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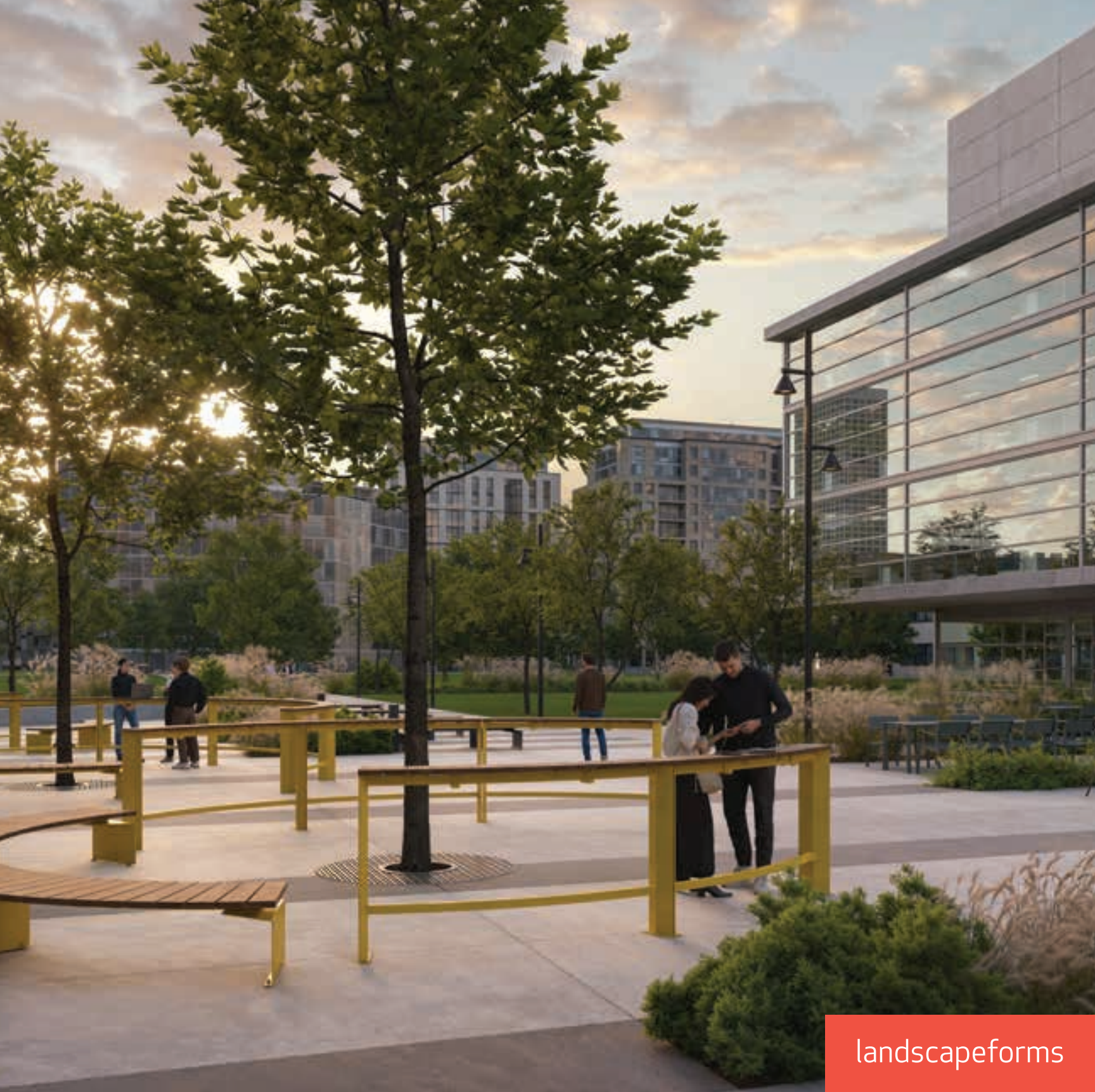
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RENDERING COMPLETED BY TAWAW ARCHITECTS OF THE SHADE STRUCTURE BEING CONSTRUCTED IN THE PARK FOR CEREMONIAL GATHERINGS
PHOTO TAWAW

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winter 26 | international practice

deadline august 17

prochains numéros

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LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES is published by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects to provide a national platform for the exchange of ideas related to the profession. The views expressed in *LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CSLA. Guest editors and contributors are volunteers, and article proposals are encouraged. Articles may be submitted in either English or French.

LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES acknowledges that the head office of the CSLA is in unceded Algonquin, Anishinabe territory, and that this magazine is developed, distributed, read and enjoyed by people from coast to coast to coast, on the lands of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people and their governments. On behalf of LJP magazine and the members of the CSLA, we are thankful to work and live on these lands. We recognize the harms inflicted on Indigenous peoples by colonialism and the residential school system and we are all working to reconcile the damage done.

LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES est publiée par l'Association des architectes paysagistes du Canada pour servir de plate-forme nationale destinée à l'échange d'idées sur la profession. Les opinions exprimées dans *LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES* appartiennent aux auteurs et ne reflètent pas forcément celles de l'AAPC. Nos rédacteurs invités contribuent bénévolement. Nous attendons, en français ou en anglais, vos propositions d'articles.

LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES reconnaît que le siège social de l'AAPC se trouve en territoire Algonquin et Anishinabe non cédé, et que ce magazine est conçu, distribué, lu et apprécié par des gens d'un océan à l'autre, sur les terres des Premières nations, des Inuits et des Métis et de leurs gouvernements. Au nom du magazine LJP et des membres de l'AAPC, nous sommes reconnaissants de travailler et de vivre sur ces terres. Nous reconnaissons les préjudices infligés aux peuples autochtones par le colonialisme et le système des pensionnats, et nous nous efforçons tous de réparer les dommages causés.

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FIRE CIRCLE, THE PEACE MEETING INTERPRETIVE SITE. THE FORKS, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
PHOTO RYAN WAKSHINSKI



NIIGAN SINCLAIR + BOB SOMERS
GUEST EDITORS | RÉDACTEURS INVITÉS

THE FIRE OF KINSHIP

IN ANISHINAABE CULTURE, one of the most important traditional teachings a young *inini* (man), will ever learn is how to create an *ishkode*, a fire. This first requires preparation of the earth, cleaning the medicines, collecting materials like dry grass, moss, flint and, more than anything else, a vast amount of love. The striking then requires a great deal of patience as one must strike the flint with a stone, light the grass and kindling and fan it with a feather to gently bring a flame into being. At the same time, while an individual is lighting a spark, a song is needed by those around him to welcome the fire into being. This act connects all fire builders at once, builds unity and invites the universe into a kind and nurturing relationship.

Once an *ishkode* arrives, the real work begins of nurturing, caring for and maintaining the most important place in a community. A fire is a space that gives warmth, facilitates visiting and enables life. In this way, a fire is a teacher; offering lessons on how a family, a community and a nation is founded. Creating a fire illustrates how intricate, complex and reciprocal a relationship with space earth – and all of the living beings found within it – is. Another word for this connection: kinship.

As landscape architects we strive for the fostering and protection of spaces, often through policy. However, policy may not be enough to truly protect an area rich of life and full with animacy and agency. A few of the questions one must therefore ask whenever engaged in such a living space are: Whose perspective are we using when drafting policy? What should govern our actions and creations? How do we act ethically, responsibly and in relationship with all of the living beings in the spaces in which we work? From any answer to these questions we inevitably arrive at the realization that centering anthropomorphism, hierarchy, capitalism and ownership will never be enough to protect any living space.

For Indigenous peoples, the relationship between all beings is seen best through the lens of kinship – an interdependent and reciprocal familial relationship in which the building of life is the ultimate goal. This does not mean synchronicity or some utopic place without war and conflict but a place of negotiation, sharing and ultimate acceptance that everything, good and bad, belongs. For millennia, Indigenous nations and communities lived as participants and stewards of these kin relationships with all things, human and non-human, and taught these to newcomers to their territories, writing them in beadwork and on treaties and explaining them in song and story.

Our hope for this issue was that we would inspire discussions how artistic expression, landscape design and creativity, and innovation could be drawn from relationships found in kinship with the earth. We are pleased with the submissions we received and hope you feel as inspired as we were receiving them. Miigwech, thank you, merci, and enjoy this special issue. **LP**

LE FEU DE LA PARENTÉ

DANS LA CULTURE anichinabée, l'un des principaux enseignements transmis aux jeunes *ininis* (hommes) est l'art de faire naître un *ishkode*, le feu vivant. Avant que la flamme ne danse, il faut préparer la Terre et honorer l'aspect médicinal du feu sacré, puis rassembler, avec révérence et amour, l'herbe sèche, la mousse et le silex qui doucement donnera naissance à la flamme qu'une plume attisera. Au même moment que jaillit l'étincelle, les chants des participants viennent accueillir le feu naissant. Cet acte renforce l'unité de tous ceux qui donnent naissance au feu sacré, et invite l'univers à entrer dans une relation bienveillante et nourricière.

À la naissance de l'*ishkode*, le véritable travail consiste à nourrir et préserver ce lieu sacré au sein de la communauté. Le feu libère de la chaleur qui facilite les échanges et rend la vie possible. Le feu est, pour ainsi dire, un enseignant qui nous explique les fondements de la famille, de la communauté et de la nation. Allumer un feu illustre à quel point la relation avec l'espace terrestre, et tous les êtres vivants, est complexe, intriquée et réciproque. Un mot décrit ce lien : la parenté.

À titre d'architectes paysagistes, nous œuvrons à la valorisation et à la protection des lieux dans le cadre de politiques. Toutefois, une politique protège rarement l'aspect animé et dynamique d'un milieu vivant. Voici quelques questions essentielles à se poser avant d'intervenir dans un milieu vivant. Dans quel état d'esprit rédigeons-nous les politiques? Quelles règles doivent encadrer nos actions et nos créations? Comment pouvons-nous agir de manière éthique, responsable et respectueuse envers tous les êtres vivants qui occupent notre espace vital? Quelles que soient les réponses, force est de constater que l'anthropomorphisme, la hiérarchie, le capitalisme et la propriété ne suffiront jamais à protéger un espace vital.

Pour les peuples autochtones, la relation entre les êtres relève de la parenté, une relation familiale interdépendante et réciproque centrée sur l'épanouissement de la vie. Il ne s'agit pas ici d'un lieu utopique sans guerres ni conflits, mais d'un espace de négociation, de partage et d'acceptation que toute chose, bonne ou mauvaise, coexiste. Pendant des millénaires, les nations et peuples autochtones furent les gardiens de cette relation familière avec tous les êtres, humains et non humains. Cette relation a été enseignée aux nouveaux arrivants, transcrite dans des broderies et des traités, puis transmise dans des chants et des récits.

Le présent numéro propose de réfléchir sur la façon dont l'expression artistique, l'aménagement paysager, la créativité et l'innovation pourraient s'inspirer de la relation parentale que nous entretenons avec la Terre. Les articles reçus nous ont inspirés, nous espérons que vous le serez tout autant. Merci, thank you et Miigwech... et bonne lecture! **LP**

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NIIGAANWEWIDAM SINCLAIR

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, PhD., is Anishinaabe (St. Peter's/Little Peguis) and an associate professor at the University of Manitoba. He regularly speaks and writes about Indigenous issues for national and international media outlets and his writing appears bi-weekly in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. He has also published short stories and the recently published book, *Winipêk - Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre* (see L/P, Fall 2025 for the review). He was a keynote speaker at the CSLA/MALA 2024 Congress in Winnipeg, where he was also awarded Honorary Membership in the CSLA.



BOB SOMERS

Bob Somers is a Principal with Scatliff+Miller+Murray located on Treaty One Territory. Having recently served as President of the CSLA, Bob had the distinct pleasure of awarding the CSLA distinction of Honorary Membership to his friend Niigaan Sinclair in 2024. In addition to his professional practice, Bob is the incoming Chair of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce for 2026-27 and strives to build relationships within his community that exist far beyond his time.

**OUR WRITERS |
NOS COLLABORATEURS**



SHANNON BAKER

Shannon Baker, OALA, CSLA, is Project Director, Parks and Public Realm for the Port Lands Flood Protection project at Waterfront Toronto. Her 25-year practice has involved award winning concrete and speculative work across Canada and internationally, always situated at the intersection of landscape, ecology and urbanism. She is passionate about urban rewilding, reconnecting people with nature, integrated climate adaptation and regenerative design. Championing design excellence for nearly a decade through her work at Waterfront Toronto, Shannon has led some of the most complex and transformative work on the waterfront, including The Bentway Phase I and the recently opened Biidaasige Park in the Port Lands.



PINA MALLOZZI

Pina Mallozzi, BLA, MLA, is the Senior Vice President, Design at Waterfront Toronto. For 20 years, Pina has worked closely with consultant teams and community stakeholders to ensure that Waterfront Toronto's vision for vibrant, accessible and well-designed communities and public spaces is realized. She is responsible for the design of a large portfolio of projects, including the revitalization of Queens Quay West, the Port Lands Flood Protection Park System, the Waterfront East LRT and other parks and public spaces emerging on the waterfront. She led the development of Waterfront Toronto's first Waterfront Accessibility Design Guidelines. She holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from Harvard University.



CRAIG KING

Craig King, Anishinaabe from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, is an experienced leader and consultant with a background in infrastructure, culture and design. As the Culture/Design Specialist for MCFN, he provides cultural and design context, traditional knowledge values and resources into projects brought forward to MCFN on treaty and traditional lands. Prior to his current role, he served in a leadership role as an elected Councilman.



RACHEL LAURENDEAU

Rachel Laurendeau, AAPQ, développe une approche holistique du paysage, qu'elle perçoit dans tout son palimpseste : un système vivant où interagissent biodiversité, culture et mémoire des lieux. Titulaire d'un baccalauréat en architecture de paysage de l'Université de Montréal et formée en arts visuels, elle enrichit ses projets par une sensibilité artistique. Son expérience familiale en agriculture biologique et son expertise en horticulture lui ont permis d'approfondir une spécialisation en végétaux, notamment ceux indigènes. | Rachel Laurendeau, AAPQ, develops a holistic approach to landscape, viewing it through its full palimpsest as a living system where biodiversity, culture and memory intersect. Holding a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from the Université de Montréal and trained in visual arts, she enriches her projects with a refined artistic sensibility. Her family background in organic farming and her expertise in horticulture have enabled her to cultivate a strong specialization in plant materials, particularly native species.



MICHELA SUTTER

Michela Sutter, MLA, is a Canadian-Swiss landscape designer currently based in Vancouver, BC, with experience practicing in Toronto and Rotterdam. She holds an MLA (U of T) and an Environmental Design degree (UBC) and dedicates her energy to creating nature-inclusive, vibrant urban spaces that connect people, species, and place – always with an eye for detail and delight.



GARTH ARMOUR

Garth Armour, OALA, FCSLA, co-led the development of Toronto’s first Ravine Strategy. Now retired, he spent most of his municipal career enhancing and restoring the natural system in the ravines – leading the sensitive design and construction of trails and master planning initiatives as Supervisor of the Natural Environment and Community Programs group and, later, as Manager of Horticulture.



JANE WELSH

Jane Welsh, OALA, FCSLA, has worked for the City Toronto for over 34 years, leading work on innovative natural heritage protection and climate adaptation policies, programs and strategies, including the Ravine and Biodiversity Strategies, Toronto Green Standard and Green Roof Bylaw. She is a member of the CSLA Board and co-director of the IFLA Climate Working Group. Jane is also the current chair of the CSLA’s Finance and Risk Management Committee.



WENDY STRICKLAND

Wendy Strickland has spent almost two decades working in a variety of roles with the City of Toronto, most recently as the Project Manager for Toronto’s Ravine Strategy, to engage community members, partners and other stakeholders in learning about, improving and protecting these special natural areas. She holds a Masters of Forest Conservation from the University of Toronto.



PIER-OLIVIER BOUDREAUULT

Pier-Olivier Boudreault est biologiste professionnel et occupe le poste de directeur de la conservation à la Société pour la nature et les parcs du Canada – section Québec (SNPAQ). Il est responsable de la campagne pour la protection de la rivière Magpie et a coordonné l’initiative pour la reconnaissance des droits de la rivière en partenariat avec l’Observatoire international des droits de la nature et l’Alliance Muteshekau-shipu. | Pier-Olivier Boudreault is a professional biologist, working as the director of conservation for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Quebec section (CPAWS Quebec). He is in charge of the campaign for the protection of the Magpie River, and coordinated the initiative for the recognition of the rights of the river in partnership with the International Observatory on the Rights of Nature and the Muteshekau-shipu Alliance.



FABIENNE JOLIET

Fabienne Joliet est professeure en géographie culturelle au Pôle Paysage de l’Institut Agro d’Angers. Elle enseigne la lecture et l’histoire des paysages et des jardins, la diversité culturelle des représentations et des pratiques de naturalités. Ses recherches explorent les distinctions et les transferts de valeur paysagères entre les sociétés occidentales et les sociétés autochtones, ainsi que la manière dont la beauté des paysages peut servir de levier à la transition environnementale. | Fabienne Joliet is a professor of cultural geography at the Landscape Department of the Institut Agro in Angers. She teaches the interpretation and history of landscapes and gardens, and the cultural diversity of representations and practices of naturalness. Her research explores the distinctions and transfers of landscape values between Western and indigenous societies, as well as how the beauty of landscapes can be leveraged for environmental transition.



PETER HARGRAVES

Peter Hargraves, MAA, OAA, MRAIC, is an architect whose work integrates design, public art, and social advocacy. Educated at the University of Manitoba and the University of Oregon, he founded Sputnik Architecture in 2008. His work includes the internationally recognized Warming Huts project and multiple transitional housing initiatives addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in Winnipeg.



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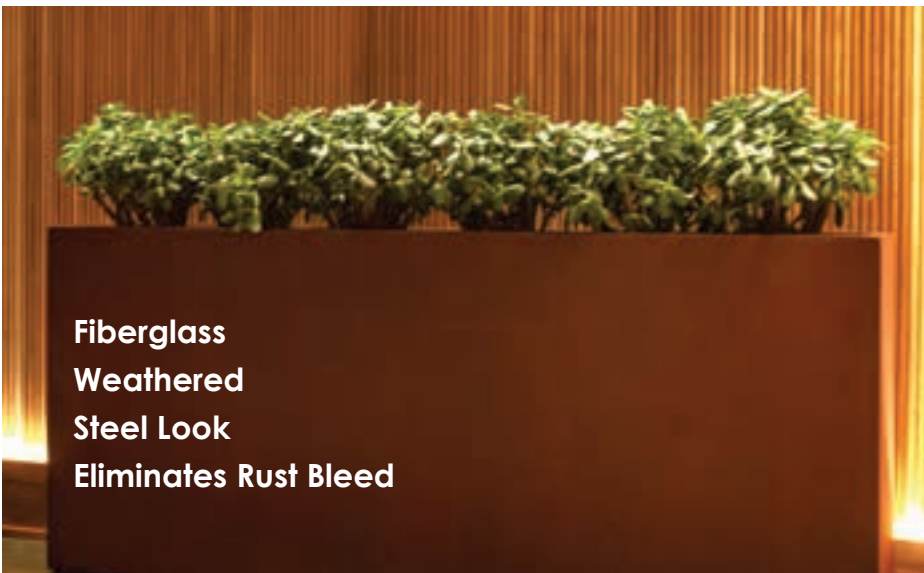
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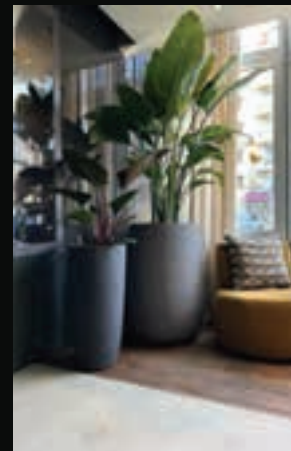
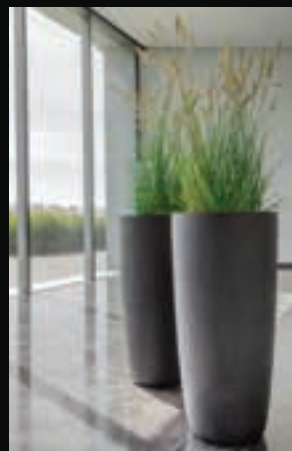


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PROLOGUE



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HERITAGE: FROM REACTION TO TERRITORIAL INTERRELATION

Looking beyond the reactive aspect of heritage

JULIE ST-ARNAULT + MIRA HAIDAR

OFFICIAL HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS are essential tools for preventing changes deemed damaging to a site. They are often issued in a reactive protection mode triggered when a specific threat arises. They are a sudden reaction intended to slow or stop an external force that has the potential to irreversibly transform a place.

A classic example of this approach is seen when archaeological remains are unexpectedly discovered during a property development project. The project is interrupted, and the authorities intervene by acquiring the parcel. The site is now officially protected by applicable heritage legislation, and development is refocused on preserving and exhibiting the archaeological discoveries.

In such cases, a heritage designation is a virtual bell jar placed over the site while its future is considered. This is a justified action that we, as a community, can use to reduce the impact of changes to sites of interest and give us the time we need to develop them while safeguarding their significance.

Looking beyond this reactive approach, how can heritage preservation become a dynamic

tool grounded in the intrinsic meaning of the site?

Dynamic heritage intertwined with the meaning of the site

Seen through this prism, heritage takes on a wider, more inclusive meaning; it is built up gradually over decades, centuries and sometimes millennia, through the perspectives of the communities that have used or continue to use the land. This approach incorporates cultural ties, validated perceptions, social practices and local memories preserved by communities over time. As a result, these values become powerful leverage for championing the significance of a landscape and guiding decisions on its development.

Montreal's iconic Mount Royal provides a perfect illustration of this phenomenon. Used by the First Nations, explored by Jacques Cartier, home to various amenities and cemeteries, dominated by the enormous public space that is Parc Mont-Royal: this is a place that is central to the lives and imaginations of many Montrealers.

Mount Royal has not been immune to imminent threats from urban development,

a fact that led to an initial designation in 1987 and a provincial declaration in 2005. But above all, the mountain is iconic because of Montrealers' deep attachment to it. Over the years they have given it different meanings, vocations, ritual roles and uses. In this example, heritage shaped gradually over time emerges as an intrinsic component of this elevated territory in the heart of Montreal. It goes beyond any considerations of official "heritage status."

Heritage designations do play a crucial role in protecting threatened sites. However, the heritage question can go beyond this reactive approach. Heritage can be directly recognized through past and present populations. By being intimately connected to the site, heritage becomes a catalyst for shaping the identity of the people occupying it. **LP**

1 MOUNT ROYAL HERITAGE SITE, CÔTE-DES-NEIGES ROAD, MONTREAL, « ESCALES DÉCOUVERTES » PROJECT CARRIED OUT AS PART OF MONTREAL'S 375TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL + VLAN + CIVILITI + LUU NGUYEN + EXP 2 SEUIL REMEMBRANCE DU PARC DU MONT-ROYAL DEVELOPED IN 2025 IN CONTINUITY WITH THE MOUNTAIN'S HERITAGE, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL + ARTELIA + CIVILITI + VLAN
PHOTOS 1 FRÉDÉRIC BOUCHARD **2** ADRIEN WILLIAMS

PATRIMOINE : ENTRE RÉACTIVITÉ ET INTERRELATION TERRITORIALE

Regarder au-delà de l'aspect réactif du patrimoine

JULIE ST-ARNAULT + MIRA HAIDAR

LES STATUTS PATRIMONIAUX constituent des outils essentiels pour freiner des transformations jugées dommageables au territoire. Ils reposent souvent sur une logique de protection réactive, déclenchée au moment où une menace se précise. Ils surviennent comme une réaction subite afin de ralentir ou d'annuler une action externe susceptible de transformer le territoire de manière irréversible.

Un exemple typique illustrant cette approche est observée lorsque des vestiges archéologiques sont révélés par surprise

au cours d'un projet de développement immobilier. Le projet initial est ainsi interrompu et l'autorité publique intervient en acquérant le terrain concerné. Le site est alors officiellement protégé en vertu de la législation en vigueur sur le patrimoine. Un réaménagement du lieu se poursuit afin de préserver et mettre en valeur les vestiges.

Dans ce cas, le patrimoine consiste à mettre une cloche de verre sur le territoire, le temps d'une réflexion sur sa vocation. Il s'agit d'un acte justifié auquel nous pouvons nous référer comme collectivité afin de réduire les

impacts d'altération des milieux d'intérêt et prendre le temps de les aménager tout en conservant leur sens.

Si nous regardons au-delà de l'aspect réactif du patrimoine, comment celui-ci peut-il se présenter lui-même comme un outil dynamique à la source de la définition du sens intrinsèque du territoire?

Le patrimoine dynamique interlié au sens du territoire

Dans ce cas, le patrimoine prend une définition large et inclusive se construisant graduellement à travers les décennies,



les siècles et parfois les millénaires, et par l'intermédiaire des regards des communautés qui ont utilisé ou utilisent toujours le territoire. Celui-ci incarne des attaches culturelles, des perceptions valorisées, des pratiques sociales ou des mémoires locales, identifiées à travers le temps par ces communautés. Ces valeurs deviennent alors des leviers puissants pour défendre la signification d'un paysage et orienter les décisions quant à sa transformation.

Le cas de notre montagne emblématique à Montréal est un parfait exemple pour illustrer ce phénomène. Utilisé par les Premières Nations, parcouru par Jacques Cartier, témoin de l'installation de divers institutions et de cimetières, incarnant le

1 SITE PATRIMONIAL DÉCLARÉ DU MONT-ROYAL, CHEMIN DE LA CÔTE-DES-NEIGES, MONTRÉAL, PROJET « ESCALES DÉCOUVERTES » RÉALISÉ DANS LE CADRE DU 375^E ANNIVERSAIRE DE MONTRÉAL, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL + VLAN + CIVILITI + LUU NGUYEN + EXP 2 SEUIL REMEMBRANCE DU PARC DU MONT-ROYAL AMÉNAGÉ EN 2025 EN CONTINUITÉ DU PATRIMOINE DE LA MONTAGNE, VILLE DE MONTRÉAL + ARTELIA + CIVILITI + VLAN
PHOTOS 1 FRÉDÉRIC BOUCHARD 2 ADRIEN WILLIAMS

parc du Mont-Royal, grand espace public montréalais, le mont Royal est un véritable lieu au cœur des occupations et dans l'imaginaire de nombreux montréalais.

Certes, ce lieu n'a pas été épargné de menaces de multiples développements urbains ayant menées à une première citation en 1987 puis une déclaration provinciale en 2005, mais il tient avant tout son titre emblématique, par l'attachement profond des populations montréalaises qui lui ont attribué différents sens, vocations, rites et usages à travers les années. Dans ce cas, le patrimoine façonné graduellement à travers le temps, se présente comme une composante fondamentalement interreliée à ce territoire topographique au cœur de la Ville de Montréal, au-delà de la question du statut patrimonial.

Les statuts patrimoniaux jouent un rôle crucial dans la protection de sites en danger, oui. Cependant, la question patrimoniale peut dépasser cette approche réactive. En ce sens, le patrimoine peut se reconnaître directement par le biais des populations

anciennes et actuelles. En étant intimement interrelié au territoire, il se présente comme un catalyseur identitaire pour les occupants des milieux. LP



Julie St-Arnault, AAPQ, OALA, AAPC. Cofondatrice de Vlan et diplômée en architecture de paysage, Julie St-Arnault dirige des projets multidisciplinaires d'envergure intégrant

patrimoine, mobilité, biodiversité et résilience. Elle conçoit des interventions sobres et audacieuses, dont plusieurs ont été primées par le milieu. Depuis 28 ans, elle explore et valorise le sol comme matrice structurante des paysages.



Mira Haidar, AAPQ, AAPC, architecte paysagiste intermédiaire, Vlan. Diplômée d'une maîtrise en aménagement, option conservation du patrimoine bâti et d'une maîtrise

en architecture de paysage (M.A.P.) de l'Université de Montréal, Mira est architecte paysagiste intermédiaire chez Vlan. De plus, elle enseigne régulièrement dans les ateliers en architecture de paysage, à l'école d'urbanisme et d'architecture de paysage de l'Université de Montréal.

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RECONNECTING LAND AND WATER, PEOPLE AND PLACE

The Port Lands Flood Protection Project

> FR_LP+

RÉCONCILIER LA TERRE ET L'EAU, LES CITOYENS ET LE TERRITOIRE

Projet de protection du secteur Port Lands contre les inondations

THE PORT LANDS Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure (PLFP) Project and the creation of Biidaasige Park (pronounced “bee-daw-si-geh,” which means “sunlight shining toward us” in Anishinaabemowin) sets an international precedent in constructing landscape infrastructure at scale, and represents a step on the path to reconciliation, reconnecting the river to the lake, and people to place.

Initiated in 2017, the program is a \$1.35B effort led by Waterfront Toronto (WT) and funded by the three levels of government. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc are lead landscape architects on the project, as well as design integrators for the entire consulting team. In addition to providing flood protection to approximately 250ha of flood vulnerable lands, the project is transforming over 30 hectares of industrial brownfields into a naturalized river valley system, while unlocking the area for revitalization and facilitating billions of dollars in investment. PLFP improves quality of life, bringing nature back to an underused industrial site and better protecting Toronto's downtown

from extreme weather conditions. It is a generational landscape infrastructure project setting an international precedent for resiliency and climate adaptation. Perhaps most importantly, it is also a powerful act of reconciliation with those who lived in reciprocity with the land and water long before the arrival of European settlers.

Thousands of Years of History

For thousands of years, the mouth of the river now known as the Don River was a fertile wetland, fishing ground and important gathering place for Indigenous people who lived in the region. The mouth of the Don River is within the Treaty Lands and Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) and was also historically used by many other Indigenous people including the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Huron Wendat peoples.

The end of the 1800s marked a turning point in the relationship between the Don River and Lake Ontario. Long woven together through the reedy braids of the Ashbridges Marsh, the promise of industrialization transformed the land and water at the mouth of the Don River, channelizing the river into the Keating Channel, and filling the marsh with millions of square metres of fill. Representative of the historical colonial relationship between humans and the rest

1 VIEW LOOKING EAST ALONG THE RENATURALIZED RIVER VALLEY 2 RENDERING COMPLETED BY TAWAW ARCHITECTS OF THE SHADE STRUCTURE BEING CONSTRUCTED IN THE PARK FOR CEREMONIAL GATHERINGS 3 MEMBERS OF NDG WORK TO BEND ONE OF THE MARKER TREES IN THE RIVER VALLEY
PHOTOS 1,3 WATERFRONT TORONTO 2 TAWAW



1



2

of nature, the channelization of the river and subsequent development of a port was emblematic of the commonly held settler view that nature was to be exploited for economic gain.

The concept of reciprocity, or kinship with more than the human world was one held

strongly by the Indigenous peoples of the area, but not by those that arrived to settle and develop it. This history of settlement and lake-filling at the mouth of the Don River is a story of the impacts of colonialism and expansionism on land, water and life.

Listening to Indigenous Voices

The Mississaugas of the Credit have a rich history in the area as it was a source of harvesting for fish and medicines. It also served as a gateway to the place now known as Toronto Island. Encroachment of settlers and commercialization of the waterway created habitat loss and pollution; one of the main reasons they were forced to seek resources from other areas. MCFN and WT have worked closely on waterfront revitalization for decades independently, however the relationship established with between the two in 2017 allowed for the opportunity to collaborate and have direct influence on how the lands will rehabilitate those lost resources and repair the damage caused by pollution and development.

Indigenous voices have had a transformative role in shaping a resilient and inclusive future for the Port Lands. The Indigenous Design elements represent a landmark in integrating Indigenous design

principles and advancing reconciliation within urban landscapes. Through a collaborative process with the MCFN) and other Indigenous communities, PLFP has woven cultural narratives, ecological stewardship, and traditional knowledge into the fabric of Toronto's waterfront revitalization. From ceremonial spaces and interpretive signage to language revitalization and public art, the design reflects a deep respect for Indigenous heritage and the circle of life.

This partnership not only enriches the physical environment but also sets a precedent for meaningful engagement and co-creation in landscape architecture. The PLFP project represents a compelling example of how the work of landscape architecture can honour traditional territories and cultural heritage, while fostering inclusive public spaces by reconnecting people with the land and the water. Moving beyond individual design elements, PLFP is most powerfully an act of reconciliation in terms of relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and a restoration of colonial harms done to people, land and water.

Continued on page 27



3



DESIGN FEATURES ROOTED IN TRADITION

Indigenous design elements created by Indigenous artists and architects are woven throughout Biidaasige Park, each carrying cultural meaning reflecting engagement with Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous peoples:

- **Fire Holder and Ceremony Shade Structure**

Spaces for gathering and cultural practices, designed with guidance from Indigenous elders and architects to support ceremony and community connection. A Fire Holder designed by Solomon King with Brook McIlroy will be located in a gathering space overlooking the new River and Canoe Cover. A Ceremonial Shade Structure that interprets the teaching of the Thirteen Moons designed by Tawaw Architects will provide space for informal gathering adjacent the Picnic Lawn.

- **Teaching Signifiers (Sturgeon Stones)**

Symbolic markers representing traditional teachings reflect the significance of sturgeon in Anishinaabe culture sculpted by Solomon King

- **Marker Trees**

Features that orient visitors to the land and its stories, conceived by Indigenous design teams to reinforce relationships between people, place and ecology. Led by Two Row Architects in conjunction of NDG under the guidance leadership of Liat Margolis and Elder Whabagoon, the Marker Tree program began with the bending of its first five marker trees this past summer. Ongoing stewardship will grow the program in the coming years.

- **Interpretive Signage and Language Integration**

Signage featuring Indigenous language and narratives, supported by Waterfront Toronto and MCFN, creating opportunities for education and cultural exchange. Designed by Nvision, signage will celebrate the many histories of the site including Indigenous storytelling, industrial colonization and natural history.

- **Public Art Installations**

Stone sculptures by Michael Belmore for the Lake Shore Boulevard East Bridge, scheduled for installation in 2025, celebrate Indigenous artistry and resilience.

Continued from page 25

The importance of Indigenous voices in shaping the future of the waterfront is a deep commitment by Waterfront Toronto. Working with Indigenous partners on the project, engagement was facilitated by Minokamik Collective and included working with First Nations and Métis communities across Ontario, as well as urban Indigenous organizations. Conversations highlighted themes that included the importance of sharing the stories of leadership, Councils and treaty history, the relationship with the land and water, the ongoing commitment to stewardship and awareness of the natural world, storytelling and spiritual migrations.

Language revitalization was also a key priority. These themes and teachings informed the design of the park, bridges and public art throughout the site. Waterfront Toronto worked with MCFN to incorporate Anishnaabemowin (Mississauga dialect) into naming features, plants and interpretive signage, ensuring cultural continuity and visibility in the public realm. Waterfront TO is also undertaking ongoing work with The Six Nations of the Grand River and the Wendat Nation to enrich content on the interpretive signage.

The design process was enriched by partnerships with Indigenous designers, artists, architects and knowledge keepers, including Tawaw Architects, Solomon King with Brook McIlroy, Two Row Architect with Nikibii Dawadinna Giigwag (NDG), NVision Consulting and Michael Belmore. These collaborations extended beyond design to education initiatives, including the summer program with NDG, which connects Indigenous youth with traditional teachings on the land, as well as future careers in landscape architecture, urban design and conservation under the guidance of Elder Whabagoon and UofT professor Liat Margolis.

PLFP represents an act of renaturalization and reconciliation with

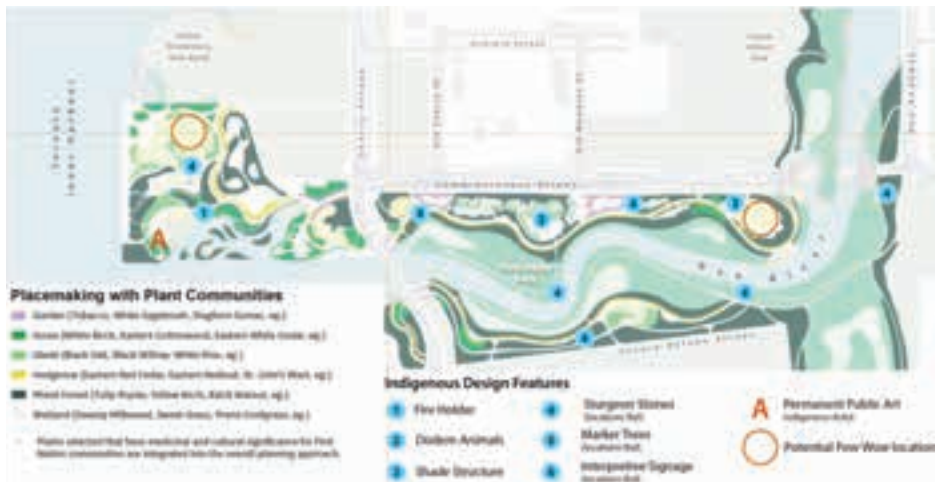
4 TWO OF THE STONE CARVINGS OF STURGEON FISH CREATED BY SOLOMON KING SIT IN THE RIVER VALLEY BENEATH THE COMMISSIONERS STREET BRIDGE
5 DETAIL OF THE PEBBLE MOSAIC CREATED BY SOLOMON KING
6 PLAN COMPLETED BY LEAD LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES FOR INDIGENOUS DESIGN ELEMENTS ON PLFP
PHOTOS 4 TAWAW **5** WATERFRONT TORONTO **6** MVVA



5

the land at the Mouth of the Don River and sets a precedent for co-creation in landscape architecture. By embedding Indigenous knowledge into the design of parks, bridges and public spaces, the project moves beyond consultation toward true partnership. It demonstrates that reconciliation is not an abstract concept but a tangible practice – one that

shapes the land, honours heritage and builds inclusive communities. The work of reconciliation also does not end with the completion of the park, it is a continuous journey that involves action to enable ongoing stewardship of the land and water by Indigenous Peoples, continuing to repair and foster connections between people and place. **LP**



6



RACHEL LAURENDEAU

LA BANDE VERTE : UN CORRIDOR ÉCOLOGIQUE POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ ET LA COMMUNAUTÉ

SOUS LES COUCHES D'ASPHALTE et les remblais hétéroclites, un autre paysage affleure : celui d'un lac oublié, d'une falaise escarpée et d'un territoire façonné par des siècles de transformations. Le site de Turcot est un palimpseste vivant, où chaque strate raconte une époque : l'ère du lac Saint-Pierre, l'ère de l'implantation du réseau ferroviaire à laquelle s'ajoutera par la suite une autoroute majeure, l'un des plus grands échangeurs autoroutiers du Québec.

En 1670, le lac Saint-Pierre s'étendait ici, la plus vaste étendue d'eau intérieure de l'île de Montréal. Ses rives marécageuses ont laissé en héritage une nappe phréatique élevée et des sols gorgés d'eau, compressibles, fragiles. Dès 1834, les plans

d'André Jobin indiquent que le lac est asséché, remplacé par des marécages. Puis, au XIXe siècle, le secteur devient un nœud stratégique : 1805, ouverture du chemin Upper Lachine ; 1825, inauguration du canal de Lachine ; 1847, arrivée du chemin de fer Montreal and Lachine Railway. Ces infrastructures annoncent la mutation industrielle.

Au XXe siècle, la transformation s'accélère : 1966-1967, la construction de l'échangeur Turcot et de l'autoroute 20 impose des remblais massifs, parfois sauvages, qui modifient la topographie et brouillent la lecture du sol. Ces apports hétérogènes ont créé un sous-bassement instable, ponctué de zones saturées.

Aujourd'hui, ce passé invisible resurgit comme un défi : comment transformer ce territoire contraint en un écosystème vivant, capable de gérer ses eaux,

d'accueillir la biodiversité et de renouer avec la mémoire des lieux ? Car le projet ne se limite pas à planter des arbres : il doit réparer un paysage fragmenté, contrer les îlots de chaleur, restaurer la connectivité nord-sud et est-ouest, et révéler le génie du lieu. La bande verte s'inscrit dans cette logique : restaurer le cycle hydrique, recréer des milieux humides et faire du design un langage qui révèle l'histoire enfouie.

Tisser des liens entre communauté et paysage par la co-création

En 2018, la Ville de Montréal a mandaté l'Office de consultation publique pour organiser une série de consultations sur la création d'un parc-nature dans le secteur Turcot et la Falaise Saint-Jacques. Cette démarche, qui a mobilisé plus de 300 participants, trois ateliers créatifs et 61 mémoires, visait à intégrer les attentes citoyennes dans un projet ambitieux de

1 SENTIER POLYVALENT | MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL
2 VUE AXONOMÉTRIQUE VIEW
PHOTOS 1 DIMA KADDOUR 2 MARTINE LAROCHE

RACHEL LAURENDEAU

LA BANDE VERTE: A GREEN CORRIDOR FOSTERING BIODIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

BENEATH LAYERS OF ASPHALT and mixed backfill, there is another landscape to be rediscovered: a forgotten lake, an escarpment, a territory shaped over centuries of transformations. Montreal's Turcot site is a living palimpsest. Each of its strata tells the story of an era: the time of Lac Saint-Pierre, the rise of the railroads, the construction of a major highway with one of Québec's biggest interchanges.

In 1670, the space was occupied by Lac Saint-Pierre, the largest body of water on the Island of Montreal. Its swampy shores left an enduring legacy in the form of a high water table and saturated – thus compressible and fragile – soils. As early as 1834, maps by André Jobin indicate that the lake had been drained and replaced by marshes. Throughout in the 19th century, the area was a strategic node: Upper Lachine Road opened in 1805; the Lachine Canal followed in 1825; and in 1847 the Montreal and Lachine Railway went into service. These infrastructures signaled the onset of a transformation ushered in by the industrial era.

In the 20th century, the transformation accelerated. The construction of the Turcot Interchange and Highway 20 involved massive amounts of fill, some of it dumped in an uncontrolled manner. The fill altered the topography and made soil studies more complex. The heterogeneous deposits created an unstable substrate punctuated with saturated areas.

This invisible past is visible once more and poses several challenges. How can we transform this difficult parcel into a living ecosystem that can manage its water, be a habitat for biodiverse flora and fauna and reconnect with the site's history? The project goes well beyond planting trees: it needs to repair a fragmented landscape,



verdissement et de connectivité urbaine. Ce processus ne se limite pas à recueillir des avis : il ancre le projet dans la mémoire collective. En impliquant les citoyens, leurs idées et préoccupations deviennent partie intégrante de la conception. Cela crée une histoire partagée autour du lieu, qui renforce son importance dans l'imaginaire collectif et transforme un espace autrefois enclavé et inaccessible en un site ouvert et réapproprié par la population. Il renforce les liens entre communauté et environnement. La participation active donne aux habitants la possibilité de contribuer à la transformation d'un territoire longtemps perçu comme hors d'atteinte. Cette implication nourrit un attachement affectif durable, car le parc devient le reflet de leurs aspirations et de leurs valeurs.

Enfin, il valorise les savoirs locaux et la diversité. Les consultations intègrent les connaissances et les besoins des différents groupes, ce qui rend cet espace inclusif et représentatif de la population montréalaise. Cette approche transforme le projet en un lieu vivant, conçu comme un refuge de biodiversité et un laboratoire d'expérimentation écologique, où la co-création citoyenne joue un rôle essentiel pour magnifier le paysage et créer une expérience distinctive.

Captation et infiltration locale : une approche intégrée pour restaurer le cycle hydrique

La gestion des eaux pluviales dans un site urbain fortement anthropisé, marqué par des remblais et des sols compressibles, exige une stratégie qui dépasse le simple drainage. Le projet de la bande verte au pied de la falaise Saint-Jacques repose sur une approche écosystémique, où la captation et l'infiltration locale constituent des mécanismes essentiels pour réduire le ruissèlement, limiter les risques d'inondation et favoriser la recharge des nappes. Les fossés reprofilés, conçus selon les principes de l'ingénierie écologique, jouent un rôle fondamental. Leur géométrie, adaptée à la topographie et aux zones de déblai/remblai, permet de ralentir la vitesse d'écoulement et d'augmenter le temps de résidence des eaux. Ensemencés et végétalisés, ces fossés assurent une filtration naturelle des particules et des polluants, tout en créant des corridors biologiques favorables à la biodiversité. Contrairement aux infrastructures minérales, ils s'intègrent dans la matrice paysagère et contribuent à la régulation thermique et hydrique.



4

Pour optimiser la percolation, le projet a prévu une couche de 300 mm de terre végétale sur l'ensemble des zones plantées. Cette mesure technique améliore la capacité d'infiltration et offre un substrat nutritif aux végétaux. Ce choix répond à une double exigence : compenser la faible perméabilité des remblais et garantir la stabilité des plantations dans un contexte de sols hétérogènes.

La stratégie s'appuie également sur des zones tampons bonifiées et des points d'eau intermittents, implantés dans des secteurs à sols saturés et non saturés. Ces dispositifs fonctionnent comme des bassins de rétention temporaires, réduisant la charge hydraulique sur le réseau municipal et favorisant la régulation des débits de pointe. Leur conception tient compte des gradients d'humidité et des dynamiques saisonnières, assurant une performance hydraulique et écologique optimale.

3 PLACETTE À L'ENTRÉE DU PARCOURS | PLOT AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TRAIL 4 HIBERNACLE POUR LA FAUNE | WINTER SHELTER FOR WILDLIFE
PHOTOS 3,4 MARTINE LAROCHE



3



mitigate heat islands, restore north-south and east-west connections, and reveal the spirit of the place. The Bande Verte is a greenway, based on the logic of restoring the hydrological cycle, recreating wetlands and using design as a language that reveals buried history.

Co-creation as a way to forge bonds between the community and the landscape

In 2018, the City of Montreal tasked the municipality's public consultations department (Office de consultation publique) with organizing a series of sessions on the creation of a nature park in the Turcot and Saint-Jacques Escarpment area. The initiative attracted more than 300 participants and led to three creative workshops and 61 briefs. Its aim was to incorporate citizens' expectations into an ambitious urban greening and mobility project. The process went beyond collecting opinions: it anchored the project in collective memory. By involving citizens directly, their ideas and concerns became integral parts of the design process. This co-creation approach helped build a

shared story around the site, reinforcing its importance in the collective imagination and transforming a once-enclosed, inaccessible space into a place that is open and re-appropriated by the citizens. The process strengthened links between the community and the environment. Active participation gave residents the opportunity to contribute to the transformation of a site long seen as out of reach. This level of involvement fostered strong emotional attachment, because the project became a reflection of people's aspirations and values.

Finally, the consultation process validated local knowledge and diversity. The sessions highlighted the knowledge and needs of different groups, making the space inclusive and representative of Montreal's population. This approach transformed the project into a living place designed as a biodiversity refuge and laboratory for ecological experimentation, where citizen co-creation plays an essential role in amplifying the landscape and creating a distinctive experience.

Local capture and infiltration: an integrated approach to restoring the hydrologic cycle

Rainwater management for a highly human-impacted site, characterized by compressible fill and soils, demands a strategy that goes beyond simple drainage. The greenway project at the base of the Saint-Jacques Escarpment takes an ecosystemic approach in which local capture and filtration are essential mechanisms for reducing surface runoff, mitigating flood risks and ensuring replenishment of the water table. Reprofiled ditches, designed using ecological engineering principles, play a crucial role. Their geometry is adapted to the topography and to excavation/fill zones, leading to a reduced rate of runoff flow and increased pooling time. These ditches are planted and seeded, resulting in natural filtration of particulates and pollutants while creating biological corridors that promote biodiversity. Unlike mineralized infrastructure, the ditches are integrated into the landscape matrix and contribute to thermal and hydrological regulation.



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L'intégration des zones humides restaurées complète ce dispositif. Ces milieux, aménagés dans des dépressions naturelles ou artificielles, accueillent des espèces végétales hygrophiles (saules, graminées, vivaces) qui stabilisent les sols, filtrent les nutriments et créent des habitats pour la faune. Les plans finaux montrent également des prairies et clairières qui, par leur structure végétale, contribuent à la dispersion des eaux et à la résilience écologique. Cette approche présente des bénéfices mesurables : la réduction des volumes dirigés vers les collecteurs grâce à des déversoirs contrôlés, l'amélioration de la qualité des eaux par filtration biologique, et l'augmentation de la diversité par la création d'habitats diversifiés. Elle illustre la transition vers une gestion intégrée des eaux pluviales, où les infrastructures

vertes remplacent les solutions purement techniques.

En définitive, la bande verte ne se limite pas à un aménagement paysager : elle constitue un système hydrologique fonctionnel, capable de restaurer des processus naturels dans un environnement urbain contraint. Les fossés reprofilés, zones tampons et milieux humides deviennent des éléments structurants d'un projet où chaque goutte d'eau participe à la régénération écologique et à la résilience climatique.

Le projet d'aménagement de la bande verte a été conçu pour répondre à un double objectif : favoriser la biodiversité et reconnecter les citoyens au milieu naturel. Dès la phase de conception, une attention particulière a été portée à l'avifaune et aux espèces à statut particulier, notamment la couleuvre brune (*Storeria dekayi*), désignée comme espèce menacée au Québec. Pour soutenir les populations d'oiseaux, nous avons intégré une palette végétale diversifiée composée d'arbres,

arbustes et vivaces indigènes, offrant des ressources alimentaires et des sites de nidification, et aménagé des zones de plantation créant des strates végétales variées favorisant la présence d'insectes et de fruits essentiels à leur alimentation. En complément, des nichoirs spécifiques ont été installés pour des espèces ciblées : hirondelle bicolor, merlebleu de l'Est, mésange à tête noire, troglodyte familial, crècerelle d'Amérique, merle d'Amérique, moucherolle phébi, hirondelle rustique et pic flamboyant, afin de compenser la rareté des cavités naturelles en milieu urbain et contribuer à la reproduction des espèces. La couleuvre brune, espèce discrète, mais essentielle à l'équilibre écologique, bénéficie quant à elle, d'hibernacles de surface et d'abris implantés en pierre dans des secteurs tranquilles, à proximité des milieux humides et des prairies restaurées, offrant des conditions favorables pour l'hibernation et la thermorégulation tout en réduisant les risques liés à la prédation et aux activités humaines.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE VERTE POUR LA GESTION DES EAUX PLUVIALES | GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RAINWATER MANAGEMENT **6** PLACETTE ET MOBILIER MONTRANT LA FALAISE SAINT-JACQUES EN ARRIÈRE-PLAN | SITE AND FURNITURE SHOWING THE SAINT-JACQUES CLIFF IN THE BACKGROUND
PHOTOS 5, 6 MARTINE LAROCHE

To optimize percolation, the project includes a uniform 300 mm topsoil layer in all planted areas. This technical measure improves infiltration capacity and provides a nutrient-rich substrate for plants. It satisfies twin requirements: compensating for the low permeability of the fill materials and ensuring the stability of plantings despite the site's heterogeneous soils.

The strategy also relies on enhanced buffer zones and intermittent water points installed in areas with saturated and non-saturated soils. These structures function as temporary holding basins, reducing the hydrological load on the municipal system and helping regulate peak flows. Their design accounts for humidity gradients and seasonal dynamics, ensuring optimal hydrological and ecological performance.

The integration of restored wetlands completes the approach. These zones, located in both natural and artificial depressions, host hydrophilic species (willows, grasses, perennials) that stabilize the soil, filter nutrients and create habitats

for fauna. The final plans also show meadows and clearings that contribute, thanks to their vegetation structure, to runoff dispersal and ecological resilience. This approach has measurable benefits: reduction of water channelled to storm sewers by the use of controlled spillways, improvement of water quality thanks to biological filtering and increased diversity through the creation of a variety of habitats. It illustrates the transition to integrated management of rainwater, in which green infrastructure replaces purely technical solutions.

Without a doubt, the greenway is more than a landscape design: it is a functioning hydrological system that restores natural processes in a constrained urban setting. The reprofiled ditches, buffer zones and wetlands become structuring elements of a project in which each drop of water contributes to ecological regeneration and climatic resilience.

The greenway project was designed to meet twin objectives: foster biodiversity and help residents reconnect with the

natural world. From the design phase onward, careful attention was given to birds and other fauna with special status, particularly the brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*), listed in Quebec as a threatened species.

To support bird populations, the project features a broad range of plant life including trees, shrubs and indigenous perennials, which provide food resources and nesting sites. We also created planting zones with diversified vegetation strata providing habitat for the insects and berries essential for birds' diet. Nesting boxes were also installed for specific species: the tree swallow, eastern bluebird, black-capped chickadee, house wren, American kestrel, American robin, eastern phoebe, barn swallow and northern flicker, with the aim of compensating for the rarity of natural cavities in urban areas and contributing to the species' reproduction. As for the brown snake, it is a discreet species that is nonetheless essential to ecological balance. It benefits from surface hibernation sites and stone





7

Au cœur du parcours, plusieurs haltes aménagées avec mobilier (bancs, tables, supports à vélo) ont été implantées le long du sentier multifonctionnel pour inviter les promeneurs à faire une pause et observer la faune et la flore dans un cadre convivial. Autour de ces haltes, des plantes comestibles et des espèces mellifères ont été introduites, créant une expérience sensorielle qui valorise les services écosystémiques et sensibilise les citoyens à la richesse du milieu naturel. L'ensemble de ces aménagements illustre une approche globale qui conjugue mobilité douce, conservation de la biodiversité et éducation environnementale, créant un corridor vert où la nature et la ville coexistent harmonieusement et où chaque halte devient une invitation à ralentir, observer et renouer avec la richesse écologique du territoire.

La palette végétale comme support de biodiversité

Le choix des végétaux pour la Bande Verte ne répond pas uniquement à des critères esthétiques ou de stabilisation des sols : il structure des habitats qui favorisent la présence d'espèces fauniques ciblées. Les arbres feuillus tels qu'érables, chênes et tilleuls offrent des perchoirs et des sites de nidification pour les oiseaux arboricoles, tandis que les arbustes fruitiers comme amélanchier (*Amelanchier canadensis*), sureau (*Sambucus canadensis*) et

cornouiller (*Cornus sericea*) fournissent des ressources alimentaires pour les espèces frugivores et migratrices. Les vivaces indigènes nectarifères dont la monarde (*Monarda fistulosa*), l'asclépiade (*Asclepias syriaca*), et l'échinacée (*Echinacea purpurea*) qui attirent les insectes pollinisateurs, augmentant ainsi la disponibilité alimentaire pour les oiseaux insectivores. Cette diversité végétale crée une mosaïque de strates arborée, arbustive et herbacée qui multiplie les niches écologiques. Elle soutient la reproduction et la migration de plus de trente espèces aviaires recensées dans le secteur, confirmant le rôle du site comme refuge dans un contexte de fragmentation.

Pour les reptiles, et notamment la couleuvre brune, espèce menacée au Québec, la conception intègre des friches herbacées et des milieux humides. Les ensemencements à base de graminées indigènes (*Festuca rubra*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Andropogon gerardii*) et la présence d'arbustes dispersés comme sumac (*Rhus typhina*) ou cornouiller offrent des zones ensoleillées pour la thermorégulation, des abris contre les prédateurs et des microhabitats riches en invertébrés, proies privilégiées de ce reptile. Les milieux humides restaurés, plantés de carex (*Carex spp.*), scirpes (*Scirpus atrovirens*) et iris versicolor, renforcent cette logique en diversifiant les ressources alimentaires et en créant des corridors fonctionnels.

La bande verte de Turcot est plus qu'un aménagement : c'est une trame

relationnelle. Elle relie des falaises à des prairies, des zones humides à des clairières, des oiseaux à des humains. Elle raconte une histoire où le design devient langage commun, où chaque élément végétal, faunique et humain participe à une chorégraphie de coexistence.

Dans un monde où la crise écologique impose de repenser nos manières d'habiter, ce projet affirme une conviction : vivre ensemble est possible. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de planter des arbres ou d'installer des nichoirs, mais de créer des conditions pour que la vie circule, pour que les liens se tissent, pour que la ville retrouve sa dimension biotique. **LP**

Mandat:

2020-2021

Équipe en architecture de paysage : WSP Anouar Bouzir, Christine Madison, Martine Larouche, Philippe Bonnet, Dima Kaddour

Client: Ministère du transport du Québec (MTQ)

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7 L'UN DES CINQ TYPES DE NICHOS UTILISÉS | ONE OF THE FIVE TYPES OF NEST BOXES USED 8 NICHOS EN CONTRE-JOUR | NEST BOX IN BACKLIGHT PHOTOS 7, 8 MARTINE LAROUCHE

shelters located in low-traffic areas near restored wetlands and meadows. These amenities provide favourable conditions for hibernation and thermal regulation, while reducing risks from predators and human activities.

Several rest areas were created. Equipped with benches, tables and bike racks, they can be found all along the multi-use trail, inviting park users to take a break and admire the flora and fauna in a pleasant setting. Edible and melliferous plants have been introduced near the rest areas, creating a sensory experience that highlights ecosystemic services and makes residents more aware of nature's bounty. As a whole, these amenities reflect a comprehensive approach combining low-impact mobility, conservation of biodiversity and environmental education. The result is a green corridor where nature and the city co-exist harmoniously, and where each rest area becomes an invitation to slow down, observe and reconnect with the ecological richness of the land.

Vegetation choices as a platform for biodiversity

The selection of plants for the Bande Verte is not based solely on aesthetics or soil stabilization. It also structures habitats for targeted fauna species. Deciduous trees such as maples, oaks and lindens provide perches and nesting sites for tree-dwelling birds, while berry-producing shrubs like serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) and dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) provide food for migratory and fruit-eating species. Nectar-producing indigenous perennials such as beebalm (*Monarda fistulosa*), milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea*) attract pollinators, in turn increasing food availability for insectivorous birds. The diversity of vegetation creates a mosaic of tree, shrub and plant strata supporting multiple ecological niches. It facilitates the reproduction and migration of more than 20 bird species sighted in the area, confirming the site's role as a refuge in a fragmented context.

For reptiles, particularly the threatened brown snake, the design includes grassy clearings and wetlands. Seeding with indigenous grasses (*Festuca rubra*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Andropogon gerardii*)



and widely spaced shrubs such as staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and dogwood provide sunny areas for thermal regulation, shelter from predators and microhabitats with large invertebrate populations – the prey of choice for the brown snake. Restored wetlands planted with sedge (*Carex spp.*), bulrushes (*Scirpus atrovirens*) and blue iris (*iris versicolor*) reinforce this logic by diversifying food sources and creating functional corridors.

The Turcot greenway is more than a landscape project, it is a relational framework. It links escarpments to meadows, wetlands to clearings, birds to people. It tells a story in which design becomes a shared language, where each element – flora, fauna, humans – takes part in a dance of coexistence.

In a world where the ecological crisis is forcing us to rethink our way of life, this project makes a statement: yes, it is possible to live together. It is not simply about planting trees or installing nesting

sites, it is about creating conditions where life can move, where bonds can form, where the city can rediscover its biotic dimension. **LP**

Mandate:

2020-2021

Landscape architecture team: WSP

Anouar Bouzır, Christine Madison, Martine Larouche, Philippe Bonnet, Dima Kaddour

Client: Ministère du transport du Québec (MTQ)

References:

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MICHELA SUTTER

WHEN PLACES BECOME RELATIVES

How kinship-based thinking can reshape conservation through stewardship and policy

1

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QUAND LES LIEUX DEVIENNENT PARENTS

Comment le concept de parenté peut-il remodeler l'intendance et les politiques de conservation

IT'S EASY TO write about problems, but far more challenging to mobilize solutions. In certain political climates, the pace of policy lags dramatically behind the speed at which landscapes are transforming. Floodplains swell, permafrost thaws, coastlines erode and species migrate – while cities, policies and infrastructure remain largely static.



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Yet amid this rapid change, certain places continue to anchor us – through memory, relationship and attentive stewardship. Around the world, communities are rediscovering old ways of listening: through Indigenous-led conservation, city plans that make room for birds and messy leaves, and approaches that acknowledge every species as a stakeholder. What changes when we treat places as relatives rather than resources?

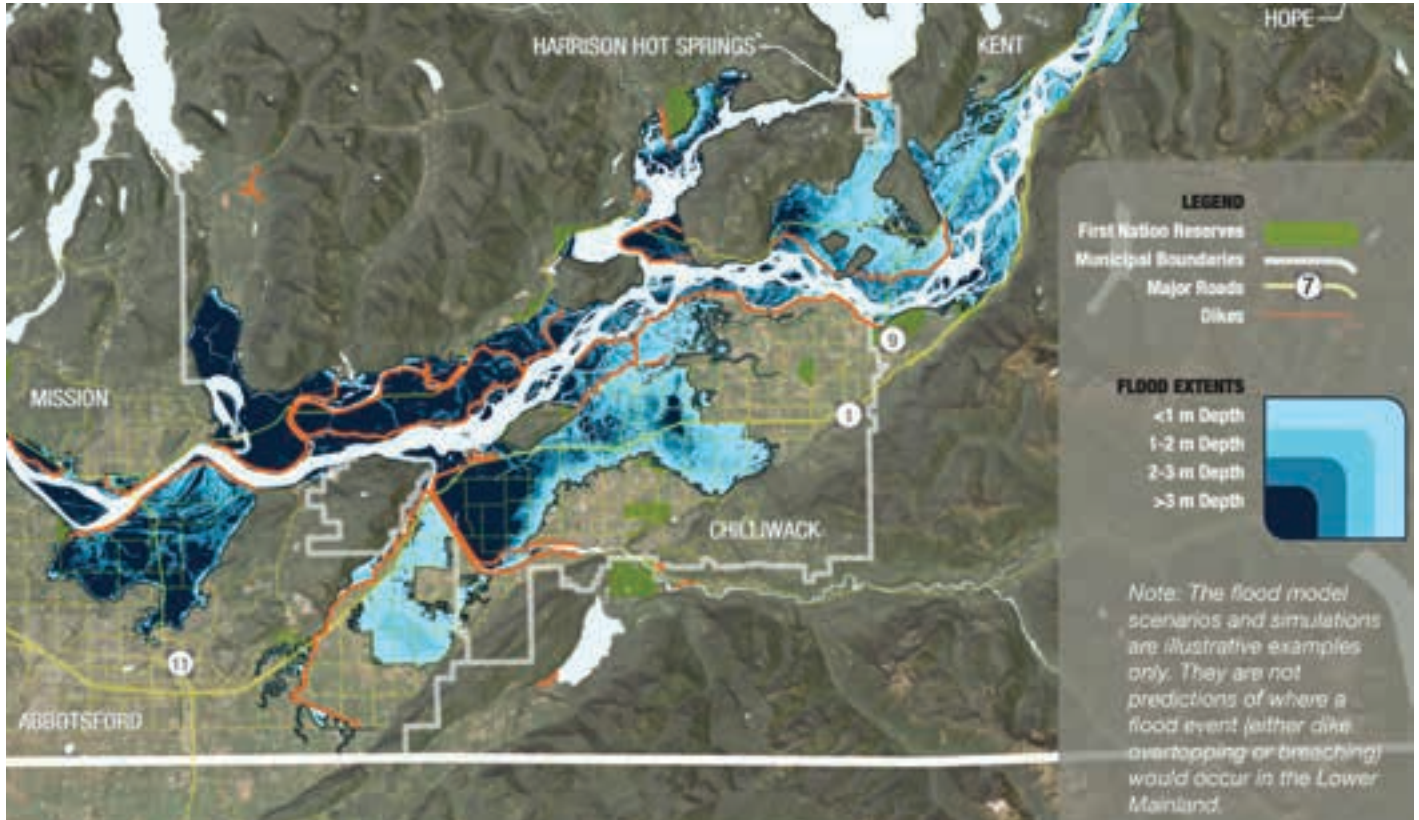
In British Columbia's Fraser Valley, Sumas lake, also known as "Great Grammy's Lake" (Sts'ólemeqwelh Sxó:tša) was a relative, a way of life and a life-source for the Semá:th and other Stó:lō nations. Between 1920–1924, it was forcibly removed. According to oral accounts shared with The Reach Gallery in Abbotsford, "the flooding was bad for the new way of life the settlers brought with them, so it had to go". But the story of "Great Grammy's Lake" didn't end there.

Over the last century, the lake has been resurrected several times (most recently, this past December), causing evacuations, livestock deaths, property damage and economic stress. The concept of kinship after disaster feels contradictory: a lake once our neighbour, is now our enemy. How can we be in a relationship with something that causes so much destruction?

Conventional conservation typically treats land and water as resources to be managed through regulation, thresholds and technical expertise. Sometimes, we may even conserve for its inevitable extraction: viewing nature as something to take from, without reciprocity. Kinship begins elsewhere. Within many Indigenous legal and knowledge systems, landforms, waters, plants and animals are understood as relatives or teachers, all carrying agency and life force. One does not manage a relative; one holds responsibility and care toward them, each one of us has the invitation to connect.

Kinship also bridges ecological science, planning and cultural practice. Observation, monitoring and adaptation – tools familiar to Western planning – also exist within Indigenous stewardship systems, but are embedded within ethical relationships that include non-human beings as proponents. Ecological indicators are not neutral data points; they are signals within a living relationship that demand an emotional response.

At the same time, values alone are insufficient. Indigenous governance systems have endured despite colonization, but colonial policy has fragmented responsibility, and displaced jurisdiction. Kinship-based conservation becomes effective only



3

when structurally programmed through authority, resources and recognition.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) offer a clear example of kinship translated into governance. IPCAs recognize Indigenous Nations as rights-holders and decision-makers, not merely stakeholders. Conservation here is inseparable from language, ceremony, food systems and Indigenous law.

Insights from a Revitalizing Indigenous Law (RELAW) report, with the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) and Semá:th Nation work, help clarify why IPCAs matter. Rather than treating land and water as passive objects of regulation, the RELAW framework understands rivers, fish and territories as living relatives with whom humans hold legal and ethical obligations. Law, in this sense, is learned through story, ceremony and sustained relationship with place, not abstract rule-making.

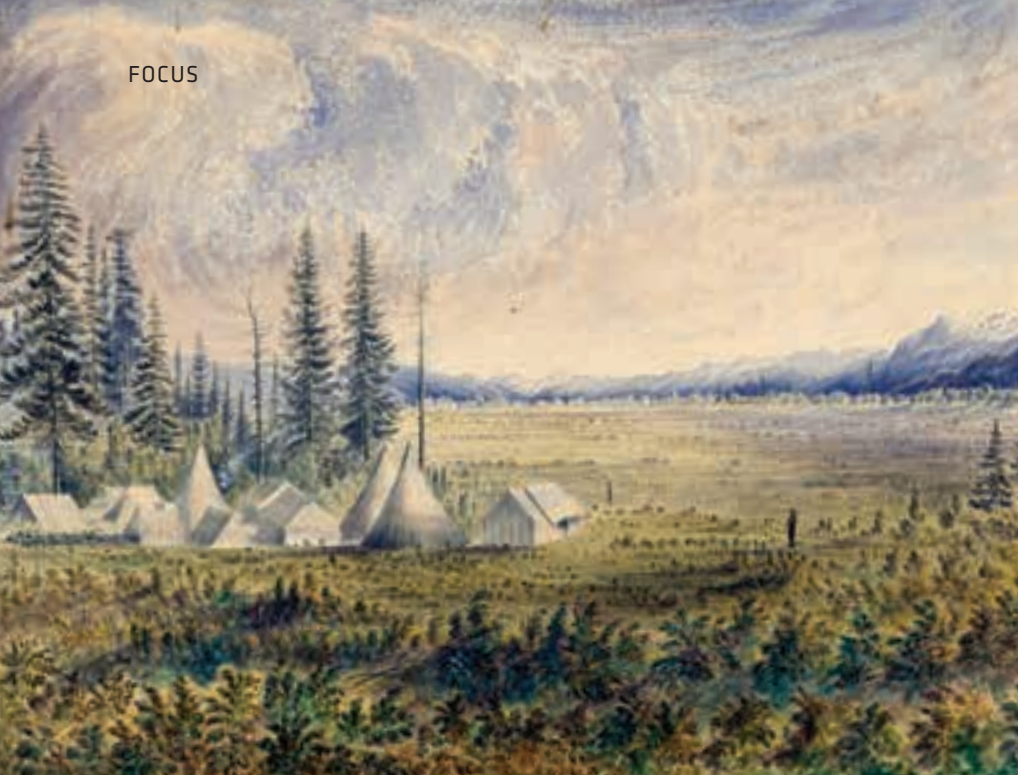
IPCAs embed this relational law into contemporary structures. Memory and responsibility are carried through named stewardship roles – guardians, elders, caretakers – who hold long-term accountability for specific places and species. Conservation is not episodic consultation, but an ongoing practice rooted in intergenerational knowledge.

Crucially, IPCAs demonstrate that kinship becomes durable when woven into governance. Mapped territories, co-governance agreements, funding mechanisms and monitoring frameworks allow Indigenous law to operate alongside government systems without being reduced to stories and symbolism. As the RELAW work makes clear, kinship-based stewardship endures not because it is morally appealing, but because it is institutionalized through authority, responsibility and collective process.



4

1 PRE-DRAINAGE, TWO SMALL BOATS SAILING ON SEMÁ:TH XO:TSA OR SUMAS LAKE **2** PAMPHLET DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE THE SALE OF 'RECLAIMED' LANDS FOLLOWING THE DRAINING OF SUMAS LAKE (1920S) **3** NEW MAPS, OLD NEWS - FLOODING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE IN THE FRASER VALLEY **4** IMAGE OF SUMAS LAKE IN "TIPS FOR TOURISTS: INTERURBAN TRIPS OVER B.C. ELECTRIC RAILWAY SYSTEM, IN VICINITY OF VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA" **PHOTOS 1** 1915 REWACH GALLERY, ABBOTSFORD **2** CAMP SUMAS: LIVING WITH A LAKE IN FLUX (PAINTING BY JAMES MADISON ALDIN; PHOTO 1857 AND 1862) **3** 2020 FRASER BASIN COUNCIL **4** UBC ARCHIVES, CA. 1913



From Policy to Action

A UBC report proposes partially restoring Sumas Lake as an act of “ecological reconciliation,” aiming to reestablish natural hydrology and habitat, support climate resilience and flood management, and honor Indigenous knowledge and cultural connections. Complementing these efforts, the Semá:th Nation is exploring legal personhood for the lake, following international precedents such as rivers and forests in Ecuador, Bolivia, New Zealand Panama, and the province of Quebec (see *Magpie River story on page 44*), to protect its ecological relationships while bridging Indigenous law with Canadian municipal and provincial frameworks.

Practically, restoration could involve purchasing properties on the lakebed, a strategy potentially less costly than repeated dyke repairs, emergency response and insurance costs – and one that could integrate with long-term climate adaptation planning. Culturally, Semá:th leaders frame the lake as a relative and teacher, interpreting its presence, cycles and flooding events through Indigenous teachings that underline the necessity of respecting, and the consequences of disrupting natural systems.

Canada Playing Catch-Up

There is a curious irony linking Indigenous and settler ways of knowing within landscape architecture and our present-day narratives here in Canada. The settler nations overseas, which once forced the static way of life on their colonized soils, are now increasingly recognized for rewilding urban environments. They are rigorously weaving nature’s dynamic systems into cities, and putting non-human stakeholders – birds, insects, mammals and water systems – at the forefront of design. Canada is turning to these rewilding initiatives as inspiration, as if we didn’t discount Canada’s Indigenous

5 CAMP SUMAS: LIVING WITH A LAKE IN FLUX. (PHOTO 1857 AND 1862) **6** A PEOPLE OF THE RIVER: WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN DUGOUT CANOE ON THE FRASER (1890) **7** SUMAS LAKE PERSISTING THROUGH LAYERED MEMORY, FROM ORAL HISTORIES TO THE RECURRING FLOODS **8** A ROAD IS COVERED BY FLOODWATERS IN ABBOTSFORD, BC **9** FLOODED FARMS IN ABBOTSFORD, BC **10** A ROAD COVERED BY FLOODWATERS IN ABBOTSFORD, BC

PHOTOS 5 NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORD ADMINISTRATION **6** CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES **7** 2021 THE REACH GALLERY, YOUTUBE **8** ETHAN CAIRNS/THE CANADIAN PRESS **9** DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS **10** ETHAN CAIRNS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Ultimately, kinship offers a lens for rethinking our relationship with landscapes, one that is attentive, reciprocal and enduring.

knowledge keepers in the first place. And now we're playing catch up with these critical policy innovations.

Ultimately, kinship offers a lens for rethinking our relationship with landscapes, one that is attentive, reciprocal and enduring. The story of Sumas Lake illustrates both the consequences of disregarding these relationships and the potential for restoration when cultural knowledge, ecological science and governance align. Legal recognition, structured stewardship and innovative planning approaches – from IPCAs in British Columbia to assigning personhood in Quebec – demonstrate that humans can live in sustained relationship with dynamic systems rather than imposing rigid control.

Treating land, water and non-human beings as relatives transforms conservation from a set of rules or interventions into an ongoing practice of care, responsibility and learning. As climate change accelerates and landscapes continue to shift, embracing kinship offers not only ecological resilience but a deeper



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ethic of connection: one that honors memory, supports adaptation and insists that our decisions account for those –

human and non-human – whose lives are inseparably entwined with the places we inhabit. **LP**

GARTH ARMOUR, JANE WELSH + WENDY STRICKLAND

ENDURING WILDERNESS: TORONTO'S RAVINE STRATEGY

"This place, named after Tkaronto, the Mohawk word meaning 'where there are trees in the water,' describes a deep rooted and meaningful relationship in natural stewardship between the people and the place. It is home to the five relations, the crawlers, swimmers, four-legged, winged, and the two-legged. The Haudenosaunee, Anishinabeg, Wendat, and Mississaugas of the Credit have been in a long relationship with the beings on this land. The biodiversity of this place once flourished. All Indigenous people from across Turtle Island have been a part of this relationship. We don't see any hierarchy between us, the land, the waters and all beings."

– Carolyn Crawley, Indigenous knowledge keeper is a Mi'kmaw woman with mixed ancestry from Nova Scotia who is dedicated to social and environmental justice and participated in the Toronto Biodiversity Strategy Advisory Group.



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NATURE SAUVAGE DURABLE : LA
STRATÉGIE DES RAVINS DE TORONTO

TORONTO HAS HAD a long and enduring kinship with its ravines. The six deeply incised river valleys (the Etobicoke, Mimico and Highland Creeks and the Humber, Don and Rouge Rivers) formed over 11,000 years ago when the last glaciers receded, define the city. Trails along the riverbanks facilitated trade and movement for Indigenous people between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe. The publication in 1911 of Elizabeth Simcoe's 1793 sketches of the ravines led to appreciation of their "picturesque beauty" and by the beginning of the 19th century, they were well used for bathing, rowing, sailing, canoeing, ice skating and curling. However, in the 19th and 20th centuries the value of the ravines as a natural heritage ecosystem was not understood – land was cleared, wetlands were drained and rivers were channelized as improvements to "disorderly nature" to build mills, dumps, farms, golf courses, manicured parks, water filtration plants, sewer systems and highways.

1 ET SEATON PARK 2 WEST HUMBER PARKLAND
3 ROUGE BEACH PARK 4 RAVINE AND NATURAL
FEATURES PROTECTION BYLAW COVER 5 TORONTO
RAVINE STRATEGY COVER 6 RAVINES BYLAW
PHOTOS 1,2,3 ROBERT BURLEY 4,5,6 CITY OF TORONTO



2



3

The 1943 *Master Plan for the City of Toronto and its Environs* proposed a regional green space system focused on the river valleys and, in 1954, the newly formed Metro Toronto launched a program to protect these lands through acquisition, successfully acquiring over 3,000 hectares by 1974. In 1976, the Toronto Field Naturalists Club advocated for more stringent Official Plan policies to protect natural areas, adopt ravine bylaws and identify environmentally significant areas. In the early 1980s, the City adopted its first Ravine Bylaw and the Metro Toronto Official Plan contained more rigorous conservation policies.

Following amalgamation of the City of Toronto with Metro Toronto and five other municipalities, protection was further enhanced with the creation of a city-wide ravine bylaw and the identification

of 86 Environmentally Significant areas, updated official plan policies (most recently in OPA 583) and performance measures in the Toronto Green Standard requiring stewardship plans and native species for new development adjacent to the ravines.

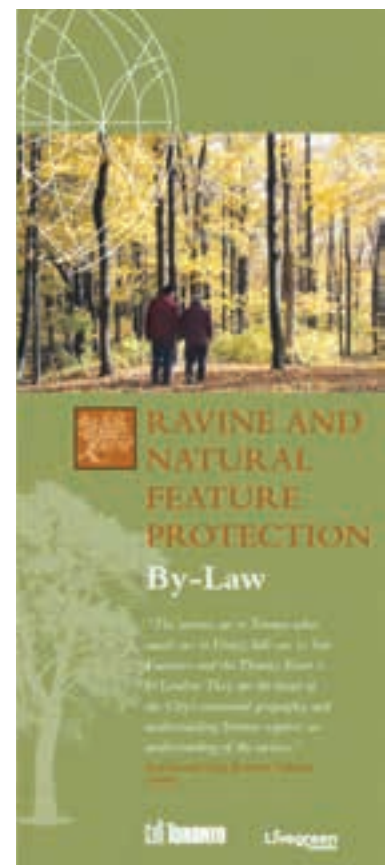
In 2015, recognizing the need for more than policy and regulations – the need for an intentional, coordinated framework to guide their management including restoration of degraded areas and improvements to accessibility, Toronto engaged residents in the development of the City’s first Ravine Strategy (CSLA National Award of Excellence winner 2019). This was followed by a report on implementation of the Ravine Strategy to guide management and investment (estimated at over \$100 million for ten priority areas) over the next 20 years.



4

-  **Guidelines & Strategies** provide direction on how to protect the natural environment.
-  **Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-Law** protects the forest and ravine by requiring a permit prior to destruction of trees.
-  **TRCA Regulation** established protects valley and stream corridors by prohibiting certain activities unless a permit has been issued by TRCA.
-  **Natural Heritage System** Development is generally not permitted, natural heritage impact study may be required.
-  **Environmentally Significant Areas** contain habitats for rare species, seasonal habitats, habitats of large size or unusually high diversity.
-  **Official Plan Land Use Policies and Designations** protect the ravines as part of the City’s parks and open space system.

5



6



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How ravines are protected

Toronto's ravines are protected through land use policies, regulations and management plans that focus on protecting our ravine landform from degradation due to the removal of trees, changes in grade, or mismanagement. These policies and regulations apply to both publicly- and privately-owned properties that extend into ravines.

Connecting People to Nature

Today, Toronto is known as one of the most multicultural cities in the world with over 140 languages and dialects spoken here. Half of Toronto's current population was born outside of Canada, which brings many diverse perspectives and approaches to experiencing nature in the city.

Starting in the early 1990s, many newcomers had their first experiences with ravine lands through organized programs at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the City of Toronto and libraries. Volunteer tree planting programs, organized by the City starting in 1994 and continuing today, have led to the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees and shrubs, but also often took advantage of the setting to explain to participants the basics of urban wildlife, ravine trails and their use

as a tool to understanding the natural environment.

At the Chief Planner Roundtable on the Ravines (December 16, 2015), it emerged that many residents were not aware of the vast recreational opportunities offered by the ravines or were intimidated by them. Some people, often newcomers, are uncertain about using the ravines due to concerns about getting lost or encounters with "wild" animals. One panelist, Sabina Ali, a Thorncliffe Park Community advocate, stated the need to "get children involved and engaged and they will bring the parents and grandparents along."

The Roundtable also highlighted the lack of access to the ravines, with their steep sides and dense vegetation that make them difficult to physically access and

long stretches with no access points or poorly marked entrances. Approximately 30% of Toronto's population lives within 500 meters of ravines, and some areas in close proximity to ravines will see considerable population growth in the coming years. Ravines play a vital role in connecting people with nature and provide essential access to urban greenspace and opportunities for passive and active recreation which contributes to the physical and mental health and well-being of residents.

Building Connections with Ravines

The 2020 Ravine Strategy Implementation report recognized this relationship and the inequitable access to nature experienced by some communities and established new engagement programs whose



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7 GLEN STEWART RAVINE 8 CHARLES SAURIOL PARK
9 CUDIA PARK, ROBERT BURLEY: *ENDURING WILDERNESS: TORONTO'S NATURAL PARKLANDS*
10 RAVINE DAYS, ROWNTREE MILLS PARK
PHOTOS 7, 8, 9 ROBERT BURLEY 10 JENNIFER LEE, THE MARKBROOK RESIDENTS GROUP AND STEPS PUBLIC ART



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“The ravines are to Toronto what canals are to Venice, hills are to San Francisco and the Thames River is to London. They are the heart of the city’s emotional geography, and understanding Toronto requires an understanding of the ravines.”

– Robert Fulford, Accidental City, 1995

successes continue to grow, with focus on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and equity-deserving communities. When people are engaged in Toronto’s ravines, they can be inspired to take responsibility for the natural environment and become involved in affecting positive change.

To build connections to these important spaces with people who have not visited ravines before or who experience barriers in accessing ravines, the City of Toronto partnered with Toronto-based national charity, Park People, launched a two-year pilot program in 2020 called “InTO the Ravines” to connect the people of Toronto



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to the city’s rich ravine system through community-led programming. This new model supports community members, through microgrants, training and administrative supports, to bring their own communities into these spaces in ways that are culturally relevant and appropriate.

“InTO the Ravines” has proven to be an incredibly impactful partnership that has supported hundreds of Torontonians to become community leaders, opening Toronto’s ravines to more residents, especially those who face barriers to access. Most events have had 50% or more attendees who were Black, Indigenous or People of Colour, and events have often been hosted by grassroots and culturally diverse groups, with activities reflecting different cultural traditions such as Bengali henna and meditation, Yoruba Indigenous drumming, and sacred fire ceremonies. In 2023 and 2024, approximately one quarter of participants were first-time ravine visitors. Over 75% of attendees in both years said they were more likely to bring family/friends to a ravine after attending an event.

Final Thoughts

“The ravines are to Toronto what canals are to Venice, hills are to San Francisco and the Thames River is to London. They are the heart of the city’s emotional geography, and understanding Toronto requires an understanding of the ravines.” – Robert Fulford, Accidental City, 1995

The ravines are integral part of the City’s identity. The people of Toronto have a deep rooted and meaningful relationship with the City’s ravines – but this has not always been consistent. While the ravines are protected from impacts of development through policy and regulation, there are both physical and social barriers preventing residents access to this amazing natural feature in the middle of a large densely populated city.

The “InTO the Ravines” programming, in partnership with Park People, has successfully fostered the development of a deeper understanding of ravine ecology (including the crawlers, swimmers, four-legged and winged relations), Indigenous knowledge, the connection between nature and health and built the foundation for a long-term sense of connection and care for the city’s ravines with Toronto residents. **LP**



FABIENNE JOLIET + PIER-OLIVIER BOUDREAU*

THE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU RIVER AS A PERSON: IN FAVOUR OF THE LANDSCAPE

FACED WITH THE inherent challenges of protecting natural territories in countries such as Canada – with vast expanses of public land – new legal mechanisms have emerged over the past decade to decentralize and reconcile conservation efforts with Indigenous perspectives. Pressures from resource extraction within a growth-driven economy, the multi-use nature of land, as well as Indigenous rights

1 LA QUATRIÈME CHUTE DE LA RIVIÈRE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU-SHIPU (CÔTE NORD DU QUÉBEC, NITASSINAN), AU MOIS DE MAI, UNE VISITEUSE ADMIRANT LA BEAUTÉ SUBLIME DE LA CHUTE | THE FOURTH WATERFALL OF THE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU-SHIPU RIVER (NORTH SHORE OF QUEBEC, NITASSINAN), IN MAY, A VISITOR ADMIRING THE SUBLIME BEAUTY OF THE WATERFALL
ALL PHOTOS TOUTES LES PHOTOS FABIENNE JOLIET

issues are all factors that complicate efforts to protect territory and achieve international goals, such as protecting 30% of terrestrial and marine areas by 2030, as laid out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to which both Quebec and Canada have committed.

In the specific case of Quebec's rivers, another issue arises: the energy transition. In Quebec, despite an installed electricity generation capacity of 41,000 MW – 94% of which comes from hydropower – over 50% of total energy consumption still relies on fossil fuels (Canada Energy Regulator, 2021; Hydro-Québec, 2023). Considerations such as electrification of transportation networks and commercial/industrial heating systems,

to name a few, place additional pressure on the province's rivers.

It is within this context that the campaign to protect the Magpie River takes place. The river was targeted for an 850 MW hydroelectric development by Hydro-Québec, the state-owned utility responsible for energy production and transmission, in its 2009 – 2013 Strategic Plan. Despite the existence of a run-of-the-river dam at its mouth, built in the 1960s and rehabilitated in 2007, the Magpie River has gained international acclaim for whitewater activities. Its massive 7,600 km² watershed is 99% free of human impact (OBV Duplessis,

**with Shanice Mollen-Picard*



FABIENNE JOLIET + PIER-OLIVIER BOUDREAU^{*}

LA RIVIÈRE MAGPIE- MUTEHEKAU SHIPU EN PERSONNE : A LA FAVEUR DU PAYSAGE

DEVANT LES DIFFICULTÉS inhérentes à la protection des territoires naturels dans des pays comme le Canada ayant de vastes superficies de territoire public, de nouveaux mécanismes légaux ont émergé dans la dernière décennie pour décentraliser et réconcilier les efforts de conservation avec les perspectives autochtones, notamment. Les pressions pour l'extraction de ressources dans une économie de croissance, les usages multiples du territoire et les enjeux de droit autochtone constituent des enjeux qui complexifient les démarches pour la protection du territoire et l'atteinte d'objectifs internationaux tels que la protection de 30% des superficies terrestres et marines d'ici 2030, issues du

Cadre Mondial de la Biodiversité de Kunming à Montréal, auxquels adhèrent le Québec et le Canada.

Dans le cas spécifique des rivières québécoises, un autre enjeu s'ajoute : celui de la transition énergétique. Au Québec, malgré une capacité de production électrique installée de 41,000 MW, dont 94% provient de l'hydroélectricité, plus de 50% de la consommation énergétique est toujours sous forme d'énergie fossile (Régie de l'énergie du Canada, 2021 ; Hydro-Québec, 2023). L'électrification du réseau de transport et des systèmes de chauffage industriels et commerciaux, pour ne nommer que ces derniers, vient mettre une pression additionnelle sur les rivières de la province.

C'est dans ce contexte que s'inscrit la démarche de protection de la rivière Magpie, une rivière ciblée pour le développement hydroélectrique de 850 MW par Hydro-Québec, la société d'État responsable de la production et du transport d'énergie, dans son Plan stratégique 2009-2013. La rivière, malgré un barrage au fil de l'eau à son embouchure datant des années 60 et réhabilité en 2007, bénéficie d'une notoriété internationale pour les activités en eaux vives et son immense bassin versant de 7600 km² est exempt d'empreinte humaine à 99% (OBV Duplessis, 2014). La protection de la rivière contre l'aménagement de barrages a été

**avec Shanice Mollen-Picard*



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2014). The protection of the river against dam development was resolved by granting it rights – formally recognizing it as a legal person.

1. The Power of the Magpie River – Mutehekau Shipu and the Existential Values (Human and Non-Human) it Embodies *Hydropower vs. Rafting?*

Located on the North Shore of Quebec (Canada), the Magpie River originates in Labrador and flows south for 290 km through boreal forest, emptying into the maritime estuary of the St. Lawrence River between the villages of Magpie and Ekuanitshit (Mingan). It carves out a watershed of more than 7,650 km² and is known for its many rapids and waterfalls, shaped by the geologic turbulence of the Canadian Shield.

Its powerful flow – 250 m³/s (Nerberg, 2022) – makes it highly suitable for hydroelectric production, similar to the nearby rivers that are already dammed, such as the Manicouagan, Outardes and, more recently, the Romaine rivers. But the Magpie River is also one of the world's top-10 whitewater rafting destinations (National Geographic, 2010), attracting athletes from around the globe, with some sections accessible only by plane or helicopter.

Magpie River or Mutehekau Shipu?

The river flows through the ancestral lands of the Innu people, known as Nitassinan, a boreal forest landscape crisscrossed by rivers flowing to the sea. This hinterland, called Nutshimit by the Innu, includes

traditional areas for fishing, hunting and gathering. In Innu-Aimun, the Innu language, the river is called *Mutehekau Shipu*, a name that refers to its steep banks and cliffs. The name “Magpie” (referring to the bird) was given during European explorations in the 19th century when ornithologist John James Audubon identified the Canada Jay.

This dual naming reflects the overlapping and sometimes competing colonial and Indigenous claims to the river, dating back centuries. European settlement in the region dates to the 16th century, anchored by cod fishing, which led to settler expansion along the St. Lawrence River, Newfoundland, and Saint Pierre and Miquelon. By the 19th century, industrialization and colonization transformed the area, displacing Indigenous peoples from their lands, forests, rivers and coastlines through forced sedentarization and the creation of reserves such as Ekuanitshit and Uashat Mak Mani-utenam.

In short, the Magpie River is a natural site of ecological, biocultural and historical significance – cherished by the Innu, whitewater sport enthusiasts and environmentalists, but also targeted by hydroelectric developers. It remains a living testament to a pluralistic relationship with nature, opening the door to a shared worldview – one that unites Indigenous and ecological values in opposition to future dam projects.

The Indigenous Values It Embodies: “The River is Alive”

While the river's recognition as a legal person surprised much of the Western world – Magpie is the third river globally to be granted this status – it is simply a

reaffirmation of Innu belief systems and their vision of Mother Earth as animated and alive: “The river is alive” (Shanice, Ekuanitshit Band Council, in Joliet & Joliet, 2023).

According to animist ontology, Mother Earth contains a multitude of “animated” beings with agency and intention: “It is the river that chose us” (Rita, Innu Cultural House of Ekuanitshit, Joliet & Joliet, 2023).

In this worldview, the Magpie River has always been a living entity – an agent with will, thoughts and voice. As described in *I Am Mutehekau Shipu* (Nerberg, 2022): *“I am on my way to the sea when I hear the voice. At first it's faint, some static notes rising through the mist of a waterfall. As I approach the cliff forming the cascade, I see a human on a rocky spur. She wears a red and green bonnet like Innu women have worn for centuries, and she's drumming. She sings. I've heard this song before, especially since pale-faced men in suits started coming to these forests wanting to divert my waters and those of other rivers. They say it's for progress. But for me, progress stopped when they forced me into that concrete box with locks. Who is this sister calling out? Then I hear her. A healing song – for me, the river – for all of us, for the planet. I hear her, even though my voice is louder than her words. I roar. That's how I know I exist.”*

The river's legal personhood – original in the Western legal world, but intrinsic in the Innu worldview – testifies to a convergence between two understandings of nature: the animist Indigenous worldview and a Western ecocentric perspective. This convergence sparked a legal battle that ended in a true collective victory.

2. The Legal Journey and Success of the River's Rights: Mirror Resolutions, Guardians, etc.

The campaign to protect the Magpie River began in 2009, following the announcement of hydroelectric dam construction projects on the Romaine River, located 250 km to the east. These massive developments raised serious concerns about the increasing environmental impact on Quebec's North Shore. As early as 2008 – 2009, the Association Eaux-Vives Minganie (AEVM), composed of non-Indigenous paddlers, took action to defend the river.

Given the scale of the project, the association reached out to CPAWS Quebec

2 LA TROISIÈME CHUTE DE LA RIVIÈRE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU, AU MOIS DE MAI | THE THIRD WATERFALL OF THE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU RIVER, IN MAY

résolue par l'attribution de droits, qui institutionnalisent sa reconnaissance en tant que personne morale.

1 - La puissance de la rivière Magpie-Mutehekau Shipu et des valeurs d'existence (humain - non humain) qu'elle porte en elle

Hydroélectricité versus rafting ?

La rivière Magpie, située sur la Côte Nord du Québec (Canada), prend sa source dans la province du Labrador et file droit au sud sur 290 km à travers la forêt boréale, pour se jeter dans l'estuaire maritime du Fleuve Saint-Laurent entre les villages de Magpie et de Ekuanitshit (Mingan). Elle sculpte un bassin versant de plus de 7 650 km². La rivière est caractérisée par de nombreux rapides et chutes causés par les tourments géologiques du bouclier canadien.

Son puissant débit est idéal pour la production hydroélectrique, à l'instar de celui des autres cours d'eau voisins déjà harnachés par de grands barrages, comme les rivières Manicouagan, des Outardes, et récemment la Romaine. Si sa force motrice de 250 m³/s (Nerberg 2022) en fait un atout hydroélectrique, elle est aussi un atout pour le rafting, la Magpie étant classée parmi les dix meilleures rivières mondiales pour cette activité de plein air à l'échelle du globe (National Geographic, 2010). Les chutes et rapides attirent en effet des sportifs du monde entier, avec un accès à certaines sections par avion ou hélicoptère.

Rivière Magpie et/ou Mutehekau Shipu ?

La rivière Magpie traverse les paysages ancestraux du peuple Innu, le Nitassinan, écrin paysager de forêt boréale innervé de rivières se jetant à la mer. Cet arrière-pays, appelé *Nutshimit* par les Innus, recèle leurs espaces vitaux traditionnels de pêche, de chasse et de cueillette. La rivière porte aussi un nom en Innu, Mutehekau Shipu, dont la toponymie évoque ses rives escarpées et ses falaises abruptes en Innu-Aimun, langue innue. En revanche, le nom « Magpie » (signifiant « pie bavarde » en anglais) a été donné au cours d'eau, lors des premières explorations européennes, lorsqu'au XIXe siècle l'ornithologue John James Audubon identifia l'espèce du mésangeai du Canada. La reconnaissance de ce « double » toponymique témoigne de volontés d'appropriation pour les cultures autochtones et coloniales en présence depuis plusieurs siècles.

L'histoire de l'occupation européenne de la région remonte au XVIe siècle. Celle-ci s'est arrimée à la Côte Nord avec la pêche à la morue, qui a marqué le début de l'installation des colons à l'embouchure Saint Laurent, Terre Neuve et Saint Pierre et Miquelon. À partir du XIXe siècle, l'industrialisation et la colonisation ont profondément transformé la région, conduisant à la sédentarisation et à la création de réserves autochtones comme Ekuanitshit ou Uashat Mak Maniutenam, dépossédant ainsi petit à petit les autochtones de leurs terres, de leurs forêts et rivières et rivages.

En somme, la rivière Magpie est un site naturel d'une grande richesse écologique, bioculturelle et historique, à la fois précieuse pour les Innus, les pratiquants de sports d'eau vive et les environnementalistes d'une part, et les industriels de l'hydroélectricité d'autre part. Elle demeure le témoin vivant d'un rapport à la nature pluriel en présence, ouvrant sur la possibilité d'un monde commun aux valeurs d'existence de la nature partagées entre écologistes et autochtones pour s'opposer à de futurs barrages sur la rivière.

Les valeurs d'existence autochtones qu'elle porte en elle : « La rivière [Magpie] est vivante »

Si le statut de personne morale reconnu à la rivière Magpie-Mutehekau Shipu est une surprise pour le monde occidental (la Magpie est la 3e rivière du monde à être reconnue juridiquement personne morale), il s'agit juste d'une évidence pour les Innus, une expression significative de leur conception animée de la Terre-Mère : « La rivière est vivante » (Shanice, Conseil de Bande de Ekuanitshit, dans Joliet & Joliet 2023). Selon l'ontologie animiste, la Terre-Mère abrite un ensemble d'êtres « animés », de subjectivités dotées d'intentions : « C'est la rivière qui nous a choisis » (Rita, Maison de la Culture Innu de Ekuanitshit, Joliet & Joliet 2023). Par conséquent, selon la conception holistique du monde des Innus, la rivière Magpie a toujours été un être animé, un agent doté de volonté, de pensées et de paroles, comme dans « Je m'appelle Mutehekau Shipu » (Nerberg 2022) : « *Je suis en route vers la mer quand j'entends la voix. C'est faible au début, quelques notes parasites grimpant dans la brume d'une cascade. Alors que je m'approche du précipice créant la cascade, j'aperçois un humain sur un éperon rocheux. Vêtue d'un*

bonnet rouge et vert comme celui que les femmes innues portent depuis des siècles, elle bat un tambour. Elle chante. J'ai déjà entendu ce chant, surtout depuis que des humains au visage pâle et portant une cravate ont commencé à venir dans ces forêts avec l'intention de détourner ma rivière et celle d'autres rivières. Ils ont dit que c'était pour le progrès. Mais pour moi, ma progression a été ralentie au moment où ils m'ont conduit dans cette boîte en béton avec des écluses. À qui supplie-t-elle, cette sœur ? Puis je l'entends. Elle chante un chant de guérison – pour moi, la rivière – pour nous tous, pour la planète. J'entends, même si ma voix est plus forte que ses paroles. Je rugis. C'est comme ça que je sais que je suis. »

L'acquisition du statut de personne morale à la rivière, originale en pays occidental, originelle pour les Innus atteste d'une véritable rencontre entre deux valeurs d'existence attribuées aux cours d'eau : un monde commun où se retrouvent une conception autochtone animiste du monde et une conception occidentale écocentrée. Cette rencontre a donné lieu à un combat commun, une l'aventure juridique qui à débouché sur une véritable réussite collective.

2 - L'aventure juridique des droits de la rivière et sa réussite : Résolutions miroir, gardiens, etc...

La campagne de protection de la rivière Magpie débute en 2009, suite aux annonces d'un projet de construction de barrages hydroélectriques de la rivière Romaine, 250 km à l'est. Ces ouvrages d'une ampleur démesurée suscitent une inquiétude notoire quant à l'impact grandissant sur l'environnement de la Côte Nord. Dès 2008-2009, l'Association Eaux-Vives Minganie (AEVM), composée de payeurs allochtones, passe à l'action pour défendre la rivière. Devant l'ampleur du projet, l'association fait appel à la SNAP Québec (Société pour la nature et les parcs) qui lance une campagne nationale pour la protection de la rivière, notamment en amorçant une pétition et en commandant une étude pour analyser le potentiel en rafting de la Magpie, classée comme la deuxième meilleure rivière au monde pour cette activité par National Geographic (2010). Par la suite, la campagne se poursuivra en organisant des expéditions sur la rivière, des conférences, des actions citoyennes et en rencontrant les parties prenantes (gouvernements, élus locaux, milieu académique, entreprises,

Pressures from resource extraction within a growth-driven economy, the multi-use nature of land, as well as Indigenous rights issues are all factors that complicate efforts to protect territory and achieve international goals....

(Société pour la nature et les parcs), which launched a national campaign to protect the river. This included initiating a petition and commissioning a study on the Magpie's rafting potential, ranked the second-best river in the world for this activity by *National Geographic* (2010).

The campaign continued with river expeditions, conferences, grassroots actions and meetings with key stakeholders (government bodies, local elected officials, academia, businesses, etc.). In 2020, AEVM, CPAWS Quebec, the Minganie Regional County Municipality (RCM) and the Ekuanitshit Innu Band Council officially founded the Mutehekau Shipu Alliance to work collectively toward the river's protection.

Meanwhile, the Government of Quebec set territorial protection targets (12% in 2015 and 17% in 2020), requiring identification of additional protected areas on the North Shore to meet provincial goals. However, the regional proposal to protect the Magpie River faced opposition from Hydro-Québec, which sought to avoid any permanent protection status that could interfere with future energy production.

Throughout the decade, several mobilization efforts took place, including a 2017 demonstration in front of Hydro-Québec's headquarters in Montreal. In 2018, CPAWS Quebec, tired of waiting for the government to act, explored the legal possibility of granting legal personhood to a Quebec river. The Magpie River was the ideal candidate due to its international reputation, growing consensus around its conservation and biocultural importance for the Innu.

CPAWS Quebec formed a working group with Alliance partners, the International Observatory on the Rights of Nature

(OIDN) and legal experts to grant the river legal personhood. This status would recognize it as a living entity with fundamental rights. In 2021, two mirror resolutions passed by the Minganie RCM and the Ekuanitshit Innu Band Council officially granted legal personhood to the Magpie River.

This status conferred fundamental rights on the river: the right to live, to flow freely, to maintain its biodiversity, and to be protected from pollution. Most importantly, the river can now be represented in court to defend its rights.

As a legal entity, the Magpie River received the 2022 Rights and Freedoms Award from Quebec's Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission. This milestone marked a significant step in recognizing river rights and strengthening Indigenous leadership in environmental stewardship.

In 2023, the river was also designated as an Indigenous and Community Conserved Area (ICCA), an international recognition of Indigenous-led conservation. In 2024, a formal proposal was submitted to the Government of Quebec for the creation of an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA).

3. Nature Protection and a Shared Ecocentric Vision?

A Common Goal: Ecology and Decolonization

The ecological crisis and the planet's finite resources are reshaping how some Westerners – particularly environmentalists – relate to nature, toward a more equitable view of human-nonhuman relations. For Indigenous peoples, however, this shift reflects a long-overdue recognition of traditional animist worldviews long suppressed by colonization.

The Magpie River case illustrates both a response to environmental destruction and a decolonial act. Quebec's reverence for hydroelectricity clashes with Indigenous reverence for living ecosystems and ancestral territories. For the Innu, protecting the Magpie is both an act

of environmental defense and cultural affirmation.

The initiative to grant the Magpie/Mutehekau Shipu River legal personhood is emblematic of a broader convergence between the global environmental crisis and Indigenous rights struggles. "Other local residents also stood up," said R. Mestokosho. "This time, we defended the river together." (Nerberg, 2022)

A Shared Ecocentric Vision

Granting legal personhood to the Magpie River signals an ontological shift: a redefinition of human-nonhuman relations that challenges the classical modern anthropocentric model. This new perspective, supported by environmentalists and Indigenous advocates alike, reconsiders nature not as a resource to be exploited, but as a sacred, living entity with intrinsic value – and as a legal subject. After all, Western legal systems already recognize non-living legal persons, such as corporations or religious entities.

By granting rights to the river, this initiative proposes a new paradigm: nature as a partner to be respected. This vision is ecocentric – perhaps even multicentric – emphasizing the interdependence of all living beings and the preservation of natural cycles through a consensus that respects the aspirations of all parties.

This ontological reconfiguration, blending the rights of nature and Indigenous peoples, opens a path toward coexistence between humans and nonhumans on equal and respectful terms. The legal recognition of the Magpie River as a person represents a first step toward reconciliation between Indigenous and Western worldviews – and may serve as a model for global environmental struggles.

The shared mobilization around the river also coalesced around the aesthetic value of its threatened landscapes. Beyond the physical dams, the landscape faces two existential risks: flooding upstream and drying downstream.

4. A Shared "Sense of Wonder" in the Landscape?

Recognizing nature's rights reveals a deep synergy between ecology and landscape, echoing naturalist Rachel Carson's idea in *The Sense of Wonder* (2021). In her collection of texts, Carson's aesthetic-

3 LA RIVIÈRE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU RÉCIPIENDAIRE DU PRIX DROITS ET LIBERTÉS, MONTRÉAL ICI AU CONSEIL DE BANDE DE EKUANITSHIT PAR SHANICE MOLLEN-PICARD | THE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU RIVER RECEIVES THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AWARD, PRESENTED HERE TO THE EKUANITSHIT BAND COUNCIL BY SHANICE MOLLEN-PICARD

etc.). En 2020, l'AEVM, la SNAP Québec, la MRC de Minganie et le Conseil de bande d'Ekuanitshit fondent officiellement l'Alliance Mutehekau Shipu pour œuvrer ensemble à la protection de la rivière.

De manière concomitante, le gouvernement du Québec annonce des objectifs de protection du territoire (12% en 2015 et 17% en 2020). Il faut donc identifier des espaces supplémentaires à protéger sur la Côte Nord pour augmenter le pourcentage provincial. Toutefois, la proposition régionale visant la protection de la rivière reste bloquée par Hydro-Québec, qui préfère éviter la protection permanente de la rivière pour des fins de production énergétique.

Durant cette décennie, plusieurs actions de mobilisation sont entreprises, dont une manifestation en 2017 devant le siège d'Hydro-Québec à Montréal. En 2018, la situation prend un tournant décisif : las d'attendre après le gouvernement pour un statut de protection, la SNAP Québec analyse la possibilité d'attribuer un statut juridique à une rivière québécoise avec des experts en droit. La rivière Magpie se révèle le premier choix à cause de sa notoriété internationale, du consensus établi avec le temps autour de sa conservation et de son importance bioculturelle pour les Innus.

La SNAP Québec constitue un comité de travail avec ses partenaires de l'Alliance et l'Observatoire international des droits de la nature (OIDN) et d'autres experts en droits, afin d'attribuer à la Magpie une personnalité juridique. Ce statut lui permettra d'être reconnue comme une entité vivante, ayant des droits fondamentaux : en 2021, deux résolutions miroirs adoptées par la MRC de Minganie et le Conseil des Innu de Ekuanitshit, attribuent à la rivière Magpie un statut de personnalité juridique. Ce statut lui confère des droits fondamentaux tels que celui de vivre, de couler, de maintenir sa biodiversité et d'être protégée contre la pollution. Surtout, la rivière peut désormais être représentée en justice pour défendre ses droits.

La rivière Magpie, en tant que personne morale, est récipiendaire du Prix Droits et Libertés en 2022, décerné par la Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse du Québec. Cette victoire marque un pas important vers la reconnaissance et la protection des droits des rivières, tout en renforçant le rôle des

peuples autochtones dans la gestion de leur environnement.

En 2023, la rivière reçoit également le statut d'Aire du patrimoine autochtone et communautaire, une reconnaissance internationale de la vocation de conservation autochtone du territoire. En 2024, un projet d'Aire protégée d'initiative autochtone est officiellement déposé au gouvernement du Québec.

3 - Protection de la nature et vision commune écocentrée ?

Un but commun : écologie et décolonisation

La crise écologique et la finitude des ressources de la planète contribuent à transformer le rapport à la nature d'une partie des occidentaux, les environnementalistes, à la faveur d'une reconsidération équitable entre humains-non humains ; tandis que pour les autochtones, il s'agit d'une reconsidération pour leur conception du monde animiste traditionnelle bafouée par la colonisation.

En effet, le cas de la rivière Magpie illustre à la fois une réaction contre la destruction environnementale et un acte de décolonisation. La sacralisation de l'hydroélectricité dans la société québécoise se heurte à celle du vivant et des territoires autochtones. Pour les Innus, la protection de la rivière Magpie s'inscrit dans un double mouvement de défense de l'environnement et de réaffirmation de leur culture.

L'initiative visant à reconnaître le statut juridique de personne morale à la rivière Magpie-Mutehekau Shipu s'inscrit en effet dans un contexte plus large, où la crise environnementale mondiale et les luttes autochtones convergent. « Les autres habitants de la région se sont également levés », explique R. Mestokosho. Cette fois, nous avons défendu la rivière ensemble. (Nerberg 2022).

Une vision commune écocentrée

La reconnaissance de la personnalité juridique de la rivière Magpie est significative d'un tournant ontologique qui s'opère, une révision des relations entre humains et non-humains, qui dépasse le modèle anthropocentrique moderne classique. Ce changement de perspective, promu par les défenseurs de la nature et de la cause autochtone, remet en question la conception occidentale de la nature comme simple ressource à exploiter. Au contraire,



il s'agit de considérer les rivières, les montagnes et autres éléments naturels comme des entités vivantes et sacrées, dotées d'une raison d'être intrinsèque et d'une existence concrète dans le système de droit occidental – qui reconnaît par ailleurs ce statut à des entités non vivantes comme les corporations ou les organismes religieux, par exemple.

En attribuant des droits à la rivière, cette initiative propose par conséquent une nouvelle manière de penser la nature, non pas comme une ressource à exploiter, mais comme un partenaire à respecter. Ce projet s'inscrit dans une vision écocentrée, voire multicentriste, où l'interdépendance des êtres vivants et la préservation des cycles naturels deviennent des priorités absolues et sujettes à une entente respectant les aspirations de toutes les parties.

Cette reconfiguration ontologique, croisant les droits de la nature et des peuples autochtones, ouvre ainsi la voie à un monde où les humains et les non-humains coexistent sur un pied d'égalité, dans le respect mutuel et la reconnaissance des droits fondamentaux de chacun. En ce sens, le statut de personne morale de la rivière Magpie incarne une première étape de réconciliation entre les visions du monde autochtone et occidentale, qui pourrait servir de modèle pour d'autres luttes environnementales à l'échelle mondiale.

Cette mobilisation commune de protection de la rivière s'est également rejointe sur le terrain de la beauté des paysages menacés de destruction par les barrages hydroélectriques. Deux scénarios de disparition du paysage, outre les barrages eux-mêmes en plein cœur de la rivière : d'une part par engloutissement en amont ; d'autre part par assèchement en aval.



4

naturalist advocacy shows how ecology and landscape are distinct yet complementary. This synergy has been noted since the 19th century by thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, early precursors of modern ecological thought. As Besse (2018) notes, “It is precisely at the point of convergence between ecology and social sciences that landscape emerges.” Likewise, the Council of Europe (2000) states, “Landscape significantly contributes to the general interest, culturally, socially, economically, ecologically, and environmentally.”

The beauty of the Magpie River’s landscapes – seen through both Indigenous and non-Indigenous lenses – became a second focal point of advocacy for its protection and legal personhood. The emotional response to the river’s scenery, whether from Innu cultural values or environmentalist perspectives, was a powerful catalyst for collective action.

From the Innu viewpoint, the river’s beauty is not merely aesthetic. It represents their living world, ancestral landscapes to which they are deeply connected and proud. Shanice, an employee of the Ekuanitshit Innu Council, emphasizes how the silence, water quality, surrounding mountains and birdsong contribute to the river’s spiritual and nourishing essence (Joliet & Joliet, 2023). This sense of belonging to a sacred, animated nature motivated, among others,

4 L'EXTREMITÉ DU SENTIER PERMETTANT D'ACCÉDER À LA QUATRIÈME CHUTE DE LA RIVIÈRE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU : DEUX ÉPAVES DE CAMIONS QUI SERVENT D'ÉTENDARD, « OBJECTIF DÉCOLONISATION » TAGUÉ SUR LA PREMIÈRE ET « PROTÉGEONS LA MUTEHEKAU-SHIPU » SUR LA DEUXIÈME | THE END OF THE TRAIL LEADING TO THE FOURTH WATERFALL ON THE MAGPIE-MUTEHEKAU SHIPU RIVER: TWO WRECKED TRUCKS SERVING AS BANNERS, WITH “AIM DECOLONIZATION” SPRAY-PAINTED ON THE FIRST AND “PROTECT MUTEHEKAU-SHIPU” ON THE SECOND

a group of young Innu women to advocate for the river after a rafting experience.

In this context, beauty becomes a source of pride and a reflection of the interdependence between the Innu and their environment. For the Innu, being human means being sensitive to the nature surrounding the community – recognizing the beauty and richness of even the smallest elements and acknowledging their sacred nature (Vega Cardenas & Turp, 2023). As Chartier (2019) notes, Innu speech is filled with an urgency to express the beauty, complexity, violence and hope of their world – a voice striving to preserve and transmit this richness.

From the non-Indigenous perspective – outdoor sports enthusiasts, whitewater paddlers, environmentalists – the radiance of the Magpie River is also championed. It evokes the mythical image of untouched, original nature, as reflected in media coverage by *Le Monde* and *National Geographic*, which highlight the river’s majestic scenery and the awe it inspires. Descriptions of “untouched” landscapes and the physical challenges of the river, including class V rapids, echo a wilderness ideal – nature seen as a space of wonder and refuge.

Thus, the beauty of the Magpie River became a unifying driver of action. Despite culturally distinct modes of appreciation, shared emotional responses to the river’s beauty transcended cultural divides and fostered collective will to preserve and value this unique natural environment. This shared “sense of wonder” also became the foundation for local recreational and tourism development.

Legal Resolution No. 025-21, which grants the Magpie River legal personhood,

highlights its ecological, scenic, and recreational value. The Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement (BAPE) noted that the river’s beauty holds major potential for adventure tourism development, particularly whitewater activities like rafting and canoeing, as well as hiking and winter sports like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The river’s aesthetic character thus becomes an economic driver for the Minganie region. This approach complements other tools, such as designating the territory as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.

The initiative to grant the Magpie River legal personhood offers a notable example of recognizing the rights of a “thing” within Western legal frameworks. At the Quebec scale, through regional resolutions, it represents an innovative case of territorial protection via regional action. By leveraging the legal powers of an Indigenous Band Council and municipal authorities, members of the Muteshekau Shipu Alliance and their partners secured an additional legal tool to safeguard the river’s intrinsic rights and integrity. **LP**

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4 - Le monde commun du paysage, ou un « Sens de la merveille » partagé ?

La reconnaissance de droits à la nature révèle également une synergie profonde entre écologie et paysage, à l'image de la proposition de la naturaliste Rachel Carson dans *Le Sens de la merveille* (2021). Dans son recueil de texte, son plaidoyer esthétique-naturaliste démontre combien écologie et paysage vont de pair, tous en étant distincts. Cette complémentarité, voire synergie, apparaît dès la fin du XIXe siècle avec Ralph Waldo Emerson et Henry David Thoreau, considéré comme des précurseurs de l'écologie contemporaine. En effet, « *C'est précisément à ce point de convergence entre écologie et sciences sociales que se tient le paysage* » (Besse 2018) ; tout autant que « *Le paysage participe de manière importante à l'intérêt général, sur les plans culturel, social, économique, écologique, environnemental* » (CEP, 2000).

La beauté des paysages de la rivière Magpie, qu'elle soit perçue à travers la lentille autochtone ou allochtone, s'avère en effet le second pivot autour duquel les revendications de sa protection et de sa reconnaissance en tant que personne morale se sont articulés. L'émotion suscitée par la contemplation des paysages de la rivière, sous le prisme des valeurs culturelles innues ou de celles des environmentalistes, a bel et bien constitué un moteur de mobilisation collective en faveur de sa protection.

Du point de vue des Innus, la beauté de la rivière Magpie est bien plus qu'une simple appréciation esthétique. Elle est une scène du monde auquel ils appartiennent, des paysages hérités dont ils sont consubstantiels et dont ils sont fiers. Shanice, employée du Conseil des Innu de Ekuanitshit, souligne que le silence, la qualité de l'eau, les montagnes environnantes et le chant des oiseaux contribuent à la dimension spirituelle et nourrissante de la rivière (Joliet & Joliet 2023). Ce sentiment d'appartenance à la nature animée et sacrée, est ce qui a motivé, entre autres, un groupe de jeunes femmes innues d'Ekuanitshit à défendre la rivière après une expérience de rafting. La beauté, dans ce cadre, devient une source de fierté et une manifestation de l'interdépendance entre les Innus et leur environnement. Pour les Innus, être humain revient à être sensible à la nature qui entoure la communauté,

à percevoir la beauté et la richesse de l'environnement, qu'il soit grand ou petit, et à reconnaître sa dimension sacrée (Vega Cardenas et Turp, 2023). Comme le mentionne D. Chartier (2019), la parole des Innus est imprégnée d'une urgence à exprimer la beauté, la complexité, la violence et les espoirs liés à leur monde, une parole qui cherche à sauvegarder et transmettre cette richesse.

Du point de vue allochtone, sportifs de plein-air, d'eaux vives et environmentalistes, l'éclat de la rivière Magpie est brandi également. Il est associé à l'image mythique de la nature vierge et originelle, comme le montrent les articles parus dans des médias tels que *Le Monde* ou *National Geographic*, qui soulignent la majesté du paysage de la rivière et l'émerveillement qu'elle suscite. Les descriptions des paysages « intacts » et des défis sportifs qu'offre la rivière, tels que les rapides de classe V, se réfèrent à une nature sauvage, « authentique » et préservée, suscitant admiration et respect. Ce regard occidental s'inscrit dans la tradition du *wilderness*, cette notion de nature sauvage qui est perçue comme un lieu d'évasion et de contemplation.

Ainsi, la beauté de la rivière Magpie a servi de catalyseur pour l'action. Bien que les registres de sensibilités soient culturellement distincts, les émotions partagées devant la beauté de la rivière constituent un levier fédérateur, qui dépasse les clivages culturels et génère une volonté collective de préserver et de valoriser cet environnement naturel unique. Ce « sens de la merveille » ou écrivain paysager est devenu le support d'activités récréotouristiques localement.

La Résolution juridique n° 025-21, qui confère à la rivière Magpie sa personnalité morale, met en lumière son intérêt écologique, paysager et récréotouristique. Le Bureau d'Audiences Publiques sur l'Environnement (BAPE) a souligné que la beauté de la rivière représente un potentiel important pour le développement du tourisme d'aventure, en particulier les activités en eau vive telles que le rafting, le canoë, ainsi que les randonnées en forêt et les activités hivernales comme le ski de fond et les randonnées en raquettes. Le caractère esthétique de la rivière devient ainsi un moteur économique pour la région de Minganie.

Conclusion

Cette démarche s'inscrit en complémentarité avec des outils additionnels, tels que la désignation du territoire comme Aire protégée d'initiative autochtone par le gouvernement du Québec ou tout autre forme de reconnaissance légale ou traditionnelle permettant d'inscrire la rivière dans le registre international des aires protégées.

L'initiative d'attribution d'une personnalité juridique à la rivière Magpie montre d'abord un exemple de reconnaissance d'une personnalité à une « chose » en Occident. À l'échelle du Québec par le biais de résolutions régionales, cet acte constitue un exemple intéressant de la régionalisation d'une démarche de protection du territoire. Par le biais des pouvoirs légaux attribués à un Conseil de bande autochtone et à des municipalités, les membres de l'Alliance Mutehekau Shipu et leurs partenaires ont été en mesure de se doter d'un outil législatif additionnel en cas de menace aux droits intrinsèques attribués à la rivière et à son intégrité. **LP**

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PETER HARGRAVES

DRIFTING



> FR_LP+ DÉRIVE

...ils ont créé une œuvre qui interprète le passé du site à travers le prisme de la faune et de la flore qui ont façonné cet environnement et qui ont été façonnées par lui.

NEAR ST. LAZARE, MANITOBA, a new constellation of meaning is being quietly installed. On a site where Fort Ellice, a significant Hudson's Bay Company fur trade post established in 1794 near the junction of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers, once stood as a crossroads of movement, trade and encounter, 11 interpretive sculptures will inhabit the landscape, not as traditional monuments, but as attentive listeners and storytellers. Conceived through a close collaboration between the Nature Conservancy of Canada, stewards and owners of the land, Sputnik Architecture as designers, and

Anvil Tree as fabricators, the installation reflects a shared commitment to respecting place, history and ecology. Together, these partners have created a work that interprets the site's past from the perspective of the flora and fauna that have long shaped – and been shaped by – this environment.

All 11 sculptures share a common formal language. Their shapes are derived from natural patterns formed when wind or water acts upon countless tiny particles: snow drifting across frozen ground, ripples etched into sand by flowing water, or dunes migrating slowly under prairie winds. These forms are familiar yet timeless, evoking processes rather than fixed objects. By repeating and subtly varying this shared geometry, the sculptures suggest that history itself is shaped through accumulation, erosion and continuous movement, rather than through singular, isolated events. From this foundation, the sculptures speak to the ephemeral nature of all natural systems.

The site near St. Lazare has undergone immense transformation over deep time – from prehistoric eras when glacial ice blanketed the region, carving and compressing the land, to the retreat of ice and the gradual emergence of grasslands, river systems, and diverse habitats. Plants established themselves, animals adapted and migrated and ecosystems evolved in response to shifting climates and resources. Human presence, including the era of Fort Ellice, is presented as just one chapter within this much longer narrative. The installation gently reframes history, situating recent cultural events within the broader continuum of geological and ecological change. The sculptures include a 600mm x 750 mm (24 x 30 inch) information panel, that specifically describe the rare prairie ecosystem at the Fort Ellice site (these are indicated and briefly described on the site plan).

Equally significant is the way each sculpture meets the ground. Designed to lightly touch the earth at minimal points, the installations

1 LARGE SCULPTURE WITH BENCH
2 SITEPLAN 3 STANDARD SCULPTURE
ALL PHOTOS SPUTNIK ARCHITECTURE

[The sculptures'] shapes are derived from natural patterns formed when wind or water acts upon countless tiny particles: snow drifting across frozen ground, ripples etched into sand by flowing water, or dunes migrating slowly under prairie winds.

avoid disrupting existing natural systems and avian activity. This approach reflects the values shared by all collaborators, particularly the Nature Conservancy of Canada, whose stewardship prioritizes ecological integrity, harmony with the land, and long-term conservation. The sculptures do not impose themselves upon the land; instead, they appear to rest within it, as if shaped by the same forces that formed the surrounding terrain.

Fabricated by Anvil Tree with careful attention to materiality and craft, and guided by Sputnik Architecture's design vision, the sculptures are also functional and welcoming. Visitors are invited to



3

sit, read the interpretive panels affixed to each piece, and quietly observe the landscape around them. In these moments of rest and reflection, the sculptures fulfill their purpose: they become places of listening and learning, where human

presence is slowed and softened. Through collaboration, restraint and respect for the land, the installation offers a meaningful dialogue between past and present, reminding visitors that the story of this site – like nature itself – is ongoing. **LP**



2



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Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge

Erica Gies
University of Chicago Press, 2022

“Figuring out what water wants – and accommodating its desires within our human landscapes – is now a crucial survival strategy.”

LEARNING TO BE A SPONGE

HEIDI REDMAN

I DISCOVERED *WATER Always Wins* through a recommendation from a civil engineering friend. How wonderful it was to discover a book about sponge cities on an engineer’s reading list.

A short description was enough for me to know that Erica’s Gies book would be a must read for landscape architects. As an independent journalist, she is methodical in how she documents how humans attempt to manage, control and live with water – and the way that water influences our relationship with our planet.

What sets this book apart from other environmental reads is its storytelling. Important and insightful climate facts are intertwined with stories that feature landscapes, people and how they live with water. Gies takes the reader on an investigative journey to meet water detectives from across the globe. Following a loosely chronological order, she lays out the problems we are creating with water, then introduces champions and examples of “Slow Water” projects from around the world.

Just as Slow Food is local, Slow Water is too. Gies first describes how water interacts in geologic time. Then looks at water’s interaction with early life and wildlife – particularly water’s original engineer, the beaver. She then travels across the globe, from Iraq to Peru, illustrating ancient human techniques that work with nature to manage water. Next, she addresses the industrial era and how the mainstream attitude toward water has changed. Our ubiquitous grey infrastructure is inherently and surprisingly short-lived – Gies calls the solution “Slow Water,” highlighting both ancient and Indigenous methods, as well as modern movements. Finally, she provides a glimpse of our shared future and how people are adapting, through restorations and retreat.

In her chapter on floodplains, Gies highlights the work of the late landscape architect



Kongjian Yu, the leading proponent of the sponge city initiative, who advocated for restoring natural water cycles and creating infrastructure that mimics Slow Water systems. Like Gies, he argued that water has a central role in climate action. Yu’s projects incorporated Slow Water at a large scale and boosted the idea of Slow Water from a fringe concept to an international scale. But this is likely not even enough – Yu was looking for ways to manage water at an even larger scope, seeking out solutions for entire watersheds. “This is a philosophy for taking care of the continental landscape,” he told Gies. “It’s time to expand the scale.”

Other landscape design projects highlighted in the book aim to slow water at a smaller scale, such as bioswales instead of stormwater detentions cisterns, daylighting a lost stream or replacing concrete medians with plantings that can absorb a little rain.



Gies highlights the work of the late landscape architect Kongjian Yu... [who] was looking for ways to manage water at an even larger scope, seeking out solutions for entire watersheds.

I was surprised to learn that only one-third of the world's rivers, longer than 1,000 kilometers travel uninterrupted to the ocean. Much of the water we see and experience in urban cities and landscapes is not in its natural state. We have dramatically altered waterways inside and outside of our cities. Water is often held behind dams, straightened into canals or dredged. Have you ever seen a wild river?

Gies' stories of lost waterways remind me of a "Lost Streams of Vancouver" map that hung on the wall during my landscape architecture studies at UBC – documenting more than 40 wild salmon streams that once ran through the city and are now mostly buried to make

way for roads, sidewalks and buildings. I also recall the vivid experience of wild undammed rivers I knew during my childhood in Northern BC. We all have stories that intertwine with water. Gies reminds us to pay attention, slow down and consider what water wants.

Water has often been treated as a nuisance, and something that needs to be controlled. But water has an agenda of its own. As we try and control it, it will make an illusion of our efforts. Water finds its chosen path through the landscape, molding it and being shaped in return. It has a relationship with rocks, minerals, animals and the air and microbes around us. Water's agency is ever more amplified in an age of climate change,

where floods, extreme heat, wildfires and droughts become more frequent and severe. The concept of kinship seems just here. What is required is to recognize water not as commodity or industrial input, but as partner, relative, and life. **LP**



Heidi Redman, BCSLA, AALA, NuALA, CSLA is a principal and landscape architect with LEES+Associates. Based in Whitehorse, she leads the firm's northern landscape and built works practice. She credits her passion for landscape architecture to time spent in parks and protected spaces. Heidi is a member of the editorial board for *Landscapes | Paysages*.

Introducing KEEP

LYNDA MACDONALD

IN OCTOBER 2025, the CSLA introduced the KEEP initiative – the Knowledge and Experience Exchange Program. Initiated by the College of Fellows Executive Committee in partnership with the CSLA’s Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, KEEP is all about empowerment. I became part of the journey to create KEEP when Gordon Smith and I first spoke in 2021 about harnessing the knowledge and networks of our fellow Fellows to share and mentor others in the profession.

This is what KEEP is all about, building on our collective knowledge and experience and sharing it to keep building our profession. Let me break it down. KEEP is a mentorship program that connects Fellows of the CSLA with other landscape architects to share their experience. The program is open to any landscape architect at any stage of their career and to landscape architecture students. They may be an emerging professional, someone changing or expanding their practice or someone just needing a sounding board. The CSLA has set up a national roster that identifies Fellows who have volunteered for the program. The roster tells you where that Fellow is in the country and what their skills/strengths are. Any landscape architect can request to be paired with one of these wise practitioners and once the match is made they set their own course of action.

Having had the honour of being a member of this profession for over 40 years I have continuously been impressed by what landscape architects do, and can do. And by our willingness to support each other. At the 2025 CSLA Congress in Ottawa, an architect colleague told me that he was impressed by the warmth and collegiality of the 400 landscape architects in attendance. He had never experienced anything like it at an architecture or any other conference.

I am part of KEEP because I am committed to passing on decades of hard won experience and helping to empower and position fellow professionals to be more influential in their futures in landscape architecture along with raising our profile.



Through KEEP I have been lucky enough to be partnered with Shelly Liu who has come to Toronto from Shang-hai to continue her career. In her own words, Shelly reached out to KEEP to “contribute to the landscape architecture industry in Canada. I felt so lucky to find Lynda as my mentor. She offered me a lot of professional advice and was willing to provide the opportunity to develop my local career, while I shared my rich professional experience and advanced design skills based on large-scale international projects in Shanghai. I believe the KEEP program is an excellent and effective project for developing and retaining talent in our industry.”

CSLA has an emerging roster and is welcoming more Fellows and mentees to join KEEP as one more step in expanding the way we support each other, build

relationships, share knowledge and lived experience to tackle the many challenges ahead that we are so well positioned to solve.

Learn more about the KEEP Program by visiting <https://www.csla-aapc.ca/awards/keep>. **LP**



Lynda Macdonald, OALA, FCSLA, OPPI, RCIP, is a graduate of the University of Guelph and recently retired after a 35-year career with the City of Toronto Planning Division. She started her career as a consulting landscape architect in the private sector. Putting the public interest and the environment first has always been at the core of her practice and she continues to volunteer with the CSLA and various grass roots organizations who influence public policy, housing and the protection of the environment and open spaces.



Unilock Founder, Ed Bryant with the UNI-Stone



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L'HÉRITAGE VIVANT DE KONGJIAN YU

LUCAS CONAN

LA DISPARITION DE Kongjian Yu a suscité chez moi une émotion profonde. J'admire son travail depuis des années, mais c'est au congrès mondial de l'IFLA à Nantes, en septembre 2025, peu avant son trépas, que j'ai pleinement compris l'ampleur de son influence. J'ai eu la chance de le rencontrer brièvement avant sa conférence, puis d'assister à une prise de parole qui m'a durablement marqué. Cette rencontre, simple mais intense, prend aujourd'hui une signification particulière.

Ce qui m'a immédiatement frappé chez lui, c'était son humilité. Malgré une carrière internationale exceptionnelle, il parlait avec une franchise calme. Il vous écoutait avec une attention rare, cherchant davantage à comprendre votre expérience qu'à imposer la sienne. Pourtant, dès qu'il abordait les enjeux liés à l'eau, au territoire ou à l'urbanisation, il se transformait : sa voix prenait de l'ampleur, son regard s'anima, et une énergie palpable traversait tout son discours.

Lors de sa présentation à Nantes, il a abordé avec force le concept de ville éponge et des parcs éponges, devenus aujourd'hui

des références incontournables dans la gestion résiliente des eaux pluviales. Il expliquait que ces approches n'étaient pas des innovations sorties de nulle part, mais des réinterprétations contemporaines de logiques vernaculaires, notamment celles observées dans les rizières en terrasse de son pays natal, la Chine. Il insistait sur le fait qu'il ne s'agissait pas de reproduire ces systèmes, mais de s'en inspirer pour comprendre comment un paysage peut absorber, retenir, filtrer et redistribuer l'eau de manière intelligente. Cette vision, ancrée dans l'histoire tout en étant tournée vers l'avenir, a profondément transformé la manière dont je perçois la relation entre ville et cycles naturels.

Ce discours résonnait d'autant plus fortement que je connaissais déjà plusieurs de ses réalisations emblématiques, de nouveau présentée lors du congrès, qui illustrent parfaitement cette approche. À Ningbo, le *Yongning River Park* démontre comment une rivière peut redevenir un espace vivant capable de gérer les crues tout en offrant un parc public d'une grande richesse écologique. À Shanghai, son projet à *Houtan Park*, conçu pour l'Exposition universelle de 2010, a montré au monde qu'un paysage peut dépolluer l'eau grâce à des infrastructures végétales tout en accueillant des milliers de visiteurs. À Qunli, le *National Urban Wetland Park* convertit un ancien marécage en un système de rétention d'eau spectaculaire, devenu un modèle international. Ces projets, et bien d'autres, illustrent sa capacité unique à transformer des sites vulnérables en paysages productifs, pédagogiques et poétiques.

En revenant à Montréal après le congrès, j'ai été frappé par la résonance de ses idées dans notre propre ville. Depuis quelques années, les ruelles bleues-vertes, les parcs éponges, les infrastructures vertes et les interventions

visant à augmenter la perméabilité des sols se multiplient. Ce qui relevait autrefois de l'expérimentation est désormais intégré aux politiques publiques et aux appels d'offres. Ces concepts sont débattus et défendus, autant par les citoyennes et citoyens que par les décideurs, dont Valérie Plante, ancienne mairesse de Montréal, et par l'ensemble des professionnels concernés, qu'il s'agisse d'urbanistes ou d'ingénieurs. Cette évolution rapide témoigne de l'impact mondial de Kongjian Yu : ses idées ont dépassé les frontières de la Chine pour nourrir une réflexion globale sur la manière de rendre les villes plus résilientes, plus sensibles aux dynamiques naturelles, plus proches du vivant.

Dans ma pratique au sein des ateliers Ublo, son influence est quotidienne. Chaque fois que j'analyse une topographie, que j'imagine un système de drainage naturel ou que je réfléchis à la relation entre sol et végétation, je me surprends à me rappeler ses mots. Il ne s'agissait pas, pour lui, de proposer des recettes, mais d'inviter à une attitude : observer, apprendre, laisser le paysage travailler, et accepter que l'eau impose parfois sa logique, sa temporalité, sa pédagogie.

Aujourd'hui, même s'il n'est plus là, son héritage demeure plus vivant que jamais. Les projets inspirés de son approche se multiplient. Les villes canadiennes, Montréal comprise, adoptent peu à peu les principes qu'il défendait avec tant de conviction. Je pense à cette idée simple et lumineuse qu'il avait su transmettre :

une ville résiliente est une ville qui apprend à vivre avec l'eau, et non contre elle.

Je suis reconnaissant d'avoir croisé sa route, même brièvement. Sa voix, sa vision et son humanité continuent d'accompagner ma pratique, et je mesure chaque jour davantage l'héritage qu'il laisse à notre discipline. **LP**



THE LIVING LEGACY OF KONGJIAN YU

LUCAS CONAN

THE PASSING OF Kongjian Yu stirred a profound emotion in me. I had admired his work for years, but it was at the IFLA World Congress in Nantes, in September 2025, shortly before his death, that I fully grasped the extent of his influence. I had the chance to meet him briefly before his lecture, and then to hear him deliver a talk that left a lasting impression. That encounter, simple yet intense, carries a special meaning for me today.

What struck me immediately was his humility. Despite an exceptional international career, he spoke with a calm sincerity. He listened with rare attentiveness, genuinely seeking to understand your experience rather than impose his own. Yet the moment he shifted to topics related to water, territory or urbanization, he seemed to ignite, his voice gained power, his gaze sharpened and a palpable energy ran through his entire speech.

During his presentation in Nantes, he explored the concepts of the sponge city and sponge parks with remarkable force. These approaches have become essential references in resilient stormwater management. He explained that they were not innovations emerging out of thin air, but contemporary reinterpretations of vernacular logics, particularly those observed in the terraced rice fields of his homeland, China. He emphasized that the goal was not to replicate those systems, but to draw inspiration from them in order to understand how a landscape can absorb, retain, filter and redistribute water in an intelligent and adaptive way. This vision, rooted in history yet oriented toward the future, profoundly transformed how I perceive the relationship between cities and natural cycles.

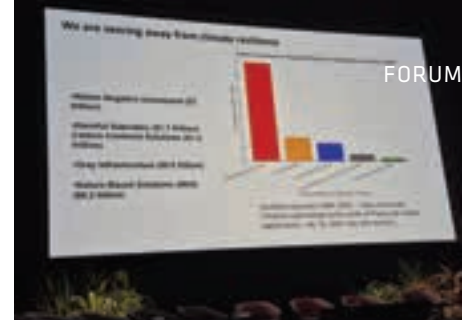
His words resonated even more strongly because I was already familiar with several of his emblematic projects, presented once again during the congress, which illustrate his approach with exceptional clarity. In Ningbo, Yongning River Park demonstrates how a river

can once again become a living space capable of managing floods while offering a public park rich in ecological value. In Shanghai, his project at Houtan Park, designed for the 2010 World Expo, showed that a landscape can purify water through vegetated systems while welcoming thousands of visitors. In Qunli, the National Urban Wetland Park transforms a former marsh into a spectacular water retention system, now considered an international benchmark. These and many other projects reveal his ability to convert vulnerable sites into productive, educational and poetic landscapes.

When I returned to Montréal after the congress, I was struck by how strongly his ideas resonate within our own city. In recent years, blue-green alleyways, sponge-inspired parks, green infrastructures and interventions aimed at increasing soil permeability have multiplied. What once bordered on experimentation is now fully integrated into public policy and design processes. These concepts are discussed and embraced by residents and elected officials, including Valérie Plante, former mayor of Montréal, and by the wide range of professionals involved, from urban planners to engineers. This rapid evolution reflects the global impact of Kongjian Yu, whose ideas have spread far beyond China to shape an international reflection on how to build cities that are more resilient, more attuned to natural dynamics and more connected to living systems.

In my practice at Ateliers Ublo, his influence is constant. Each time I analyze a topography, imagine a natural drainage strategy, or reflect on the relationship between soil and vegetation, I find myself recalling his words. He was not proposing formulas, but encouraging an attitude: observe, learn, let the landscape do its work and accept that water sometimes imposes its own logic, its own timing, its own lessons.

Today, even though he is no longer with us, his legacy remains very much alive.



3, 4, 5

Projects inspired by his approach continue to multiply. Canadian cities, Montréal among them, are gradually adopting the principles he defended with such passion. I often think of the simple and luminous idea he conveyed with such clarity, that a resilient city is a city that learns to live with water, not against it.

I am grateful to have crossed paths with him, even briefly. His voice, his vision and his humanity continue to guide my practice, and each day I measure more fully the depth of the legacy he leaves our discipline. **LP**



Architecte paysagiste français établi et formé au Québec, Lucas Conan explore les liens entre paysage et humain, en portant une attention particulière aux relations

sociales et conviviales que les paysages peuvent générer. Il travaille aujourd'hui à la firme Ateliers Ublo, Montréal, et enseigne à l'Université de Montréal. Lucas est également membre du comité de rédaction de Landscapes | Paysages | French landscape architect, established and trained in Quebec, Lucas Conan explores the relationship between people and landscapes, with a particular focus on the social and convivial interactions that landscapes can generate. He currently works at the Montreal firm Ateliers Ublo and teaches at the Université de Montréal. Lucas is also an editorial board member for Landscapes | Paysages.

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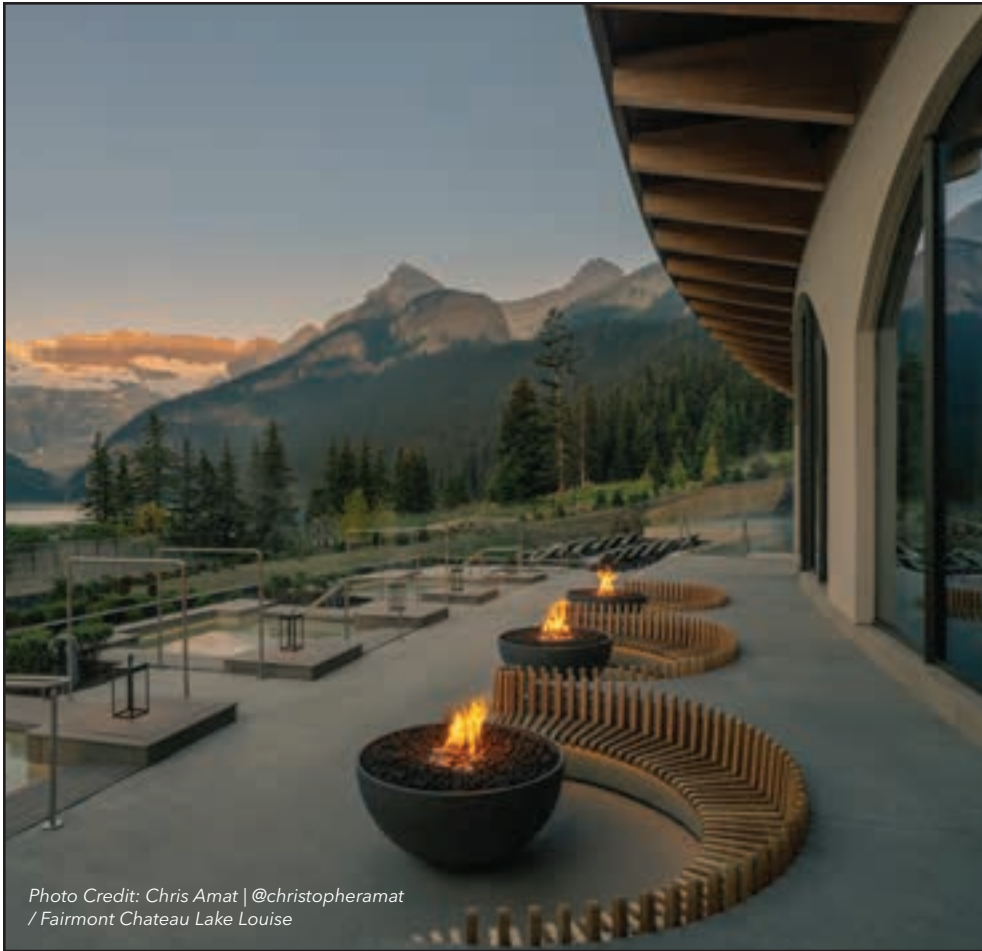


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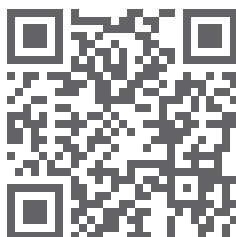


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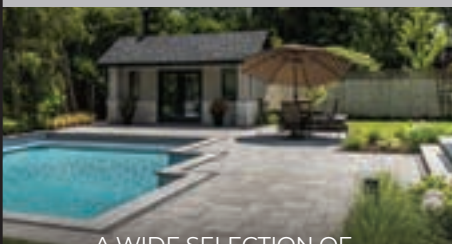


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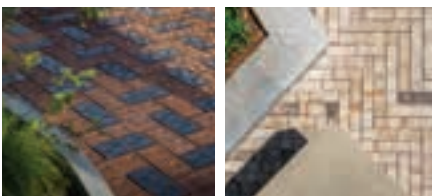
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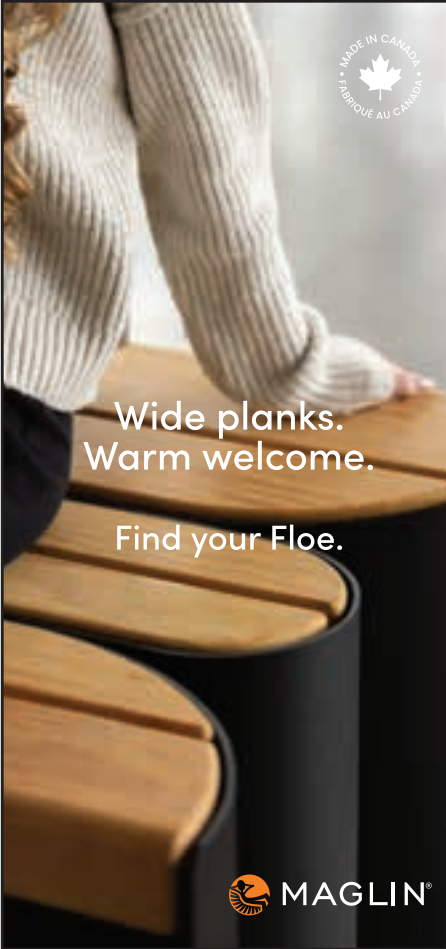
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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BOB SOMERS

RELATIONSHIPS, ESPECIALLY THOSE rooted in shared land, are a journey. I first met Niigaan Sinclair while walking at The Forks in Winnipeg. The objective was a project initiation meeting for what was referred to as “South Point” at the Forks. The results of this initiation was the ideation of a vision for engaging members of Treaty One in the collaboration of what became Niizhoziibeau, featuring Niimaamaa (see cover photo), a collaboration with Jaime Isaac, Val Vint and KC Adams.

Niigaan and I wandered through the lands, moving slowly, letting the place guide the conversation. Our first conversation was simple enough: two people getting to know one another. It set the tone for everything that followed: exploring not just a landscape, but the systems, stories and histories that shaped us, and all of the collaborators that eventually joined in.

Time, of course, has its own way of working on relationships. Some people drift in and out of our lives gently, barely leaving a ripple. Others arrive unexpectedly and leave

NIIZHOZIIBEAN (SOUTH POINT) WIIGIWAM, PROJECT BY NIIGAAN SINCLAIR WITH HTFC (SEE LIP FALL, 2022)
PHOTO RYAN WAKSHINSKI

fingerprints that never fade. Years after that first walk, I received a text from Niigaan that made my stomach tighten: “Bob Somers, you have a lot to answer for.” At first, I froze. It felt heavy, confrontational even. But as I read it again, I sensed something else beneath it: an invitation. A challenge. A door opening toward truths that needed to be spoken, not avoided.

That lunch, meant to last an hour but stretching into many, became a turning point. We unpacked not just my history, but our history. The laughter, the discomfort, the honesty, well, it was raw in the best way. It was the kind of conversation that changes you because it refuses to let you remain on the surface. By the end of it, something had shifted between us. We were no longer just colleagues sharing a project. We were kin bonded by trying to understand one another across the connected layers of our pasts.

As landscape architects, we meet people whose stories are deeply interwoven with the places we’re asked to shape. And if we’re paying attention, we learn that our responsibility isn’t just to design what’s next. It’s to listen. To dig. To question the assumptions we carry. To face the truths,

both personal and collective that rise to the surface when we give space for honest conversation.

It’s through this willingness to explore, to be uncomfortable, to be changed, that we learn to set aside ego. And only then can we begin to imagine futures that honour the land, the people and the histories they carry. Futures co-created through collaboration, artistry, technical skill and, perhaps most important, the courage to build relationships rooted in truth.

As Rachel Laurendeau reminds us, “living together is possible,” though it is never without complexity. Kinship carries challenges, and time introduces change, shaping how we understand the past and imagine the future. Designing for adaptability means recognizing that our relationship with the environment is constant, layered and evolving. And, as the Magpie River’s pursuit of legal personhood teaches us, we must embrace a multicentric perspective, one that honours all our kin and the interconnectedness of life. Only through this lens can we create futures rooted in truth, respect and shared responsibility. **LP**



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