



An urgent plea to save  
a precious ecosystem

## Description

# We must act now to conserve Montreal's 215-hectare wetland ecosystem

July 25, 2022

**Green Coalition** wishes to commend and support the **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** for putting the **Monarch Butterfly** on the **list of Endangered Species**, as the organization indicated in its July 21, 2022 communiqué:

"The migratory monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*), known for its spectacular annual journey of up to 4,000 kilometres across the Americas, has entered the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as Endangered, threatened by habitat destruction and climate change."

The Director General of the IUCN, **Dr. Bruno Oberle**, made a comment important for Montreal, Quebec and the Federal Government of Canada: "Today's Red List update highlights the fragility of nature's wonders, such as the unique spectacle of monarch butterflies migrating across thousands of kilometres." And he pointedly added: "To preserve the rich diversity of nature we need effective, fairly governed protected and conserved areas, alongside decisive action to tackle climate change and restore ecosystems."

Just north of Montreal's **Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau International Airport** is a unique 215-hectare wetland ecosystem of marshes, fields, and forest where the Monarch butterfly comes to feed and reproduce. But in June 2022, the Montreal airport authority – **Les Aéroports de Montréal (ADM)** – razed the **Monarch Butterfly fields** in this ecosystem, destroying 4,000 milkweed plants essential for the reproduction of the species and destroying many other flowering plants the butterfly needs to survive. The conduct of the ADM, and of **Transport Canada**, is now being scrutinized by both **Environment Canada** and the federal office of the **Auditor General**.

Transport Canada owns 155 hectares of the 215-hectare endangered wetland ecosystem — public lands that are



held in trust by the Government of Canada on behalf of all Canadians. These lands have been leased to ADM. The Transport Minister of Canada, the Honourable **Omar Alhabra**, and the Canadian Environment Minister, the Honourable **Steven Guilbeault**, have both been repeatedly urged to use the property rights of Canada, and of the Canadian people, to truly make this wetland ecosystem one of Canada's "effective, fairly governed protected and conserved areas." The City of Montreal has already expressed its intention to protect the wetlands of the ecosystem within its jurisdiction.

Ministers Alhabra and Guilbeault have not done so. Now they must act to protect and conserve Montreal's last large, marshland and riverine ecosystem – 215 hectares of irreplaceable wildlife habitats – the size of Mount Royal Park. They must act now especially since **Montreal is a "Monarch Gold" city** and because the Metropolis will host the **COP 15 talks of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity**, which will be held here in December. If Canada and Quebec and Montreal fail to protect this ecosystem, delegates from all around the world will see that failure for themselves. But if we succeed, that achievement will be proudly visible.

Ministers Alhabra and Guilbeault – act now to protect and conserve the 215-hectare wetland ecosystem north of Montreal's airport. For the sake of Canada, Québec and Montreal – act now!

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