

## Episode 1: The Gault Nature Reserve

**00:03 Sheetal:** Welcome to *Voices from the Footnotes*, a podcast series presented by the McGill University Libraries' ROAAr team. Each episode we will explore some of the hidden histories at McGill, looking at places, people and artifacts. The library collections are rich and interesting, but this series flows from the silences also present. It is our desire to gather stories and share them. It is our goal is to highlight voices who have often been overlooked in histories and in archives. I am today's host, Sheetal Lodhia.

**[00:40]** Before we begin today's episode, we acknowledge that McGill University is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Nations. We recognize and respect the Kanien'kehà:ka as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

**01:01 Sheetal:** McGill's campus is well-known to Montrealers and to many Canadians. It's located primarily in downtown Montreal, beginning at Sherbrooke Street and heading north all the way up to Pine Avenue at the foot of Mont Royal. There is an additional campus, the MacDonald, or "mac campus" as it is known by McGillians, which is located west of the downtown campus on several acres of land. But did you know that McGill also owns some land in Mont St. Hilaire? it's called the Gault Nature Reserve.

**[01:35]** Today's episode will focus on the Gault Nature Reserve, what we know about its history based on McGill's archives, and how it is used today, especially by McGill's First Peoples' House.

**01:50 Paige:** I mean, if you've ever been there and if you've seen the lake up in the mountain, like it's just, I don't know, like it's almost like a perfect circle, with the steep mountains around it, like it's a gorgeous place. So you can tell, I think, you can tell that there, you know, Indigenous peoples have been there. You can tell a-and feel that it was a sacred place.

**02:17 Allan:** Uh [laughs] but there was also a significant, also cultural aspect where I think we had opportunity just for Indigenous people to be on the land, um, to take hikes, to walk, and just to be in one with nature that we wouldn't receive that if we were, you know, downtown campus.

**02:42 Sheetal:** The Gault Reserve on Mont St. Hilaire has a pretty long and storied history. And the thing is, we don't know the whole history. What we do know, we have pieced together through archives at McGill and through stories where we can. We know that the land was parcelled out by the French crown, and then sold to various owners over the years. We also know that McGill's ownership comes quite late in the story, and through a donation.

**[03:10]** I also want to mention that, as with many research endeavours, new information can often come to light as we are in the midst of creating our publication. That is true in this case. When we began this radio documentary project, and unbeknownst to us, McGill had begun to create a relationship with the Abenaki Community, who are the original stewards of this land.

We don't yet know all the history of the reserve, as much of it is still sacred knowledge among the Abenaki. You'll hear more about McGill's developing relationship later in the piece.

**[03:42]** First, let's get to some of the history we do know. And for that, we turn to Adria

**03:49 Adria:** So my name is Adria Seccareccia. I am, uh, archivist and liaison librarian at, uh, Rare Books and Special Collections at McGill library. And yeah, I mean, I work with, um, processing collections, archival collections, but also reference, uh, some, uh, teaching as well about, you know, archival literacy, and, uh, helping with research requests like this one [laughs].

**[04:16]** But the first timeline is really, became a-a timeline of property ownership, like I mentioned. Um, and it, it only starts in 1694 because, um, the records, or the narrative, the records, um, are kind of, um, telling our, you know, a history of, uh, when colonialists take this land and make it their property. And obviously, we know this land was around way longer [laughs] than that.

**[04:44]** Um, so yeah, so it begins in 1694, uh, when, um, the land is, um, given to, uh, Jean-Baptiste Hertel, um, as—and he becomes the first seigneur, um, of this, um, seigneurie de Rouville they called it. Um, the lot of land that ends up, um, being donated to McGill is really only a small portion of this large seigneurie. Um, from 1694 to, um, 1844, the seigneurie is intact in a sense and remains, um, within the family, the Hertel family, through inheritance until it's sold in 1844 to Thomas Edmund Campbell.

**05:31 Sheetal:** The timeline is fairly detailed, so alongside this podcast, we have online resources where you can see a visual timeline and more granular details of the history of Gault, including pictures. Look for the link in the show notes. You might also be wondering: what is the seigneurie system?

**05:50 Adria:** It's, it's based off of, um, like the French feudal system. But there's, um, okay, so it, it was adopted in 1627 in, in New France, and it's abolished in I think 1854. What essentially it is, is that, uh, influential colonists were given portions of land, or seigneuries, uh, in order to kind of encourage settlement.

**06:20 Sheetal:** Remember that France in the 1600s was a monarchy, and so the first settlers were responsible to the crown. In fact, it is assumed that all the “discovered” land is owned by the crown, with an officer acting in the king's place in New France through a crown company. The first crown company was originally run by Cardinal Richelieu. There was also a fee structure in this seigneurie system. Seigneurs are essentially Lords.

**06:48 Adria:** And these colonists became seigneurs and they either produced on the land themselves or they also, um, gave land to tenants, or assigned, had tenants on this land who would pay the seigneur rent to either produce on the land or to also extract resources like lumber or, um, hunting, things like this.

**07:13 Sheetal:** So, now getting back to the timeline. In 1844 is when we see a shift from francophone ownership to anglophone ownership, and that's through marriage. The Campbells sell off portions of land and Admiral Gault purchases some of it, which would later be donated to McGill.

**07:30 Adria:** And then, you know, the big, kind of like, milestone i-in, for the history of McGill is when Admiral Gault, uh, receives, um, or purchases part of Lot 306 in 1913, but also in 1913, he also purchases Lot, part, a portion of Lots 305 and 306 from, uh, Robert Peel William Campbell who was, um, the son of the, the first Thomas Campbell who got the property in 1844, or the, I should say the seigneurie rights in 1844.

**[08:04]** And so, from that point, um, you know, we know the story is that he then, uh, Admiral Gault then, donates this land to McGill in 18, uh, sorry, 1958, after he after, um, after he passes away. Um, but McGill also kind of acquired, um, other portions of this land, or the, or the surrounding area, uh, through another donation in 1959, um, from also I think another relative of the Campbells, but it seems like they also purchased portions.

**08:40 Sheetal:** As is typical with land ownership throughout history, sometimes the rights are murky and contested. In fact, the archives show that some parts of Mont St. Hilaire may not have even been Admiral Gault's to give.

**[08:53]** So, how has this land been used? Well, among other things, there were mines and claims to mining rights. There is a lake, Lac Hertel, which used to provide the surrounding municipality of Beloeil with water. McGill took part in gravel mining and in building many of the road infrastructures leading to and from these resources. In fact, the surrounding community did not like the noise and disturbances caused by the mining in the early 1960s.

**[09:23]** Resource extraction may have actually run rampant in the area if not for the fact that in 1978 — roughly 20 years after McGill owns a portion — Mont St. Hilaire was declared Canada's first Biosphere by UNESCO. That declaration entitled the mountain to protection against resource extraction. In the decade leading up the UNESCO declaration, the director of the Gault Nature Reserve also began putting policies in place to ensure that the land would be protected.

**09:56 Adria:** So, in 1963 and 1964, these kinds of conversations or questions, uh, lead to actually dividing the estate into three sections. Um, so there's the biological reserve, the recreational area, and, uh, a forest management area. But the need to kind of prioritize the conversation around, um, around preservation, um, really kind of gets more defined in 1969 with Alice Johansson,

**[10:31]** who sets up, um, kind of a committee to plan, to create a nature center, which is then ju- or even further justified by a study, um, done by the National Audubon Society in 1970. So, the center actually, because of, um, Alice Johansen's recommendations, but also I think, you know, the National Audubon Society's recommendations, the center is established in 1972, um, and in 1977,

**[11:01]** they kind of do this review of the master plan for the Gault estate and they re-identify these, these three zones, let's call them. So, the first becomes the Nature Center sector. Uh, then there's also [clears throat] the Research and Preservation sector and, um, the Development, uh, and Access, uh, sector. So, you know, the Nature Center was really meant to allow for the use of public trails,

**[11:31]** so that people could, you know, walk or, or um, interact with nature without having, with having as least harm as possible to the ecosystem. Um, and then the Research and Preservation sector is really kind of intended to be, uh, left, you know, "untouched" [laughs] as much as possible, um, and used for academic staff and students, really for all kinds of different research purposes.

**11:59 Sheetal:** And that's how the Gault Nature Reserve is largely known today, as an environmental research centre and nature conservation area. The water disputes among McGill and Beloeil was an example of McGill's push for preservation rather than resource extraction. We also look to the bequest of Admiral Gault, which outlines his interest in land stewardship. In the show notes, you will see a photo of a plaque in Gault's memory from September 29, 1964, which outlines his wish for the reserve.

**[12:29]** Gault himself was a businessman, involved in textiles and in the cotton industry. He financed a regiment for WWI called the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

**12:50 Sheetal:** As I mentioned at the beginning, we do not know some of Mont St. Hilaire's indigenous history. Indeed, the principle of absence has been one of the guiding forces of these podcasts: whose voices are we missing?

**13:14 Sheetal:** Where connections to the land or to the Abenaki community has occurred, it has come through individual efforts, and through the First Peoples' House. We spoke with Paige Isaac, former student and former director of First Peoples' House, about what it's like up there on the mountain.

**13:31 Paige:** I mean, if you've ever been there and if you've seen the lake up in the mountain like it's just, I don't know, like it's almost like a perfect circle, with the steep mountains around it, like it's a gorgeous place. So you can tell, I think, you can tell that there, you know, Indigenous peoples have been there. You can tell a-and feel that it was a sacred place. But it was only after a friend of mine, um,

**[14:01]** asked if I knew anything about it, like asked if I knew if it was a ceremonial place for Indigenous peoples, and you know, and I had to admit, like I didn't really know the history, you know. And as any place in, in North America, you know it's, it's a sacred place for Indigenous peoples, but you don't often get, have access to those stories, um, or that history.

**[14:26]** And so, yeah, I remember, you know, it was something that she would remind me every time she saw me, like "have you found anything out yet"? And, you know, "we need to do something", you know, "we need to bring ceremony to the place," you know, to that space and

make, you know. Um, so there was always this intrigue that I had but I didn't, you know, quite get to doing the research or speaking with, with Indigenous communities around that area to find anything out. Yeah, so it's still like a mystery to me, yeah.

**14:58 Sheetal:** Were you, were you glad that McGill sort of had this, you know, a place that, that most McGillians weren't really using?

**15:07 Paige:** Yeah, I mean I thought it was, um, yeah, I mean, you know, I thought it was pretty cool that there was, there was this connection, for sure. I actually went there as a student in one of my ecology classes. We went and took a walk around there and, um, yeah. Yeah, no, I mean I, I was happy to have that connection there when I was a, a student and an employee to just kind of, yeah, like maybe reclaim our, con- connection to that

**[15:37]** land even though, you know, a lot of our, a lot of the Indigenous students who went to McGill were from all over the place, right? So they might not have been aware of, of the history there, um, you know. But I think just being there, you can feel it, right? And there's like a change of energy when you, when you're out in natural spaces and so, you know, I think we, even though we might not be connected to the history, that we can kind of feel and be changed by just being there and taking in the beauty and breathing the air [laughs]. Yeah.

**16:07 Sheetal:** Paige is not the only one who described having a connection to this land. Tanya Lalonde, former and current student of McGill and former Family Care Officer at SEDE, also talks about the having a connection to this land and how that sparked the idea of an annual Indigenous student and staff retreat.

**16:26 Tanya:** I grew up in the country, so I grew up on a farm in Alberta and then I lived on an acreage in Alberta as well, so I've always been a country person. I didn't live in a city until I was 15 years old, um, that was my first time living in a city, taking a bus, going to a city school, all that kind of stuff, so it's like, I'm definitely a country kid, so I always find it extremely calming and, like,

**[16:56]** spiritual to be in a place where there's a lot of nature. And so I think that that connection to the land is very integral to, um, Indigenous culture and Indigenous people, and I think that, you know, I'm not the only one that feels that way. Um, yeah, like just being out there and hiking, uh, you know, usually we, we went in winter, so, uh, we do like big snow hikes and,

**[17:27]** uh, it's just, in the middle of a busy, stressful academic year, it was just such a nice break to look forward to, and I really liked that. I also really like, you know, eating communal meals together and talking and, um, you know, at night we would have like a fire outside, and we just hang out and joke around, and we'd have crafts out so that people could do like a beading project,

**[17:58]** or, I would always bring homework because it was kind of the, like a kid-free time for me to get some work done. Um so, there's people, you know, working on computers in the

corner, people doing crafting, people out by the fire, like it was just a very nice, communal, like sense of community, but with no pressure, like, um, it wasn't super structured, so there wasn't like "okay at three you have to do this,

at five, you do this." It was like very much, very organic in terms of how we, you know, structured the weekend, so I, I really like that too.

**18:37 Sheetal:** I asked Paige what it took to get the retreat going.

**18:41 Paige:** Yeah, so, you know, First Peoples' House was, you know, a service there to support Indigenous students and so, you know, we had a community of Indigenous students at the House, and there was also another program and I think it was a new program, uh, Indigenous Access McGill, and so they were also offering more support for Indigenous social work and nursing students. And so they, there was a cohort of Indigenous social work students and Tanya LaLonde was one of them.

**[19:10]** Um, and so you know, I was really, they were part of our, of our, of our community and it was one year, It was like an especially rough year I think, you know. Several of these students had something major going on in their life, whether, you know, I think it was like losing family members, there was, I remember there was, you know, suicide in the, in the family and like, a lot of rough things were happening that were affecting their well-being, um, and affecting their studies,

**[19:40]** and I think it was a, you know, I think it was Tanya who, who brought up the idea to one of their, the people running Indigenous Access McGill that a retreat could be a good idea. And, yeah, I think, you know, we were like "yeah, that sounds like a really great idea, how do we make this happen and, and what does this look like?" And, so, it—that began a collaboration. So, it was a First Peoples' House [and] Indigenous Access McGill collaboration, open to all Indigenous students.

**[20:11]** And, you know, uh, I think we identified the Gault Nature Reserve pretty early on, like I don't, you know, I think just being part of McGill, it was far enough out of the city, it was a natural, beautiful location, there was somewhere to stay. Um, you know, it all just kind of, sounded really good and, and we thought, why not? Let's, let's try this out and, you know, I would, I would, um, ask the students,

**[20:41]** like get a group of students who are interested in coming, we would meet beforehand and collaborate on the activities, like, you know, um, so we would gather ideas from the students and get a sense of what they wanted to do and try to make it a good community, community event and, you know, yeah that's it. It was kind of like a camping, camping weekend and something to, build community, right?

**[21:09]** So people, th-the students kind of actually, I think a big thing that we learned was that for them, just getting to know each other and building community within each other was really supportive. So it wasn't just, just getting away, it was really—I think that helped, you know

[laughs]. Get away from the city, get away from distractions, um, and get to know one another on a different level, um, I think that really helped build their friendships even like moving forward.

**21:36 Sheetal:** Allan Vicaire became director of First Peoples' House after Paige. He was also the Indigenous Education Officer at SEDE, and we spoke with him about his experiences there too.

**21:46 Allan:** Well, I was very lucky when I was at SEDE. I actually participated in the retreat, um, I would say several times. I don't know, maybe two or three times. So I had an opportunity to go out. I didn't stay the night there. Um, so I always did day trips. Uh, it wasn't until I took the, you know, the head of the First— director of the First Peoples' House. Then, I was like okay, I gotta, I gotta, I gotta bunk it with the students. Uh, so I had a little bit of luxury beforehand. Not to say I actually, I actually did enjoy, um, uh, bunking it with the students 'cause we actually had a lot of fun and, and just being me, we put on music, we did face mask.

**[22:17]** Uh, uh, [laughs] but there was also a significant, also cultural aspect where I think we had opportunity just for Indigenous people to be on the land, um, to take hikes, to walk, and just to be in one with nature that we wouldn't receive, that if we were, you know, downtown campus. So it was something where, it was just, it was, it was something that was really special, you know, for us *and* for the students. So we incorporated a mix of variety. Some was cul- some were cultural,

**[22:47]** but then some were just like, just bonding experiences, whether it was games, or watching a movie. But there were opportunities for drumming, for sharing circles, um, for craft, so we invited like Ben Jibo to come in and do some crafts. Uh, we did, on our spare time, beading, so we were looking at everyone's beading projects. I remember Ben Jibo, uh, he, he, he's a PhD student who, I, I believe just is going to be wrapping up his studies soon in the School of Social Work.

**[23:17]** And, uh, he's also part of Indigenous Access McGill, so he was really part of like bringing the beading in and that was something that was really great, to sit around, to talk. Some of us, some students will come and bead, but the others would just be on the couch, uh, reading, doing some of their, their, their, their schoolwork or anything that they had to do, or papers, and it was just a really relaxing time.

**23:38 Paige:** We, we did different things. We did a lot of, like, collages and we would bring photos and talk about, you know, and share, uh, like what it meant to us, so you know. So, a lot of thinking about family and relationships and where we come from and, um, we, you know one of our, one of my colleagues Kakwiranoron was a massage therapist, like before, [laughs] before coming to McGill and so he would do, sometimes he would like actually

**[24:08]** do massages on people and then he would do workshops on just like self-massage techniques. We would go hiking, we would make all of the meals together, we would watch movies, play games, um, yeah, there was this [laughs] one game, it was left at the First Peoples' House when I first got there. It was, it was a board game called TOPONA [laughs] st-stands for The Original People of North America.

**[24:39]** And it's a trivia game, and so we would play [audio lags] this trivia game about Indigenous Peoples of North America and it became a tradition, like we would play it every year to see who won TOPONA [laughs].

**24:51 Sheetal:** Describe the, the bunking. What did it look like? What is it, what was it like?

**24:56 Allan:** Yeah, so you would go in, so there was these two— so we would, uh, book these kind of two lodges that kind of, they didn't connect but they were beside each other. And then, uh, for each room there were four bunk beds, and we just divided it up, so, you know. But what happened i- when I took, you know, when I took the lead on this was I think we divided up by like grad students in one area and undergrads in the other, because I think the undergrads had more of a lively night, uh, being up,

**[25:26]** playing games, uh, you know, whether it was like, you know, Dungeons and Dragons at like one or two a.m. Um, and then, on our side we just went to bed early 'cause we were just old farts [laughs]. It was definitely the more, you know, y-you could definitely feel the vibe. So that's how, that's how it was.

**25:46 Sheetal:** What about meals? How did you, what did you do for meals?

**25:49 Allan:** Meals were very communal, so that was one of the, the most I think important part of, in that experience, like I think as Indigenous peoples, the community aspect. It wasn't just like, you know, everyone's— yeah, some people would do, would take their own individual, like, snacks. But when it came to the meals, people were coming together, they were cutting, they were chopping, “what do you need?” And then by the time we were done eating, then it was the cleaning, um, and everyone took their share. So, and that was something that was really important for all of us.

**[26:18]** And I think it was something that was well understood, like I didn't, I didn't, you know, have to say anything, or none of us, it's just everyone came together and just did what they had to do.

**26:27 Sheetal:** And how was it funded?

**26:29 Allan:** So first, it was funded by an Eberts fund, so we ac- First Peoples House has an endowed kind of, like, fund where they fund their activities, so they have access to that. Um, second, it was only for Indigenous students, so those who use this, th-th-the space. Um, um, and how it was advertised was through our Listserv, and when students self-identify as being



Indigenous through the application process, then we get our list and that's the information that we disseminate.

**[26:58]** And the reason why it's continued [indistinct], so, you know, it's still continued, you know, is because of the fact—of the success. People really enjoyed going out there, people loved it, and people who did it the year before were going to go again the year, you know, coming and then the year after, until they graduated, right? So I think that was really the key 'cause it was just like, people knew that they were going to have a good time. They, you know, we did a lot of fun things.

**[27:24]** Um, you know, so it's funny 'cause you have the, the two lodges, but then in the back you have this additional space so, so it was kind of like, I'm sure in the summer i-i-it would be easier to, to, to move as opposed to like minus 20 weather, but you could open the back and then you can go into this other space which we, we'd use for, I remember, you know, one year, uh, Jessica Barudin did, uh, uh, yoga, so we did yoga, you know. And I remember one year that it was me and a few students, that we just started to do some work outs, so we were just doing some like pushups and like some [indistinct],

**[27:54]** you know, we're getting the, o-o-our blood going and then, and then, I know there were, last year there were students who were really into games and they ended up making that a game space, where they were up till 3:00 a.m., um, uh, playing games. But what's important to note too, is that it, that, this, that retreat was also, there was no alcohol involved, right? So that's something that's important. But we made it so, where it was a respectful space where this is—there's no alcohol allowed in this space. So that we kept it really, we kept that intentionally dry, so.

**[28:25]** I was gonna say something, And then the food that, you know, unfortunately we didn't have, we didn't do traditional food, like, that we would normally do at the House. So at the House sometimes will have traditional feasts where we had moose and salmon. I think it was just more for logistics of, of, of, of, just like, you know, there was always a pasta night, there was, you know, uh, you know, maybe like a big salad. I'm trying to think [mumbles] lasagna, vegetarian lasagna, we had, you know what I mean? So we, we made it very easy because it was a jam packed, uh, weekend

**[28:56]** and we wanted to make it the easiest, um, kind of food. And like, at lunch it was kind of like, put all the stuff out for sandwiches, we made like a big like, you know, chickpea salad, and then, you know, and then people can eat whatever they want to eat, yeah.

**29:11 Sheetal:** I spoke with Tanya, Paige and Allan about land ownership and a little about the settler timeline of the reserve. One principle that they all made clear was that the concept of ownership of land – the western concept as we know it today – is not one shared by Indigenous people.

**29:28 Paige:** Well that's it, right? Like we don't own the land, but I think, you know, we would have used the land in different ways and felt connected to the land and known, you know, have

known the land and used it for, you know, survival and, and what not. Um, so yeah, for sure it was [clears throat] you know, even though I was happy to have that connection through McGill,

**[29:58]** it's always complicated, right? Because I think I had conversations with other friends, with some, some of my friends who were Abenaki, who, you know, didn't feel that connection to the place and, and were actually excluded and had to pay to get in there and, you know, so that definitely, um, leaves a bitter taste in your mouth and, you know. I think for a lot of Indigenous Peoples, like land is so important, right? Land, and language, and culture, and so,

**[30:28]** if you're not, you know, if you're excluded from that, for sure, it's not, uh, it's not a good feeling, right? And so [gulps] I, I do remember also mentioning that, I think I wrote that, you know, I think I wrote to the Gault, just, you know, informing them that, you know, this is what community is saying and, and you know, what can we open up this conversation, what can we do to enhance people's connection to, to that place that is likely very sacred and has a historical significance?

**31:02 Allan:** [laughs] Where do I begin, right? Uh, [laughs] it's just one of those things where I think w-w-we see, you know, not we, but I think the Western view is land as, as property, as buying, as ownership, um, monetizing the resources, uh, you know? A-A-And in some sense, like as Indigenous people, like, we use the land as resources, but we used it for what we needed, right? It wasn't this like mass production of like, a-a-a kind of capitalism, you know, a-a-and, and for those that, that run,

**[31:34]** you know, those types of operations gain th-the money a-and the resources as opposed to the rest of the population. You know, for us it was just we need it for ourselves and for the community that we were in, to sustain ourselves through the seasons and hardships of, of winter and summer, right? So it was our shelter, our food, and, and also how maybe some Nations even moved from different spots when the seasons changed, right? So for me, I think, there was that connection. I think there was always some sort of,

**[32:04]** I wouldn't say the term ownership, but an understanding back in the day of territories. I, I could say that where there was like, "here's Miq'Mah territory, here's the [name, indistinct]", a-a-a-and some sort of, kind of, you know, "borders" o-o-of where territories lie 'cause sometimes different Nations were enemies, right? Um, but that would be, that would be it, there was nothing that was really drawn.

**[32:26]** You know, as Indigenous people, like nothing is ours, I think in relation to the land, i-i-it's kind of a really kind of holistic approach. It's like we're there as the caretakers and the land also care takes us, you know, of our needs. You know, for many of us, who, not all of us, but for some of us who grew up on the land, you know, wherever their Nations were from, it kind of resonated them t-to be, uh, in one with nature.

**[32:51]** And it was always refreshing after, when we were coming back from the retreat, you know, to have had that experience, not just togetherness, as like a community, but also to be outdoors and to walk around. We would build a fire in the evening, um, 'cause there was a fire

pit, uh, we would take, you know, uhh, twice I took a walk up, all the way up to one of the top of the mountains during winter with some students, others would take hikes, there were some students who, who snowshoed. So, it was just an opportunity for us just to, to really

**[33:21]** feel connected and feel that, I don't want to say the term ownership, but at least I think the word I would use is the connection to the land that we normally don't have downtown.

**33:33 Sheetal:** Paige and I discussed Parks Canada and how Indigenous people now have free access to our parks.

**33:39 Paige:** I think similar to, um, you know, I think Parks Canada has done, done work on that to improve access for Indigenous Peoples and on a lot of the areas under their, uh, mandate, you know. And so I think, yeah, I think that should be similar to everywhere, [laughs] you know [Sheetal interjects: Yeah]. Whether it's like a provincial park or a local park, or, you know, that's something that I think, um, *at least*, you know, at the *very least*, that that could be done.

**34:08 Sheetal:** Yeah, I agree.

**[34:09]** Paige is clearly forward thinking, and also partly responsible for McGill's beginning of a relationship with the Abenaki. When she was head of First People's House, she began discussions with the Gault Reserve about waiving fees for Indigenous people. Well, as of June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and as part of its larger recognition and reconciliation mandate, McGill has created a partnership with the Grande Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki, welcoming its Nation's members to the reserve to practice cultural activities free of charge.

**35:00 Sheetal:** As always, look to our show notes for additional material, such as timelines, photos, links to archival material, and more. Many thanks to our guests Paige Isaac, Allan Vicaire and Tanya Lalonde, and to our dedicated researchers Adria Secaraccia and Michelle MacLeod. We also thank former Director of the Gault Nature Reserve, Martin Lechowicz (letch-o-vitz), for all his assistance. Thank you to Professor Nathalie Cooke, Director of this project at McGill Library's ROAAr team, and to Jacquelyn Sundberg, Associate Producer.

**[35:32]** Our title song called Happy Sandbox was composed by Mative and sourced from freesound.org. All composers are listed in our show notes. I'm Sheetal Lodhia, producer for this episode. Thanks for listening!