

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

1290 All right, thank you.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

1295 Alors, merci beaucoup, Madame. J'inviterais maintenant monsieur David Fletcher, please. Good afternoon, welcome, bonjour.

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1300 Thank you. I'll just start by saying my head is a buzz with some of the comments that I've heard here, that I was just itching to respond to. There's a lot of misconceptions and lot of things that really would need clarifying. But I'm going to start with what I prepared and if I have time, I'll perhaps deal with some of those things that I would like to comment too.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

1305 Fine.

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1310 First of all, what I would like to say is, you know, there has been an international process going on now since at least 1994, that has recognized that in a capitalist world, there's two kinds of capital, social and environmental capital, that have been sadly degraded through history, in fact, and out of that... out of an initial United Nation General Assembly Meeting, in 1983 I believe, there is a mandate set-up for a commission headed by Gro Harlem Bruntland and she set up the world commission on environment and development. Significantly, the word environment preceded the development in that particular document – and I think that's critical – that document and every document in the process since up until this very year in fact talks about the critical

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1320 element that the biodiversity is in achieving sustainability in the world for the future.

1325 I think if I can start by reading something just very current that was written by the current – he's moving out now - executive secretary of the Convention on biodiversity, the secretary at the meeting here in Montreal, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias wrote a letter to mayor Coderre thanking Montreal – monsieur Coderre, monsieur Daniel Hodder, one of our primary planners, monsieur Ménard – for their participation in Cancun, in the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the parties, and his congratulations might have been this ingenious as I recall, because in the second to last paragraph – I'll read it to you – he had said:

1330 *“I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the report from the David Suzuki Foundation on biodiversity in Montreal's borough of Pierrefonds/Roxboro as attached. Given the rigueur of the study and the compelling evidence it presents regarding both the rich biodiversity of the area and the presence of threatened species such as the bobolink, I believe that it was served as a very valuable input to the decision-making process regarding development options for this area of Montreal.”*

1335 It was very diplomatically framed, I would have to say. And the United Nation – I've spoken to people of the United Nation Convention over the past 12 years – and I know that they are very chary of creating pressure on some national jurisdictions or even national jurisdictions in fact, to advance the cause of biodiversity conservation.

1340 What we are facing right now globally, the process exists, because we're not dealing with the esthetic, we're not dealing with something that is pretty, we're not dealing with something that makes people happy. We're dealing with something that is existential in its implications. And in a context like that, every single person on the planet, including our developers, have to be committed to doing what is right to conserve not just the species that are at risk, but all those that will come in to risk if we don't act, and act soon.

1350 And the critical thing is that it is not... biodiversity does not exist simply at the level of species, it involves genetics. When we reduce the gene pools of these species, we're destroying information that contributes towards healthy living systems on the planet. It is not just the species, it's the places in which they live. Because it is not just species that are becoming extinct. It is places for them to live in that are becoming extinct. And these can never properly be, except in geological timeframes, restored to what they were.

1355 I'm going to read here something from my hero, a recent book, *Half-Earth*, Edward Osborne Wilson, professor *emeritus* at Harvard University, claimer of the concept of biodiversity, the very man that created the concept – the world foremost biologist unarguably, now add the case for protecting not the 17% that we hear in our documentation, but 50%. His book is written in 2016, and this is the measure that he sees as necessary to secure the health of our planet.  
1360 This is the health of the world in which future generations are going to live in.

This would secure, according to Wilson, if we were to save 50% of the planet biological and ecological inheritance, it would secure 85% of earth's biodiversity and if we include biodiversity hot spots, which by the way in Montreal are in the area right around Montreal, that's  
1365 where the concentration of biodiversity hot spots is in Quebec – he goes on to say that only a little more than 15% is protected globally. That's in 2016. So there's a hell of a lot of work to be done on the part of everybody in this room, all of our politicians, all of our corporations, all of our consultants, and indeed everybody that has a mind on our planet, we got a big job to do.

1370 He declares that all available evidence points to the same two conclusions: first, the sixth extinction is on the way. Second, human activity is its driving force. We are the asteroid in our time, this is equivalent to that which destroyed the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. That's the magnitude of what we're talking about. This isn't tribal. It's not to do with an esthetic. It's to do with our survival.

1375 We are now between 100 and 1,000 times the background extinction rate before human influence, and that's accelerating because of continued shrinking of the biologically richest areas.

1380 It is essentially – and I've used this expression myself – a death by a thousand cuts. A little bit taking here, a little bit ceded to development there. That's what's driving the biodiversity down. And so we look at Pierrefonds West and we see that that is one cut on the flesh of our planet. It is sad to say that we are all complicit in it, whether we like it or not.

1385 This last death by a 1,000 cuts is exactly what is happening here in Montreal. More than half of the total field area of Pierrefonds West – 185 hectares out of a total of 365 – has been ceded to development all the while claiming – and I have to say ironically – that the Cap Nature project is environmentally benign, that is green. There is no reasonable or no possible explanation as to how we're replacing rich wet meadow habitat with urban infrastructure has ecological merit.

1390 Against the existing global 15%, Montreal's target for 2020 is to reach 8% according to its sustainable development, 2016- 2020 planning document. With its ultimate target of 10% having no defined deadline – I would refer you to that document, I posted it online and I would invite you to refer to it – and all the other items amongst those 10 targets set had a defining date of either 1395 2020 or 2025, this one does not. And in a meeting with Mr. Coderre back in 2014, he assured us that he would get around to it in 10 years' time – that's 2024 - that there was no rush, essentially. That was to us very distressing. And the record to date, the Tremblay and Coderre administrations is dismal, because we've added barely 2% since the City was merged in 2002. - May I just take a sip of water, I'm getting a little dry here.

1400 There is no commitment on the part of our city right now to get anything done. We were promised that Meadowbrook would be secured, we were promised that Angell Woods would be secured, that the City was committed to that, and right now both of those are in litigation and the City doesn't seem to be coming forward with amounts of settlement that would probably fall within 1405 the range of what it takes to light up a bridge.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Will we be able to ask you a few questions?

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**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

Yes. May I just continue with some of these points that I'd like to make.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Yes.

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

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I was there, by the way, that letter was under the heading of 2011-2020 United Nation Decade for biodiversity which was launched here – the hall d'honneur of the City of Montreal into October, October the 4<sup>th</sup> I believe of 2010, we, at the Green Coalition, were invited as special guests, the only environmental group to be sole invited – there were dignitaries from around the world and the launch of this very decade that ends in barely two and a half years' time, has been ignored essentially by our City. Our City is signatory to a process, an international process. We have the secretary right here in our City. And yet, our City plays around with definitions of sustainable development and carries on doing what it has always done, which is to develop in places that are open and available to nature, and to people.

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Quebec biodiversity has also published by the *ministère du Développement durable de l'environnement et des parcs*, in 2005, under the watch of Mr. Mulcair, with whom, by the way, colleagues of mine at the Green Coalition, you know, had negotiations regarding that very national park that you were talking about, Mr. Wolfe, that these fields would have been included in that national park at that time. And he was about to make a decision on that very project at the time that he was asked to step down from the ministry.

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And our approaches to any of the ministers since have resulted in nothing in the way of interest.

1440           So, what can I say at this point. Maybe move on and not take much more of your time,  
but if I can just make a comment about the bird species nesting in those fields. I have watched –  
actually watched – bobolinks in those fields engaging in their reproductive behaviors, making  
their nests, and going about in those fields and finding father for their young, picking up the  
1445           insects. I have got photographs at home of bobolinks with insects moths in their beaks for their  
young.

                  These used to extend throughout the West Island and probably for the region. And this is  
probably the last vestige of their habitat now, because developers looking after profit have  
basically eradicated the rest of the bobolinks' habitat throughout the West Island. But you know  
1450           that is just one species.

                  I'll tell you a little bit about the species. We're talking about is it in danger? Does it have a  
problem? According to bird studies in Canada, Dr. Jon D. McCracken, this bird has undergone a  
decline in its numbers of 80% over the period from 1970. The rate of loss of that bird's population  
1455           is 1.8% per year. Now if you were taking a formula for growth and investments, you would be  
doubling almost by that time.

                  Now, there's other birds that are not seen in those fields anymore, at least very rarely,  
that used to be quite common in the West Island. One of them is the eastern meadowlark. I used  
1460           to see those. I was a school teacher and I used to take my children out regularly and I would see  
the meadowlarks, and we would stop to watch them, and they were throughout the fields in the  
West Island. Now, they're gone. Their rate of decline over the period from 1972 when I was  
doing exactly that teaching is 2.8% per annum.

1465           The grasshopper sparrow, also which has been sighted in those fields as had a rate of  
3.8% loss of population per annum. This is disturbing.

1470 So what we're expected to believe now is that these species there that aren't at risk are not lining  
up ready to undergo that same process of decline. And we're going to make sure it simply by  
1475 doing that death by a thousand cuts. Cutting away the habitat that subtends these populations.  
And Montreal has the idea that it can claim to be sustainable all the while deciding that it has to  
do nothing along with all the other people of the world to secure these populations. The bobolink,  
by the way, extends all its range, extends all the way from Paraguay to Montreal. And here is  
where it breeds; it doesn't breed down there.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

No. so can we ask you a few questions now?

1480 **M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

Yes, absolutely.

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

1485 In your discussion about the biodiversity topics of targets of COP10 you talked about  
target 15 and I think you referred to this in another point of our other hearings, about target 15  
that no one talks about it...

1490 **M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

Yes.

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

1495 ...and it's 15% of degraded ecosystem. So that restoration of an additional 15%...

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1500 That's right.

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

1505 ...so what would that mean in the best of all possible world and your imagination, what would that mean in terms of the site that we're discussing now? How would we restore...

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1510 Well, to be quite honest with you, I don't think that the site that we have at hand right now needs much in the way of restoration. It needs some management, because it is, after all, an artificial meadow. It's a wet meadow. By the way, I think I mentioned about the meadow vole being in there by the way...

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

1515 Hum, hum.

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1520 ...and the meadow voles are the base of a food chain that supports all sorts of raptors, including owls, a number of species of hawks some which are endangered, one of them in decline is the northern harrier, that I have watched hunting in those fields. And I have seen them undergoing nesting activity in those fields along with others. Now, where was I about...

1525 **M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

Well, I think you answered my question, whereas you're saying that there isn't a need for restoration.



**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

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There is management that is needed because it has to be kept in a field state in order for it to continue to be a value to these particular species... hum...

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

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Perhaps, if I can move on to my next question.

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

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Yes.

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

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You referred to – I don't think that this is a study that was submitted to the OCPM but – you know - the study by Gestion Environnement MM Ecosystem Services in capital Pierrefonds West Development Project, has that one already been submitted? Or if not, can you...

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

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I've submitted that online. And the figure by the way was 285,000 but that's a low-ball figure. It could extend as far as 700,000...

**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

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When you say submitted online, you mean you submitted online to the OCPM?

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

Yes. Yes.

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**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

As part of this process.

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**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

That's right. That's right.

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**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

O.K. and I think you answered my last question: what is the status... so the Green Coalition is continuing to work on the national park?

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**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

At this point, it's been put in static. We've got nowhere to go with it. The current administration has been invited by Marvin Rotrand in fact, a member on council, to reendorse support for the *parc écologique de l'archipel de Montréal* that we initiated with Mr. Mulcair. And of course, we've gone nowhere with that. And all of the successors in the environment ministries have basically given at the back of the hand, they are not interested in this. We have tried with Lyne Beauchamp...

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**M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

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And how about the Federal government, because of the... isn't there a similar... the Rouge project in Toronto is similar to what you want to see in Montreal?

**M. DAVID FLETCHER :**

1590 Absolutely, yes. And there is room for federal involvement. It's just they seem to be very  
chary of getting themselves involved at this point. We would like to see somebody on the island  
step up and actually grasp the nettle on this one and do what needs to be done here, and by the  
way, at the Technoparc in St-Laurent.

1595 **M. JOSHUA WOLFE, commissaire:**

Thank you.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Fine. Thank you very much. Monsieur Ed Hoyer, please? Welcome.

**M. EDWARD HOYER:**

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Good afternoon. We have come here today to talk about our thoughts on this housing  
project called Pierrefonds Ouest, which is a building of 5 500 housing units.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Would you mind bringing your microphone a little closer to you, please?

**M. EDWARD HOYER:**

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And to evaluate this project, we have to look at not only the local scene, but also the  
wider scene, namely Greater Montreal. This whole project will affect the local and the wider  
scene.