

Comments on the Proposed Development in Pierrefonds –West at L’Anse-a-L’Orme  
Submitted on Thursday April 27, 2017, by Brenda Penak, former resident of Montreal.

Currently I am a resident of Prince Edward Island. However, from 1979-1981 I lived in Dollard des Ormeaux and went to school at McGill University, in Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue. I completed my MSc. associated with the McGill Raptor Centre. While finishing my studies I had an opportunity to teach an undergraduate field course. One of the key locations where I took students to observe and study wildlife, was L’Anse-a-L’Orme. I have very fond memories of this special area and when I heard that it threatened by development I felt compelled to provide a written brief to let City Officials understand why I oppose the development. I list and briefly explain several key points for your consideration.

- 1) First, these wetland meadows provide important habitat for numerous species (birds, mammals, plants, reptiles and amphibians) that I am sure other briefs have discussed in detail. However, as my thesis concentrated on the Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) I must mention this bird in particular. This hawk is found in deciduous and mixed woods in Southern Ontario, SW Quebec and occasionally in New Brunswick. Its main prey includes small mammals, as well as reptiles and amphibians. From the 1950-70’s this species and a number of birds of prey suffered considerable decline. In 1983, the Red-shouldered Hawk was federally declared a Species of Concern. A review of its status later in 1996 and in 2006 found the population had stabilized and in some locations increased so it was removed from the list of “Species of Concern”. However, that was based on a Committee for the Status of Endangered Species In Canada (COSEWIC) report by DS. Badzinski (2006) some 11 years ago. As an ornithologist by training, I find that that status is tenuous and needs to be regularly monitored as development pressures continue to reduce the needed habitat for nesting (woodlands) as well as that for this species’ prey base (woodlands, meadows and wetlands). L’Anse-a-L’Orme provides habitat for prey species for Red-shouldered Hawks that nest in and migrate through the West Island’s Green Corridor. Additionally, other hawk species and a significant number of nesting and migratory owl species are found in NW Montreal and are supported by the habitat in L’Anse-a-L’Orme and the contiguous green corridor it links with.
- 2) Related to point 1) the habitat of L’Anse-a-L’Orme provides habitat to support a great diversity of wildlife, as species lists provided by local biologists for this area and surrounds will indicate.
- 3) Wild species, especially mammals and birds often need large tracts of different habitats to complete all stages of their life cycle. Interconnectedness of habitats, especially in and around urban areas is therefore essential. L’Anse-a-L’Orme is an integral part of that critical Green Corridor of the West Island together with The Migratory Bird Sanctuary in Senneville, the Morgan Arboretum, Parc-agricole Bois-de-la-Roche, Angell Woods, Cap-St. Jaques, Ile Bizzard and the Kestrel Fields.
- 4) I understand that Montreal has a conservation goal of protecting a certain percentage of its land mass. Currently I believe Montreal has not reached that goal. The proposed

development negates attempts to reach a goal and therefore to comply with its own conservation targets.

- 5) The green space in the West Island of the Montreal is a special gem and needs to be protected. Not only does it support critical habitat for a diversity of wildlife and contribute to the City's conservation goals, it also provides its human population (and visitors to Montreal) with a close connection to nature and our environment. This area continues to be used by teachers and their students, researchers, as well as families, recreationists, and tourists. Spending time outdoors, in nature, has been proven to provide many health benefits. In Mental Health and Function- A Literature Review In: Green Cities: Good health [www.greenhealth.washington.edu](http://www.greenhealth.washington.edu) Wolf and Flora ( 2010) outline many of the health benefits of green spaces such as opportunities for physical activity that in turn improves cognitive function, memory and learning; in children this contact with nature is important in helping develop "cognitive, emotional and behavioral linkages to their social and biophysical environments"; it also helps reduce "mental fatigue and relax and restore the mind" and can increase both school and job performance by contributing to the reduction of mental stress.

Although I do not live in Montreal now, I visit and I have wonderful memories of natural history outings in the green spaces that still exist in the NW of Montreal. I hope these areas, including L'Anse-a- L'Orme will be protected now and for future generations. Therefore, I ask City Officials to make a forward-thinking decision, and cancel the proposed development plans for this special area. Once this habitat is destroyed, it and the flora and fauna for this area is gone forever.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my perspective on the proposed development plans for this area.

In Conservation,

Brenda L. Penak