



NEWS RELEASE

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A Centenarian Forest Is Threatened in the Laurentians and Lanaudière

Faced with the new logging projects, a citizen collective launches a petition for a protected area status for Mont-Kaaikop

SAINTE-LUCIE-DES-LAURENTIDES, Friday, July 28th, 2017.

The Coalition Mont-Kaaikop¹ is launching a [petition](#) to support the project to create a protected area of biodiversity at Mont-Kaaikop¹. The 2013 petition against logging at Mont-Kaaikop had attracted more than 8,000 signatories. With this new petition for the protected area, the Coalition aspires to exceed this number, with a minimum target of 10,000 signatories. More than 800 people have already signed.

THE MFFP ABSOLUTELY WANTS TO LOG!

The Coalition received confirmation from the Québec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks (MFFP) that it will submit new logging plans for Mont-Kaaikop in the fall of 2017 / winter 2018, which will be subject to public consultation. Although the Coalition has opposed these cuts for the last four years and is campaigning for permanent protection of the summit and its surroundings, the government has not changed its intentions for this territory.

QUÉBEC LACK OF PROTECTED AREAS

The Québec Government's position on Mont-Kaaikop is difficult to understand. Québec is struggling to achieve its interim goal of protecting 17% of its territory by 2020. Only 9.35% of Québec's territory is protected today. The protected area of Mont-Kaaikop would be a simple solution to this deficit in order to achieve this laudable national objective. The designation of the protected area at Mont-Kaaikop would be a concrete gesture and would be greatly appreciated by the population, which has been loudly calling for protection of this territory for over four years.

¹ The term "Mont-Kaaikop" refers to a territory consisting of the Kaaikop Mountain, surrounding public lands and a biodiversity corridor linking Mount Tremblant, Mount Kaaikop, the Mohawk Territory of Tioweroton and the Ouareau Forest. All of the targeted lands are in public land located both in the Laurentians and Lanaudière.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VACATIONING AND TOURISM

For Mayor Serge Chénier of Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides: "Tourism is our main economic activity. We are even turning more and more towards ecological tourism. The plans of the MFFP are nothing good for us. It is going to be very damaging to us. It looks like the government is hustling on Sainte-Lucie. In 20 years, there have been seven logging campaigns. At Mount Kaaikop, it's going to be a disaster. If this happens, the people will not go there anymore."

THE SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT IS HOWEVER ENLIGHTENING

For Serge Hayman, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors and wildlife and ecosystem adviser of the Coalition: "The MFFP has only one obsession: cutting wood! All the fine provisions of the Sustainable Forest Management Act take the edge in practice. Public consultations are smoking mirrors. These are mere information sessions where it is clearly written that they are not intended to change the land use. What is their purpose then? Even when we oppose the logging plans, in addition with excellent reasons, well they try to pass us this across the throat! Ecosystems are scarcely or not even studied, field visits are rare and, once the cuts have been made, there are no inspections to validate the plans and, in the event of errors, there are no consequences. They are so loose! It's the Cut and Run Empire."

THE CREATION OF ECO-CORRIDOR KAAIKOP OUAREAU (ECKO)

For Claude Samson, Treasurer of the Coalition and President of the Lake Creux and Lake Dufresne Protection Association: "If the work of the MFFP, the MRCs and the foresters were well done, respectful of nature and the population, do you think that there would be so much protest? For the last four years, we have met with many people and groups who have the same problems with the Government of Québec.

For example, the Coalition has partnered with the Municipality of Chertsey (Lanaudière), the Friends of the Ouareau Forest and the Federation of Chertsey Lakes Associations, which campaign to preserve local public lands, namely the Ouareau Forest. Eco-Corridor Kaaikop Ouareau (ECKO) was founded and aims to unite local forces and to share experiences to permanently save natural and interconnected expanses of land.

THE ECONOMIC CAPITAL OF PERIPHERAL REGIONS

Among the recitals, vacationing is the main economic capital of the Laurentians and Lanaudière, especially at less than one to two hours from Montréal. We are not systematically against any logging, but it is aberrant to harm the main asset of a region (vacationing and tourism) to favor another. When we see what is being done on public lands managed by the MRC des Laurentides, the MRC Matawinie or the MFFP, we quickly see that we are not the ones who are harming forestry, but the foresters themselves. By means of greed, without medium- and long-term vision, forestry will self-destruct, for lack of sound practices."

So, support us by [signing the petition](#). Let us give today and to future generations the privilege that we have right now at Mont-Kaaikop to benefit from a pristine and beautiful natural environment, preserved by the ancients over the centuries!

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Source :

The Coalition Mont-Kaaikop, Claude Alexandre Carpentier, spokesman

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ⁱ The Coalition Mont-Kaaikop is supported by the Municipality of Sainte-Lucie-des-Laurentides and many other municipalities, the Mohawk Communities of Kahnawake and Kanesatake, L'Interval outdoor camp and tourism and environmental associations and organizations. In October 2014, the Coalition won the David Suzuki Foundation's first Operation Charm grand prize.