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ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF SANDY BEACH - FULL REPORT PUBLISHED

Hudson, Quebec, November 22, 2021 – In the spring of 2021, Nature Hudson and the Legacy Fund for the Environment, with a grant from Bird Protection Quebec, mandated TerraHumana Solutions to conduct an ecological evaluation of the Sandy Beach area slated for development. The report in full, including methodologies used and complete lists of all species observed, is now available on Nature Hudson's website: <http://naturehudson.org/past-news/>

Due to the study area's high ecological significance, the authors recommend the town of Hudson take the findings of this study into account and consider revisiting its plan to develop the study area.

Key findings include:

- This forest is not interchangeable with an upland forest, it is unique and contains species that are scarcely found elsewhere in Quebec. As the study area is a vital resource for the flora, fauna, and human population of this region and beyond, the social, ecological, and environmental value of the area is indisputable.
- TerraHumana Solutions scientists completed 26 field surveys to assess plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and bats, from 4 April to 22 July 2021, and observed and positively identified 354 species of flora and fauna, including 29 species at risk. It is important to note that their inventories are far from complete, as many phyla have not been surveyed or surveyed only briefly.
- The CDPNQ (*Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec*) reports a total of 17 species at risk (3 flora and 14 fauna) within an 8km radius of the study area. Of the 29 species at risk documented in the study, the CDPNQ lists only one within an eight-km radius of the study area, the map turtle, implying that few surveys exist of the site and that 16 more at-risk species can potentially be observed at the site with further study. The 28 currently unlisted species at risk observed will be registered with the CDPNQ.
- The extent and size of the wetland, especially of the eastern block, was found to be greater than the previously delineated area on the development plans submitted to Hudson in 2020 by Nicanco Holdings. An entire wetland area extending from rue Royalview to the Ottawa River waterfront was not described in the development plan.
- Climate change predictions for this region warn of an increase in severe weather events, with 100-year-floods occurring every six years by 2050 (MELCC 2021, USGCRP 2017). Retaining this wetland can help protect current Hudson residents from future flooding.
- The 2020 Eco2Urb report presented six possible development scenarios based on different strategies the Town may want to adopt. Regardless of the scenario presented, the study area was consistently recommended for conservation as Tier 1: the highest conservation priority: “[...] perhaps most essential to ensuring the connectivity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats in Hudson is the conservation of natural areas associated with the Viviry River [...]” (Eco2Urb 2020).

The authors of the study recommend the following actions be taken:

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- *Wetlands*. As the value of vernal pools has often gone unrecognized, we recommend additional vernal pool surveys in early spring 2022.
- *Flora*. Additional botanical surveys should be conducted in mid to late summer to acquire a complete inventory. The site is a candidate for classification as an Exceptional Forest Ecosystem (EFE) (MFFP 2016-2019). Québec's Sustainable Forest Development Act stipulates that all forest development activities are prohibited in an EFE.
- *Fauna*. The presence of one federally endangered, one critically imperilled, and one vulnerable insect species in a single morning's survey indicates the potential presence of many more species at risk. A more extensive survey should be conducted.

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