green map system

Intro   Maps   News   Participate   Youth   About Us

Montreal's Story

This article first appeared in the Summer 1998 issue of the Montreal Sustainable Development Association's **Green Design Quarterly**. *Our thanks to author Douglas Jack and publisher Jim Banks for sharing it with Green Map web site visitors. Click for a short summary of Montreal's project, or visit their project website directly.*

The efforts of the Sustainable Development Association's local network produced Canada's first 'green' map in February of this year. The new map, ECO-MONTREAL: TIOTIAKE, provides a fresh perspective on our hometown's relationship with nature. Hoping to educate, inform, and promote a 'green' awareness of the Montreal island, the map identifies as many sites of ecological & environmental importance as resources allowed. Eco-Montreal: Tiotiake initiates an evaluation process that encourages urban ecology to become part of collective thinking and a routine component of planning activity.

Initiated by the Sustainable Development Association (SDA) in the Fall of 1995, the project is the result of a partnership with McGill University's Urban Planning Department. The Sustainable Development Association are the project creators and developers. McGill University's Urban Planning Department designed the Map using a computer based Geographic Information System (GIS). This strong partnership is supported by many other volunteers and collaborators, such as Environment Canada's Biosphere, equally committed to the map's success.

Perceptions of nature and its complexity are shaped by surroundings. By presenting the environmental positives and negatives of a region on a map, larger visions become possible. For example, by considering the interconnected nature of our environment, we can more fully appreciate the consequences of placing toxic landfills near our homes. Seeing the proximity of designated hazardous sites to residential communities is compelling. A comprehensive document that highlights the related nature of the landscape also encourages networking between like-minded individuals and organizations.

The Sustainable Development Association decided to give our map the Mohawk subtitle, TIOTIAKE, pronounced jo-ja-guay, because of the respect that indigenous peoples have traditionally held for this place. Tiotiake is the name for the Montreal archipelago (group of islands), and means 'where the nations (and allegorically, the rivers) unite and divide'. A title based on natural features rather than politically derived boundaries seemed appropriate for a bioregional map.

The Green Map System

Eco-Montreal: Tiotiake is part of the Green Map System, a global effort to map the world's urban areas. The Montreal map is the first in Canada in this major project.

Eco-Montreal: Tiotiake is now in its third year of mapping in the Montreal archipelago. We were included with the Green Map System in their recent nomination for the United Nations 'Best Practices in Sustainable Development' prize as a group along with seven of the world's urban ecology maps. There are now over eighty urban ecology mapping teams worldwide.

This summer our mapping team at the McGill School of Urban Planning is continuing its work. We have received five grants and a contract to prepare our database for use as educational software for a local college. This should allow the college as well

as other Universities and Colleges of our archipelago to use our regional Geographic Information System (GIS) based data as a research platform. In this way students and professors will have a tool for mapping local ecology integrated into a metropolitan framework. Professors and students from local universities (McGill, Concordia, UQAM) and colleges (John Abbott, Dawson) have been using our growing map as a framework for their studies. Several thousand people across the archipelago have visited the website, seen the paper map or presentations on the project.

Our hope is that not only will this mapping grow to many sites simultaneously but as well become interdisciplinary with public health issues and the research of other fields correlated with our growing ecological database. We presently have twelve local teams oriented to eco-mapping.

The goal of Eco-Montreal is to organize ecological data for public access (including access to GIS software), understanding and local mapping, and to develop local expertise. The mapping framework provides for easier understanding of relationships in our complex metropolitan living. Integration of public health data and its correlation with a range of environmental data is an important part of our long term plan. Through mapping, local educational and civil institutions, ecologically-progressive business and environmentally aware citizens will find the tools, the authority and the economy for a local determination of ecological values and policy.

Douglas Jack, Regional Coordinator
Copyright Sustainable Development Association, 1998

Contact Eco-Montreal, Tiotiake:
Tel: (514) 482-5033
Email: eco-montreal@mcgill.ca
Web site: http://www.eco-montreal.mcgill.ca

BACK TO TOP

GREEN MAP

Greenmap.org© 1999-2004 Green Map System
Green Map Icons Copyright 2004 Green Map System, Inc.
Donate | STORE | email: info@greenmap.org