



Bertrand Stream south of Bois-de-Liesse Nature Park

At year-end 2003, wooded tracts outside existing parks totalled less than 1 600 hectares in area. The aggregate market value of these wooded tracts nonetheless amounted to several hundred million dollars. Given the City's limited resources, the cost of full-fledged protection would be prohibitive. Hence the urgency of taking decisive action... of another sort.

City targeting protection of 8% of island land mass

According to an evaluation conducted by the Government of Québec, protected areas on the Island of Montréal account for slightly more than 3% of the total land mass. Drawing inspiration from the Québec Strategy on Protected Areas, the City's policy targets protection of a total of 8% of the island area under City jurisdiction, including a full 6% land sites.

This policy further seeks to spur community initiative and cooperation, an innovative approach which should provide for the planned, integrated management of natural spaces of high ecological value.

City intent upon acting upstream of development

The success of this policy is reliant in equal measure upon the active involvement of all partners concerned and recognition by all Montréalers (citizens, promoters and others) of the economic, social and ecological value of the island's natural environment. The object is to reconcile the environmental, social and economic benefits linked to the enhancement of the natural environment. In adopting this policy, the City of Montréal is intent upon taking action upstream of development and putting in place a mechanism for cooperatively resolving problematic issues relating to the natural environment.



TARGET OBJECTIVES

The three key objectives of the Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment are as follows:

OBJECTIVE 1

Maximize biodiversity and increase aggregate hectarage of protected natural spaces in Montréal

The City of Montréal plans to develop conservation projects for sectors of high ecological value measuring 15 hectares or more in area, and introduce and enforce measures designed to protect the island's shoreline and wetland environments. In so doing, the City aims to create or consolidate natural corridors essential for wildlife, plantlife dispersion and recreational activities. To the extent possible, the City further wishes to remedy the lack of natural spaces in certain areas of the island.

Ecosystem viability hinges above all upon size, which explains why the size criterium set out in the policy is of decided significance. It is not that smaller sized wooded areas command no interest or are less deserving of protection, rather that they are considerably more difficult to maintain as self-sustaining components of the natural environment.

OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure sustainability of the natural environment in City parks, and promote the consolidation and viability of park ecosystems

Public parks and spaces are home to a number of natural environments boasting a wealth of biodiversity. The object of this policy is to protect those spaces of highest ecological value.

However, the proper protection of these spaces is oftentimes impacted by the level of protection afforded land located outside park boundaries. The City thus intends to take action in the matter of peripheral land and habitat to ensure the sustainability and preserve the integrity of the natural environment in Montréal area parks.

OBJECTIVE 3

Foster enhanced integration of ecosystems and natural landscape in built-up areas

The Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment identifies conservation priorities. The policy also outlines a framework for concerted action and development conducive to the formulation of novel, winning solutions leading to the implementation of a process designed to ensure the enhanced integration of the natural and living environments.

This framework for action will make it possible to develop new approaches in matters of urban design, architecture and infrastructure planning. These approaches will, in turn, foster the protection and enhancement of the natural environment whenever new development projects are submitted for consideration.

APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



The Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment calls for a concerted approach and a melding of interests. Rather than acting as sole architect, the City of Montréal is proposing a program of multilateral action involving a number of internal and external stakeholders. The object is to introduce a negotiation process designed to achieve consensus among decision-makers and other partners.

The City has identified 10 sectors, referred to as ecoterritories, slated for priority protection and enhancement. These sectors represent considerable tracts of land which include existing protected areas (large parks, nature reserves, etc.) as well as natural spaces in need of protection and enhancement. Together these spaces provide for the creation of a natural environment mosaic of broad ecological interest accessible to all Montréalers. The ten ecoterritories shown on the attached map have each been profiled and are accompanied by an outline of the conservation and management aims specific to each.

A multidisciplinary technical committee will be set up for each ecoterritory and commissioned to examine issues linked to conservation and management, and propose appropriate solutions. The workings of the technical committees will be overseen by a management committee comprising members of the Executive Committee, elected officials from the boroughs concerned and City department representatives.



Cascading waters of De Montigny Stream



Stand of sugar maple and beech south of Anse-à-l'Orme Nature Park



Boutin Island offshore from De Montigny Stream



Marsh south of Heritage Woods in Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park



Sixfold strategy for action

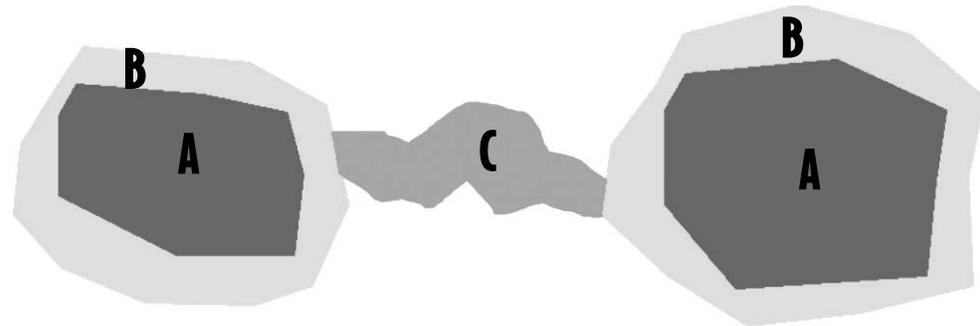
1. Concerted action to sustain viable ecosystems

In each ecoterritory, the City plans to initiate concerted action leading to the development of a viable ecosystem conservation project for which specific protection and enhancement objectives will be detailed prior to or in tandem with urban development projects (residential projects, road network expansion projects, etc.).

Action will be based on the notion of an ecological whole defined as a natural environment comprising three zones: a core zone, a buffer zone and an ecological corridor around which a development project may be designed. This model fosters a better meshing of urban development projects while protecting the long term viability of high value ecosystems.

MODEL FOR ECOSYSTEM VIABILITY

- A) CORE ZONE:** root of biodiversity to be protected
- B) BUFFER ZONE:** protector zone for core zone
- C) CORRIDOR:** linear link from one core zone to another



2. Regulatory framework to support protection of the natural environment

The Urban Development Plan currently being drafted by the City incorporates the norms and measures set out in the Shoreline and Floodplain Protection Policy, adopted in 1996 by the Government of Québec, and details the conservation and management objectives for each of the ecoterritories identified.

Moreover, the work of the ecoterritory technical committees should assist the boroughs in deciding upon the tools they require (master development plan, architectural implementation and integration plan, etc.) and identifying project objectives and evaluation criteria to be included in applicable regulations. In cooperation with the different levels of government, the technical committees could eventually assess the pertinence of other tools necessary for the proper protection and preservation of the island's ecosystems (conservation status: natural space, wildlife sanctuary, plant habitat, etc.).



Bertrand Stream in vicinity of industrial park, Borough of Dorval-Dorval Island



Stand of silver maple in treed swamp in vicinity of Cheval Blanc Rapids



St Paul Woods on Nuns' Island

Under this policy, the City plans to develop an overall vision for the entire island shoreline as well as all aquatic and wetland environments with a view to identifying ecological potential, prioritizing sectors to be preserved and determining specific action to be taken. This vision will serve as the foundation of a new regulatory framework to be drawn up in cooperation with the boroughs, the Montréal Metropolitan Community, the Québec Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada.

3. Ecological management of the natural environment in City parks

The City of Montréal plans to assess the natural environment in island parks and green spaces, and enter key components in a registry of protected areas. These protected areas would be subject to protective measures within the scope of an ecological management process similar to the one applying to nature parks.

Ecological management is essential if the City is to maintain plant and animal biological diversity, restore environments impaired by human development or natural causes, and prevent future degradation. Ecological management makes it possible to understand and monitor ecosystems, and then develop and institute appropriate activities for users.

4. Land use strategy

The Policy provides for the drafting of a land acquisition strategy based on a number of key criteria: prioritization of natural environments, evaluation of costs and anticipated benefits, leverage effect on the entire protection and enhancement initiative.

Furthermore, in light of the market value of land of high ecological value and mounting pressures in this respect, the City foresees the creation of a Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement Fund and is intent upon maximizing a number of existing leverage mechanisms. Provisions in the proposed land use strategy would allow not only for the acquisition of land, but also for donations and multiparty, shared-cost agreements with the stakeholders involved, including the federal and provincial governments.

The strategy would further advocate a concerted approach in matters of the utilization of contributions (cash or land) required of developers to create parks in the wake of subdivision initiatives, and the constitution of a land bank made up of surplus government land.

5. Partner support programs

This policy makes provision for the drawing up of various cooperation and support programs for partners seeking to join in the protection and enhancement initiative.

These programs will be developed based on criteria and terms specific to the conservation organizations and other public and private groups and organizations involved. These programs could take a number of different forms such as providing project support, enhancing citizen awareness and promoting development projects that meet the ecosystem objectives set out in the policy.



Marsh on Île Bizard

6. Active citizen involvement

The City is placing the emphasis upon the active involvement of the organizations concerned and the island's citizenry.

In this regard, follow-up committees grouping together citizens and environmental groups could be set up by the technical committees. Information on the island's natural environment would also be posted on the City's website.



White-tailed deer south of Heritage Woods in Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park

In conclusion

In proposing this policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, the City of Montréal seeks to underscore the importance attributed to natural spaces in the ongoing planning and development of an urban entity which remains both competitive from the economic standpoint and a great place to live. Readers will bear in mind, however, that this policy represents but a segment of municipal efforts devoted to the protection and enhancement of Montréal's green and blue heritage.

Given the urgent need for decisive action, the City of Montréal is submitting this draft policy for immediate public consultation. The object is to spur the active interest and involvement of Montréalers in this initiative designed to enhance the quality of their living environment.



Riffle or natural shallows on Lachine Rapids



Ecoterritory Profiles



Senneville Woods



Ecological profile

This territory, which comprises the area surrounding the Morgan Arboretum, is dominated by stands of mature trees and includes several streams and wetland areas (marshes and treed swamps). These natural spaces are home to rare species of plants and contribute to the preservation of a wooded tract some 300 hectares in area, the largest on the Island of Montreal. Found here are rare stands of beech, red oak and eastern hemlock several of which have been selected by the Ministry of Natural Resources for designation as exceptional forest ecosystems (EFEs). Owing to both size and diversity, these woods constitute prime habitat for forest birds, including birds of prey.



Conservation and management objectives

- Preserve the biodiversity and integrity of this wooded area.
- Provide for wildlife corridors linking Lake of Two Mountains, Senneville Woods, the Ecomuseum and Bois-de-la-Roche Agricultural Park without compromising the privacy of lakefront properties.
- Preserve the ponds located north of the Ecomuseum given the rarity of ponds on the island and their potential as wildlife habitat.





Rivière à l'Orme Ecoforest Corridor



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Ecological profile

This corridor comprises five distinct natural areas of considerable biodiversity: Angell Woods south of Autoroute 40; Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Woods west of rivière à l'Orme; the two mature forest stands at each end of Anse-à-l'Orme Nature Park; and, the lowland area at the mouth of rivière à l'Orme. Each of these areas is characterized by a mosaic of vegetation comprising mixed stands of young and mature forest growth, unimproved land, marshland, bogs and waterways. These natural areas are home to a number of rare species of plants and constitute potential habitat for three endangered species of animal life, namely the red-shouldered hawk, Cooper's hawk and brown snake. The size of the mature wooded areas combined with the proximity of open land favours the presence of populations of birds of prey. *Veronica anagallis-aquatica* or American speedwell, an aquatic plant particularly rare in Québec, can be found in the vicinity of rivière à l'Orme. This ecoterritory encompasses the entirety of rivière à l'Orme and its principal tributaries. The forest corridor bordering rivière à l'Orme serves a strategic link for the fauna and flora of the three neighbouring nature parks (Anse-à-l'Orme, Bois-de-la-Roche and Cap-Saint-Jacques).

Angell Woods are home to eight species of rare plants and a full quarter of the wooded area dominated by stands of hickory and sugar maple has been designated as an exceptional forest ecosystem (EFE) by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Woods boast rare stands of yellow birch and cedars which constitute prime habitat for white-tailed deer and birds of prey.

Conservation and management objectives

Create a sustainable ecological corridor of great biodiversity in the area surrounding the only inland river on the Island of Montréal.

- Create a recreational corridor from Beaurepaire Station to Cap-Saint-Jacques Nature Park and Bois-de-la-Roche Agricultural Park.
- Maintain rivière à l'Orme water quality and ensure appropriate water levels.
- Consolidate the boundaries of Anse-à-l'Orme Nature Park and Bois-de-la-Roche Agricultural Park by conserving natural spaces of significant ecological interest in the adjoining area.



Île Bizard Ecoforest Corridor



Ecological profile

This corridor is characterized by important networks of wetlands (marshes and bogs) linked by waterways and stands of mature trees. These natural spaces are home to a number of rare plants and constitute prime habitat for herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles), waterfowl and forest birds. Wetlands are particularly abundant in the southwest sector of the island in the vicinity of Pointe Théorêt and in the area north of Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard Nature Park. The high ecological value of the Pointe Théorêt sector led Montréal Urban Community (MUC) officials to shortlist the area for eventual transformation into a nature park. The sector north of Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard Nature Park is characterized by several tracts of open land which serve as feeding grounds for birds of prey that nest in the nature park. The cedar bush also found in the area provides habitat for the white-tailed deer population in winter.

One of the sectors of the nature park is dominated by a prize stand of sugar maple and hickory. Home to seven rare species of plants, the area acts as a buffer for nature park's network of wetlands. These woods provide suitable habitat for two endangered species of birds of prey that live in the nature park, namely the red-shouldered hawk and Cooper's hawk. The black maple woodlot to the northwest of the nature park is extremely rare for Montréal and environs, and infrequently encountered elsewhere in Québec. This woodlot has been designated as an exceptional forest ecosystem (EFE) by the Ministry of Natural Resources, and is home to seven species of endangered plants. The brown snake, also an endangered species, frequents the open land in the vicinity of the black maple woodlot which adjoins the nature park.

Conservation and management objectives

- Preserve the diverse, sustainable ecosystems in the vicinity of the wetlands and forest stands of extremely high ecological value, all of which are located in an area under development.
- Consolidate the boundaries of Cap-Saint-Jacques and Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard nature parks by conserving various natural spaces of intrinsic ecological interest or decided significance in terms of wildlife habitat.
- Create an ecological and recreational corridor linking Pointe Théorêt (extension of Cap-Saint-Jacques Nature Park), Lake of Two Mountains and Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard Nature Park.
- Conserve an important tract of the natural environment north of Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard Nature Park to meet the needs of resident wildlife, especially birds of prey and white-tailed deer.

Cheval Blanc Rapids



Ecological profile

The area in the vicinity of Cheval Blanc Rapids is characterized by a wooded shoreline, ongoing stretches of wet meadowland home to an abundance of phalaris arundinacea or reed phalaris and a concentration of treed wetlands adjoining Rivière des Prairies, which are home to large silver maple woodlots. These areas constitute prime breeding habitat for fish, amphibians, reptiles and waterfowl. They also serve as feeding grounds for the great blue heron and other shorebirds. These riparian and wetland areas, as well as adjacent terrestrial tracts open land and woods are home to a number of rare plant species. Until recently, one of these species, the pubescent sticklewort (see below), had not been observed in Québec for over 50 years.



The silver maple woodlot found in this area is the largest of all such stands bordering rivière des Prairies.

Conservation and management objectives

- Preserve a viable ecosystem in an area of unique scenic beauty along the banks of rivière des Prairies which offers potential in terms of regional park development.
- Preserve extensive wildlife and plant biodiversity in the area while maximizing access to the riverbank.
- Maintain a link between the conservation areas and the three riverside parks: Roxboro Island, Cheval Blanc and Des Arbres parks.

Bertrand Stream Basin



Ecological profile

The basin encompasses the entirety of the Bertrand Stream system from the upstream sector of the waterway to Bois-de-Liesse Nature Park. In the upstream sector, Bertrand Stream flows through a bog and marsh area adjacent to Dorval Industrial Park. In the stream's headwater area, on land occupied by the Saint-Laurent Technoparc, is found a natural space comprising a small pond bordered by marsh and treed swampland, as well as a mature stand of beech which is considered a rarity on the island. These aquatic (streams and ponds) and wetland (marshes and bogs) areas provide habitat for fish (cyprinids), migratory waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, beavers and muskrats.

South of the nature park lies a wooded area of considerable ecological interest comprising various types of mature forest stands representative of the Montréal area: sugar maple-beech, sugar maple-hickory, silver maple and an extremely rare stand of black sugar maple. These forest stands are home to rare species of plants and are frequented by two endangered species of birds of prey observed in the park, namely the red-shouldered hawk and Cooper's hawk.

Conservation and management objectives

- Control Bertrand Stream water quality and quantity.
- Redirect runoff from Saint-Laurent Technoparc to Bertrand Stream.
- Develop and enhance the natural environment with a view to recreating a natural ecosystem the length of the stream from the airport to Bois-de-Liesse Nature Park.
- Consolidate the boundaries of Bois-de-Liesse Nature Park by including the stands of trees of ecological interest south of the park.
- Provide for a green belt linking the shores of Lake Saint-Louis and Bois-de-Liesse Nature Park.

Summits and Slopes of Mount Royal



Ecological profile

The summits and slopes of Mount Royal are of significant landscape and ecological value. The wooded areas found on the mountain comprise mainly mature, century-old stands of red oak, sugar maple-red oak and sugar maple-hickory. Stands of oak, a rarity in Montréal, are generally concentrated on the slopes of Mount Royal. These wooded tracts have preserved their ecological integrity, constitute prime breeding habitat for birdlife and are possibly home to rare species of plants

Conservation and management objectives

- Update the Mount Royal Development Plan by incorporating objectives relating to ecological management as currently practised in the nature parks.
- Preserve the emblematic value of the green summits and slopes of the mountain.
- Protect each of the three strata of vegetation (herbaceous plants, brushwood and trees) on the summits and slopes which provide feeding and nesting habitat for a broad diversity of birds.
- Focus particular attention on the preservation of exceptional forest stands on the north slope of the mountain which is home to rare vestiges of the original Mount Royal forest cover.
- Maximize the possibilities for vistas and contact with nature on all sides of the mountain.
- Foster links between the islands of natural spaces on each of the three summits both inside and outside the limits of existing parks.
- Preserve the wooded corridor bordering Camillien-Houde Way.

De Montigny Stream Basin



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Ecological profile

The De Montigny Stream Basin is unique to Montréal's natural landscape. The stream cascades directly down over the limestone and features a spectacular waterfall. Stream banks are bordered mainly by a mix of young and mature growth northern red ash. The four islands offshore from the mouth of the stream (Boutin, Rochon, Lapierre and Gagné) are almost completely flooded come spring and constitute prime breeding habitat for fish, muskrats, amphibians, reptiles and ducks, as well as feeding grounds for the great blue heron. These islands, where a number of rare plants have been observed, together comprise one of the rare, natural, East Island locations little impacted by urban development and which present considerable interpretive potential.



Conservation and management objectives

- Preserve a viable ecosystem in the area surrounding this exceptional stream located in a highly built-up sector of the City generally lacking in natural spaces.
- Preserve the considerable biodiversity of Boutin, Rochon, Lapierre and Gagné islands by allowing recreational activities in keeping with efforts to protect the natural environment.
- Ensure a sufficient volume of quality water to feed De Montigny Stream.
- Create a linear park linking the area extending from Rivière des Prairies to the retention pond in Anjou.





East Island Greenbelt



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Ecological profile

This area comprises mature stands of trees running alongside Autoroute 40, which serve as a visual screen, and those found in the Bois-de-la-Réparation sector outside the boundaries of Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park. These wooded areas are home to a number of rare species of plantlife, including the cork elm. The Bois-de-la-Réparation sector is currently being evaluated for designation as an exceptional forest ecosystem (EFE).

The East Island greenbelt, which also encompasses the upstream and central sections of Pinel Creek, features a mix of marsh, new growth forest, wetlands and wooded tracts bordering Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park, in particular those located in the headwater sector of Grou Basin and those found in the area south of Heritage Woods. These natural spaces constitute prime habitat for amphibians, reptiles and waterfowl. The white-tailed deer population, estimated at some fifteen or so individuals, frequent the wetlands and open fields to the south.

Bonfoin Island, located off the eastern tip of the Island of Montréal, also forms a part of this ecoterritory. This small island, which boasts a mix of herbaceous prairie cover and central marshland, provides breeding habitat for fish and waterfowl. The island's shoreline is home to a number of rare species of plants.

Conservation and management objectives

- Supplement the deficiency of natural spaces in the eastern sector of the Island of Montréal.
- Preserve biodiversity by protecting the remaining natural spaces of ecological interest.
- Maximize connecting links between and accessibility of natural spaces in the area for both residents and wildlife.
- Consolidate the boundaries of Pointe-aux-Prairies Nature Park.
- Ensure sufficient supply of quality water for Pinel Creek, Grou Basin and headwater marshes.
- Conserve the wooded areas along Autoroute 40 to buffer and reduce traffic noise, and provide a visual element of quality in a heavily industrialized area which serves as one of the main gateways to the Island of Montréal.



Lachine Rapids



Ecological profile

The Lachine Rapids are unique to the Québec landscape. The area is a breeding ground for any number of species of fish (still and fast water spawning sites) and aquatic birds (sterns, ducks and herons). The midstream islands provide sanctuary for a number of endangered species of plants and represent prime nesting sites for ducks and herons. Heron Island is home to a mixed colony of herons, including the black-crowned night heron, great blue heron and tufted heron*. This colony includes the largest nesting population of black-crowned night herons and second largest nesting population of great blue herons in Québec. The Lachine Rapids, one of the largest ice-free expanses in southern Québec, is frequented by over 2000 ducks each year.

St Paul Woods on Nuns' Island provide sanctuary for a number of endangered species of plants and are home to a great diversity of birds, including birds of prey. This wet woodland, together with Lac des Battures, constitute important breeding grounds for amphibians and reptiles.



Conservation and management objectives

- Conserve ecosystem integrity.
- Preserve cultural heritage.
- Develop recreational and tourism potential.

Saint-Jacques Escarpment



Ecological profile

The Saint-Jacques escarpment, together with Mount Royal, are each defining characteristics of the Island of Montréal landscape. This escarpment is dominated by stands of poplar which ensure soil stability. Geographically located between Mount Royal and the Lachine Rapids and extending over an area of more than 20 hectares, the escarpment is of strategic importance for migratory waterfowl.

Conservation and management objectives

- Draw up a protection and development plan for this area in conjunction with the boroughs concerned.
- Identify action required to curb erosion of the escarpment.