

PRESS RELEASE



Montreal
First City in the World
To Sign
The National Geographic
Center for Sustainable
Destination's Geotourism Charter

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Geographic Society invites Montrealers to share their local favourites

Montréal, November 20, 2008 - Montréal is proud to celebrate the first anniversary of the signing of the National Geographic Society's Geotourism Charter. On October 18, 2007, Montréal became the first city in the world to sign this charter, and remains today the only urban centre to adhere to the 13 principles of geotourism. This prestigious recognition makes Montréal a model for sustainable tourism and cultural development.

Following the adoption of this charter by the city, the Geotourism Montréal Committee was created and, today, the committee announces the official launch of the Montréal Geotourism Project. This project, resulting from an initiative to create a new kind of tourism, in collaboration with the National Geographic Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations, aims to produce a geotourism map and guide of the city.

Geotourism is a type of tourism that preserves and promotes the geographic character of a destination—its environment, culture, aesthetic values, heritage and the well-being of its residents. The project to create the geotourism Mapguide respects this definition and the principles of geotourism. This printed geotourism Mapguide is a two-sided poster-sized map that shows the natural, cultural and historical attractions particular to the heritage of a destination. In contributing to the preservation and promotion of this region, this map becomes an integral part of efforts to ensure the economic development of the community.

The National Geographic Society will use its recognized procedures and expertise to create the geotourism Mapguide. The Society has already designed similar products for several locations around the world. The sites selected for Montréal will be highlighted on a map that will bear the seal of the National Geographic Society and will be complemented with high-quality design, texts and printing.

Activities will be held in the city to encourage the participation of members of the local community and to facilitate the selection of sites. Residents will choose the places, attractions, activities, events, local businesses and experiences that best represent Montréal's unique and distinctive character. Nominations will be accepted

until January 15, 2009. Montrealers interested in submitting their favourites can simply complete the online selection form available at www.montrealgeo.com.

The geotourism Mapguide encourages national and international tourists to choose sustainable tourism. It is a sophisticated planning tool for vacations in certain types of destinations. Designed using local knowledge and respecting the spirit of the region it describes, the National Geographic geotourism map has the potential to increase local revenue and foster economic initiatives to preserve and promote the specific characteristics that make Montréal truly unique.

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Geotourism Project Begins

Questions, Answers about New Tourism Initiative

What is this project ?

Working with the National Geographic Societys' Center for Sustainable Destinations, Montreal is now developing a Geotourism MapGuide for the City.

What is geotourism ?

Geo.tour.ism is a tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well being of its residents.

What is a Mapguide ?

The printed MapGuide is a two-sided poster-sized map with destination information that identifies natural, cultural, and historic attractions, as well as experiences that define a sense of place. It will help to sustain and enhance the regions assets to complement community's economic development strategies.

How will the Mapguide be developed?

A Montreal Geotourism council has been defined to represent local interests to work with the National Geographic Society. The members of the council are:

- Tourisme Montréal
- Héritage Montréal
- Centre mondial d'Excellence des Destinations
- City of Montréal
- Parks Canada
- Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine
- Les amis de la montagne
- Old Port of Montreal
- Parc Jean-Drapeau
- Université du Québec à Montréal
- Société de développement de l'avenue du Mont-Royal
- Destination Centre-Ville

What will National Geographic do?

National Geographic will use its proven process and expertise to produce the MapGuide. The Society has produced similar products around the world. They will consolidate local nominations to edit, design, and print a high quality National Geographic branded map.

What is the role of the geotouris council?

- Identify the MapGuide boundaries (Island of Montreal)
- Encourage community participation in the nomination process
- Ensure nominations reflect the diversity of the city
- Plan distribution of the MapGuide
- Develop companion website and other outreach efforts

How will community members be involved?

Activities will be held around the city to encourage community involvement and facilitate nominations. Local residents will nominate sites, attractions, activities, events, local businesses, and organizations that define the regions unique character and distinctive appeal. Nominations may be made until January 15th 2009, by completing a nomination form on this web site: www.geomontreal.com

How will this benefit Montreal?

The Geotourism MapGuide encourages sustainable tourism choices to international and domestic tourists. It is a tool to refine vacation planning for specific kinds of destinations. Built upon local knowledge and sense of place, a National Geographic MapGuide can increase local incomes and produce economic incentives to conserve and preserve the things that make Montreal unique.

What's the schedule?

Community outreach and collect data : From November 2008 to January 15 2009.

Community meetings : Commence November 2008

Verify data and write supporting text : January to March 2009

Release Mapguide : Spring 2009

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