



Immediate Release

## Cannon must legislate on park: poll confirms 86% want action

**Chelsea, May 1, 2009** – Local environment groups are calling on Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon for action on his promise to protect Gatineau Park.<sup>1</sup>

“Last December, the minister promised he’d soon table protective legislation for Gatineau Park, so now is the time for him to match words with action since 86% of the public want him to do so according to a recent poll,” said Gatineau Park Protection Committee Co-chair Andrew McDermott.

In April, an online poll conducted by *Le Droit* confirmed that 86% of the 382 respondents wanted the federal government to give Gatineau Park legislative protection. Bills are currently before the Senate and House of Commons that would provide such protection. Tabled by Ottawa-Centre MP Paul Dewar and Manitoba Senator Mira Spivak, they would set Gatineau Park’s boundaries in law, as well as provide a clear land management policy.

“It’s past time for the Conservative government to take action on this front. All the legislative work has been done, the overwhelming majority of people want legislation for Gatineau Park and the government has run out of excuses for inaction,” said Muriel How, chair of the Gatineau Park Committee for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Gatineau Park is the only federal park that isn’t a national park, and in the absence of proper legal protection the National Capital Commission has removed nearly eight square kilometers of its territory, while allowing construction of 118 new houses and 5 new roads inside it.

“Lawrence Cannon has talked a great deal about protecting Gatineau Park, he even said there was a consensus on this issue over a year ago; so, enough talk, a little action please, Mr. Minister,” added Mr. McDermott.

Mr. Cannon isn’t the only cabinet minister to have expressed support for such a measure. Speaking at the Larrimac Golf and Country Club nearly two years ago, Transport Minister John Baird also confirmed the government would give Gatineau Park legislative protection.<sup>2</sup>

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Information: Andrew McDermott: 613-316-1320

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<sup>1</sup> « La ceinture de verdure sous la loupe de la CCN », *Le Droit*, 11 décembre 2008.

<sup>2</sup> “Chelsea first to hear Baird won’t cut funds,” *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*, Oct. 3, 2007.

## Backgrounder: Gatineau Park Poll

The poll was conducted by Ottawa's *Le Droit* newspaper on April 22-23. It confirmed that 86% of the 382 respondents wanted the federal government to give Gatineau Park legislative protection. Although not scientific, this online poll is supported by the 2006 Decima-Ottawa Citizen poll conducted by Decima Research in 2006 which confirmed that 82% of the population would like to see Gatineau Park made into a national park.

Results for the current poll were published in *Le Droit* on April 24. Below is a translation of the article and the graph published online. Note the paper edition says 87% want legislative protection. The difference is attributable to the poll continuing after the paper went to press. The 86% is to be taken as the final figure.

The question asked: "Should the federal government legislate to protect Gatineau Park?" Preliminary results published in *Le Droit*, April 24, 2009, p. 4: **Yes 87%; No 13%; 350 respondents.**

### Results Posted on *Le Droit's* Web site:

