



Protected areas
in Québec:

A Lifelong Heritage

Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka



CONSERVATION PLAN

Québec 

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
1 THE TERRITORY OF THE BIODIVERSITY RESERVE	2
1.1 CONSERVATION PROJECT BACKGROUND	2
1.2 OFFICIAL TOPONYM	2
1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	2
1.4 ECOLOGICAL PORTRAIT.....	3
1.5 OCCUPATION AND LAND USE.....	5
2 CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT	5
2.1 PROTECTION OF THE BIODIVERSITY	5
• <i>Rationalization of the use of snowmobiles:</i>	6
• <i>Protection of the natural character of the landscapes:</i>	6
• <i>Knowledge acquisition and follow-up:</i>	6
2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION	7
• <i>Offer education and awareness activities:</i>	7
• <i>Harmonizing uses:</i>	8
3 ZONING	8
3.1 ZONE I.....	8
3.2 ZONE II	9
4 ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK	9
4.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK UNDER THE <i>NATURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION ACT</i>	9
4.2 OTHER ACTIVITIES GOVERNED BY OTHER LAWS	10
5 MANAGEMENT	11
5.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS.	11
5.2 PARTICIPATION OF OTHER ACTORS AND INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT	11
5.3 FOLLOW-UP.....	12
CONCLUSION	12
BIBLIOGRAPHY	13
APPENDIX 1 : RÉSERVE DE BIODIVERSITÉ UAPISHKA : TERRITORY LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT	15
APPENDIX 2 : RÉSERVE DE BIODIVERSITÉ UAPISHKA : BOUNDARIES AND TERRITORY USE	17
APPENDIX 3 : RÉSERVE DE BIODIVERSITÉ UAPISHKA : ZONING	19
APPENDIX 4 : ACTIVITIES FRAMEWORK IN THE RÉSERVE DE BIODIVERSITÉ UAPISHKA	21

Introduction

In May 2002, the Québec government took the necessary administrative measures to ensure the protection of part of Monts Groulx by prohibiting the main industrial activities likely to jeopardize the conservation of that environment (forestry, hydroelectricity and mining activities).

The legal provisional status of proposed biodiversity reserve was officially granted to this part of Monts Groulx on June 19, 2003, under section 90 of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01).

By attributing a status of permanent protected area to the *Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka*, the Québec government provides definitive protection to representative samples of the biodiversity of the Central Laurentides Mountains natural province (Li and Ducruc, 1999) and specifically ecosystems that are representative of the natural region of the Sainte-Marguerite plateau, which is characterized by a plateau covered in a very dense network of fractures that make up an alternating pattern of parallel hills and valleys.

This biodiversity reserve is integrated into a vast network of representative and exceptional protected areas that cover Québec's various types of ecosystems. It was selected mainly for its particular features related to the ecosystems it shelters. The creation of the *Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka* aims to protect a mountain range where the vegetation succession extends from the boreal forest to the tundra. All these ecosystems contain a unique biodiversity and the fact that they are found in such a small area is exceptional in itself. The grand landscapes are another reason justifying the selection of this site. These landscapes are in fact already enjoyed by a good number of hikers who visit the area.

On March 31, 2003, the Minister of the Environment mandated the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) to hold a public consultation on the

proposed Monts Groulx (Uapishka) and Île René-Levasseur (Météorite) protected area projects. The BAPE's mandate began on April 11, 2003, and ended on September 11 of the same year. The commission held public hearings in Baie-Comeau on May 12 and 13, and June 9 and 10, 2003. The BAPE's investigation and public consultation report (report 181) was submitted to the Minister of the Environment in September 2003.

The commission recommended assigning permanent status as soon as possible to the protected areas given the strong local and regional support they received.

This conservation plan was developed by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) further to the consultation and recommendations of the BAPE. It sets forth the vision of the conservation and development of the territory of the *Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka*. It reiterates a large part of the document prepared by the Ministère in April 2003 for the public consultation and takes into account the recommendations in BAPE report no. 181. The conservation plan thus reflects the concerns of all the government and non-government players involved, within the context of the project, in the implementation of the Strategic action plan for protected areas.

The objective of this conservation plan is to inform the public about the legislative framework that will apply to the biodiversity reserve. Section 4 of the document introduces the Activities framework, which is completed by the standards additional to those in the act found in Appendix 4. The conservation plan also aims to guide the Management Committee, which will be created by specifying the conservation and development objectives specific to the *Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka*. These objectives, found in sections 2.1 and 2.2, are summarized as follows:

- Protecting the biodiversity;
 - Rationalise use of snowmobiles;
 - Protect the natural character of the landscapes;

- Encourage knowledge acquisition and follow-up;
- Develop the territory;
 - Offer education and awareness raising activities;
 - Harmonise uses.

1 The territory of the biodiversity reserve

1.1 Conservation project background

Since the construction of Route 389 in 1987, the territory of Monts Groulx has been visited by numerous hikers, skiers and backcountry enthusiasts.

In 2000, the *Les Amis des Monts Groulx* association was officially formed with the objective to protect the natural integrity of the massif.

In May 2001, the Manicouagan regional tourism association (ATRM) submitted an initial proposal for application of the status of UNESCO's World Biosphere Reserve to the territory including Monts Groulx, the Manicouagan astrobleme and the Daniel-Johnson dam (Messier *et al.* 2001). The *Comité de création de la Réserve de la biosphère Manicouagan - Uapishka* was formed to pursue this objective and their efforts were rewarded when, on September 20, 2007, the Manicouagan – Uapishka World Biosphere Reserve was officially designated. This recognition by UNESCO is not a legal designation but allows for efforts to be recognized in terms of sustainable development and the particular links between people and nature.

The First Nation Pessamit Innu also manifested an interest in the conservation of the Monts Groulx massif. In fact, the Agreement-in Principle of General Nature between the Mamuitun First Nations and the governments of Québec and Canada signed in the fall of 2002 provides for the creation of Innu parks in Nitassinan, notably the Monts Groulx regional park.

A regional park was also envisaged by the RCMs of Caniapiscau, Manicouagan and

Sept-Rivières in the Monts Groulx territory.

The creation of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka therefore supports a regional desire to protect the territory and reflects the sustainable development view taken with world biosphere reserves.

1.2 Official toponym

The official name is Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka. Uapishka is the name given by the Innu to the Monts Groulx massif and means “rocky summits always covered in snow” (Drapeau 1994).

1.3 Geographical location

The location and boundaries of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka are shown on the maps provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

LOCATION

The Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka is located on the North Shore, between 51°21' and 51°48' north latitude and 67°34' and 68°21' west longitude. It is situated approximately 325 km north of Baie-Comeau and is accessible from the west by Route 389, which links Baie-Comeau to Fermont. It protects the western portion of the Monts Groulx massif. It partially covers the unorganized territories of Rivière-Mouchalagane, Rivière-aux-Outardes and Lac-Walker, which are part of the regional county municipalities (RCM) of Caniapiscau, Manicouagan and Sept-Rivières. The western limit of the biodiversity reserve follow the Réservoir Manicouagan while the eastern limit follows the residual portion of the Réserve de biodiversité projetée des monts Groulx for which a status of ecological reserve is considered.

Route 389 runs from north to south through the western part of the biodiversity reserve. The average right-of-way width of the road in the protected area is 35 metres. The current actual right-of-way of Route 389 is excluded from the biodiversity reserve.

1.4 Ecological portrait

DIMENSIONS AND BOUNDARIES

The revised boundaries chosen by the Ministère for obtaining the status of biodiversity reserve cover 1,382 km². This does not include the part of the former Réserve de biodiversité projetée des mont Groulx which is to be given the status of ecological reserve as the Lande-alpine-des-Monts-Groulx ecological reserve (Appendix 2). The boundaries of the reserve correspond to the maximum critical water level of the Réservoir Manicouagan, which is 362.71 metres.

The area represented by the different land rights granted inside the perimeter of the biodiversity reserve prior to its creation are excluded from the final boundaries. The restrictions and prohibitions provided for activities under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* therefore do not apply to the excluded areas. The areas excluded are approximately 4,000 m² for each lease for private vacation purposes. These areas are approximately 4,000 m² for each of the six vacation leases and the tourism site, 3,600 m² for the telecommunications site, and 100 m² for the temporary shelter.

The legal boundaries of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka are defined in the technical description prepared by surveyor Claude Vincent in the minutes as follows: *réserve de biodiversité Uapishka*, minute: 6134.

ACCESS

The biodiversity reserve is accessible from the west by Route 389, which links Baie-Comeau to Fermont.

Three hiking trails, which start from kilometres 335, 350 and 365 on Route 389 provide access to the interior of the reserve. Also, two snowmobile trails, which both start at kilometre 337 on Route 389 gave snowmobilers access to the plateau before this activity was prohibited at the summits.

The Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka lies within the Central Laurentides Mountains natural province. It protects the natural settings that are representative of the natural region of the Sainte-Marguerite plateau.

CLIMATE

The area is characterized by a cold, subpolar and subhumid continental climate, with a short growing season (Gerardin and M^cKenney, 2001). It belongs to the bioclimatic field of mossy spruce stands (Ministère des Ressources naturelles, 2003).

GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

The Monts Groulx massif is in the Grenville geologic province, which is formed of Precambrian rocks deformed over one billion years ago during the Labradorian and Grenvillian orogenies. The bedrock is mainly gabbronorite, a mafic rock rich in magnesium and iron. The rocky basement in the northern part of the biodiversity reserve consists of anorthosite, a mafic igneous rock, while in the eastern part, it is formed of metamorphic rocks, in this instance gneiss and paragneiss. Over time, the zone of igneous rock protected a part of the metamorphic rocks from erosion, which contributed to the formation of the Monts Groulx massif. Certain layered sequences of metamorphic rock contain paragneisses and quartzites, as may be observed to the southwest of Lac Mora and in the area around Lac Boissinot.

The Monts Groulx massif is a tabular mass with a long plateau surrounded by steep flanks in the uppermost part. Several slightly convex peaks are over 1,000 m in altitude. The altitude varies from approximately 360 m at the edge of the Réservoir Manicouagan to 1,104 m at the summit of Mont Veyrier. The Monts Groulx is the third largest of its kind in Québec in terms of area and the sixth highest. From a geomorphologic perspective, the peaks of the highland have rocky outcrops. The flanks are covered with a deposit of till that is up to several metres thick in the concave parts of the longer

slopes. The valley bottoms are covered with recent alluvial deposits, fluvial deposits, and frequently peat-covered sandy, fluvio-glacial deposits.

HYDROGRAPHY

The Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka is in the Rivière Manicouagan watershed, which feeds three large rivers, the Rivière Toulnois-tou, the Rivière Hart Jaune and the Rivière Manicouagan. The drainage system is formed mainly of headwater streams, associated with twenty or so small lakes that occupy shallow depressions.

VEGETATION

The vegetation of the Monts Groulx mountains changes with altitudinal cline. From the base of the slopes to an altitude of approximately 700 m, the forest is mainly black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), with some white spruce (*Picea glauca*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) and trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). Above 700 m, the deciduous trees disappear, the cover opens up and white spruce becomes more frequent. Above 800 m, cover density and tree size decrease, and the heath, also found in sheltered valleys on the plateau, begins. The number of trees decreases with increasing altitude. A few resistant, isolated specimens of krummholz forms of spruce and fir can be found in some slightly protected topographic positions. Generally, the tree line is situated at approximately 900 m. Above this altitude, the landscape is an alpine heath where the vegetation is dominated by arctic-alpine plants. The proportion of different types of cover in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka is similar to what is found throughout the Monts Groulx massif.

Of the vegetation of Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka, four species are designated as threatened, vulnerable or likely to be threatened or vulnerable. They are a fern (*Athyrium alpestre subsp. americanum*), two species from the composite family (*Agoseris aurantiaca* and *Gnaphalium norvegicum*) and one species from the rose family (*Alchemilla glomerulans*).

WILDLIFE

The Monts Groulx massif is also believed to shelter one threatened species, the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), which was designated as threatened in March 2000. A forest ecotype of the woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), designated as vulnerable in March 2005, was observed on the mountains. Four other animal species with protection status are also present in the area: the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) designated as vulnerable in March 2005, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) designated as vulnerable in September 2003, the rock vole (*Microtus chrotorrhinus*) and the least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) both likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable.

Among the birds inventoried, three species have particular heritage significance: the willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*), the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and the rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*).

OUTSTANDING ELEMENTS

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune has identified two exceptional forest ecosystems (EFE) within the boundaries of the biodiversity reserve. They are old-growth montane white spruce stands which have been undisturbed by human activity or have not recently experienced any natural disturbances. This type of forest ecosystem is rare in Québec.

1.5 Occupation and land use

The occupations and uses in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka are shown on the map in Appendix 2. Route 389, which crosses the western part of the biodiversity reserve, is excluded from the reserve.

The territory lies within the Bersimis and Saguenay beaver reserves in which the Innu have special rights for the hunting and trapping of fur-bearing animals. There are four traplines located in the Bersimis beaver reserve and one in the Saguenay beaver reserve. The status of biodiversity reserve does not affect their rights and traditional practices. No archaeological site has been identified on the territory of the biodiversity reserve.

Nine land rights have been granted within the perimeter of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka:

- 7 are for private vacation resort purposes;
- 1 for commercial tourism purposes;
- 1 authorization for a hiking trail with authorization to build 8 camping platforms.

The interior of the biodiversity reserve is accessible by three trails located at:

- kilometre 335 of Route 389, at the site referred to as Camp Nomade;
- kilometre 365, at the site referred to as Camp Matsheshu;
- kilometre 350 (a cross-country ski trail).

A new trail reaches Mont Harfang from Route 389.

Before the assignment of permanent status and its associated regulations, there were a number of trails used by snowmobilers to reach the peaks:

- at kilometre 337 on Route 389, two trails go from the old prospector outfitter;
- the winter trail on Rivière Touloustouc;
- the winter trail on Rivière Beaupin;
- the winter trail on Rivière Le torrent.

A number of activities, including hiking, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, telemarking and dogsled tours, are carried on in these mountains. There are approximately 500 visitors to the area each year. Some hunting and fishing is carried on in the southern and western parts. Snowmobiling was also practiced at the summits before permanent protection status was obtained and is now limited to the area below 800 metres (section 2.1).

2 Conservation and development

This section describes the management orientations with regard to conservation and development of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka. Specific objectives to be reached are also presented in order to target the conservation and development priorities.

2.1 Protection of the biodiversity

Management of the biodiversity reserve must serve to protect the existing ecosystems and the species that depend on them. This also means enabling the currently disturbed ecosystems to regain their balance and natural characteristics.

Protection of the biodiversity must also be associated with the protection of the landscapes, as well as the existing types of occupation and use, compatible with the protection of the biodiversity reserve. Management of the existing occupations and activities must ensure that they have minimal negative impact on the biodiversity. In the event that archaeological sites are discovered, the archaeological heritage

must also be protected and developed.

The conservation challenge of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka consists in preserving the ancient ecosystems and fragile arctic-alpine vegetation at the summits and upper plateaus while enabling the pursuit of outdoor activities that the area is famous for. In this context, it would be interesting to encourage the acquisition of knowledge on the support capacity of this environment with regard to recreational and tourism activities.

Specific objectives:

- *Rationalization of the use of snowmobiles:*

Monts Groulx is an increasingly popular destination with snowmobilers. However, use of the snowmobile has negative impacts on the natural setting. Snowmobiles can have a negative impact on the vegetation of the alpine tundra (Greller, 1974), caribou (Simpson, 1987), wildlife in general (Bury, 1978) and on the environment (Greer, 1979). Thus, snowmobile use may have an impact on the biodiversity of the reserve. In fact, the Uapishka reserve shelters woodland caribou designated as vulnerable and vegetation at the summits is particularly sensitive to snowmobile traffic given the thin snow cover in these areas. Plants with protection status have been identified on the slopes, plateaus and summits of the biodiversity reserve. Thus, under the principle of precaution and section 9 of the activity framework (Appendix 4), snowmobiling is prohibited in the sectors where the altitude is over 800 metres (Zone I). Appropriate signposting will serve to advise snowmobilers.

Rationalizing the use of snowmobiles will also mean the creation of an awareness raising program for snowmobilers. The awareness program will focus on respect for other users, education regarding impacts of the snowmobile and on proposals for alternative routes.

- *Protection of the natural character of the landscapes:*

Monts Groulx is known for its remarkable

landscapes and for its natural quality. This reputation attracts in fact attracts more and more visitors. The Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs wishes to maintain the quality of these landscapes. Part of these landscapes seen from Mont Groulx is in fact protected by two other protected areas: the Réserve de biodiversité de la Météorite and the Réserve écologique Louis-Babel.

One of the ways proposed to reach this objective is first to make users aware of the impacts of their practices on the territory and inform them about the different ways to reduce the impact. The Ministère will also help the partners restore the polluted sites identified in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka. Equally, users of the territories surrounding the protected area must be made aware of the preservation of quality landscapes. The creation committee of the Manicouagan - Uapishka World Biosphere Reserve has already carried out a great deal of work in this regard and the expertise that is gained will be useful.

- *Knowledge acquisition and follow-up:*

Monts Groulx are of great interest for scientific research and education, since they have a tremendous variety of settings, ecological conditions, species and landscapes. The current state of knowledge offers good possibilities for researchers from highly diverse fields such as biology, forest ecology, alpine ecology, geology and tourism. Moreover, given that studies of arctic settings Monts Groulx by road could be of interest to more than one researcher. The different research can enrich future educational programs that will be developed.

Knowledge acquisition, in addition to contributing a great deal to reaching the specific objectives stemming from the principle of protecting the natural heritage, would serve to provide a description and follow-up of the biodiversity and natural character. In fact, knowledge of the wildlife and vegetation of Monts Groulx are incomplete and inventories could be done with the help of the partners. Knowledge acquired could also contribute to development of discovery,

education, and awareness activities. Finally, it will help managers in their understanding of the operation and evolution of the ecosystems, analysis of development proposals and facilitate a mutual understanding of the issues with management partners.

Ecological knowledge, notably that of the support capacity of the settings, and knowledge of the impact of recreational and tourism activities on the natural environment, should be developed in order to appreciate the riches of the territory and to have the data and tools needed for management that is respectful of the territory's biodiversity.

As part of the rationalization of snowmobile use, a study program must be set up with help from the partners. The program will enable the impact of snowmobiles on the alpine vegetation to be studied in the case where the management committee would recommend authorization of the snowmobile in an alpine zone that is less sensitive and occupied by rare or threatened species.

Follow-up on use of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka could also be envisaged even if the territory is for the moment not visited extensively. However, users of the area have noted an increase in visitors, particularly snowmobiles. Granting permanent protection status to this territory may serve to increase its reputation which is likely to increase traffic. Given its fragility, any uncontrolled increase will create a great deal of pressure on the area, both from hikers and snowmobilers. Moreover, the open forests of the plateau valleys do take well to the cutting of dead trees for campfires. Indeed, tree density is low in these areas and their regeneration and growth is slow. In the mid-term, these ecosystems will be lost in some areas. Multiplication of these campfires could change the landscape, since once they are extinguished, they leave a mark on the landscape. Thus, abusive use of the territory could have negative consequences on these landscapes: garbage, trampling, increased number of campfires, woodcutting, etc. The peat bogs, beaches, floodplains, permafrost and alpine heaths are all environments that could be affected

by a too high level of humans in the biodiversity reserve. The follow-up of the use could therefore serve to adjust the future control measures and awareness programs according to increases in the signs of degradation.

2.2 Sustainable development and education

The level of use and occupation of the biodiversity reserve is relatively low but the fragility of the ecosystems is significant. Sustainable development can only be possible if it is limited and well structured. In this context, new activities or new facilities that contribute to the territory's development must not conflict with the existing ones, nor, through the cumulative effects of the impacts, exceed the environment's support capacity. In the absence of precise knowledge of the support capacity, the principle of precaution must be applied to the planning of development activities. Moreover, development of the biodiversity reserve must be done in such manner that it does not excessively change the environment, in order to avoid affecting the ecological and cultural integrity and maintain the quality of the "nature" experience of visitors and users. In short, the development of activities must aim to maintain or improve the quality of the natural structure and the dynamic of the interaction between nature and culture.

In the current context of the territory's occupation and use, the MDDEP is open to the development of new activities. However, development proposals will be analyzed before being authorized.

Specific objectives:

- *Offer education and awareness activities:*

Several researchers have demonstrated that teaching visitors about practices having less impact on the environment was more efficient for protecting the environment than introducing regulations (Widner and Marion, 1993/4). The objective of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement

et des Parcs is therefore to promote education of the visitors about good environmental practices, such as respectful use of the trails and campsites. People must also be made aware of the ecological value of these areas and of the importance of keeping them intact.

To reach the conservation objectives, the territory's particularities must be known, but equally important is adequately informing, communicating and making users and the population aware. The reasons for seeking its protection, the different projects underway and the objectives pursued must be known and explained.

- *Harmonizing uses:*

By defining a conservation vocation for the territory, while allowing recreational activities, approaches must be taken to evaluate the compatibility of activities with the conservation objectives of the biodiversity reserve and ensure that the practice of an activity does not interfere with another one. Monts Groulx have long been visited by backcountry enthusiasts. It appears that in recent years snowmobiling has increased and has led to conflicts between winter hikers and the snowmobilers. Particular attention must be paid to the harmonization of snowmobilers and outdoor enthusiasts in Zone II.

3 Zoning

The altitudinal cline in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka is typified by two distinct environment types in terms of their ecological fragility: high altitude settings and low altitude settings. By taking this different sensitivity into account and the resulting protection and management objectives, the biodiversity reserve was subdivided into two zones. These zones, which have similar levels of protection and activity schedules will serve to guide the management measures according to the respective particularities and fragility of each one. The boundaries of the zones are illustrated on the plan in Appendix 3. The Minister will take this zoning into account for management of

the biodiversity reserve and for authorization of activities and facilities.

3.1 Zone I

Zone I is mainly within an altitude above 800 metres. It is comprised of wooded heaths and alpine heaths located on the upper slopes, plateaus and summits of the massif. From this altitude, the vegetation is made up of increasingly sparse trees, krummholz and, on the summits, shrubs and herbaceous characteristic of arctic settings.

This part of the territory is characterized by a high level of naturalness (low level of occupation and use, low fragmentation index, natural or intact character of the environment, etc.) It is also characterized by a marked ecological and landscape interest. Moreover, it is a fragile setting and of low autoregeneration capacity. This zone is therefore managed in such manner as to limit anthropogenic disturbances and pressures in an effort to encourage the natural dynamic and the maintaining of the natural landscape qualities. It is an ideal area to experience nature where the ecosystems have evolved with little influence from human activities.

This zone allows for maintaining the existing occupation and the pursuit of recreational activities that do not have a negative impact on the wildlife and vegetation. Activities are framed according to their impact level and specific conservation objectives that are pursued. In the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka, the fragility of the arctic-alpine vegetation at the summits and the presence of plants designated or likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable require that, under the principle of precaution, signposting be installed forbidding prohibiting motorized activity in that zone. Moreover, new infrastructures and uses are not allowed except if the additional impact is not significant and that the landscapes qualities are not affected. Generally, any intervention or activity that creates additional fragmentation is not allowed. Circulation and traffic, generally free in this zone, must be cause minimal impact to the environment.

The purpose of development in this zone will be education, interpretation, ecotourism and any other type of nature appreciation activity without harvesting of the resources or use of motorized vehicles. Development activities with resource harvesting and those involving the use of motorized vehicles may be considered only if the impact on the environment is not significant. Conditions for their practices may be considered. This zone has potential for the development of elements of an ecological and cultural interest through the realization of education and interpretation activities.

3.2 Zone II

Zone II, which is mainly below 800 metres, is made up of coniferous and deciduous forests located on the foothills. This part of the territory is characterized by a partially developed natural setting (occupation and use facilities) whose level of naturalness is lower than the one for Zone I.

The management objective of this zone is to ensure the maintenance of the balance between extensive occupation and use and the natural dynamic of the ecosystems while encouraging an increase in the level of naturalness.

This zone therefore enables the maintenance of occupation and pursuit of existing recreational activities. It is an area for framed or unframed education, interpretation, recreation and tourism activities. Infrastructures and equipment for these activities may be set up. However, it would be preferable if they had a low impact on the natural setting. The analysis of the development projects will take cumulative impacts into account.

4 Activity framework

4.1 Legal framework under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*

Activities practiced inside the biodiversity reserve are mainly governed by the provisions of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*.

The biodiversity reserve aims to protect the biodiversity associated with the natural environments. For this purpose, the main activities prohibited under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* in a territory with a biodiversity reserve status are the following:

- mining, and gas or petroleum development;
- mining, gas and petroleum exploration, including brine and underground reservoir exploration, prospecting, and digging or boring;
- forest management within the meaning of section 3 of the Forest Act (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1);
- the development of hydraulic resources and any production of energy on a commercial or industrial basis.

However fundamental to the long-term protection of the territory and ecosystems, these prohibitions do not, however, cover all the standards deemed desirable to ensure sound management of the reserve and conservation of the environment. The Act allows the government to specify in the conservation plan the legal framework applicable in the reserve.

A more specific framework was therefore developed. Appendix 4 of this plan contains additional standards that were planned by the government to frame the activities that could take place in the reserve in such manner as to better protect the natural environment following the principles of conservation and the other management objectives of the biodiversity reserve. Thus, certain activities are notably subject to prior authorization from the Minister and in keeping with the conditions set by her for their realization.

Several provisions of Appendix 4 therefore provide for an authorization schedule by the Minister that will enable the introduction of conditions for the appropriate realization taking the circumstances into consideration.

Examples of this are certain constructions (reception building or shelters) or trails that in many cases may be part of the management and conservation objectives, whereas other types of soilwork or constructions, much more damaging for the environment and preservation of the biodiversity will not be deemed appropriate nor authorized.

Several standards set forth in Appendix 4 are therefore formulated to enable the Minister to carry out an appropriate framework taking into account the context and enabling her to be flexible when circumstances and characteristics of the environments warrant it to adequately guide the realization of different activities.

In other respects it should be noted that the measures contained in this appendix are specifically intended for new interventions on the territory and generally do not question the installations already present nor certain activities already underway on the territory, thus preserving several existing compatible uses.

Since the terms of the legal framework in Appendix 4 give little indication of whether or not the requests for authorization will be approved the MDEEP will publish the criteria it will use in its management to analyse the requests that will be addressed to it. Guides, instructions or directives will be developed and made public. For example, the MDDEP will establish a list of the activities in Appendix 4 that will not be authorized except in exceptional or rare cases given their impact that is initially deemed damaging.

On the other hand, despite the introduction of a control plan, a good number of activities may be perceived as being completely compatible with the objectives of the protection status. The authorization plan in this case will aim to ensure rather that the undertaking of these activities is known, allowing

the MDDEP to make adjustments as needed with the person concerned.

Finally, in order to avoid controls deemed relatively unuseful due to low damaging impact or unuseful due to a doubling with other control measures provided for by other laws. Appendix 4 also contains certain exemptions from the requirement to obtain authorization before carrying on certain activities (e.g., routine maintenance on existing installations).

4.2 Other activities governed by other laws

Certain activities likely to be practiced inside the biodiversity reserve are also governed by other applicable legislative and regulatory provisions, including those requiring a permit or authorization or payment of certain fees. The practice of certain activities may also be prohibited or limited under other laws or regulations applicable on the territory of the biodiversity reserve.

In the biodiversity reserve, a particular legal framework may, notably in the following fields, provide guidelines for the following activities:

- Environmental protection: measures provided for particularly under the *Environment Quality Act* (R.S.Q., c. Q-2) and its regulations.
- Harvesting flora species deemed threatened or likely to be designated as such: measures prohibiting the harvesting of these species under the *Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species* (R.S.Q., c. E-12.01).
- The use and conservation of wildlife species: measures provided for by the *Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife* (R.S.Q., c. C-61.1), including the provisions pertaining to threatened or vulnerable wildlife species, to outfitting operations and beaver reserves and the measures contained in applicable federal legislations, in particular the fishery regulation.

- Archaeological research: measures provided for in particular by the *Cultural Property Act* (L.R.Q., c. B-4).
- Access and land rights related to land in the domain of the state: measures provided for under the *Act respecting the lands in the domain of the state* (R.S.Q., c. T-8.1) and the *Watercourses Act* (R.S.Q., c. R-13).
- Issue and control of permits for forestry operations provided for under the *Forest Act* (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1).
- Circulation: measures provided for in particular by the *Act respecting the lands in the domain of the state* (R.S.Q., c. T-8.1) as well as regulations governing the circulation of motorized vehicles in certain fragile environments identified under the *Environment Quality Act*.
- Construction and building standards: regulatory measures adopted by the municipal, regional and local authorities under the applicable laws.

tory, an integrated form of management is required for the activities. For this purpose, the participation of the players concerned in the choice of management for the biodiversity reserve is essential. The Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs would like the management of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka to be an opportunity for local and regional partners to work together to protect and develop the Monts Groulx massif. Thus, they will develop a shared vision of how to raise the awareness of the population of the importance of protecting the biological diversity and enable responsible development.

Creation of the biodiversity reserve is therefore an opportunity to bring together several local players with different objectives. This integrated management also aims to allow the region to appropriate these projects. It is also hoped that this synergy will have repercussions on the territories located in the periphery of the reserve.

5 Management

5.1 Responsibilities of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks

Management of the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka is the responsibility of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks. Among other things, it oversees the monitoring and control of activities that may be carried on and the application of the law. These management responsibilities are assigned to North Shore environmental control centre of the MDDEP (CCEQ-09). The Minister is assisted in her management duties through the collaboration and participation of other government officials who have specific responsibilities on this territory or in proximity to it.

5.2 Participation of other actors and integrated management

Given the occupation and use of the terri-

A management committee will be created with the mandate to develop an action plan aimed at the conservation and development of the biodiversity reserve. Several partners will be called upon to sit on the committee. The Pessamit community Band Council and the creation committee of world reserve of the Biosphère Manicouagan- Uapishka will be key partners. The Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam Innu could also be a partner if they wish. These groups represent the different interests of the region because the representatives of the Société des amis des monts Groulx, RCMs, regional tourist association, forestry companies, environmental and native groups sit on the committees. Other local and regional organizations, as well as cottage and user associations and local communities could be asked to act as partners based on the priorities established by the management committee.

An action plan will be developed by the management committee under the responsibility of the MDDEP's regional branch. The plan will determine the actions to take, the preferred methods, the actors identified to perform the actions, the timetable, the evaluation mechanism for the results of

these actions and the financing modes, if applicable.

5.3 Follow-up

As mentioned in the section “Conservation and Development,” a follow-up of the state of the natural environment will be set up, in cooperation with the regional and local parties concerned.

Ideally a mechanism should be set up to keep track of the conservation objectives and, as needed, rectify the strategies in place to reach them. It is also hoped that management of the biodiversity reserve respects the following conservation principles:

- Maintain the natural dynamic of the ecosystems;
- Restore, as needed and in the long term, perturbed ecosystems;
- Respect the support capacity of the ecosystems (or according to the principle of precaution in the absence of sufficient knowledge);
- Encourage the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge about natural and cultural heritage;
- Harmonize land management in the peripheral areas with the conservation objectives of the biodiversity reserve.

Conclusion

The Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka protects a mountain range that is unique in Québec. Protection of this portion of Monts Groulx enables the conservation of an altitudinal cline of vegetation that starts with the boreal forest and ends with taiga. It was necessary as a result to protect the future of this geological jewel, while allowing development of its riches for the benefit of all.

It is appropriate to point out here the energy deployed by the local players in seeking to preserve and showcase this unique natural site. Protection of this unique natural site crowns their efforts. In fact, the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka will benefit local and

regional communities first, as an area to relax and fully enjoy its attractions. It is in this perspective in fact that the MDDEP proposed to implement management that calls on the partnership of organizations based in the community. In this perspective, a management committee will become the preferred partner of the Ministère for all issues related to the drawing up of an action plan and management planning in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka.

Conservation of this territory, devoted to recreation, natural heritage discovery activities, education and scientific research to contribute to consolidating the local tourism offer. The territory with its natural character, uniqueness and accessibility offers a highly favourable framework for the development of popular recreational and tourism activities such as ecotourism, nature observation and hiking.

The management approach that is planned for the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka encourages the different interest groups to work together by inviting them to combine their efforts, means and skills to design a conservation and development project that is respectful of and in harmony with the biodiversity.

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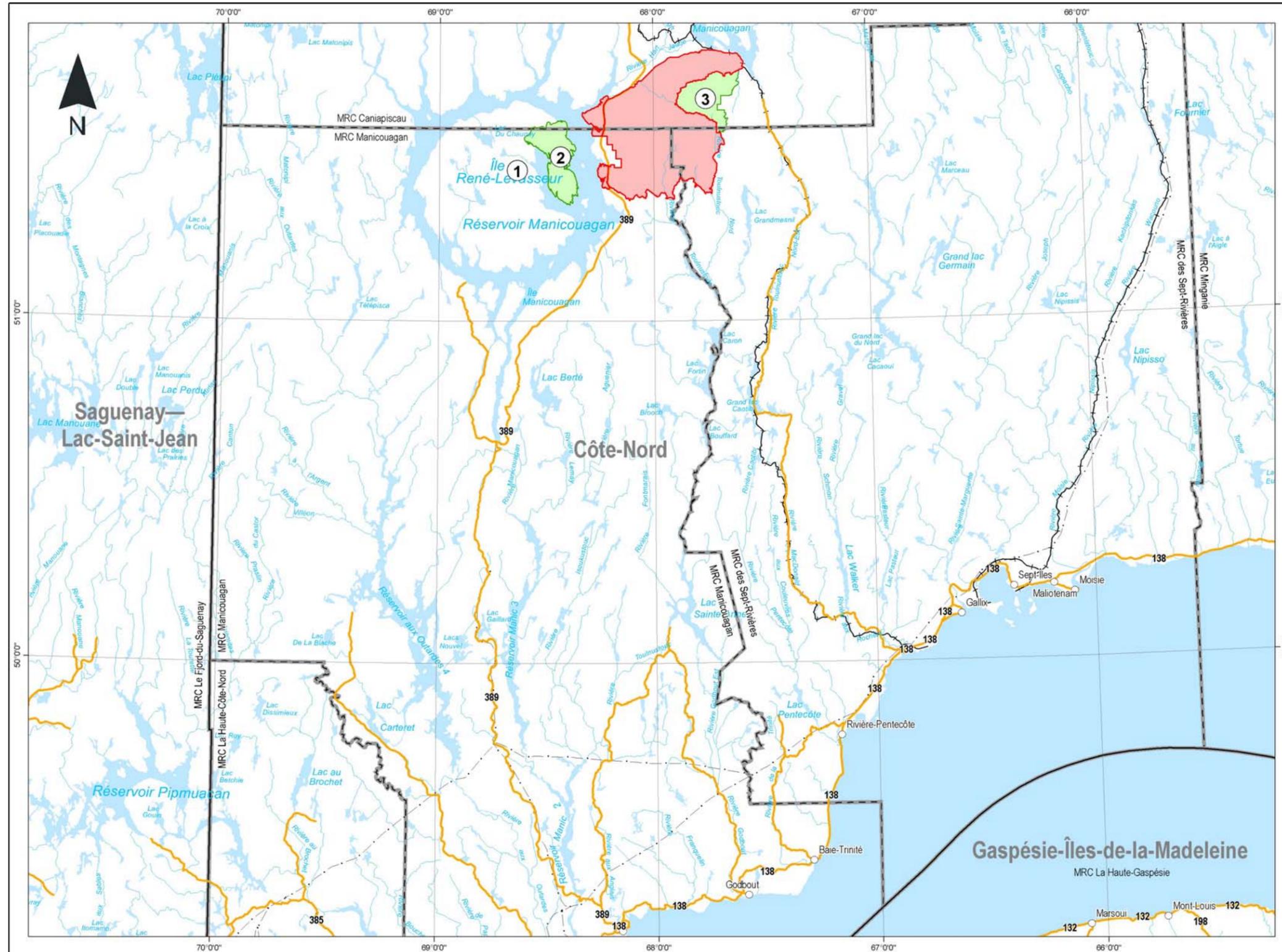
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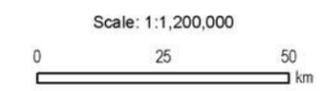
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Appendix 1
Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka
 Location and Regional Context

- Legend**
- Road
 - Railway
 - Powerline
 - Administrative region
 - RCM boundaries
 - Uapishka Biodiversity Reserve
 - Protected area
 - ① Louis-Babel Ecological Reserve
 - ② Uapishka Biodiversity Reserve
 - ③ Monts Groulx Proposed Biodiversity Reserve

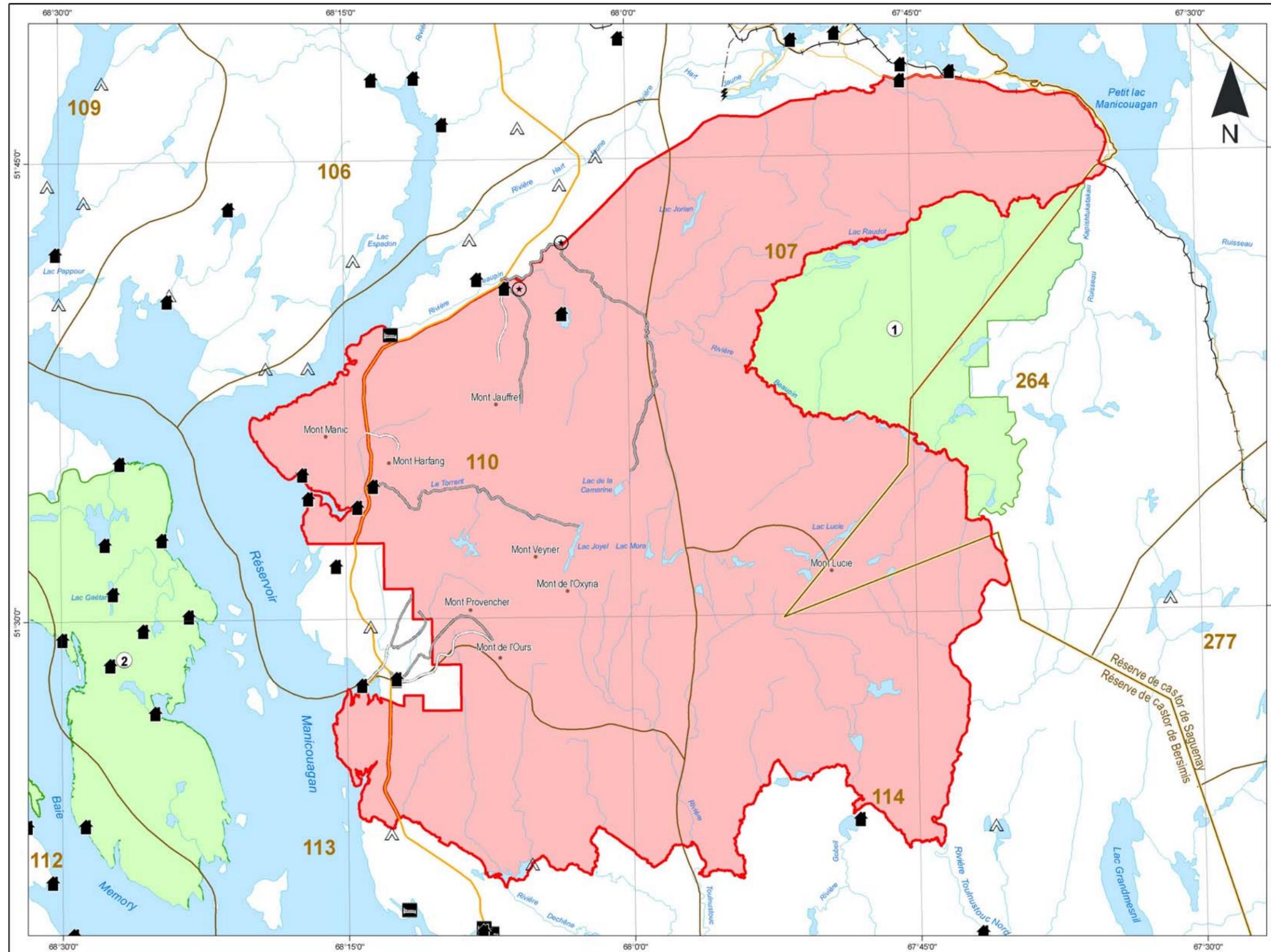


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Protected areas database (base de données du registre des aires protégées), 2007	Aires d'intérêt (base de données des territoires d'intérêt), 2007
Organizations	Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune
Production	Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs

Production: Direction du patrimoine écologique et des parcs
 Service des aires protégées
 Division de la géomatique et de l'infographie
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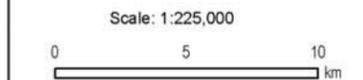




Appendix 2
Reserve de biodiversité Uapishka
 Boundaries and Uses

Legend

-  Cottages
-  Temporary shelter
-  Outfitter
-  Tourism site
-  Hiking trail
-  Winter trail
-  Beaver reserve
-  Trapline
-  Road
-  Railway
-  Powerline
-  Uapishka Biodiversity Reserve
-  Protected area
-  Monts Groulx Proposed Biodiversity Reserve
-  Météorite Biodiversity Reserve



Metadata
 Geodetic reference system: NAD 83, ellipsoid GRS80
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 Protected areas database: Base de données du registre des aires protégées, 2007
 Areas of interest database: Base de données des territoires d'intérêt, 2007
 Organizations: Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune
 Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs
Production
 Production: Direction du patrimoine écologique et des parcs
 Service des aires protégées
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Appendix 4 : Activities framework in the Réserve de biodiversité Uapishka

—STANDARDS ADDITIONAL TO THOSE IN THE ACT

PROHIBITIONS, PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS AND OTHER CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACTIVITIES IN THE BIODIVERSITY RESERVE

Natural Heritage Conservation Act
(R.S.Q., c. C-61.01, ss. 46 and 49)

DIVISION I PROTECTION OF RESOURCES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Subject to the prohibition in the second paragraph, no person may establish in the biodiversity reserve any specimens or individuals of a native or non-native species of fauna, including by stocking, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister and complies with the conditions the Minister determines.

No person may stock a watercourse or body of water for aquaculture, commercial fishing or any other commercial purpose.

No person may establish in the biodiversity reserve a non-native species of flora, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister and complies with the conditions the Minister determines.

Before issuing an authorization under this section, the Minister is to take into consideration, in addition to the characteristics and the number of species involved, the risk of biodiversity imbalance, the importance of conserving the various ecosystems, the needs of the species in the ecosystems, the needs of rehabilitating degraded environments or habitats within the biodiversity reserve, and the interest in reintroducing certain species that have disappeared.

2. No person may use fertilizer or fertilizing material in the biodiversity reserve. Compost for domestic purposes is permitted if used at least 20 metres from a watercourse or body of water measured from the high-water mark.

The high-water mark means the high-water mark defined in the Protection Policy for Lakeshores, Riverbanks, Littoral Zones and Floodplains, adopted by Order in Council 468-2005 dated 18 May 2005.

3. No person may, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister and carries on the activity in compliance with the conditions the Minister determines,

(1) intervene in a wetland area, including a marsh, swamp or bog;

- (2) modify the reserve's natural drainage or water regime, including by creating or developing watercourses or bodies of water;
- (3) dig, fill, obstruct or divert a watercourse or body of water;
- (4) install or erect any structure, infrastructure or new works in or on the bed, banks, shores or floodplain of a watercourse or body of water, although no authorization is required for minor works such as a wharf, platform or boathouse erected for private purposes and free of charge under section 2 of the Regulation respecting the water property in the domain of the State made by Order in Council 81-2003 dated 29 January 2003;
- (5) carry on any activity other than those referred to in the preceding subparagraphs that is likely to degrade the bed, banks or shores of a body of water or watercourse or directly and substantially affect the quality of the biochemical characteristics of aquatic or riparian environments or wetland areas in the biodiversity reserve, including by discharging or dumping waste or pollutants into those areas;
- (6) carry out soil development work, including any burial, earthwork, removal or displacement of surface materials or vegetation cover, for any purpose including recreational and tourism purposes such as trail development;
- (7) install or erect any structure, infrastructure or new works;
- (8) reconstruct or demolish an existing structure, infrastructure or works,
- (9) carry on an activity that is likely to severely degrade the soil or a geological formation or damage the vegetation cover, such as stripping, the digging of trenches or excavation work;
- (10) use a pesticide, although no authorization is required for the use of personal insect repellent;
- (11) carry on educational or research-related activities if the activities are likely to significantly damage or disturb the natural environment, in particular because of the nature or size of the samples taken or the invasive character of the method or process used; or
- (12) hold a sports event, tournament, rally or similar event if more than 15 persons are likely to participate in the activity and have access to the biodiversity reserve at the same time; no authorization may be issued by the Minister if the activity involves motor vehicle traffic, unless it has been shown to the Minister that it is impossible to organize the activity elsewhere or that bypassing the biodiversity reserve is highly unfeasible.

The conditions determined by the Minister for the authorization may pertain to the location of the authorized activity, the methods used, the areas that may be cleared or deforested, the types of material that may be used including on-site materials, and the presence of ancillary works or facilities. The conditions may also include a requirement to ensure periodic follow-up or

to report to the Minister, in particular as regards the results obtained from the research to which subparagraph 11 of the first paragraph refers.

4. Despite subparagraphs 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the first paragraph of section 3, no authorization is required to carry out work referred to in subparagraph 1 of this section when the requirements of subparagraph 2 are met.

(1) The work involves

(a) work to maintain, repair or upgrade an existing structure, infrastructure or works such as a camp, cottage, road or trail, including ancillary facilities such as lookouts or stairs;

(b) the construction or erection of

i. an appurtenance or ancillary facility of a trapping camp, rough shelter, shelter or cottage such as a shed, well, water intake or sanitary facilities; or

ii. a trapping camp, rough shelter, shelter or cottage if such a building was permitted under the right to use or occupy the land but had not been constructed or installed on the effective date of the status as a biodiversity reserve; or

(c) the demolition or reconstruction of a trapping camp, rough shelter, shelter or cottage, including an appurtenance or ancillary facility such as a shed, well, water intake or sanitary facilities.

(2) The work is carried out in compliance with the following requirements:

(a) the work involves a structure, infrastructure or works permitted within the biodiversity reserve;

(b) the work is carried out within the area of land or right-of-way subject to the right to use or occupy the land in the biodiversity reserve, whether the right results from a lease, servitude or other form of title, permit or authorization;

(c) the nature of the work or elements erected by the work will not operate to increase the area of land that may remain deforested beyond the limits permitted under the provisions applicable to the sale, lease and granting of immovable rights under the Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State (R.S.Q., c. T-8.1) and, if applicable, the limits allowed under an authorization for the structure, works or infrastructure; and

(d) the work is carried out in compliance with the conditions of a permit or authorization issued for the work or in connection with the structure, infrastructure or works involved, and in accordance with the laws and regulations that apply.

For the purposes of this section, repair and upgrading work includes work to replace or erect works or facilities to comply with the requirements of an environmental regulation.

5. No person may bury, abandon or dispose of waste, snow or other residual materials elsewhere than in waste disposal containers, facilities or sites determined by the Minister or in another place with the authorization of the Minister and in compliance with the conditions the Minister determines.

Despite the first paragraph, an outfitting operation does not require an authorization to use a disposal facility or site in compliance with the Environment Quality Act and its regulations if the outfitting operation was already using the facility or site on the effective date of the protection status as a biodiversity reserve.

DIVISION II RULES OF CONDUCT FOR USERS

6. Every person staying, carrying on an activity or travelling in the biodiversity reserve is required to maintain the premises in a satisfactory state and before leaving, return the premises to their natural state to the extent possible.

7. Every person who makes a campfire must

(1) first clear an area around the fire site sufficient to prevent the fire from spreading by removing all branches, scrub, dry leaves and other combustible material;

(2) ensure that the fire is at all times under the immediate supervision of a person on the premises; and

(3) ensure that the fire is completely extinguished before leaving the premises.

8. In the biodiversity reserve, no person may

(1) cause any excessive noise;

(2) behave in a manner that unduly disturbs other persons or interferes with their enjoyment of the reserve; or

(3) harass wildlife.

For the purposes of subparagraphs 1 and 2 of the first paragraph, behaviour that significantly disturbs other persons and constitutes unusual or abnormal conditions for the carrying on of an activity or for the permitted use of property, a device or an instrument within the biodiversity reserve is considered excessive or undue.

9. No person may enter, carry on an activity or travel in a vehicle in a given sector of the biodiversity reserve if the signage erected by the Minister restricts access, traffic or certain activities in order to protect the public from a danger or to avoid placing the fauna, flora or other components of the natural environment at risk, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister

and complies with the conditions the Minister determines.

10. No person may destroy, remove, move or damage any poster, sign, notice or other types of signage posted by the Minister within the biodiversity reserve.

DIVISION III ACTIVITIES REQUIRING AN AUTHORIZATION

11. No person may occupy or use the same site in the biodiversity reserve for a period of more than 90 days in the same year, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister and complies with the conditions the Minister determines.

(1) For the purposes of the first paragraph,

(a) the occupation or use of a site includes

i. staying or settling in the biodiversity reserve, including for vacation purposes;

ii. installing a camp or shelter in the reserve; and

iii. installing, burying or leaving property in the reserve, including equipment, any device or a vehicle;

(b) "same site" means any other site within a radius of 1 kilometre from the site.

(2) Despite the first paragraph, no authorization is required if a person,

(a) on the effective date of the protection status as a biodiversity reserve, was a party to a lease or had already obtained another form of right or authorization allowing the person to legally occupy the land under the Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State or, if applicable, the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife (R.S.Q., c. C-61.1), and whose right to occupy the land is renewed or extended on the same conditions, subject to possible changes in fees;

(b) in accordance with the applicable provisions of law, has entitlement under a sub-lease, an assignment of a lease or a transfer of a right or authorization referred to in paragraph a, and whose right to occupy the land is renewed or extended on the same conditions, subject to possible changes in fees; or

(c) elects to acquire land the person legally occupies on the effective date of the protection status as a biodiversity reserve, pursuant to the Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State.

12. (1) No person may carry on forest management activities to meet domestic needs or for the purpose of maintaining biodiversity, unless the person has been authorized by the Minister and carries on the activities in compliance with the conditions the Minister determines.

The conditions determined by the Minister for the authorization may pertain, among other things, to species of trees or shrubs, the size of the stems that may be cut, the quantities authorized and the places where the activities may be carried on.

(2) Despite subsection 1, the authorization of the Minister is not required if a person staying or residing in the biodiversity reserve collects wood to make a campfire.

An authorization is also not required if a person collects firewood to meet domestic needs in the following cases and on the following conditions:

(a) the wood is collected to supply a trapping camp or a rough shelter permitted within the biodiversity reserve if

i. the wood is collected by a person in compliance with the conditions set out in the permit for the harvest of firewood for domestic purposes issued by the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife under the Forest Act;

ii. the quantity of wood collected does not exceed 7 apparent cubic metres per year;

(b) in all other cases if

i. the wood is collected within a sector designated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife as a sector for which a permit for the harvest of firewood for domestic purposes under the Forest Act may be issued, and for which, on the effective date of the protection status as a biodiversity reserve, a designation as such had already been made by the Minister;

ii. the wood is collected by a person who, on the effective date of the protection status as a biodiversity reserve or in any of the three preceding years, held a permit for the harvest of firewood for domestic purposes allowing the person to harvest firewood within the biodiversity reserve;

iii. the wood is collected by a person in compliance with the conditions set out in the permit for the harvest of firewood for domestic purposes issued by the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife under the Forest Act.

(3) Despite subsection 1, an authorization to carry on a forest management activity is not required if a person authorized by lease to occupy land within the biodiversity reserve in accordance with this conservation plan carries on the forest management activity for the purpose of

(a) clearing the permitted areas, maintaining them or creating visual openings, or any other similar removal work permitted under the provisions governing the sale, lease and granting of immovable rights under the Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State, including work for access roads, stairs and other trails permitted under those provisions; or

(b) clearing the necessary area for the installation, connection, maintenance, repair,

reconstruction or upgrading of facilities, lines or mains for water, sewer, electric power or telecommunications services.

If the work referred to in paragraph *b* of subsection 3 is carried on for or under the responsibility of an enterprise providing any of those services, the work requires the prior authorization of the Minister, other than in the case of the exemptions in sections 13 and 15.

DIVISION IV AUTHORIZATION EXEMPTIONS

13. Despite the preceding provisions, an authorization is not required for an activity or other form of intervention within the biodiversity reserve if urgent action is necessary to prevent harm to the health or safety of persons, or to repair or prevent damage caused by a real or apprehended disaster. The person concerned must, however, immediately inform the Minister of the activity or intervention that has taken place.

14. The members of a Native community who, for food, ritual or social purposes, carry on an intervention or an activity within the biodiversity reserve are exempted from obtaining an authorization.

15. Despite the preceding provisions, the following activities and interventions involving the transmission, distribution or production of electricity carried out by Hydro-Québec (Société) or by any other person for Hydro-Québec do not require the prior authorization of the Minister under this conservation plan:

(1) any activity or intervention required within the biodiversity reserve to complete a project for which express authorization had previously been given by the Government and the Minister, or only by the Minister, in accordance with the Environment Quality Act (R.S.Q., c. Q-2), if the activity or intervention is carried out in compliance with the authorizations issued;

(2) any activity or intervention necessary for the preparation and presentation of a pre-project report for a project requiring an authorization under the Environment Quality Act;

(3) any activity or intervention relating to a project requiring the prior authorization of the Minister under the Environment Quality Act if the activity or intervention is in response to a request for a clarification or for additional information made by the Minister to the Société, and the activity or intervention is carried out in conformity with the request; and

(4) any activity or intervention by the Société, if the conditions for the carrying out of the activity or intervention have been determined in an agreement between the Minister and the Société and the activity or intervention is carried out in compliance with those conditions.

The Société is to keep the Minister informed of the various activities or interventions re-

ferred to in this section it proposes to carry out before the work is begun in the reserve.

For the purposes of this section, the activities and interventions of the Société include but are not restricted to pre-project studies, analysis work or field research, work required to study and ascertain the impact of electric power transmission and distribution line corridors and rights-of-way, geological or geophysical surveys and survey lines, and the opening and maintenance of roads required for the purpose of access, construction or equipment movement incidental to the work.

DIVISION V
GENERAL PROVISIONS

16. Every person who applies to the Minister for an individual authorization or an authorization for a group or a number of persons must provide all information or documents requested by the Minister for the examination of the application.

17. The Minister's authorization, which is general or for a group, may be communicated for the benefit of the persons concerned by any appropriate means including a posted notice or appropriate signage at the reception centre or any other location within the biodiversity reserve that is readily accessible to the public. The Minister may also provide a copy to any person concerned.