



## Protecting Gatineau Park for Future Generations: Public Consultation 2024

### *Did you know that Gatineau Park has no legal status?*

Since my election as MP for Pontiac - Kitigan Zibi, I have made protecting Gatineau Park a priority! This natural treasure, with its exceptional biodiversity, must be safeguarded for ourselves and for our children.

This summer, I had the privilege of working alongside Senator Rosa Galvez to draft a bill aimed at protecting Gatineau Park. This bill proposes to define clear official limits for the park and preserve it for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of the people of Canada. It also guarantees that the park's ecological integrity will be protected, ensuring that the park will be maintained in a way that allows future generations to experience its unspoiled beauty.

### *Why is Protecting Gatineau Park Important?*

- 1. Adequate protection of Gatineau Park is essential if we are to achieve our 2030 climate targets.**

Quality protection of our green spaces is essential to achieving our goal of protecting 30% of our territory by 2030. Currently, only 7.6% of the Outaouais region is protected, and less than 9% of the Ottawa River watershed is considered protected.

Although Gatineau Park has been included in the 30x2030 as a protected and conservation area in the [Canadian Protected and Conservation Areas](#) Database as well as in the [World Protected Areas](#) Database since 1999, this “protection” **does not meet** the standards of a protected area or other effective conservation measures per zone (AMCEZ) of [decision-support tool](#) for the following reasons:

- **Governance issues:** The National Capital Commission (NCC) has limited authority over conservation and biodiversity, as the conservation mandate is not a priority in the *National Capital Act*.
- **Lack of official limits:** The park has no clearly defined official limits imposed by law; its current limits are only approximations contained in the NCC's [Gatineau Park Master Plan](#).
- **Lack of legal protection:** Gatineau Park is currently "protected" by policy, not by law. As a result, there is no legislative framework to ensure its long-term protection.

In the absence of an entity responsible for enforcing international monitoring mechanisms, each COP15 signatory country must, based on trust, respect the criteria of the decision-support tool. Consequently, Gatineau Park, which currently benefits from minimal protection, should not be considered part of 30x2030 if we aim for transparency and honesty in our environmental commitments.

## 2. We are losing biodiversity at an accelerating rate in Gatineau Park

The park is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including species at risk and plant species found nowhere else in Quebec. Some 90 plants and 50 animal species in the park are at risk in Quebec or Canada.

## 3. Protecting Gatineau Park's ecosystem is important for the well-being of local communities and for adapting to climate change.

Parks and protected areas are good investments to support communities across Canada. In 2017-2018, national parks alone provided some 28,000 jobs directly, contributed \$2.6 billion to Canada's GDP and generated \$449 million in tax revenue. Gatineau Park, while not a national park, attracts some 2.6 million visitors each year who, according to the NCC, spend \$184 million on local services in surrounding communities. This spending supports some 4,828 jobs and contributes \$241 million to GDP.

### ***Get Involved!***

I invite you to consult the main clauses of our bill in the [appendix below](#). Let us know what you think. This is a unique opportunity to help shape this bill: **your voice matters.**

**APPENDIX**  
**SUMMARY OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE GATINEAU PARK**  
**September 2024**

**Main Legislative Choices**

Our main legislative choices are as follows:

- Integration of a new chapter into the [National Capital Act](#) for the protection of Gatineau Park.
- The structure is inspired by [Bill C-20](#) in 2010, which aimed to amend the National Capital Act.
- The [National Parks Act](#) is the primary legislative precedent used. We have also drawn extensively from the concepts in the [Rouge National Urban Park Act](#).

**Key Elements of the Bill**

**PREAMBLE**

- **Objectives:** Preservation of the natural environment, promotion of cultural heritage, and provision of legislative tools for the effective management of recreational and other activities in Gatineau Park.

**AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT**

- **Definitions:** Introduction of definitions specific to the National Capital Act, including terms related to ecological integrity and Gatineau Park.

**GATINEAU PARK**

- **Public Use of the Park:** Maintenance of the park for public benefit and protection of its ecological integrity.
- **Management and Ecological Integrity:** Priority given to preserving ecological integrity.
- **Master Plan:** Development of a master plan, with objectives and indicators for managing and protecting the park, including public and Indigenous community consultation in park-related decisions.
- **Park Lands – Alienation and Use:** Restrictions on the alienation of public lands and procedures for their disposal.
- **Pre-emptive Right:**
  - *Principle.* The provision establishes a pre-emptive right (right of first refusal), allowing the NCC to protect and preserve of lands within Gatineau Park. The pre-emptive right gives the NCC the priority to purchase at fair market value (expert’s appraisal) available

- vacant lands (i.e. land without a residence) within the park before they are sold to third parties.
- *Exception.* Land where there is a residence.
  - *Notification.* The owner has to notify the Commission of the owner's intention to dispose of the immovable property. The notice must contain an expert's appraisal of the immovable property's value.
  - *60-day period.* The NCC must be notified of intention to sale lands within the park, and it can exercise its pre-emptive right within a 60-day period after receiving the notice.

## REGULATIONS

- **Regulatory Powers:** Regulation of activities in the park, setting fees, and managing ecological integrity.

## ENFORCEMENT OF THE ACT

- **Designation of Authority Agents:** Delegation of powers for the enforcement of the act.
- **Violations:** Designation of agents for monitoring infractions.

## INTERPRETATION

- **Indigenous Rights:** The act respects the ancestral and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples.

## ANNEXES

- **Annex 2:** Boundaries of Gatineau Park, updated from [Bill C-20](#) (2010).