

A WORLD FIRST: TERRASSE-VAUDREUIL BECOMES THE FIRST MUNICIPALITY TO OFFICIALLY ADOPT THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF TREE RIGHTS



Original publication: 14 June 2026 - Official English PDF edition: 29 July 2026

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First official adoption of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights by a municipality

Terrasse-Vaudreuil - Quebec, Canada - 9 June 2026

On 9 June 2026, the Municipal Council of Terrasse-Vaudreuil, Quebec, unanimously adopted a resolution recognizing the fundamental rights of the Tree and formally endorsing the principles of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights.

This decision constitutes a world first: for the first time, a local authority has brought the principles of this Declaration into the sphere of local public action through a resolution adopted by its municipal council.

Terrasse-Vaudreuil has thereby opened a new path for local authorities seeking to incorporate the protection of trees, their living environment, biodiversity, and the living world into public policy.

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The Universal Declaration of Tree Rights is an autonomous initiative conceived, founded, and developed under the responsibility of La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus, which serves as its official institutional steward.

Ms Yenny Vega Cárdenas and OIDN contributed to the local mobilization preceding the Municipality of Terrasse-Vaudreuil's adoption of the Declaration. That contribution is acknowledged for what it was. It does not, however, confer upon them any mandate to represent the Declaration, interpret it officially, exercise governance over it, or undertake its institutional deployment.

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LEGAL SCOPE

An essential clarification

The Universal Declaration of Tree Rights does not confer legal personality on trees; legal personality is not provided for in its text.

Nor does the Declaration grant trees standing to bring legal proceedings. Its ethical, scientific, normative, democratic, and institutional architecture is autonomous from theories concerning the legal personhood of nature and procedural standing.

First municipality in the world to officially adopt the Declaration

Meeting on 9 June 2026, the Municipal Council of Terrasse-Vaudreuil unanimously adopted a resolution entitled:

"Municipal commitment to canopy protection and recognition of the fundamental rights of the Tree"

Through this resolution, the Municipality officially recognizes that the Tree is a living being whose physical integrity and vital needs must be respected and protected within the municipal ecosystem.

It also endorses the three founding articles of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights:

1. **The Tree, a sentient living being and source of Life, is a common good of humanity.**
2. **Life on Earth depends upon the existence of the Tree.**
3. **The human being, endowed with reason and conscience, must act toward the Tree in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity.**

The municipal resolution adds four operational rights adapted to the territorial context of Terrasse-Vaudreuil: the rights to life, natural growth, integrity, and regeneration.

These four municipal rights must be distinguished from the Declaration's three articles. They constitute a local and operational expression adopted by the Municipal Council within the scope of its powers.

A decisive citizen mobilization

This advance is the result of substantial local work involving public awareness, dialogue, and citizen engagement.

Quebec filmmaker André Desrochers, through his film *Des arbres et des arts*, made a major contribution to raising residents' awareness of the issues surrounding tree protection. Screenings of the documentary prompted public discussion and opened a substantive debate about our relationship with the living world.

Following this mobilization, the Terrasse-Vaudreuil Environment Committee brought a request before the Municipal Council, leading to the adoption of the resolution of 9 June 2026.

This local initiative also benefited from the contribution of several individuals committed to protecting the living world, including Yenny Vega Cárdenas.

Recognition of these local contributions does not, however, confer upon any external individual or organization a mandate to represent the Declaration or La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus institutionally.

CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

The local mobilization that led to the resolution of 9 June 2026 developed with contributions from André Desrochers, the Terrasse-Vaudreuil Environment Committee, Yenny Vega Cárdenas, and the International Observatory for the Rights of Nature.

La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus, the founding organization and official institutional steward of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights, and Ricardo Rey, the Declaration's author and founder, had nevertheless neither been consulted nor involved nor informed in advance of the municipal process that led to this adoption.

La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus therefore took part neither in the initial preparation of the municipal resolution, nor in drafting the press release accompanying its announcement, nor in organizing the initial media communications process.

This lack of prior coordination in no way calls into question the historic importance of the decision sovereignly taken by the Municipal Council of Terrasse-Vaudreuil. It does, however, explain why the initial communications did not present the Declaration's entire official framework, including the Fifteen Commitments for local authorities, the Tree Assembly, its institutional stewardship, and the necessary distinctions concerning its legal scope.

This initial institutional situation has now been regularized in relations with the Municipality of Terrasse-Vaudreuil. La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus is now in direct contact with the Municipality through its general administration so that follow-up to the adoption, public presentation of the Declaration, and any progressive implementation may be conducted with full respect for its identity, attribution, official framework, and the respective institutional responsibilities of all parties.

This direct dialogue fully preserves the historic significance of the decision of 9 June 2026 while restoring proper institutional coordination between the first municipality to adopt the Declaration and the organization that has served as its official institutional steward since its inception.

This regularization concerns the institutional relationship between La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus and the Municipality of Terrasse-Vaudreuil. It does not constitute retroactive approval of actions undertaken by third parties without a mandate, nor recognition of any representative authority that was not expressly granted to them.

An international initiative conceived and stewarded from France

Drafted in France and stewarded from its inception by La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus, the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights arose from the conviction that trees can no longer be regarded as mere objects, scenery, or exploitable resources.

It affirms that trees must be recognized as sentient living beings, indispensable to the planet's equilibrium and to the existence of Life.

Ricardo Rey is the author and founder of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights, founder of the Tree Assembly, and President of La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus.

Since the launch of the Global Appeal for a Universal Declaration of Tree Rights in Paris on 18 November 2018, citizens, associations, scientists, lawyers, artists, elected representatives, and professionals from numerous territories have joined or supported the initiative.

Terrasse-Vaudreuil's adoption demonstrates that the Declaration's principles can now inspire concrete institutional commitments and guide local public action.

Why does this adoption constitute a world first?

Until 9 June 2026, the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights was a reference text supported by citizens, scientists, lawyers, associations, artists, and defenders of the living world in different countries.

With the resolution adopted by Terrasse-Vaudreuil, its principles crossed a decisive threshold: they formally entered the sphere of local public action.

Terrasse-Vaudreuil thus became the first municipality in the world to officially adopt the principles of this Declaration through a formal decision of its Municipal Council.

This advance demonstrates that tree protection can now move beyond citizen awareness alone and inspire public policies, governance arrangements, planning rules, and territorial protection mechanisms.

From recognition of the principles to their implementation

Adoption of the Declaration is the starting point of a progressive territorial process.

La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus has developed an architecture around the Declaration that includes, in particular:

- the Fifteen Commitments for local and regional authorities;
- the Tree Assembly, a consultative body for dialogue, participation, and proposals;
- the International Register of local authorities engaged in the official process;
- the proposed International Convention on Tree Rights, intended for States and competent international organizations;
- knowledge, governance, education, protection, and restoration tools adapted to territorial realities.

These instruments enable each local authority progressively to translate the Declaration's principles into concrete action according to its powers, resources, applicable law, and the ecological characteristics of its territory.

A precedent for local authorities worldwide

In the face of accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss, the artificialization of territories, and the progressive disappearance of tree heritage, local authorities possess essential powers.

They act in particular in the fields of land-use planning, urban planning, management of public spaces, canopy protection, education, citizen participation, and ecological restoration.

By officially adopting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights, Terrasse-Vaudreuil has opened a new path for local authorities seeking to strengthen protection of the living world and transform the place accorded to trees in public decision-making.

This first municipal recognition sends a powerful signal to all local and regional authorities wishing to place their actions within a framework of long-term responsibility toward trees, ecosystems, and future generations.

CONGRATULATIONS

La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus and the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights extend their warmest congratulations to the Municipality of Terrasse-Vaudreuil, its Municipal Council, the Environment Committee, André Desrochers, Yenny Vega Cárdenas, and all citizens who contributed to this historic advance.

Today, one municipality has opened the way.

Tomorrow, we hope that many others will follow.

Official documents

Terrasse-Vaudreuil municipal resolution of 9 June 2026

[Download the municipal resolution](#)

Official press kit concerning the first municipal adoption

[Download the press kit](#)

Further reading

- **[Global Appeal for the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights - 18 November 2018](#)**
- **[Official Framework of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights](#)**
- **[Christopher D. Stone and the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights](#)**

Official institutional contact

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OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION

Published by La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus

This publication is issued under the authority of La Compagnie des Papillons Bleus, the founding organization and official institutional steward of the Universal Declaration of Tree Rights and its international institutional framework.

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