

Dwight Smith  
680 av Querbes  
Outremont, Québec H2V 3W7

April 25, 2017

Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM)  
1550, rue Metcalfe – Bureau 1414  
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1X6

**Subject: Urgent need to Protect l'Anse-à-l'Orme**

“The human impact on biodiversity, to put the matter as briefly as possible, is an attack on ourselves. It is the action of a mindless juggernaut fuelled by the biomass of the very life it destroys.”

—E.O. Wilson, *The Meaning of Human Existence* (Liveright 2014)

The Anse-à-l'Orme in Pierrefonds-Roxboro, located on the island of Montreal, is a 220-hectare expanse of wet meadows, forest and fallow agricultural lands. It is home to more than 270 species of fauna and flora, including several endangered species such as the bobolink bird and Canadian Black Snakeroot, a wild plant.

L'Anse-à-l'Orme is part of the largest wildlife corridor on the Island of Montréal, a network of forests and fields that includes Cap-Saint-Jacques, the Morgan Arboretum, Parc-Agricole du Bois-de-la-Roche, the Ecoterritory of Senneville Forest, and Angell Woods. The diverse habitats of the l'Anse-à-l'Orme corridor include Montréal's only remaining inland river (rivière à l'Orme) and support the richest biodiversity and the last unprotected large wild green space on the Island of Montréal.

This last refuge of exceptional intrinsic value to present and future generations of Montrealers is threatened by a small group of developers, who propose converting the 185-hectare pristine land into a 5500-house development project, the intrinsic value of which beyond monetary gain is nil in comparison.

The proposed housing project is a perfect example of everything that is wrong with urban sprawl, things we should have long since learnt. While compromising the integrity of the existing ecosystems of that area, species that currently live there would have nowhere else to go. The reason why is that previous forms of urban sprawl practiced on the island of Montreal have eliminated all other habitats. Loss of habitat is the main cause of animal and plant extinctions. Destroying the Anse-à-l'Orme in Pierrefonds-Roxboro would constitute the final chapter in this tragic legacy of development and one that is all the more incriminating given the volume of evidence being put forward as argument against it.

Let us be unequivocal. There exists no evidence supporting the idea that the proposed housing project would do anything to improve the life of Montrealers. On the contrary there

exists substantial and reputable evidence that this project if given the green light would increase car traffic thereby increasing pollution, it would increase the heat-trap on the island and thereby contribute significantly to global warming, and consequently have a negative impact on the quality of life for all forms of life, including human, in the future of Montréal. Employing more intelligent forms of urban planning, there exist numerous former industrial sites or parking sites which could be reconstituted for the purpose of constructing new housing, ideally projects which would encompass social housing.

The quality of life for residents of Montreal Island in the future is presently in the hands of local and city politicians, urban planners and private sector developers. I urge all these players to act responsibly and with good conscience. Short term gain is never a justification for long term and irreversible loss. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is based in Montréal. Therefore, Montréal should be at the forefront of sustainable practices that preserve precious ecosystems and biodiversity like l'Anse-à-l'Orme.

I therefore request that the City of Montréal move to cancel this project. However one choses to measure the value of this project—morally, legally or practical—it is irresponsible and wrong to proceed. In taking steps now to protect the l'Anse-à-l'Orme eco-territory in its entirety, the City of Montréal would be moving closer to honouring its own promise and objective to conserve 17 percent of its land. City officials must focus their attention on sustainable development and on finding innovative, progressive projects to optimize the use of the existing space occupied by humans on the Island of Montréal.

Permit me to add my voice to all the other caring and intelligent Montréal citizens who are beseeching the City of Montréal to preserve the l'Anse-à-l'Orme eco-territory and thereby protect and assure the future of our natural flora and fauna for future generations of Montrealers.

Yours truly,

Dwight Smith