

LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

A SERIES OF LOCAL CASES



City of Montréal, Canada Policies and plans to protect natural heritage

SUMMARY: As host city to the UN Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the City of Montréal has demonstrated special commitment to biodiversity for many years. The City of Montréal formalized local commitment to protecting biodiversity through a combination of the city's Master Plan, Heritage Policy, Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats and first ever Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development. Spurred to action as a result of these plans and policies, Montréal has developed several exemplary new programs designed to protect and enhance biodiversity in and around the city.

Biodiversity & biodiversity management in Montréal

Ecological network

Montréal's Master Plan, which defines the framework for urban development, explicitly identifies commitments made to protect and promote Montréal's natural heritage. Under the plan, Montréal set up a network of twenty large parks, half of which are nature parks. Efforts are devoted to preserving these parks in their natural state, keeping invasive species in check, and providing educational opportunities for the general public. Montreal also



View of downtown Montreal from Mount Royal Summit.

established ten écoterritories boasting high levels of biodiversity. Conservation efforts in these areas are based on ecological networks comprised of biodiversity core areas, buffer zones and ecological corridors which link various core areas with one another.

Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development

In 2005, Montréal adopted the city's first Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development. Drawn up collaboratively with eighty community partners and forty municipal administrative units, the plan is intended as a collective commitment to making sustainable development the foundation upon which future building in Montréal will be based.

The 5-year plan focuses on improving air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the quality of residential living areas, practising responsible resource management, fostering sustainable practices in industry, business and institutions - both public and private, as well as protecting biological diversity, natural habitats, and green spaces. The plan defines action to be taken by municipal authorities and community partners to meet predetermined goals. During Phase 2 of the plan (2007-2009), biodiversity actions will include: increasing protected natural habitats to 8% of total island area under city jurisdiction, augmenting total biomass, signing a partnership agreement with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity providing for cooperation regarding training programs, and setting up a centre on biodiversity at Montréal Botanical Garden.

Heritage Policy and Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats

In 2005, Montréal adopted a Heritage Policy which recognizes the conservation and enhancement of Montréal's natural heritage as a priority concern. A year earlier, the city adopted a Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats with the primary objective to double the size of natural habitats under ecological management within the city. This is being achieved by careful monitoring and management of ecosystems in existing parks and by integrating significant conservation initiatives within major urban development projects in the urban fringe.

Tree policy

In 2005, Montréal adopted a tree policy to provide the city with an effective vision of tree-related issues and activities. The policy recommended the establishment of a tree inventory, arboreal plan and public tree maintenance program, as well as the adoption of regulations pertaining to the protection of trees on private property. In 2006, Montréal planted 9,000 new trees pursuant to policy guidelines which advocate “planting the right tree in the right place”.



De Montigny Stream Basin Ecoterritory.

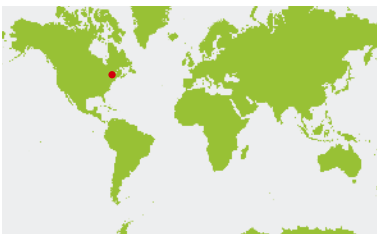
Saint-Michel Environmental Park

The 192-hectare Saint-Michel Environmental Park is a creation of the City of Montréal. The original site was transformed from a quarry/refuse disposal site into a vast environmental technology and educational complex set against an extensive backdrop of green. It now includes a circus arts centre, a recycling centre, a biogas power plant, environmental education initiatives, and traditional recreation areas.

Involvement in international initiatives

The City of Montréal continues to play a significant role in promoting biodiversity initiatives at the international level. Montréal is presently the host city for seven international organizations active in matters of the environment and hosts the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (since 1996). In 2005, Montréal hosted the 11th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Mayor of Montréal is also Vice Chairperson of the World Mayors Council on Climate Change with a special focus on biodiversity. Within ICLEI, Montréal has shown special commitment on climate protection and has linked this to biodiversity. The Mayor of Montréal figures among the original five mayors who signed the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity and, as a result, now sits on the steering committee of the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity.

City contacts & profile



Biodiversity protection in Montréal takes many different forms, occurs in a multitude of locations and is shaped by numerous policies and partnerships.

With a population of over 1.6 million inhabitants, the **CITY OF MONTRÉAL** is the second largest city in Canada and the largest city in the Province of Québec. The city is located on the Island of Montréal in southwestern Québec at the confluence of the Ottawa and St Lawrence Rivers. As a result of unique geography, Montréal is home to 315 kilometres of shoreline. Riverbank and island waterway ecosystems represent significant sources of biological diversity. The city's green spaces make up 13% of the total land area and include Mount Royal Park, a 200-hectare oasis of green in honour of which the city was named.

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LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY is a global urban biodiversity initiative of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in cooperation with IUCN. This pilot project of 21 cities around the globe focuses on the key roles that local governments play in conserving the world's biodiversity and retaining the relationship between people and nature. See: www.iclei.org/lab; lab@iclei.org

COUNTDOWN 2010 is a powerful network of more than 600 partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Each partner commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The secretariat – hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010. See: www.countdown2010.org

CITIES & BIODIVERSITY is an initiative of local governments and UN agencies to increase awareness on the relevant role of cities and towns for conserving and managing biodiversity. See: www.iclei.org/biodiversity

THE “CITIES & BIODIVERSITY CASE SERIES” is started in 2008 on the occasion of the UN CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) 9 in Bonn/Germany in May 2008. Funding is provided by UNEP, with co-funding from ICLEI, IUCN and the City of Bonn. The case descriptions are compiled by the “Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB)” project team in the ICLEI Africa Secretariat and ICLEI's International Training Centre.

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