

To: His Worship the Mayor, Scott Gillingham and Councillors Brian Mayes, Ross Eadie, Cindy Gilroy and Vivian Santos

RE: The Montreal Pledge Motion

Dear Sir and/or Madam,

We are writing on behalf of the Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to offer our strong support for the March 23rd Motion requesting that the City of Winnipeg become the 12th Canadian city to sign The Montreal Biodiversity Pledge.

CPAWS is Canada's only charity dedicated to the protection of public land, freshwater and ocean with a strong national and regional presence across the country. Working in a way that respects the sovereignty and leadership of Indigenous nations, we are focused on conserving nature to respond to the dual crises of accelerated biodiversity loss and climate change.

Biodiversity loss is the third most severe threat humanity will face over the next decade. There has already been a staggering 69% loss in wildlife populations worldwide and vast swaths of habitat have been destroyed.

At recent meetings at COP 15 it was acknowledged that cities are major contributors to biodiversity loss, and its City Summit took a leading role in formulating solutions to halt that loss, begin its restoration, and limit the negative impacts cities have on the environment.

As host city, Montreal challenged cities and municipalities around the world to sign the "Montreal Pledge," which contains 15 actions to protect urban biodiversity and ecosystems.

Within two months of the Montreal COP15 meeting in December 2022, 11 Canadian and 47 international cities signed the Montreal Pledge. <https://montreal.ca/en/articles/montreal-pledge-call-cop15-launched-to-worlds-cities-39529>

Signing the Montreal Pledge provides participating cities like ours an opportunity to learn and grow with other cities that have already signed the pledge and receive international, national, and most importantly, local public recognition for those efforts.

Signing the Pledge will also serve to highlight the positive initiatives Winnipeg is already undertaking that will help to meet the targets and goals of the pledge. For example, the development of the new Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan and Biodiversity Policy will address many of the goals in the Pledge, including the expansion of city greenspace. The City's agreement with the federal government to explore establishing a National Urban Park within Winnipeg is promising and CPAWS believes Assiniboine Forest and its potential expansion is a strong candidate for this designation. Additional City of Winnipeg initiatives, among them the Parks Strategy, the 20 Year Urban Forest Strategy, the Climate Action Plan and Indigenous consultation efforts by the City will also contribute to meeting Pledge goals.

CPAWS has Chapters working across Canada, and we have seen firsthand the positive impact that signing the Montreal Pledge has had in other cities. By joining these cities, the City of Winnipeg will clearly demonstrate its strong support for the primary goals of COP15 and reinforce the city's commitment to transform Winnipeg into a greener, healthier, more just and biodiverse city.

Yours Sincerely,



Ron Thiessen
Executive Director
The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Manitoba chapter



Chris Rider
National Director, Conservation
The Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society

