

THE MOUNT ROYAL CHARTER

Prepared on the occasion of the 125th Anniversary of Mount Royal Park by Les Amis de la montagne, Héritage Montréal and Centre de la montagne, and presented at the Mount Royal Summit, Thursday, March 14, 2002

Preamble

Visible from afar, accessible from all directions, with its three summits, its neighbourhoods, parks and institutions, Mount Royal is at the heart of Montreal's geography, history and identity. Together with the mighty St. Lawrence River, the mountain is the predominant feature of the Montreal cityscape and a major landmark that contributes to the human and environmental quality of the city.

Our richly diverse natural, historical, architectural, archaeological and landscape heritage all find expression on Mount Royal. Its geology, contours and plant and animal life all bear witness to the origins of the St. Lawrence River Valley, the Monteregian Hills, and the Hochelaga archipelago. Its landscaping, buildings and artifacts retain the imprint of the cultures that have succeeded each other over the centuries, from the Aboriginal peoples to the inhabitants of the present-day city. Jacques Cartier gave it the name we use today, and De Maisonneuve and the pioneers of Ville-Marie marked it with a cross and the first land survey. Its history is that of the farms, villages, religious communities, public figures, health and educational institutions, cemeteries and public services that were established on its slopes.

Such as we have inherited it, the mountain is a register of the civic work that it has helped bring about. Deep in the era of industrialization, Montrealers, with the support of the Québec legislature and the American landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, protected a portion of the mountain by transforming it into a large park, inaugurated in 1876. Since then, laws, by-laws and successive plans have reflected the public's continuous desire to expand the protected area and the scope of this protection. This work continues today, at a time when a widespread concern with the sustainable development of our cities prevails. In the search for a balance between conservation and the satisfaction of new needs in an urban context, Mount Royal is an exemplary site for educating the public about civic and environmental values.

Mount Royal is at the heart of a metropolis with a myriad of complex interests. Its conservation and enhancement require creativity and commitment to ensure the development and pooling of knowledge, talents and a wide variety of measures that will work for the benefit of the city, both present and future. This is both an individual and a collective responsibility.

Drawing inspiration from national and international sources, the Mount Royal Charter sets forth the general principles that can readily be invoked by any person or organization who is interested in the mountain and contributes to or is concerned about its conservation, protection and enhancement.

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A combined work of nature and diverse cultures, Mount Royal is an exceptional monument that contributes to the vibrant identity of Montreal and to the quality of the city's environment and way of life.

Individually and collectively, we are all guardians of the natural, landscape, architectural, archaeological and historic heritage of Mount Royal, not only for ourselves but also for future generations.

Accordingly, we set forth the following principles:

- We must increase our personal and public awareness of Mount Royal, from both a scientific and cultural perspective, in order to gain a better appreciation of the site, ensure the appropriateness and quality of any measures we take in harmony with this site and its unique attributes, and derive the necessary lessons, for our own benefit and that of future generations;
- We must protect Mount Royal from activities or negligence that could be detrimental to the natural, developed or built features that contribute to its value and its presence in the urban landscape;
- We must work together to conserve and enhance the diversity of Mount Royal's landscape, heritage and urban values, by adopting measures that meet the highest quality standards.