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THE SOUTH MARCH HIGHLAND FOREST
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A unique deciduous forest of 1100 hectares exists within the city of Ottawa limits. It is called The South March Highland Forest. The trees are extraordinary, because of the genetic pool they represent. The soil is rich in the divalent cation called calcium, which confers on these trees their great health. This, added to a subsurface aquifer spells an ability of these trees to withstand the dire effects of disease and climate change.

The collective genome of this forest is singular. A trunk bole height of 60 –70 feet is common to almost all species. The boles are straight and true to a covering canopy. This in itself indicates a gene pool of a very ancient source of perhaps 400 million years of development. In the forest itself, there is a 25 foot in circumference fingerprint stool of Fagus grandiflora, the American Beech, just one of many. The White Ash, Fraxinus alba, are the largest in diameter, approximately 5 feet, in the area, if not in Eastern Canada. A natural graft twin between F. alba and Carya cordiformis, the butternut hickory is a scientific first and demands of itself research and investigation. There is also a melding of the Carolinian forest system in these woods, carpinus caroliniana, American hornbeam or bluebeech, stands out as an important medicinal tree of the Birch family. In addition, the increasingly rare Betula Intea, yellow birch, is seen holding its own for height. This tree, too, is medicinal for men.

The South March Forest is developing a floor canopy of ferns. These, too, show fingerprints of the past of virgin forest systems. Dryopteris Felis-mas, being just one and is common to all deciduous forests including temperate rainforests across the world.

Each tree specie with its flux of calcium is responsible for forty species of insects, animals, and birds. Some rare. Some endangered. This is no small matter of biodiversity for the area. These cratures form the web of life upon which, ours, too, depends.

The trees help oxygenate the air for the city of Ottawa. They reduce and eliminate particulate pollution of 2.5 microns and less, which is important for the health of the young and old. The mix of trees of South March has an extraordinary ability to fight climate change because the woods are endowed with Carya ssp. of trees. These trees have a colossal thirst for carbon dioxide on a daily bases during their growing season. This forest, too, produces aerosols some of which are antiviral and antibiotic. The benefit of these trees has never been measured in dollars.

All across the Europe of today, it is indeed a criminal act to remove such a forest from the face of the planet. They are cherished and preserved as is St. Johns Forest in London, England and Central Park in New York, not to mention the green space of Stockholm Sweden. Faceless names and nameless faces like KNL have to be dealt with, either, by exploration of the deed of donation on their part. Cities represent culture, and our combined culture is not just represented by concrete. It is the song of the Chickadee or the Yellow Billed Cuckoo. If it is not, what excuse will we ever have for our children?