

# GRAND PARC DE L'OUEST

5 questions answered









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# Creating Canada's largest municipal park

Montréal is proud to present the result of an ambitious vision: the creation of a large park on more than 3,000 hectares of land in the West Island.

In creating the Grand parc de l'Ouest, the city follows through with its commitment to protect 10% of its territory by preserving and protecting the West Island's green space and natural habitats.

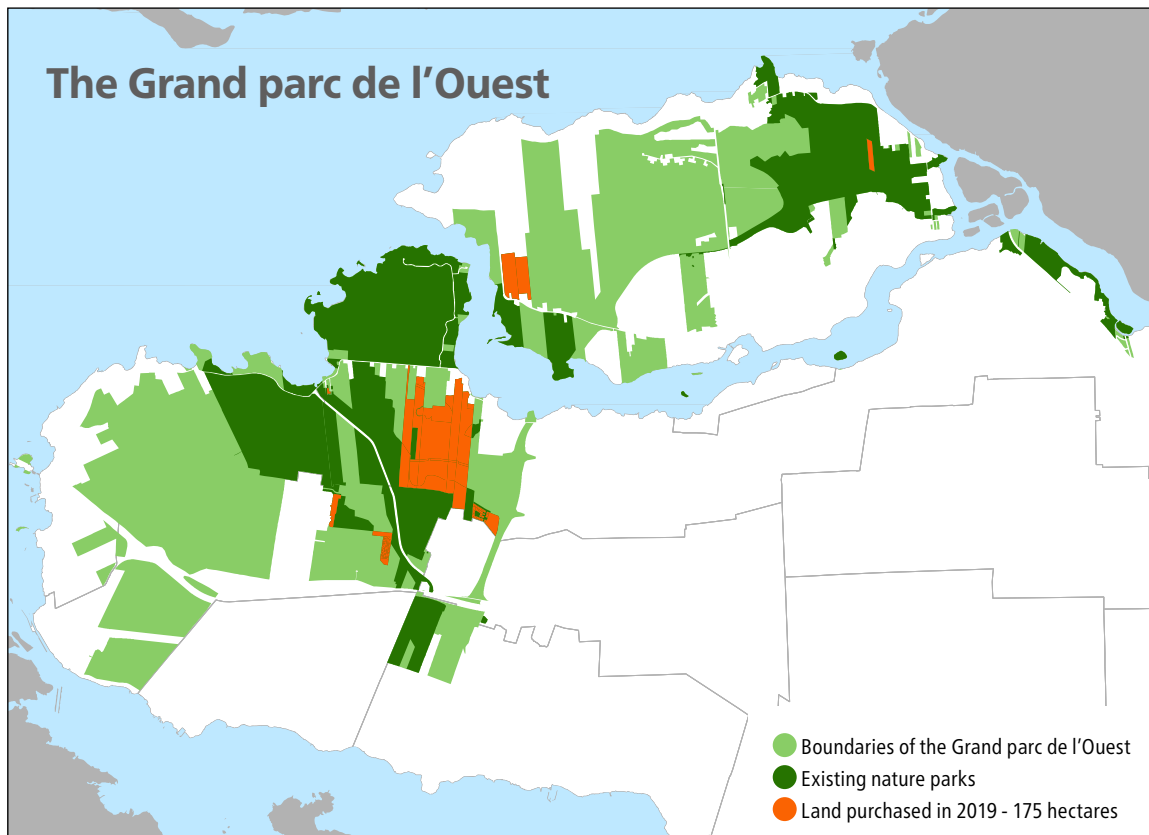
The project was designed in a global, integrated perspective, and is meant to buckle the green belt bordering on the Lac des Deux Montagnes. By becoming one of our city's large parks, it also consolidates Montréal's green and blue corridors.

The Grand parc de l'Ouest will namely ensure the sustainability of the ecosystems that participate in increasing Montréal's resilience to climate change.

By enhancing the urban outdoor activity network, including recreation and tourism as well as educational activities year-round, this new large park provides citizens with additional points of contact with their natural environment.

This ambitious collective project represents an historic moment. It is the fruit of a close collaboration between the boroughs of L'île-Bizard–Sainte-Geneviève and Pierrefonds–Roxboro, the towns of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and Kirkland, the city of Beaconsfield, and the Village de Senneville.

Given its sizeable surface area, the Grand parc de l'Ouest may potentially become Canada's largest park under municipal jurisdiction.





# One vision, 3,000 hectares

Faced with the urgency to address climate issues, municipalities play a crucial role in the first-line management of extreme climate events.

This is why Montréal is increasing its efforts to offer all citizens resilient and sustainable living environments.

A sure way of reaching our ambitious goals is to protect natural environments. These invaluable green areas contribute, among other things, to preserving biodiversity and improving the quality of life of our population.

It is with this objective in mind that the urban agglomeration council adopted, in October 2019, a new by-law to create a regional park comprised of the Anse-à-l'Orme, Bois-de-l'Île-Bizard, Bois-de-la-Roche, Cap-Saint-Jacques and Rapides-du-Cheval-Blanc nature parks, as well as other areas of ecological value.

The city also purchased 175 hectares namely made up of rare wetlands and aquatic environments located at the heart of the Grand parc de l'Ouest, in order to protect those areas.

The creation of the Grand parc de l'Ouest is a sustainable action of unprecedented scope. This large area represents a natural environment located in an urban setting offering the potential to protect 3,000 hectares of land.

The territory of the Grand parc de l'Ouest consists of a mosaic of natural habitats that are as extensive as they are diverse: wooded areas, shrub swamps, fallows, uncultivated agricultural land, wetlands, and aquatic environments... in addition to one of Montréal's most important inland rivers!

The Grand parc de l'Ouest project is much more than a large park; it is a legacy for generations to come.



Photo: Ville de Montréal

# The Grand parc de l'Ouest: 5 questions answered

## 1. What types of natural habitats can be found in the Grand parc de l'Ouest?

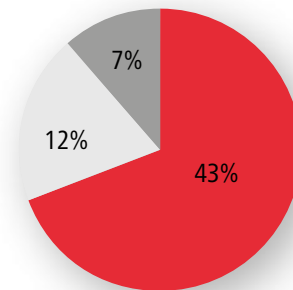
A true gold mine of biodiversity, the vast territory covered by the Grand parc de l'Ouest is comprised of a mosaic of habitats including wetlands, mature woods, old-growth forests, swamps, marshlands, fallows, as well as developed green areas. They are home to Montréal's most abundant and surprisingly diverse wildlife, with more than 60 species of plants and animals that are designated as protected\*.

Forests and woods make up the majority of the park's surface area. In the west, the Morgan Arboretum and the adjacent forests form the largest wooded massif on the Island of Montréal. Towards the east, old-growth forests and mature woods coexist with young stands, fallows and agricultural land.

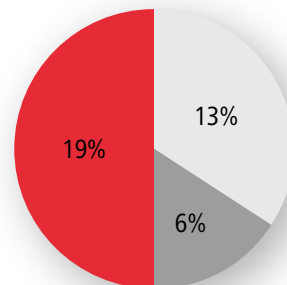
Wetlands, mostly made up of swamp forests and, in a lesser proportion of marshland, represent approximately 12% of the surface area of the Grand parc de l'Ouest. Finally, fallows, mostly former agricultural land in the process of revegetation, make up 7% of the territory. Fallows play a major ecological role for species that depend on them, such as country birds.

\* Species at Risk Act (federal), Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species (provincial)

### The habitats of the Grand parc de l'Ouest



**Natural habitats: 62%**  
Forests and woods: 43%  
Wetlands: 12%  
Fallows: 7%



**Developed green areas: 38%**  
Golf course: 13%  
Urban: 6%  
Agricultural: 19%



Least bittern  
Photo: Steve Arena 2015 - USFWS Volunteer



## 2. What recreation and tourism activities are offered in the Grand parc de l'Ouest?

The Grand parc de l'Ouest forms a true urban outdoor recreation network. It provides various contact points with nature, as well as unique opportunities to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life, without ever leaving the island.

The park's programming proposes a plethora of opportunities to go play outside: outdoor yoga, fat-biking, starlit walks, traction kiting, sunset kayaking, music shows, rabaska tours and much, much more!

What's more, the Grand parc de l'Ouest is not only a gem in terms of its wealth of natural habitats, but also for its exceptional historic value. A wide array of educational activities will thus also be offered year-round.

Thanks to the Réseau express métropolitain (REM), and the city's downtown shuttle service, the plethora of recreation and tourism activities offered in the Grand parc de l'Ouest will be more readily accessible to everyone.

### Today, the Grand parc de l'Ouest, includes:

- 2 public beaches
- 25 km of hiking trails
- 18 km of bike paths
- 23 km cross-country skiing trails
- 17 km snowshoeing trails
- 14 km of fat-bike trails
- 4 boat launching ramps
- 1 outdoor recreation centre
- 1 sugar shack





Photo: Yves Kéroack

### 3. How does agriculture fit in to the Grand parc de l'Ouest?

In the urban agglomeration of Montréal, the West Island is known for the diversity of its agricultural activities. To this day, the different agricultural activities in the Grand parc de l'Ouest yield a wide variety of crops — including organic ones — while also providing for educational and community projects.

Some agricultural practices contribute to protecting biodiversity and preserving heritage. What's more, in addition to its productive aspect, agriculture in the Grand parc de l'Ouest also creates distinctive landscapes, thus enhancing the park's tourism and recreation appeal.

The city plays a role in preserving this agricultural use of the land by way of two partnership

agreements with non profit organizations, respectively in Cap-Saint-Jacques and in Bois-de-la-Roche.

The first, D-Trois-Pierres, a social economy organization offers employment to youth as part of a social reintegration program. They operate the organic farm, as well as the sugar shack located in the Parc nature du Cap-Saint-Jacques, in addition to cultivating the agricultural land in Bois-de-la-Roche. Their maple products and their produce are certified organic by Ecocert Canada.

The second is a partnership agreement with Regroupement Partage and D-Trois-Pierres, which yielded the project *Cultiver l'espoir*. This is a social economy project aiming to become Canada's biggest organic urban agriculture project. With half of its production donated to food banks, this project helps several thousand underprivileged people.



Photo: Air Imex

#### The humanized landscape of L'Île-Bizard

The city and a number of partners have started an innovative sustainable development project for the rural areas of L'Île-Bizard. The humanized landscape is a protected area located on inhabited land. It aims to:

- Ensure the sustainability of agricultural activities and to enhance their vitality
- Protect biodiversity
- Enhance the natural and cultural heritage
- Preserve and develop recreation and tourism activities that are both educational and sustainable

The "humanized landscape" status is granted by the ministry of the environment and the fight against climate change (Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques). This is a first for Québec.



#### 4. How does the creation of the Grand parc de l'Ouest affect the owners of properties located within park boundaries?

The by-law determining the location and boundaries of the Grand parc de l'Ouest was adopted in 2019.

The coming into force of this by-law enabled the city to make agreements (purchases, leases or other types) across the territory concerned, for the purposes of a regional park.

The rights of property owners within park limits remain unchanged.

Urban planning by-laws also remain unchanged. The owners of land located within park limits may continue to build or carry out work. It is thus possible to obtain construction or renovation permits in accordance with existing by-laws.





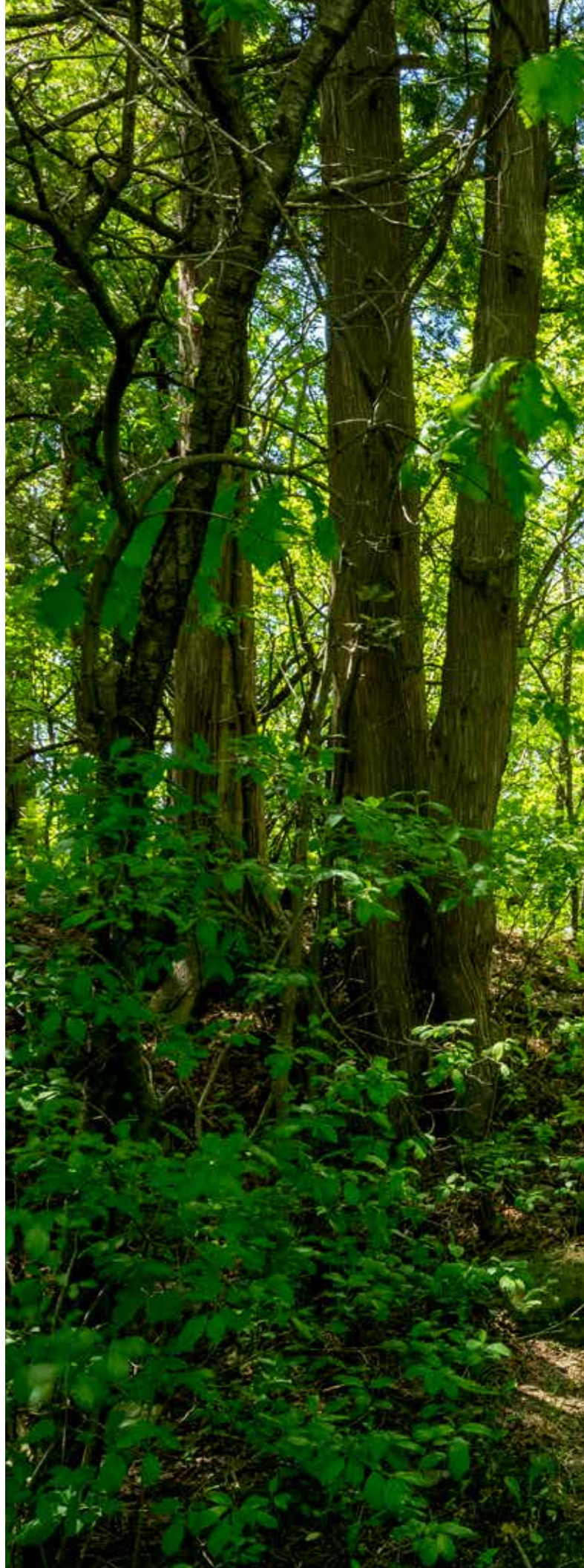
## 5. What are the next steps in the creation of the Grand parc de l'Ouest?

The city will continue to take measures to protect all or part of the territory.

During the spring of 2020, the public will have a say in the Grand parc de l'Ouest project. Public consultations will be held in order to collect Montrealers' input, so as to develop a collective, unifying vision for this large park.

The city will then roll out a strategy for the implementation of the park, leading to its realization.

**For more details concerning the public consultation, go to: [makingmtl.ca/grandparcouest](https://makingmtl.ca/grandparcouest).**











[makingmtl.ca/grandparcouest](http://makingmtl.ca/grandparcouest)