



COM07A

For IMMEDIATE release

The Grey Nuns' Heritage: Rich Heritage for Our Community and Future Generations

Châteauguay, February 20, 2019 – During a public meeting, Châteauguay municipal councillors confirmed the île Saint-Bernard refurbishment project, which includes restoring the cemetery, grotto, cross and long staircase, and developing a historical tour route. The City has ratified an agreement in principle with the Grey Nuns of Montreal regarding their participation in this project.

Châteauguay has been one of the locations preserving the Grey Nuns' heritage for many years. The very productive lands of the seigneurie of Châteauguay, purchased in 1765 by Marguerite d'Youville, were originally cultivated to feed the sick. For a long time, this seigneurie was the most important site in the Grey Nuns' community after the Montreal General Hospital. Following the abolition of the seigneuries, the Grey Nuns continued to own île Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay and the area now called de la Commune Park. In 2014, the last three Grey Nuns living on île Saint-Bernard left the site ending the congregation's 249 years of presence in the region. Only a few years ago, the Grey Nuns transferred most of the island that it owned to the Government of Quebec, while ensuring that the land will be protected in perpetuity and accessible to the public. This part forms the Marguerite-D'Youville wildlife refuge, named in honour of the founder of the Grey Nuns of Montreal. The knoll on île Saint-Bernard, acquired by Ville de Châteauguay in 2011, remains a heritage gem that is part of the collective property accessible to everyone. "We are privileged to be able to enjoy this recreational and tourism centre, which is rich in history and a source of pride that evokes a feeling of belonging for the Châteauguay community. We must definitely preserve this important heritage," stated Châteauguay Mayor Pierre-Paul Routhier.

The City and the representatives of the Grey Nuns of Montreal have held discussions in recent weeks regarding the project to restore the cemetery, grotto, cross and long staircase, and develop a historical tour route for the île Saint-Bernard knoll. Both have agreed to participate financially to complete this development project, which is scheduled for next fall. Héritage Saint-Bernard will be in charge of coordinating the completion and monitoring of the work.

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