

# NORTH HARRICANA RIVER AQUATIC RESERVE

IN A  
NUTSHELL...



Harricana river <sup>(1)</sup>



Moose <sup>(2)</sup>

*Harricana : geographic name derived from the Algonquin noun Nanikana,  
which means « The main road »*

*It is also called anâkona (Algonquin), uhnahkoonah (Ojibway) and ayukoona'w (Cri),  
or, locally, Inikana, Algonquin term meaning « river road »*

The proposed aquatic reserve covers an area of 250.8 km<sup>2</sup>. It comprises a corridor between 1.5 km and 4.5 km wide, taking in the main bed of the Harricana River and the slopes of its valley, from km 125 to km 32, in other words the northern section of the river. Its boundaries coincide with what is visible to an observer from the valley line. The proposed aquatic reserve, which stops at the Ontario boundary, lies within the territory of the Baie-James Municipality, to which the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement applies.

The area is typical of large hydrosystems ecological conditions in the natural province of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands and, in particular the natural region of the James Bay Coastal Plain and the Turgeon River Plain. It belongs to the bioclimatic field of mossy spruce stands.

The river's watershed covers an area of 29 300 km<sup>2</sup>. Along with the Nottaway, Broadback, Rupert and Eastmain rivers, it is one of the main watercourses in the natural province. Its source lies in the Blouin, De Montigny, Lemoine and Mourier lakes, close to Val-d'Or. It flows northward, crosses the Ontario border and empties into James Bay, with a total length of around 533 km. Its course through the proposed aquatic reserve is relatively straight.

Over one-third of the area of the proposed aquatic reserve is composed of peat bogs. Trees grow sparsely on another third of the reserve; the stands are mostly softwoods, namely black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*).

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The proposed aquatic reserve is home to two stations of vascular plants living in palustrine habitats that are likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable because of their limited distribution and the loss of their habitat: a flower from the composite family, the Prairie Aster (*Solidago ptarmicoides*), and one from the sedge family, the Richardson's Sedge (*Carex richardsonii*).

### Conservation Objectives

Aquatic reserve status would allow the pursuit of the following conservation objectives:

- the conservation of a river representative of the regional hydrosystems;
- the preservation of biodiversity in aquatic and peat-based ecosystems;
- the acquisition of new knowledge concerning natural and cultural heritage.

The objectives implementation and site management will be based upon a partnership between the ministère de l'Environnement and the local stakeholders.

### Activity Regulation

From now on, the territory of North Harricana River aquatic reserve is excluded from all forms of forestry operations, mining exploration and operations as well as energy production. Any type of activity likely to degrade the bed, banks or shores or to otherwise affect the integrity of the watercourse is prohibited. The practices and rights in effect regarding fishing, hunting and trapping are maintained.

### Next Events...

According to the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*, adopted by the Government in December of 2002, public hearings on the proposed aquatic reserves shall be held to allow the population, organizations and enterprises to comment on the conservation plan to be adopted, and that, before the final deposit of the conservation plan. These hearings shall be held in compliance with the provisions of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.



Harricana river (3)



Prairie Aster (1)



Richardson's Sedge (4)

Photos :

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