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To the Mayor and Councillors of Toronto City,

The Woodland League a not for profit NGO based in Ireland, who have formally sought the preservation of the 250 year old Red oak tree, which is the subject of current Motion MM9.1 deliberations, wish to draw your attention to the recent saving of a 200 year old veteran Redwood tree in Ireland. This action which we supported and provided assistance to the courageous citizen, Sharon Coade, who made a stand and empathised with this living national monument. Sharon made a very late intervention which led to this amazing tree having the opportunity to live on and continue to share its multiple benefits. This sends out a very clear and loud message of hope and empathy with the natural world upon which we all depend. See article at foot of letter.

The Redwood tree stood on Irish Department of Defence lands and was facing imminent destruction in order to minimise damage to a road caused by the expansion of its roots. One of the suggested actions we proposed to Sharon, was to directly contact the Minister for Defence , Simon Coveney, who had ultimate responsibility, and to his credit the Redwood was saved.

It is so heartening to see a politician doing the right thing and especially so in light of the very recent UN agreement in New York, whereby 193 Nations **including Canada**, signed up to the UN SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals). These SDG's are the latest commitment by many Nations to achieve the Rio 1992, Principles of Sustainable Development, to balance the social, environmental and economic pillars of all societies. The Rio mantra of “ **Think Globally, Act Locally** ”, is still very relevant today and particularly in the case of this veteran **Red Oak Tree**. We also have the COP 21 negotiations in Paris from November 30th to December 11th, when 196 Nations will seek to agree on how to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and keep global warming below 2 degrees.

The Woodland League therefore feel that it would be a most timely and appropriate gesture by Toronto City Council, on behalf of the Canadian people, to lead by example and pass **Motion MM9.1 to Protect a 250 Year Old Red Oak Tree in Toronto, Canada** to ensure that this veteran tree can live out its remaining life in the peace and dignity, it so obviously deserves. Do not lose sight of the fact that trees are the ultimate exponents of Sustainable Development, they work night and day on behalf of all living beings, providing our Oxygen, cleaning our Water, making our Soil, seeking nothing in return. They build themselves up into incredible carbon stores, without ever needing to open a quarry or a mine. They stand in glorious majesty hosting abundant wildlife to remind us of how wonderful this fragile earth and our blessed lives truly are.

The Woodland League stand in solidarity with Faith Rivers and the Mississaugas People on whose ancient territory this tree stands, we also believe that this tree is a “ Sacred Tree ” by virtue of its great age, silent witness to history and accumulated wisdom. This tradition of Sacred Trees was very much part of the old Gaelic order in Ireland. The Gaelic/Irish word for a tree of this character is “ **Bile** ”, it is used to describe trees treated with a certain reverence which afforded them protection from wilful damage. (*Ref, The Sacred Trees of Ireland, A.T. Lucas, 1963*).

The tradition remains alive in Ireland, although much diminished like the great Irish forests, to be found in remote rural areas and these days mostly associated with trees at holy wells (springs), protecting the water. Sacred Trees imply a connectedness and respect for nature which has sadly been lost to modern societies, but not forgotten.

Finally, the Woodland League note with dismay that this tree was first proposed for designation with heritage status in July 2007, by Mr Jack Radecki Executive Director of the Ontario Urban Forest Council. Mr Peter Wynnyczuk the present OUFCE Executive Director, sent a registered letter dated September 21, 2015 to City Hall with a hard copy of this document. According to your website, the letter proposing this is shown however the attached report is missing.. Why was this not followed through in 2007 and why is all of the relevant information not in the public domain today.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/mm/comm/communicationfile-55877.pdf>

We will leave the last word to a Brehon Poet of the Gaelic order, Daibhì Ò Bruadair (circa 1700 ad), lamenting the loss of the great Irish forests in his famous poem Caoine Cill Chais (Lament for kilcash oakwood). The ancient Brehon laws of Ireland included tree protection 2000 years ago, with a system of penalties for wilfully damaging trees. The Brehons were the lawyers of the day who recited the law as poetry from their heart..

**“ Cad a dhèanamhfaimid feasta gan admad? Tà deireadh na gcoillte ar làr ”
Translated to “ What will we do without wood ? Now that the forest lies low ”**

Signed,
Andrew St Ledger,
PRO The Woodland League.

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Tuesday 27th October 2015 **WICKLOW Times** NEWS 3

Bray Redwood tree saved

Concerns were raised by residents in Charnwood on the Vevay Road in Bray recently over the future of a nearby large mature redwood tree located inside the gates at Rockbrae House. However, it was learned late last week that the tree will not be cut down as originally feared.

One of the residents of Charnwood, Sharon Coade, intervened in the cutting down of the tree on 9th October. Ms Coade said she rushed to the scene when she heard the chainsaw and prevented the tree surgeons from cutting it down. Another redwood tree on the grounds had been identified as being diseased and in need of felling.

Following enquiries from local Green Party councillor Steven Matthews no further work on the Redwood is to be carried out without consultation. The Department confirmed late last week that the tree can be saved and maintained by the removal and pruning of ivy/saprotrophs.

Cllr Matthews contacted the Department of Defence who informed him that following an assessment carried out on the trees at Rockbrae earlier this month, one Redwood was identified as needing felling due to disease.

"A second tree, a 22-metre mature *Willingtonia Siquaria* - a species of redwood tree - does not appear to need felling and issues concerning it can be addressed by pruning," Cllr Matthews told Wicklow Times.

"I will stay in contact with the Department engineer to try and protect this tree from any unnecessary works and to keep the concerned residents informed. Legally the Department are responsible for the maintenance of trees on the land and have an obligation to take action where a tree becomes diseased or dangerous, especially given the close proximity of Charnwood residents and public roadways to the area.

"Wicklow County Council are currently producing the County Development Plan which will include Tree Preservation Orders. If anyone is aware of an individual or group of trees that would merit a preservation order please make a submission to Wicklow County Council in the coming weeks or contact me and I will assist," said Cllr Matthews.

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The large mature Redwood tree located inside the gates at Rockbrae House.