

The MRC des Laurentides Formalizes its 20-Year Agreement with EAK and Begins Work

A One-of-a-Kind Tourist Attraction in North America



Saint-Faustin–Lac-Carré, January 28, 2020 – On Sunday, January 26, the MRC des Laurentides and EAK Tree Top Walks inc. a wholly owned subsidiary of Erlebnis Akademie AG (EAK), a forward-thinking German company, signed a lease for twenty (20) years to give a second life to the former fish farm located in Saint-Faustin–Lac-Carré. Work will begin this spring to build the new tourist attraction, the Tree Top Walk, which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2021.

The parties signed a letter of intent in February 2019 and will work together in the long term to bring the Tree Top Walk project to life. It is an elevated walkway through the forest that incorporates activity and education in an entertaining way and a lookout tower above the treetops. The 40-metre-high tower will be the first of its kind built in North America. Nine (9) other sites are already in operation, including in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria. New Tree Top Walks in Alsace and on the German island of Usedom will begin operations in the summer of 2020, evidencing the enthusiasm for this increasingly popular activity.

Necessary work

It goes without saying that this site needed extensive restoration work that the MRC des Laurentides, as the site's manager, was required to carry out to ensure its sustainability. The project is timely as it will not only allow for restoring buildings, but also provide significant earning power and economic benefits to the region.



Preliminary illustration by PLA architectes Inc.

The start of a great vision

The Tree Top Walk is part of an integrated site improvement project to develop and rehabilitate the site, so it is expected that other projects will become integrated as well. Once the Tree Top Walk is established more detailed plans will be announced on an ongoing basis.

The MRC des Laurentides had established very specific project selection criteria to preserve this unparalleled heritage site. That is why the selection of the German company Erlebnis Akademie AG (EAK) resulted from a deep desire to enhance the environment while ensuring the economic vitality of the region and supplementing existing tourism offerings. This project fully meets these criteria while taking into account the desire to ensure that the site is accessible to the public.

A partnership built on trust

“We are truly proud of this partnership,” said Marc L’Heureux, Warden of the MRC des Laurentides. “We have established a relationship of trust with EAK, which has a proven track record with similar projects in Europe. As a result of the company’s concern over the environment and its construction expertise, it is sure to respect and preserve the heritage of the site. We couldn’t have hoped for anything better!”

The German company EAK was charmed by the site and the region and chose it over other possibilities around the world. It will invest a considerable amount in this major project. The MRC des Laurentides is committed to restoring heritage buildings, including the main building and all infrastructure, to make the project a reality.

“We are very excited about the launch of our first Tree Top Walk facility in North America, more specifically in Canada, and especially to have it located in Saint-Faustin–Lac-Carré in the Laurentians,” said Bernd Bayerköhler, CEO of EAK Tree Top Walk Inc. “The support of the MRC des Laurentides and the excellent frame conditions for the project made the difference and allowed us to move ahead with plans to make this project become true. We will continue to work closely with the MRC des Laurentides to ensure that this project is completed on time.”

About the Tree Top Walk

EAK’s project is to construct a 1250-metre-long treetop path from the main building with a 40-metre-high lookout tower. As part of the region’s overall tourism development, the project is intended to be a tourist attraction, but also an environmental education platform. The Tree Top Walk will become part of the wide range of tourist attractions offered in the region, at a reasonable price.

The main building and treetop path will also include various educational and experimental components, among others, based on the site’s history. The main building will include services such as a restaurant and a gift shop.

The Tree Top Walk and the on-site facilities will be easily accessible by everyone, including those with reduced mobility and children. For more information about the project, see “*Liste de questions et réponses: Projet de mise en valeur et de réfection du site de l’ancienne pisciculture à Saint-Faustin–Lac-Carré*” [Q&A: **project to develop and rehabilitate the former fish farm site in Saint-Faustin–Lac-Carré**] in the **Quoi de neuf à la MRC des Laurentides?** [what’s new in the MRC des Laurentides?] section of the mrclaurentides.qc.ca website (document available in French only).

About Erlebnis Akademie AG (EAK)

EAK is the leading European provider (construction and operation) of recreational facilities that are close to nature and that include components of natural and environmental education. It was founded in 2001 at Bad Kötzting, in the Bavarian Forest, and has been listed on the Börse München (Munich stock exchange) since December 2015. In Germany, it currently operates four sites: paths in the Bavarian Forest (2009), in the Black Forest (2014), in Saarschleife (2016) and at the Natural Heritage Centre Rügen (2013). It also operates paths in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria. Other projects in Germany and abroad are being planned. Since September 2018, EAK Tree Top Walks Inc. has represented EAK as a wholly owned subsidiary in Canada.

About the MRC des Laurentides

The MRC des Laurentides sustainably plans and showcases its land from a social, economic, cultural and environmental perspective. Its vision is to become a leader in authentic regional development that is adapted to the quality of life of its residents and the natural components of its land. The MRC des Laurentides is made up of 20 cities and municipalities over a vast area of approximately 2,500 km².



In order, Ms. Nancy Pelletier, Executive director at the MRC des Laurentides, M. Marc L'Heureux, Warden of the MRC des Laurentides, M. Bernd Bayerköhler, CEO of EAK Tree Top Walk Inc. and M. Nicolas Joly, Director of service environment and parks at the MRC des Laurentides, when they signed the lease

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