



Dine, dance, bid, and
save the environment!

Description

An exciting evening ahead at the Legacy Fund for the Environment Annual Fundraiser

By **Carole Reed**

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On **September 15**, the **Legacy Fund for the Environment** is hosting an **Auction Extravaganza at Hurley's Irish Pub** in downtown Montreal. The Legacy Fund is a Montreal-based charitable organization that raises money for citizens' groups who want to take legal action to protect our beautiful and irreplaceable wild spaces and their species.

The Legacy Fund, in collaboration with the **Green Coalition**, has planned an eventful evening with a very Montreal flavour, an auction, a three-course dinner with wine, and a jam session.



Wetland Sentinels painting by Barry Kent MacKay

Master of Ceremonies is CJAD 800's morning host **Andrew Carter**. **John McGale (Offenbach)**, **Brian Greenway (April Wine)**, **Jonathan Moorman** and **Charlie MacLeod**, musicians well known in our Montreal music scene, are performing. Some of our sports heroes from the Montreal Alouettes and the Montreal Canadiens will be there. Our former Quebec environment minister, **Tom Mulcair**, has accepted our invitation. And, to add to the fun, local artist **Kimberly Glickman** will be completing a live painting on-site.

Up for auction, among other art treasures, is the beautiful painting **Wildlife Sentinels** by renowned Canadian naturalist **Barry Kent MacKay**. Kimberly Glickman's live painting will also be on the auction block. Local writers have donated signed copies of their books, two of which, one French, one English, may be of special interest to Montreal Canadiens fans. Local artisans have donated ceramics and handmade beauty products. Also up for auction are a Montreal Canadiens 2022 jersey signed by Joel Edmundson, tickets to an Alouettes game, and guided tours of some of Montreal's beautiful woodlands and wetlands with well-known and well-informed environmentalists, including **Dave Fletcher** of the Green Coalition.

Jason Prince, urban planner and vice president of the Legacy Fund, is excited. "With all this fame and talent in the room, along with the items available on auction, I can't wait to see what we can achieve together to save our environment."

The donations raised will give concerned citizens' groups access to legal support that they could not otherwise afford for legal and financial research, biodiversity reports and legal actions. "Citizens may require public advocacy or other resources and networks for environmental issues," says Charlie MacLeod, president of the Green Coalition. "But sometimes their only recourse is the courts. Our partnership with the Legacy Fund enables us to address all these scenarios."

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– Jason Prince, vice president, Legacy Fund

What is the Legacy Fund for the Environment?

The mission of the Environmental Legacy Fund is to identify and fund legal actions taken by citizen groups to defend Canada's environment, to educate the general public about environmental laws and the legal remedies available to them, and to raise funds to support these activities.

The five-member board has a diversity of voices and competencies, including legal expertise, political experience, accounting, environmental impact assessment, and urban planning. "Our immediate goal is to gain the financial support of a major foundation to hire a full-time executive director," explains **Campbell Stuart**, president and co-founder. "The number of cases is growing every month and we are reaching our limit as a volunteer board."



Jason Prince, vice president, Legacy Fund

Jason Prince wants to create a network of legal and environmental groups. "We are building it now, with alliances and shared events with the oldest and largest organizations in Canada, such as the **Centre Québécois du droit de l'environnement (CQDE)**, The Green Coalition, **Ecojustice**, and, more recently, the **Sierra Club Canada Foundation**."



“The Legacy Fund has just completed its fourth full year of operations and its caseload is growing fast as the word gets out about our services,” explains Prince. “We have prepared a three-year fundraising strategy with the objective of building the professional infrastructure necessary to support growth across Quebec and the rest of Canada. The goal is to be financially autonomous with direct donations from citizens in a growing network of citizen-driven initiatives by 2025. It’s an ambitious goal, but we are confident it can be done.”

What is the Legacy Fund fighting for?

Some of us can still remember a Montreal Island where we were never too far from fields, forests, and streams. By the 1970s, some of that wilderness had been transformed into suburbs with cars and strip malls, but also with trees, parks and wild spaces that cleaned our air and made our towns beautiful. Since 1970, our urban footprint has increased by nearly 30 times, with overdevelopment bringing overcrowding, traffic, pollution, crime and attendant health problems in its wake.

Hard-working volunteer citizens’ groups are fighting to save what’s left of our natural heritage. And they aren’t just facing off against developers.

Citizens’ groups need to confront and re-educate municipal councils, many of whom believe that extra tax revenue from development compensates cities for the overburdened infrastructure, for the overcrowded schools and clinics, and for the loss of citizens’ health and quality of life that development brings in its wake. Fiscal analyses show this isn’t always the case.

Sauvons L’Anse à L’Orme proved that citizens can fight city hall. They fought hard to save 233 hectares of beautiful wilderness in Pierrefonds south of Cap St. Jacques from a massive development project. Legacy Fund dollars paid for the biodiversity report that helped the group win their fight. **L’Anse à L’Orme** is now part of the **Grand parc de l’Ouest**.

Citizens’ groups also need to challenge the Quebec Ministry of the Environment over certificates of authorization routinely handed out to developers due to what Louis-Gilles Francoeur, retired investigative journalist at *Le Devoir*, calls over-influence by private interests. The Legacy Fund witnessed this first-hand in a 2020 court case when the ministry’s own witness stated that they never refuse a developer’s request for a Certificate of Authorization to build on natural spaces.

‘... there are other organizations in Quebec and Canada that take on lawsuits, but the secret sauce at the Legacy Fund is that we finance local citizens’ groups which are just beginning to organize.’

– Campbell Stuart, president and co-founder, Legacy Fund

Some of us remember trips to **Sandy Beach** in Hudson with our day camps, swimming, picnicking under the trees and playing in the sand. In 2017, the land around Sandy Beach became the site of a 214-unit development project. In 2021, a citizens’ group was formed to protect it.

The developers of the Sandy Beach project had already obtained their Certificate of Authorization. What could the citizens’ group **Nature Hudson** do to save it? They had to challenge the science used to obtain the certificate with their own biodiversity report. The study, co-funded by the Legacy Fund, **Bird Protection Quebec** and the citizens themselves, found twenty-nine endangered species where the developers had reported only one. The Sandy Beach biodiversity study forced the Environment Ministry to revoke the developer’s Certificate of Authorization, setting an important legal precedent and saving Sandy Beach.

“Probably the best illustration of our work and that of our partners is in an amazing 18-minute documentary about the struggle to save Sandy Beach in Hudson,” says **Marianne Bellavance**, a law student at the Université



de Montréal and a Legacy Fund board member since June 2021. The **Sandy Beach Development Project documentary** made by **Terra Humana Solutions**, the firm that produced the biodiversity study, “helped turn the tide against reckless development of the wetlands, and really explains clearly the recipe for success.” Bellavance is also on the executive of the Quebec chapter of **Sustainable Youth Canada**, a group that mobilizes youth to protect nature.

Stuart points out that “there are other organizations in Quebec and Canada that take on lawsuits, but the secret sauce at the Legacy Fund is that we finance local citizens’ groups which are just beginning to organize.”

Stuart deplores the unnecessary loss of nature to development: “There are so many areas that can easily be redeveloped on the Island of Montreal – brownfields, vacant and semi-vacant commercial and light industrial buildings, large parking lots, and other sites. There is simply no need to destroy the remaining wild areas, green spaces, wetlands, and farmland, and the threatened and endangered plants and animals that live on these sites.”

‘Together we can raise funds to give our community volunteers the tools they need to take on the corporate and political interests that are paving paradise.’

Saving Canada’s natural heritage is an uphill battle, one that is won or lost case by case in towns all over the country. To fight that battle, the Legacy Fund and the Green Coalition invite you to join in. Buy your \$250, all-inclusive ticket by clicking [here](#). “There will be something for everyone! Bring your chequebook!” promises Bellavance with a smile.

Together we can raise funds to give our community volunteers the tools they need to take on the corporate and political interests that are paving paradise.

Legacy Fund for the Environment Annual Fundraiser

Thursday September 15, 6 pm to 9 pm
Hurley’s Irish Pub, 1225 Crescent, Montreal

Tickets: \$250, all-inclusive, click to purchase [here](#)
Please reserve by September 7, tickets are limited
A tax receipt for the maximum allowable amount will be issued

If people can’t make it but want to help, they are asked to consider buying a ticket for one of the tireless Legacy Fund volunteers to attend.

Tax-deductible donations of any amount can be sent to canadahelps.org

If this cause is close to peoples’ heart, volunteers are always welcome.
For further information, please contact Charlie MacLeod, President, Green Coalition, 514 574-9670 or charliermacleod@gmail.com

Feature image: detail from Wildlife Sentinels by Barry Kent MacKay
Images: courtesy of the Legacy Fund



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Carole Reed spent her childhood in Pointe Claire climbing trees, playing in the woods, and

biking through farmland. She became an environmentalist in 1972 after reading Silent Spring. Now retired from teaching, she is devoting the rest of her life to saving the planet for her great granddaughter.



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