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Project to Create the Albanel- Témiscamie-Otish National Park

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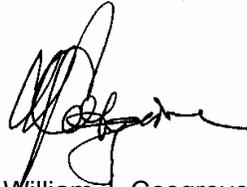
Québec City, March 16, 2006

Mr. Claude Béchar
Minister of Sustainable Development,
Environment and Parks
Édifice Marie-Guyart, 30th Floor
675, Boulevard René-Lévesque Est
Québec City (Québec) G1R 5V7

Dear Sir,

It is with pleasure that I transmit the report of the public hearings concerning the project to create the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park. The report was prepared as part of the mandate entrusted under the terms of the *Parks Act* to Mr. Qussaï Samak, a member of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, which began on January 14, 2006 and was sent to me on December 9, 2005.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William J. Cosgrove', written in a cursive style.

William J. Cosgrove, President

Québec City, March 10, 2006

Mr. William J. Cosgrove
President
Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement
Édifce Lomer-Gouin
575, Saint-Amable, Suite 2.10
Québec City (Québec) G1R 6A6

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to submit the report of the public hearings for the project to create the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park. This report was prepared in collaboration with Ms. Julie Milot, who assisted me in her capacity as analyst, on behalf of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, as part of the mandate entrusted to me by the Minister pursuant to the *Parks Act*. The mandate began on January 14, 2006, and was received by you on December 9, 2005.

As you will see, both sessions of the hearing were well attended by members of the general public. A broad consensus emerged in favour of the project, at both the regional and national levels. Regionally, the project is regarded as having economic development potential, especially in the ecotourism sector, and as a tool for the promotion of future collaboration between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the James Bay community.

The organizations and individuals who attended the hearing made a certain number of proposals concerning the boundaries and configuration of the proposed park, in order to create conditions conducive to the achievement of its conservation goals. The report summarizes these proposals and presents some of the comments made at the hearing. It also contains additional information that I have included by way of explanation and in order to provide context for a clearer understanding of the improvements suggested by participants.

...2

Lastly, I would like to underscore the excellent support provided by the team from the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, and especially by the Service des parcs, which is the ministerial branch responsible for the project. I would also like to stress the quality of the work done by the team from the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, which assisted me throughout the mandate. The help of both teams was extremely valuable to me, and I thank them for their efforts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Qussai Samak', written in a cursive style.

Qussai Samak,
Minister's Representative

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Introduction

Under section 4 of the *Parks Act* (R.S.Q., c. P-9), the Government may establish a park if the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks has previously given notice of his intention to do so, has subsequently granted 60 days from the publication of the notice to enable interested persons to submit their objections in writing, and lastly, has received interested persons at a public hearing held by a person designated by the Minister.

On December 9, 2005, the Minister entrusted Mr. Qussai Samak, a member of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, to act as the Minister's representative for the holding of a public hearing on the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project. The mandate began with a hearing held in Mistissini on January 14, 2006, followed by a second hearing held in Chibougamau on January 15, 2006.

In all, twenty-six briefs were submitted, ten of which were presented at the public hearing. A further ten participants made verbal contributions, expressing their concerns, opinions and suggestions relating to the proposed park. The boundaries and zoning of the proposed park, as shown in the Provisory Master Plan, were the main subject of the consultations (Gouvernement du Québec, 2005a). This report presents the opinions expressed by participants at the hearings, and provides additional information to clarify certain points.

The Project

The Québec Government, working in collaboration with the Cree Nation of Mistissini, hopes to create a park that will be representative of Québec's boreal forest. The new park would cover an area of some 11,093.1 km², making it the largest park in Québec. Land mass would account for 6,938.4 km² of the total area, and lakes and rivers for 4,154.67 km², or 37.4% of the total area. According to the Department, nearly 6,000 km² of the park's land mass, or 54% of its total area, would be capable of hosting forests. However, the exact percentage of the new park currently hosting forest growth is not known¹.

The Cree village of Mistissini is located on the southern boundary of the area, and the town of Chibougamau lies 90 km to the south. The boundaries of the proposed park

1. Letter from Mr. Jean Gagnon, Project Officer, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, dated January 31, 2006.

are shown in Figure 1. They encompass the waters of Lac Albanel (Lake Albanel)¹ and Lac Mistassini (Lake Mistassini), as well as a riparian strip around their shorelines, the upstream portion of the Rivière Rupert (Ruper River), a portion of the Rivière Témiscamie (Témiscamie River) drainage basin, the historic canoe corridor connecting Lac à l'Eau Froide (Coldwater Lake) to Lac Témiscamie (Lake Témiscamie), a portion of the Monts Otish (Otish Mountains) and Lac Naococane (Lake Naococane), along with its many hundreds of islands. Some sectors of this area currently lie within the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi (Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi Wildlife Reserve).

Based on the Service des parcs classification, the creation of the park would protect representative elements of five natural regions of Québec, namely the Lac Mistassini and Lac Albanel drainage basins (natural region B-30), the Rupert plateau (B-29), the boreal Laurentians (B-17), the Monts Otish (B-31) and the central lacustrine plateau (B-32).

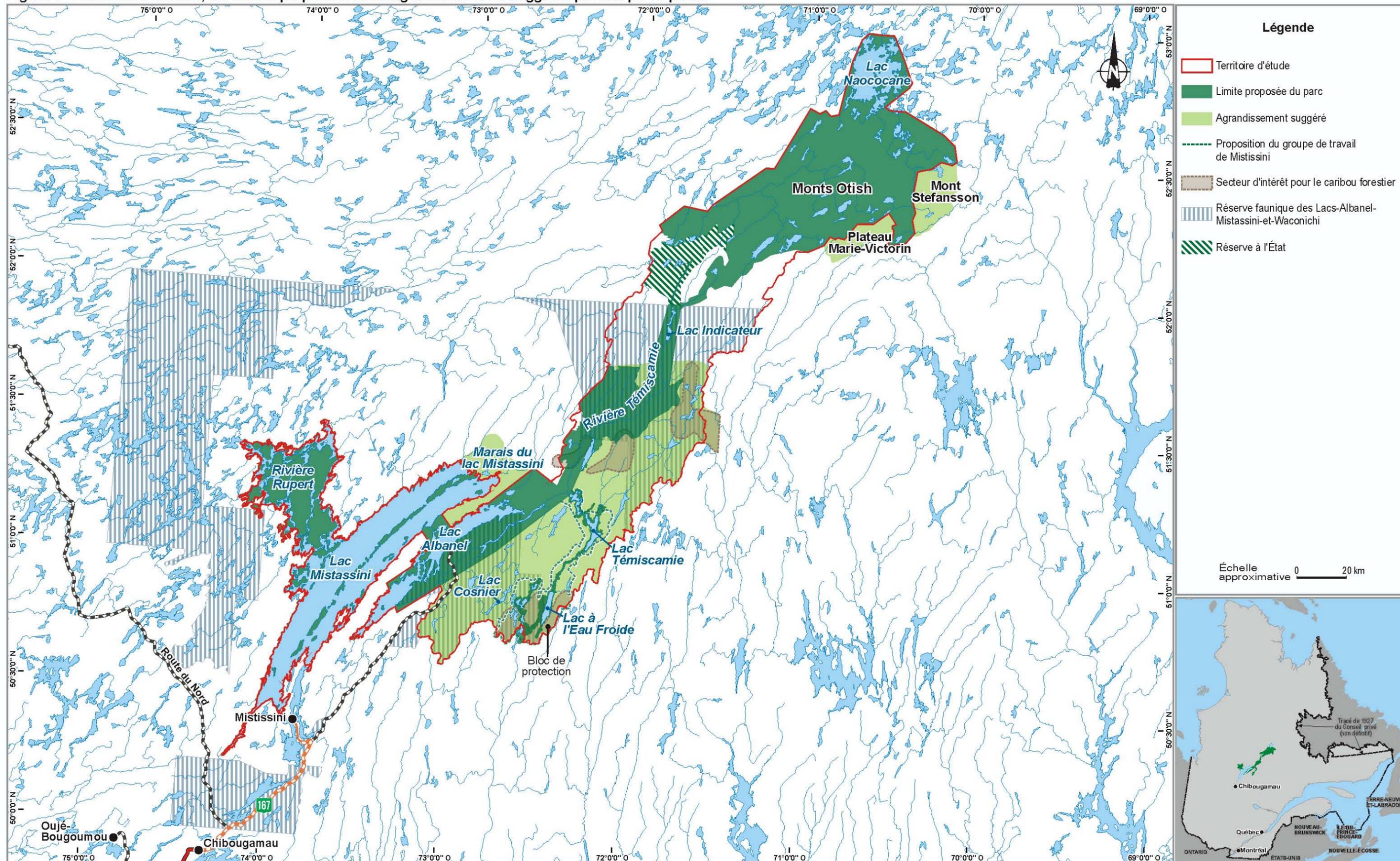
A sector located in the Monts Otish foothills has been designated as a State mining reserve² (Figure 1). This is a temporary status that will expire on July 7, 2009. If, at that point, no significant mining potential has been identified in the sector, it will be included in the park and all mining activities will be prohibited. Additionally, most of the park would be located on Category II lands³ belonging to the Cree Nation of Mistissini. It would therefore encompass several ancestral traplines and would be Québec's first-ever inhabited park.

1. In compliance with the guidelines of La Commission de toponymie du Québec regarding the names of nature landmarks such as lakes, rivers and mountains, the report employs the official French names of such landmarks throughout. In order to facilitate comprehension, the report provides parenthetically at first reference the English name for each landmark referred to as established by either historical records or current common use.

2. An area within which the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune may allow mining companies to carry out prospection work.

3. Category II lands are public lands on which the Aboriginal people have exclusive hunting, fishing and trapping rights. Category I lands are the Cree and Inuit villages, surrounded by land over which they have exclusive use or exclusive ownership, while Category III lands are public lands on which the Aboriginal people have harvesting rights (hunting, fishing and trapping).

Figure 1 Le territoire d'étude, les limites proposées et les agrandissements suggérés par des participants



Sources : adaptée du Plan directeur provisoire (gouvernement du Québec, 2005a) ; Société pour la nature et les parcs du Canada, ATO 016 ; lettre de M^{me} Kathleen J. Wootton, chef adjointe du Conseil de la Nation crie de Mistissini, datée du 19 janvier 2006 ; carte routière du ministère des Transports [en ligne (15 mars 2006) : www.mtq.gouv.qc.ca/images/information/carte_routiere/PDF/web17_Nord-Qc_nord.pdf].

Chapter 1 **The Park – Creation Process and Context**

The Park Creation Process

In 1989, the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche obtained Government approval for a list of eighteen areas reserved for the creation of parks. In 1992, the Minister of Energy and Resources prohibited all forestry, mining and energy operations within those areas (Ministerial Orders 92-170 and 91-192). Two of the reserved areas, known as the “Lac Albanel-Colline blanche et la Rivière Témiscamie” and “Monts Otish” areas, form part of the sector encompassed by the proposed new park (Gouvernement du Québec, 2005b, p. 10 and 11). In August 2001, the Chief of the Cree Nation of Mistissini, Mr. John Longchap, requested the creation of a task force to review the boundaries of the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi compared to the proposed conservation park. The Cree Nation of Mistissini then adopted two resolutions asking for the original park to be extended to cover virtually the whole of Lac Albanel and Lac Mistassini, the upstream portion of the Rivière Rupert, the historic canoe corridor between Lac à l’Eau Froide and Lac Témiscamie, and Lac Naococane. The Minister responsible for Parks accepted both resolutions in 2002.

Research was then carried out in the company of Cree guides and scientific experts in order to provide additional information on the area, and a status report summarizing the knowledge gathered was produced. This was followed by preparation of the Provisory Master Plan, which was the subject of public consultations.

All proposed new parks situated in the area governed by the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* are subject to an environmental and social impact assessment and review process as stipulated in Chapter II of the *Environment Quality Act* (R.S.Q., c. Q-2). Where the proposed park is located south of the 55th parallel¹, as in the case of the present project, the project proponent must notify the Evaluating Committee (COMEV)², which issues a directive stipulating the scope of the impact assessment.

-
1. For projects located north of the 55th parallel, the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission, composed of representatives of the Québec government and the Inuit Nation, is responsible for the assessment and review.
 2. A tripartite body composed of representatives of the Québec government, the Canadian government and the Cree Nation, which is responsible for the preliminary assessment and the production of directives.

The directive for the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project was issued in December 2003 (directive no. 3214-18-03).

The environmental and social impact assessment will be implemented in the course of the coming year for submission to the Review Committee (COMEX)¹. At that stage, the Aboriginal authorities and the general public will have an opportunity to state their views, since COMEX is able to hold public hearings or any other appropriate form of consultation. It will then be up to COMEX to recommend or advise against authorization of the new park. The final decision to create the park or not is made by the Government, in light of COMEX's recommendations².

Some of the participants at the public hearings felt the Provisory Master Plan had been published too late for them to respond appropriately to the park project. For example, WWF-Canada claimed that the lack of preparation time had prevented it from making additional comments and producing maps and scientific references that it felt would have been useful (ATO 015). The James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Representatives also felt the documentation provided was insufficient for it to reach an informed opinion on the proposed project (ATO 006, p. 5).

Similarly, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society recommended that the public consultation process applicable to the creation of protected areas should also be adopted for the creation of parks, where permitted by the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01). The Society would have preferred the public consultation to be divided into two parts, the first part comprising an information session at which participants could have questioned resource people and requested documentation, and the second part for the presentation of briefs (ATO 016, p. 19 and 20).

The James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Representatives recommended that the Government “should delay the decision to create the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish park by at least two years in order to allow for a wider study of its social and economic impacts” (ATO 006, p. 10). It was pointed out, however, that a social and economic study will be carried out in the near future, as required by the environmental and social impact assessment and review procedure stipulated in the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*.

1. A bipartite body composed of representatives of the Québec government and the Cree Nation, responsible for reviewing projects located south of the 55th parallel.

2. Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, *Évaluation environnementale des projets en milieu nordique*. [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/mil-nordique/index.htm]

Conservation Commitments

The boreal forest is the Earth's largest forest system, and is the dominant ecosystem in northern regions of the world. Boreal forests are present in Québec and the rest of Canada, as well as in Alaska, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway and some small regions of China and Japan. Québec's boreal forest is dominated to a large extent by the black spruce, a species that exists only in North America and is representative of the Eastern portion of the continent.

According to a recent report by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (2005, p. 8 and 11), the forested portion of the zone occupied by the boreal forest is larger than the area occupied by the rain forests in Amazonia and South-East Asia. The boreal region, whether in Québec, in Canada (which is home to 30% of the world's boreal regions) or in the rest of the world, plays a vital role in maintaining the ecological stability of the planet.

The project under study would provide protection for the boreal forest's natural and cultural heritage, for the benefit of both Québec and the rest of the world. The Provisory Master Plan proposed by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs describes the pressures currently placed on the boreal region of Québec, which are likely to increase in the future. These pressures are both demographic in nature, in regard to the region's Aboriginal population, and resource-related, due to harvesting demands. The Provisory Master Plan refers to the management of these pressures as a challenge that must be faced in a sustainable way by Québec and by the Aboriginal communities.

The Conservation Approach Followed in Regard to the Proposed Project

According to the Provisory Master Plan, the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project is a direct result of Québec's desire to create a network of protected areas¹ representative of Québec's biodiversity, covering all its natural regions and exceptional natural sites. Ultimately, the network would encompass 8% of Québec's total area and will respect the categories established by the World Conservation Union, as stipulated in section 5 of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*. In addition,

1. A protected area is a geographically delimited tract of land or water that is legally and administratively structured so as to protect and maintain the biological diversity of its natural and cultural resources. Québec has 26 types of protected areas, including "national parks", which are areas whose priority purpose is to preserve and provide permanent protection for sites that are representative of natural or exceptional regions, while making them available to the public.

the park project is consistent with the Government's 2004-2007 Plan for Biological Diversity and with its Sustainable Development Plan.

The Provisory Master Plan indicates that the area proposed for the new park is one of the last bastions of Québec's boreal forest that has not been touched by intensive natural resource harvesting activities (forestry, mining, hydro-electricity). It is also inhabited by the Cree Nation of Mistissini, which has maintained traditional links to the area for many centuries, among other things for the practice of its ancestral hunting, fishing and trapping activities.

According to the Provisory Master Plan, the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs intends to apply three basic principles to the organization and management of the proposed new park, as is the case in the remainder of Québec's national park network:

- Conservation takes precedence over resource development in the area in question;
- The integrity of the area's natural heritage must be maintained;
- The precautionary principle must be central to all decisions concerning the organization and management of the area in question.

The park would require the full participation and commitment of the Cree Nation of Mistissini. Accordingly, the project provides for the creation of an agency composed of equal numbers of representatives from the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SEPAQ) and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, which would be responsible for administering the park.

Participants' Opinions of the Proposed Conservation Approach

The public hearing allowed organizations and individual citizens to give their opinions of different aspects of the project, including the underlying conservation principles and approach. None of the participants was against the project's natural or cultural conservation goals, and no-one contradicted the importance and urgency of achieving those goals. Some participants raised issues relating to the extent of the conservation effort and its relative importance in the general context of Québec's conservation strategy.

Nature Québec/UQCN praised the park creation initiative, noting that the *Commission d'étude sur la gestion de la forêt publique québécoise* had suggested that 12% of

Québec's boreal forest should be protected in some way, and that the proposed new park would be a significant step towards that goal. It also observed that a significant portion of Québec's boreal forest has already been signed over to the forestry industry via timber supply and forest management agreements (TSFMAs), and is also touched by hydro-electric and mining activities. Accordingly, the organization felt it was now urgent to protect those components of the boreal ecosystem that are still relatively intact (ATO 012, p. 5 to 7).

Nature Québec/UQCN also pointed out that, in the area set aside for the new park, the land-based component capable of supporting an unfragmented boreal forest would not exceed 3,200 km². Citing criteria from the scientific literature, the organization judges the scope of the proposed conservation effort to be insufficient. Based on the principle that a protected area should be three to four times as large as the largest observed historical disturbance, it proposed that the new park should encompass at least 5,000 km² of boreal forest (ATO 012, p. 10).

The Conseil québécois du loisir, for its part, praised the fact that, following the 2001 amendment to the *Parks Act*¹, both the "conservation park" and "recreation park" classifications had been abolished. This allowed for the introduction of a single priority objective for all parks in Québec, namely conservation of the natural environment in accordance with internationally recognized criteria established by the World Conservation Union. The Conseil was also pleased that the Provisory Master Plan had retained the precautionary principle as a central element of the new park's administration and management (ATO 007, p. 5).

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society observed that the proposed park would be much larger in terms of size than all Québec's other national parks combined, and that it would represent a major step forward in the implementation of Québec's Conservation Strategy. It also reported that only 3.6% of Québec's boreal zone is currently protected on a temporary or permanent basis, compared with between 6.8% and 14.2% in the other Canadian provinces and territories. According to the Society, the proposed park, which would increase the protected portion of Québec's boreal forest to 4.6%, would help overcome a major deficiency in Québec's boreal forest protection strategy. In addition, it felt the project would go some way towards correcting another deficiency, that of general conservation in Québec, pointing out that the current world conservation percentage is approximately 11%, compared to just 3.5% at the present time in Québec (ATO 016, p. 1 and 4).

1. *Act to amend the Parks Act*, S.Q. 2001, c. 63.

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society also approved of the fact that the level of protection granted to the area by its national park status would correspond to the World Conservation Union's Category II ranking¹, which emphasizes the maintenance of ecological integrity while providing control over activities that are incompatible with conservation goals. In addition, it felt that national park status, in addition to providing better protection for ecosystems, would also foster local economic spin-offs and would lead to a higher level of investment and infrastructures (ATO 016, p. 4).

Having said that, the Society also mentioned a number of elements that it felt were essential to the ecological integrity of the proposed park, including the minimum surface area and configuration required to provide the necessary level of protection. These elements, it said, would play a crucial role in maintaining ecological integrity, which is the ultimate goal of the conservation effort. Based on previous work in the field of conservation, the Society reported that long, narrow protected areas with a low surface area-to-perimeter ratio appear to be much more sensitive to the strip effect than areas with higher ratios. They also appear to be more sensitive to outside disturbances and more vulnerable to fragmentation. Another criterion to be considered when designing protected areas is their interconnectivity. In the Society's view, interconnectivity facilitates wildlife movements and helps reduce population isolation. Small protected areas often become pockets of extinction, since the species living within them cannot migrate or go elsewhere to breed (ATO 016, p. 8).

Generally speaking, the Albnel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project was considered by participants to constitute a major contribution to conservation in general, and conservation of the boreal forest in particular. Some, however, pointed out deficiencies in the proposed park's configuration that could work against the protection effort. These aspects will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

The Project – The Aboriginal Standpoint

The Aboriginal nations of North America have maintained a close relationship with the boreal forest for many centuries. This relationship is both economic, in that it involves the harvesting of resources and means of subsistence, and cultural, in that the boreal forest has an impact on how these nations view their history, their place and their role in their environment. The Aboriginal nations of Québec, in particular the Cree Nation, are important protagonists' representative of this interdependency.

1. The World Conservation Union Category II classification is given to a protected area managed primarily with a view to preserving ecosystems and for recreational purposes.

The Current Structure of the Relationship Between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Land

The *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* is the political and administrative instrument governing relations between the Aboriginal nations of Northern Québec and the land on which they live and work. The Agreement enshrines traditional hunting, fishing, trapping and resource access rights exercised by these nations over the centuries, and grants priority to those rights over all other administrative and regulatory measures that may apply to the territory in question.

Under the Agreement, all proposals for the creation of parks or other equivalent usage in the area covered by the Agreement must be submitted to the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee¹ for its opinion. Some elements of the Agreement deserve to be highlighted, since they are relevant to the general context of the project under consideration.

The Agreement defines the notion of “conservation” as the quest for optimal productivity of all living species in the area, and the protection of their ecosystems, to ensure the sustainability of traditional Aboriginal activities. The notion also covers the practices and activities required to satisfy hunting and fishing needs. In recognizing the landholding system applicable to the James Bay region, the Agreement grants the Crees an exemption relating to land access and the payment of ministerial dues that would otherwise be chargeable.

The Peace of the Brave Agreement provides detailed coverage of other factors such as forest management and development, mining activities and economic and community development. It also contains a large number of financial and legal measures. One of its most significant stipulations concerns forest management and harvesting methods in the area in question. By requiring Québec and the Crees to work together, it grants the Crees joint responsibility for determining the development methods that are acceptable on their land. Under the Agreement, the Cree traplines are used to establish the boundaries of forest management units, and various joint management structures are set up to enable the Crees to play an effective role in land and forest management.

1. The Coordinating Committee is composed of representatives from the Québec government, the Canadian government, the Cree Regional Authority, the Makivik Corporation, the Naskapi Land Corporation, plus an observer appointed by the James Bay Development Corporation.

In addition to the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* and the Peace of the Brave Agreement, the Rio Declaration, especially Principle 22¹, and the various provisions of Agenda 21 recognize the central role to be played by Aboriginal peoples and nations in administering their land and managing their resources. The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity also acknowledges the key role of traditional Aboriginal knowledge in local and global conservation initiatives and efforts to ensure the survival and sustainable development of the planet's biological resources.

The project to create the Albnel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park on land inhabited by the Cree Nation of Mistissini recognizes the primordial role to be played by the Nation in the conservation of its land. Following creation of the proposed park, the Nation will be able to participate actively in the development of the area while ensuring the protection of its natural and cultural heritage. As stipulated in the Provisory Master Plan and confirmed by the spokesperson of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, the project would not affect the rights recognized by the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* or the Peace of the Brave (Mr. Alain Hébert, Mistissini hearing, p. 28 and 29). Nevertheless, this aspect was a core element of many of the concerns expressed at the public hearing.

The Concerns and Opinions of Cree Participants

At the Mistissini hearing, the Cree Nation of Mistissini supported the project to create the Albnel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park, provided the new park is planned and administered in a way that is consistent with the principles of sustainable development and the Nation's goals relating to the social and economic development of the community, its access to the region's resources and its freedom to exercise the ancestral rights recognized by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Peace of the Brave (Mr. William Mianscum, Mistissini hearing, p. 5 and 6).

In addition to the rights asserted and recognized in the Agreement and in the Peace of the Brave, the goals mentioned by the representative of the Cree Nation of Mistissini included protection of the community's natural and cultural heritage, introduction of appropriate measures to control access to the land and its resources, and the preparation of effective economic development plans in the best interests of the Cree community and its business people. The Nation also asked for joint measures (with Québec) to ensure the safety of tourists, fishers and other users of

1. Principle 22 : "Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development."

Lac Mistassini, the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi and the proposed new park. In addition, its representative reviewed the elements relating to the new park that are currently under discussion or negotiation with the Québec government (*ibid.*, p. 5 to 7).

These elements include the development and implementation of the natural heritage management plan and the zoning plan for the proposed park, plans for the development of the region's ecotourism potential, a definitive agreement between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the SEPAQ concerning the training and employment of Cree personnel for the project, and the introduction of joint management and financing plans for the existing Wildlife Reserve, if the proposed park is created (*ibid.*, p. 7 and 8).

Although the project to create the park was generally well received by the Aboriginal community, some specific concerns were nevertheless raised at the hearing. First, one of the participants pointed out that the Peace of the Brave makes no mention of the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park as such. However, it does provide for the creation of a joint corporation to be responsible for managing and operating the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi, and mentions the possibility of eventually converting the Réserve faunique Assinica, in the territory of the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree community, into a Cree heritage park. In his judgment, the plan to create a national conservation park on land belonging to the Mistissini Crees was based on an incorrect interpretation of the original intention of the Peace of the Brave. For him, the creation of the park would constitute a *de facto* amendment to that agreement (Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Mistissini hearing, p. 23, 24, 26 and 30).

The spokesperson of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) explained that the creation of the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park would in no way alter the rights of the Aboriginal people or the rights conferred by the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, including those relating to hunting, fishing and trapping (Mr. Alain Hébert, Mistissini hearing, p. 28 and 29). The MDDEP's Service des parcs manager noted that the proposed park's boundaries and zoning provisions would not apply to Agreement beneficiaries, and the Cree people could therefore continue to use the land in exactly the same way as they have always done (Mr. Serge Alain, Mistissini hearing, p. 49).

Despite the assurance that the creation of the park would not alter the Aboriginal rights granted by the Agreement and the Peace of the Brave, some participants were nevertheless fearful of losing their hunting, fishing and trapping rights (Mr. Matthew Coon Come and Mr. Willie K. Gunner, Mistissini hearing, p. 24 and 68). One of them mentioned the likelihood of incompatibility between traditional Aboriginal hunting,

fishing and trapping rights on the one hand, and ecotourism requirements on the other (Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Mistissini hearing, p. 27 and 28). Another participant also raised the possibility of conflicting uses (Mr. Jean-François Lamarre, ATO 013, p. 28). In this respect, the Conseil québécois du loisir pointed out that:

[...] We are also concerned about the conflicts likely to arise between the Aboriginal people and outdoor enthusiasts. We support the need for the Aboriginal people to retain their hunting and trapping rights, but we foresee that visitors will not be welcome on traplines if their presence frightens away the prey. (ATO 007, p. 9)

Provisions have been made for talleyman to have a right of supervision over activities taking place in their ancestral traplines. In other words, park managers would have to consult every talleyman before the beginning of each park operating year. They could then decide, for example, not to receive visitors during the coming year, or to shorten or lengthen the period during which visitors would be received (Mr. Alain Hébert, Mistissini hearing, p. 29).

To ensure priority for Aboriginal rights, some participants suggested that the *Parks Act* should be amended to include the special hunting, fishing and trapping rules applicable to beneficiaries of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (Ms. Chantal Tétreault and Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Mistissini hearing, p. 79 to 82). This proposal would certainly be worth considering, especially since the parks legislation is currently under review.

In addition to an assurance concerning the maintenance of Aboriginal rights, one participant requested that the Cree lifestyle and traditional knowledge of Cree elders should be play their role in the project (Mr. Peter Coonishish Coon, Mistissini hearing, p. 51, 91 and 92). This is consistent with one of the recommendations made by James Bay Tourism, namely that the proposed park should be created “with true respect for Aboriginal values and culture” (ATO 023, p. 7).

One of the participants (the principal wind energy negotiator for the Cree Nation of Mistissini) also mentioned the area’s wind energy potential and the future development of wind energy projects on sites adjacent to the proposed park. His concerns related to the possibility of installing measurement masts around the proposed park, to obtain a more accurate estimate of wind energy potential in the region before the park is created (Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Mistissini hearing, p. 25, 48 and 49).

The Service des parcs Manager from the Ministère du Développement durable, de l’Environnement et des Parcs commented on the possibility of measuring the wind energy potential on sites adjacent to the proposed park. According to him, if the

Minister eventually decided to grant temporary legal protection to the park area, that decision would have the effect of prohibiting all natural resource-related economic and exploratory activities. However, the protective status would apply only within the boundaries of the proposed park, and would be in effect until Cabinet made its final decision regarding creation of the park. Therefore, wind energy measurement activities taking place outside the proposed park would not be prohibited, at least for the time being (Mr. Serge Alain, Mistissini hearing, p. 44, 48 and 49).

The Socio-Economic Context in the Region

The socio-economic situation of the James Bay community and the Cree Nation of Mistissini is extremely vulnerable, since it is dependent on a very limited number of sectors. The James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Officers identified some promising areas for future development in its 2004-2009 five-year development plan. The first of these is the diversification of economic activity in the region (ATO 006, p. 3). To achieve this, James Bay Tourism felt the tourist industry offers great promise for the James Bay region, and well-managed development of tourism would be a significant element in consolidating the region's economy (ATO 023, p. 3 and 6). Concurring with that idea, The Groupe faune régional du Nord-du-Québec agreed that the region's economy is in a poor state, both for the mining and the forestry sectors, and the region should not wait for the situation to become worse before developing new niches of economic activities (ATO 020, p. 5).

According to a report published by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (2005, p. 12), there is significant potential for the development of tourism in the boreal forest, and this would constitute an alternative basis for community economic development in the region. The report also points out that tourism expenditure in Canada in 2001 totalled \$54.6 billion, and ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing components of the tourist industry.

The Cree Nation of Mistissini

According to the 2001 census¹, the Mistissini community had nearly 2,600 inhabitants in 2001, with the largest age group being the under-14s (31.8 %). The community's population is therefore composed mainly of young people, a situation that is considerably different from the rest of Québec, where the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups predominate (29.9% and 25.8% respectively). In 2001, the unemployment rate

1. Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Recensement de la population 2001 Nord-du-Québec*.
[www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/regions/recens2001_10/10_index.htm]

in Mistissini was 21.4%, compared with just 8.2% for Québec as a whole. Therefore, according to the Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini:

The residents of Mistissini as well as the neighbouring municipalities aspire for sustainable socioeconomic development as well as a greater local and regional control over such development. Sustainable socioeconomic development must provide for the needs of the demographic growth of the region. Mistissini has a large young population who require employment.
(M. William Mianscum, Mistissini hearing, p. 9)

The population is undergoing demographic growth, and needs jobs. It is for this reason that the Cree Nation of Mistissini wants to be involved in every development avenue for the region (Mr. William Mianscum, Mistissini hearing, p. 13). For example, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association wishes to continue to support community tourism initiatives (ATO 005).

Creation of the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park would generate jobs for the Mistissini Crees, since they would be jointly involved in its management and operation pursuant to a 2005 agreement between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec. This is one of the reasons why the Nation is in favour of creating the park (M. William Mianscum, Mistissini hearing, p. 6 and 13).

The Population of Chibougamau

The population of Chibougamau was approximately 8,000 in 2001. Its age distribution was similar to that for Québec as a whole, i.e. the dominant age group was the 24-44 year-old group (33.9%). The unemployment rate in 2001 was 12.6%.

A study carried out for the Town of Chibougamau indicates that the local economy depends mainly on natural resource operations - mining and forestry activities for the most part – and both these sectors are currently undergoing radical changes. The mining industry is declining, and the future of the forestry industry is somewhat uncertain due among other things to the report published by the *Commission d'étude sur la gestion de la forêt publique québécoise* and signature of the Peace of the Brave Agreement (Ville de Chibougamau, 2005a, p. 1 and 11).

The Town has drawn up a strategic development plan to address these uncertainties. One of the strategies selected to motivate the community's principal stakeholders and develop the full social and economic potential of Chibougamau is to support and create conditions conducive to the diversification of Chibougamau's economy, among other things by developing the region's tourist attractions. The Town also hopes to establish and maintain political, economic and commercial contacts with the region's Aboriginal populations, in order to maximize the positive spin-offs available to the

Town as a result of its strategic geographical location (Ville de Chibougamau, 2005b, p. 20, 23 and 25).

Similarly, community organizations including the Commission économique et touristique de Chibougamau and the Chambre de commerce de Chibougamau believe the creation of the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park would offer a significant opportunity for the development of tourism (ATO 011, p. 6; ATO 019).

For its part, the Groupe faune régional du Nord-du-Québec :

[...]invites the James Bay organizations, and especially the Town of Chibougamau, which is directly concerned by the proposed park, to take steps to forge business contacts with the Mistissini Crees as quickly as possible. (ATO 020, p. 5)

According to the Group, the Town is anxious to create a sustainable partnership with the Crees, and such a partnership would generate many new opportunities for the region's businesses (ATO 020, p. 5).

The Social and Economic Contribution of the Proposed Park

The economy of the Chibougamau region depends on the mining and forestry sectors, which are susceptible to periodic declines (as is the case presently). There is therefore an urgent need for new jobs, especially as the Cree Nation of Mistissini is undergoing significant demographic growth.

Clearly, then, the creation of the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park would provide new avenues for social and economic development in the James Bay region, the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Town of Chibougamau. Development of the tourism niche would very probably generate new jobs and help diversify the region's economy.

Chapter 2 **The Boundaries and Zoning of the Proposed Park**

The Proposed Boundaries and Selected Conservation Approach

At the public hearing, eleven individuals and organizations, including the Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini, were clearly in favour of extending the area of the proposed park. The recommendations concerning changes to the proposed park's boundaries are presented briefly below. As Figure 1 shows, the sectors mentioned were Mont Stefansson (Mount Stefansson) and the Marie-Victorin plateau in the Monts Otish, the Rivière Témiscamie drainage basin, the historic canoe corridor between Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Témiscamie, and the Lac Mistassini spillway including the downstream sectors of the Rivières Pépeshquasati, Chéno and Takwa (Pépeshquasati, Chéno and Takwa Rivers).

Mont Stefansson and the Marie-Victorin plateau

Some participants took note of the fact that Mont Stefansson and the Marie-Victorin plateau were excluded from the project. One participant in particular, while unreservedly praising the park initiative, felt it was vital to review the proposed boundaries in order to include the Marie-Victorin plateau and Mont Stefansson, which he believed were showcases of the area. In his view it would be absurd to exclude them simply because of mining claims that are mostly inactive, and he recommended that the Government should revoke these claims and include areas in question in the park (Mr. Marc Mercier, ATO 003).

Nature Québec/UQCN and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society also recommended that these two sectors of the Monts Otish should be included in the proposed park. This would mean that the entire Monts Otish range would be protected, which both organizations felt was essential, since its value lies in the exceptional visual quality of the views it provides (ATO 012, p. 19; ATO 016, p. 16).

One participant also proposed that the Marie-Victorin plateau, Mont Stefansson and some adjacent mountains should all be included in the new park. She described the Marie-Victorin plateau summit as being dominated by Arctic communities of lichens and mosses, an environment that is highly sensitive to other forms of development,

and one that constitutes, as Jacques Rousseau pointed out, an Arctic pocket in the Boreal zone (Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022).

The Rivière Témiscamie Drainage Basin

The shape and size of a protected area influences the degree to which its ecological integrity can be effectively protected. According to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the boundaries proposed in the Provisory Master Plan sector were too narrow along most of the Rivière Témiscamie, especially at its northernmost point, where the park would only be 0.5 to 2 km wide. The Society was of the view that such a design was far from ideal, especially given the potential importance of mining activities along its periphery (ATO 016, p. 8).

The Society also underscored what it considered to be a weakness and a “lack of vision” in the planning of protected areas, namely the maintenance of ecological integrity. Given that industrial activities often take place in the immediate vicinity of a protected area and are likely to place pressure on the ecological integrity of ecosystems, the Society felt it was essential in this case to include a buffer zone around the protected area, within which activities would be controlled in order to minimize peripheral harmful effects. Another of its recommendations related to the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi and involved maintaining residual portions of the Reserve around the periphery of the proposed park, as a buffer zone. It also recommended that migration corridors should be created between the National Park and the proposed Cree heritage park at Oujé-Bougoumou (ATO 016, p. 8, 18 and 19).

The Conseil québécois du loisir made some similar recommendations. It felt the proposed park should protect all natural components likely to have an impact on the ecological integrity of the three vegetation zones represented in the park, namely the boreal forest, the taiga and the tundra. This would involve basing the park’s boundaries on drainage basins. In other words, it felt the proposed rectilinear boundaries along each side of the Rivière Témiscamie and south-east of Lac Albanel were unjustified, since forestry and mining operations in the sector would potentially alter the site’s exceptional nature and biological diversity. Rather than opting for rectilinear boundaries, the organization proposed that all the sector’s tributaries should be included in the park project (ATO 007, p. 6).

Nature Québec/UQCN was also of the same view, basing its comments on a concept mentioned by the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks¹, under

1. Parks Canada, *Report of the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks*. [www.pc.gc.ca/docs/pc/rpts/ie-ei/report-rapport_1_f.asp]

which an area is considered “integral” if its indigenous components and ecological processes can remain intact. The organization therefore felt the proposed design of the park was not conducive to ensuring its ecological integrity (ATO 012, p. 9).

Nature Québec/UQCN also noted that the proposed project had maintained the same long, narrow configuration as in the 1990s, which it felt was then, and still is, a concession to forestry and mining restrictions. Yet, the conservation biology is based on the principle that, to protect a river, it is also necessary to protect its drainage basin. The organization maintains that the principle should most certainly apply to the Rivière Témiscamie, which is one of the last great Northern rivers not developed for hydro-electricity purposes. It therefore proposed that, as at a strict minimum, the Government should protect the river’s primary drainage basin even if it rejected the possibility of protecting the drainage basin as a whole (ATO 012, p. 11 and 12).

The narrow configuration of certain sectors of the proposed park, and the importance of buffer zones, were addressed by other participants too. With regard to the main tracts of water, one participant was of the opinion that the protective riparian strip should be at least 5 km wide, especially along the Rivière Témiscamie. In her opinion it was appropriate for the strip to be as wide as the drainage basin boundaries, to protect the integrity of the water (Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022). The Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes also shares the view that the current boundaries of the proposed park do not guarantee the area’s ecological integrity, since only a small portion of the Rivière Témiscamie’s primary drainage basis would be protected (ATO 010).

The Historic Canoe Corridor Sector

The historical canoe corridor connecting Lac à l’Eau Froide to Lac Témiscamie was included in the recommendations made by many participants. The proposed park configuration around the corridor is in the shape of a thin hook, and excludes all the tributaries. This is a critical point, since the park’s configuration as currently proposed would not protect the ecological integrity of the watercourse, nor would it maintain an appropriate visual corridor, preserve an exceptional forest ecosystem or preserve an essential habitat for the woodland caribou.

Nature Québec/UQCN, basing its comments on scientific literature, noted that a rounded configuration, rather than a long, narrow one, would be much more appropriate for protecting ecological integrity. It therefore recommended that this principle be considered when deciding the park’s definitive configuration, especially in the historic canoe corridor sector, which is currently protected by only a narrow strip (ATO 012, p. 9).

The Conseil québécois du loisir was also concerned about the lack of protective strips around Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Témiscamie, a situation it found particularly worrying because logging operations are currently underway in the sector. In its opinion, this would work against ecosystem conservation requirements. The Conseil also pointed out that:

A 200 m riparian strip is the minimum required for an interesting canoe path [...]. Due to lack of information in the Provisory Master Plan, we feel there are risks relating to the width of the wooded strips around Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Témiscamie [...].
(ATO 007, p. 10)

The Fédération québécoise du canot et du kayak considers that the lack of a sufficiently broad riparian buffer strip around the lakes, in addition to endangering the sector's ecological integrity, would threaten canoe-based recreational and tourist activities (ATO 024, p. 2). Another participant also mentioned the importance of maintaining landscape quality, especially in areas with significant variations in relief, for example around tracts of water and in the historic canoe corridor (Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022).

Nature Québec/UQCN and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society underscored the ecological and heritage value of the old-growth forests located between Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Cosnier (Lake Cosnier), even though they are not part of the proposed park. Both organizations emphasized the importance of including these forests in the park (ATO 012, p. 16 and 17; ATO 016, p. 13). The forests also constitute a habitat for the woodland caribou, and this should be a major consideration when establishing the boundaries of the park in the sector in question.

Woodland Caribou

The woodland caribou is an ecotype that is distinct from the barren-ground caribou and the mountain caribou, and it lives in a different habitat. Its range diminished significantly during the last century, especially in southern Québec. It is for this reason that the boreal woodland caribou population has been designated in Canada as a species at risk under the *Species at Risk Act* (L.C., 2002, c. 29). In Québec, it has been given status as a vulnerable species under the *Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species* (R.S.Q., c. E-12.01)¹.

The woodland caribou depends on a variety of habitats, and needs wide-open spaces of up to 3,500 km² over periods of years. It is sensitive to predators, and seeks out dense, mature forests for better protection. The species would therefore be vulnerable

1. *Regulation respecting threatened or vulnerable species and their habitats* [E-12.01, r. 0.2.3].

to the fragmentation of its habitat due to logging. In particular, disturbance due to logging and loss of the dietary components on which it depends as a result of the destruction of mature stands are both significant threats to the animal. Other indirect factors, such as forest roads, public access roads, hunters and poachers, all appear to increase the pressure and restrictions already placed on the species. The rejuvenation of forests due to logging operations, which produces an increase in moose density and a parallel increase in the wolf population, also increases the pressure on woodland caribou populations (Saint-Pierre, Lantin et Bélanger, 2003; Saint-Pierre *et al.*, 2003; Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, ATO 016, p. 5 to 7).

If the animal is to survive, the area in which it lives must be protected. Accordingly, the woodland caribou is considered by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society to be an “umbrella species”; in other words, the fact of ensuring its survival automatically ensures the maintenance of all ecosystem components (ATO 016, p. 5). Protection of the woodland caribou through preservation of its habitat is therefore of great importance, far beyond the survival of the animal itself.

The survival of the woodland caribou entails the protection of large areas, in addition to better forestry practices. It would therefore be necessary to leave large tracts of mature forest untouched, along with corridors through which the animal could travel. Logging operations would also need to be grouped into large blocks. Habitat fragmentation could be minimized by rationalizing the forest road network and, in some cases, by closing down certain roads altogether (Courtois *et al.*, 2002; Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, ATO 016, p. 6).

A herd of woodland caribou lives in the Lac à l'Eau Froide sector. However, the area in question is located on the periphery of the proposed park, not within its boundaries. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society believed this area to be of capital importance for the survival of the woodland caribou, since it contains quality habitats, calving grounds, winter feeding grounds and several tracts of mature forest. The Society also felt the protected areas should be sufficiently large to provide an extensive and diversified habitat for mammals requiring a large home range, including the woodland caribou and the wolf. Generally speaking, the size of a protected area should be greater than the area affected by the largest natural disturbance (e.g. fire). In the boreal forest, large forest fires often destroy areas in excess of 1,000 km². Accordingly, the society felt the minimum size of a protected area in the boreal forest should be in excess of 2,000 km² (ATO 016, p. 7).

Several other participants also criticized the fact that the woodland caribou's habitat had not been included in the proposed park, and recommended that the park's area should be extended accordingly. The participants holding this view included the

Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes, Nature Québec/UQCN and the Canadian Boreal Initiative¹ (ATO 010; ATO 012, p. 14 to 16). In addition, the task force for the joint management of the Wildlife Reserve and the proposed park, of which the Cree Nation of Mistissini is a member, basing its comments on the work of another task force², also asked that the historic canoe corridor sector be extended. The reasons behind its proposal included the existence of mature forests in the sector, the importance of those forests for the woodland caribou, and the importance of protecting the landscapes around the sector's tracts of water³.

In 2003, the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec established a woodland caribou protection block between Lac Cosnier and Lac à l'Eau Froide as part of a proposal to manage the woodland caribou habitat in the Nord-du-Québec region⁴ (Saint-Pierre, Lantin and Bélanger, 2003). The block was never given official protective status, however, and its inclusion in the park would correct this deficiency.

It is important at this point to emphasize that the vulnerable status of the woodland caribou has triggered a number of government initiatives. For example, a recovery plan and species conservation guidelines are currently being drawn up by a provincial committee formed for that purpose. There is, therefore, a consensus on the importance of protecting the woodland caribou. In the opinion participants who addressed this issue in the course of the public hearing, the present context is conducive to improving protection for the animal's habitat. The Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project is regarded by all as an exceptional opportunity for doing this. It would therefore be relevant to extend the boundaries of the park around the historic canoe corridor, at the very least to bring them into line with the protection block proposal made in 2003.

In addition, the Cree also want to be involved in the woodland caribou protection effort. During consultations concerning a recovery plan for the species in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, they said they were willing to cease their woodland caribou culling operations, although they also stipulated that Cree hunters would be free to choose whether or not to adhere to this new code. In addition, the Hunting,

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1. Letter from Ms. Cathy Wilkinson, Principal Manager of the Canadian Boreal Initiative, dated February 13, 2006.
 2. The task force is composed of representatives from the Cree Nation of Mistissini, the Service des parcs of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, the Direction d'aménagement de la faune du Nord-du-Québec of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune and the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi.
 3. Letter from Ms. Kathleen J. Wootton, Deputy Chief of the Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini, concerning inclusion of the historic corridor in the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park, dated January 19, 2006.
 4. The main goals of the management plan are to prevent the disappearance of the woodland caribou population from the Nord-du-Québec region, to maintain current population levels, to protect wintering grounds, to maintain connections between and contiguity of habitats to allow for animal movement, to protect known breeding grounds and to maintain logging and limit its impacts on the allowable annual cut.

Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee supported the measures proposed in the regional plan¹.

Recovery of the species, which will require a well thought-out, long-term effort, will not be possible without the contribution of the Cree Nation. The Cree Nation has traditional knowledge of the land, its cycles, its wealth of vegetation and the habits of the animals that live off this wealth. In addition, the recovery effort will have access to the best remote sensing techniques and land management methods based on constantly updated scientific information. A combination of all these means, within a true conservation partnership between Québec and the Cree Nation, will be required to ensure the recovery of the woodland caribou population.

The Lac Mistassini Spillway Sector

Laval University's Canada Research Chair in Genetic Conservation of Aquatic Resources focused its intervention on the aquatic wealth of Lac Mistassini and its genetic and biological diversity. The Chair has researched the brook trout and walleye populations, both of which are part of a unique freshwater fish community in Lac Mistassini. According to the researchers, these species differ from most of those found in other tracts of water in North America, principally due to the complete absence of stocking and their abundance and size (ATO 017, p. 2).

After examining the level of protection granted to Lac Mistassini by the park project, the Research Chair criticized the fact that there is no provision for the most important brook trout and walleye breeding grounds in the area. These grounds are located in the Rivières Pépeshquasati and Chéno, which flow into the extreme north-eastern corner of Lac Mistassini, and which were found by the research group to be of primary importance to the health of the lake's brook trout population. The Rivière Takwa also appears to play a major role in maintaining and preserving the lake's walleye population (ATO 017, p. 7; ATO 018, p. 6). The sector around the point where these three rivers flow into Lac Mistassini is also known as the Lac Mistassini spillway.

The Research Chair recommended that the project be revised in order to protect the aquatic resources of Lac Mistassini by including the Rivières Pépeshquasati, Chéno and Takwa in the protected area. This approach would have the merit of preserving the largest brook trout and walleye spawning grounds in Lac Mistassini (ATO 017, p. 8; ATO 018, p. 7).

1. Letter from Mr. Johnny Peters, Chair of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee, to Mr. Louis Villemure, Direction de l'aménagement de la faune de la région du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, dated December 21, 2005.

The Groupe faune régional du Nord-du-Québec also referred approvingly to the recommendations made by Laval University's Research Chair (ATO 020, p. 4). Similarly, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society pointed out that the sector around the three rivers was part of a proposed new ecological reserve, and recommended that it be included in the park (ATO 016, p. 17).

In more general terms, one participant felt water quality should be maintained in all tracts of water whose source would be located outside the proposed new park. This would be the case among others for many Lac Mistassini tributaries (Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022). Nature Québec/UQCN, for its part, recommended that the spawning grounds in the primary basins of Lac Albanel and Lac Mistassini should be analyzed exhaustively with a view to establishing their support capacity and providing the appropriate level of protection (ATO 012, p. 13).

Following the public hearings, the Canadian Boreal Initiative, an organization devoted to the conservation of Canada's boreal zone and the sustainable development of its resources, wrote to express its support for the proposed park. It also suggested that the proposed park's boundaries should be extended to incorporate the sectors mentioned above, essentially for the same reasons¹.

Summary of Participants' Recommendations

A consensus emerges from the participants' recommendations, regarding the need to extend the boundaries of the proposed park. Clearly, this recommendation is based mainly on considerations relating to ecology and the biology of conservation. If we look more closely at the participants' proposals, there are also a certain number of orientations that need to be considered when deciding on the configuration and management method of the new park.

In addition to the principles and measures set out in the Provisory Master Plan (which were favourably received for the most part), participants suggested that it would be appropriate to review the sectors in the proposed park with a low surface-to-perimeter ratio, in order to ensure that they are broad enough to prevent potential strip and fragmentation effects. With regard to the buffer zones required to provide better protection from the harmful impacts of economic activities on land adjacent to the park, they should be established on the basis of scientifically-supported conservation criteria. It also goes without saying that this exercise would involve balancing interests that are sometimes contradictory. The participants who expressed an opinion on this issue emphasized the importance of buffer zones. In their view, the importance and

1. Letter from Ms. Cathy Wilkinson, Principal Manager of the Canadian Boreal Initiative, dated February 13, 2006.

scope of the proposed park, along with its unique place in Québec's conservation strategy, would justify the creation of buffer zones that are broad enough to ensure the ecological integrity of the park.

Generally speaking, it was proposed that:

- The park's boundaries be extended so that the area of its land-based component is at least equivalent to the area affected by natural disturbances over a one-century cycle, as indicated in the scientific literature on conservation;
- Rectilinear and narrow tracts should be avoided as far as possible, in favour of rounder lines and configurations;
- Factors conducive to the recovery of the woodland caribou as an *umbrella species* should be considered when designing the park;
- Buffer zones should be created to protect the ecological integrity and landscape quality of the new park's water-based components;
- Where possible, the drainage basins of tributaries flowing into the park's lakes should be included in the new park.

It was suggested that certain sectors in particular should be included in the park, as follows:

- The Marie-Victorin plateau and Mont Stefansson sectors;
- The Rivière Témiscamie drainage basin, or at least its primary basin;
- The woodland caribou habitat located around Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Cosnier;
- The Lac Mistassini spillway sector, including the upstream portions of the Rivières Pépeshquasati, Chéno and Takwa.

It goes without saying that the final decision concerning the proposed park's boundaries and configuration will reflect a balance between conservation interests and economic considerations. However, given that conservation is the primary goal in creating the park, the ecological integrity of the area should be a core consideration in any decision concerning its boundaries.

Zoning Proposals

Although zoning is a central element of the Provisory Master Plan submitted for the hearing, it was addressed to a much lesser extent, both at the hearings and in the briefs, than the proposed boundaries of the new park. However, a handful of participants did underscore the importance of zoning and made a certain number of suggestions.

Zoning is a tool used to designate and delimit areas requiring special protection by determining the activities that are permitted. In the case of the proposed park, zones would be set aside for “extreme preservation”, “preservation”, “ambiance”, “services” and sacred areas.

Overall, the participants agreed with the zoning proposals. Most of the park’s land mass would be designated as an “extreme preservation” or “preservation” zone, and this was welcomed by the participants. In their view, the predominance of protection over recreational and tourist development would help maintain the area’s ecological integrity (Mr. Marc Mercier, ATO 003; Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022). Some participants, including the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, also praised the concept of sacred areas:

The initiative is an excellent one and illustrates a true will on the part of the Québec government to acknowledge the importance of spiritual or sacred sites for the Aboriginal nations that occupy the area. It is to be hoped that similar initiatives will be repeated for future park projects, and that they will help enhance the social acceptability of protected areas (translation).
(ATO 016, p. 10)

Basing its comments on the zoning proposals, the Society thought the park’s zoning system should be adjustable to reflect new information on the area, as well as new conservation knowledge. It therefore recommended that the knowledge acquisition effort be continued, to ensure that every sector needing additional protection is considered in the zoning plan for the proposed park (*ibid.*). Another participant made similar comments:

The new park’s management should document the presence of threatened or vulnerable species (plants and wildlife), or species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable within the park’s boundaries, and consider including the habitats of numerous species in future extreme preservation zones (translation).
(Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022)

In short, the proposed zoning for the park was well-received, but participants proposed that it should change over time to reflect new knowledge of the area derived from an ongoing knowledge acquisition effort, and also to reflect new conservation knowledge and the observed consequences of permitted ecotourist uses.

Natural Resources and Regional Socio-Economic Development

The Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish project's compatibility with the continuation or introduction of economic activities in adjacent areas was addressed on several occasions during the hearing. The possibility of mining and forestry operations was addressed from this standpoint, as was the feasibility of setting up wind generating facilities. Participants also discussed the possibility of constructing an access road to the Monts Otish, as part of an effort to support the region's socio-economic development. The importance of collaboration between the James Bay community and the Crees was also noted.

Mining Activities

The Association de l'exploration minière du Québec was of the view that it was important to maintain access to Québec's mineral resources, so that future generations will also be able to take advantage of them. The Association thought the recent ban on staking in certain areas of Québec had been introduced without an appropriate prior analysis of mining potential, and without proper consideration of the likely economic impacts (ATO 001, p. 6).

Based on similar reasoning applied more specifically to the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project, other participants emphasized the importance of properly assessing the region's mining potential before prohibiting mining exploration (James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Officers, ATO 006, p. 7; Majescor Resources, ATO 026; Mr. Jimmy McLeod, Mistissini hearing, p. 38).

The Uranor Corporation shared this view. According to its President, the uranium potential of the Otish basin, which he described as "undeniable", had not been sufficiently taken into account when setting the boundaries of the proposed park. In his view, the uranium deposits were of capital importance to Québec and the entire world for their energy production potential, at a time when the demand for carbon-free energy sources is increasing steadily. In his opinion, nuclear energy will become an unavoidable means of achieving a healthy energy balance sheet. It was for this reason that he proposed changing the boundaries of the park in order to exclude the sectors with the highest uranium potential, around the Monts Otish and in the Lac Indicateur (Lake Indicator) corridor sector. He also recommended that mining

prospection be permitted inside the park (ATO 004, p. 2 and 6; Mr. Serge Genest, Chibougamau hearing, p. 4, 8 and 13).

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune supported the current boundaries, and its spokesperson at the hearing pointed out that mineral prospecting is and will continue to be prohibited in areas that have been withdrawn from mining activities (Mr. Sébastien Desrochers, Chibougamau hearing, p. 12). In addition, a corridor that, according to Uranor, has significant uranium potential, located north of the Lac Indicateur sector, is situated in the area reserved to the State.

The Ashton-Soquem Joint Venture, which owns a diamond deposit located 350 km north-east of Chibougamau, did not object to the proposed park. However, it was concerned that creation of the park would hinder the future construction of the road needed to mine its deposit, which is currently accessible only by air. Similar concerns were also raised later in the hearing (ATO 009, p. 2 and 8; Mr. Ghislain Poirier, Chibougamau hearing, p. 21).

Other participants were concerned about the fate of the land reserved to the State. This was the case of Nature Québec/UQCN and another participant who said companies carrying out mineral exploration work in the area should be obliged, at their own expense, to restore the land to its natural state if mining potential is not found (ATO 012, p. 18; Ms. Martine Landry, ATO 022). The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society also recommended that no additional time be granted beyond the current July 2009 deadline for inclusion of the land reserved to the State in the proposed park (ATO 016, p. 17 and 18).

Forestry Activities

According to the James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Representatives, the forestry industry is currently undergoing a period of change, due among other things to “the strength of the Canadian dollar, the lumber dispute with the United States, the cost of energy and the application of the Coulombe report’s recommendation to reduce the allowable annual cut by 20%”¹ (ATO 006, p. 6). In the area covered by the Peace of the Brave Agreement, the allowable annual cut reduction for the period 2005-2008 is 25%².

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1. Commission d’étude sur la gestion de la forêt publique québécoise, 2004.
 2. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, *Report des plans généraux d’aménagement forestier (PGAF) et baisse de l’attribution de la matière ligneuse*. [www.mrnfp.gouv.qc.ca/forets/modernisation/modernisation-pgaf.jsp]

The James Bay region faces additional restrictions on logging due to the application of the Peace of the Brave Agreement. When forest management units are situated in traplines, the allowable annual cut calculation is based on more restrictive rules for logging. Among other things, forest management activities cannot take place on sites of interest established and mapped by the Crees, although such sites must not exceed 1% of the total area of the trapline. In addition, to ensure preservation of forested areas of interest to the Crees for wildlife-related purposes (marten, beaver, caribou and other habitats), the talleyman calculate an area equivalent to no more than 25% of their respective traplines within which only mosaic or block cutting is permitted. Harvesting is prohibited in traplines where more than 40% of the productive forest area has been logged or damaged by fire in the last twenty years.

The entire area assigned to Chantiers Chibougamau for its timber supply is governed by the Peace of the Brave Agreement. The company's representatives believe the company has no way of achieving the same level of annual profitability as other forestry companies whose logging areas are not covered by the Agreement and its restrictions (ATO 014, p. 1; Mr. Jean-Pierre Boudreau, Chibougamau hearing, p. 69).

According to the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, creation of the Albnel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park would have an impact on the allowable annual cut estimated at 29,000 m³ per year in the areas under forest management¹. The Chantiers Chibougamau representative estimated that withdrawal of the 4,500 ha area that would fall within the proposed park (i.e. the historic canoe corridor between Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Témiscamie) would result in an allowable annual cut reduction of approximately 5,600 m³, and thus to the loss of 5.6 jobs (Mr. Jean-Pierre Boudreau, Chibougamau hearing, p. 70, 71 and 77). The company did not object to the creation of the park, provided its impacts were minimized and properly compensated.

First, to minimize the park's impacts on the allowable annual cut in a trapline, Chantiers Chibougamau insisted that the area of the proposed park should still be considered as forming part of the trapline – in other words, as part of the productive forest area. If this were the case, the area that the company could disturb, which is determined by the ratio between the area already disturbed and the total productive forest area, would remain the same, and would simply be distributed differently outside the park. Second, the company proposed that the areas of wildlife interest to the Crees (not more than 25% of the trapline), established by the talleyman, should be situated in the portion of the trapline that falls within the proposed park. Third, it asked for government compensation, in the form of an additional ad-hoc volume

1. Letter from Mr. Marcel Grenier, Service de la coordination et des orientations of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, dated February 22, 2006.

allocation when the 2008 allowable annual cut calculations are revised. Lastly, the company asked for road access to its logging area, for example in the form of a road that would cross the park in the historic canoe corridor (ATO 014, p. 2; Mr. Jean-Pierre Boudreau, Chibougamau hearing, p. 71 and 73).

The Groupe faune régional du Nord-du-Québec, which was in favour of the creation of the park, recommended that all possible provisions be applied “to ensure that the boundaries retained for the new park do not have a negative impact on the supplies available to our region’s mills” (ATO 020, p. 6). However, commenting upon the appropriateness of compensating Chantiers Chibougamau for the loss of allowable annual cut by allocating an additional volume, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune has said this is not a possibility at the present time¹.

The configuration of the proposed park would not allow for adequate conservation of its ecological integrity, nor would it provide appropriate protection for the woodland caribou. Many participants therefore felt it would be desirable to extend the park around the historic canoe corridor, in order to include more of the drainage basin and more of the woodland caribou habitat around Lac à l’Eau Froide and Lac Cosnier. Clearly, such an extension would generate further negative repercussions for Chantiers Chibougamau.

The Introduction of Wind Energy Projects

At the public hearing, one of the participants talked about the wind energy electricity generating projects currently being assessed by the Cree Nation of Mistissini in partnership with specialist American companies. The participant in question is the chief negotiator for these projects. According to him, exploration of the economic and energy production potential of wind energy is appropriate at this time due to Québec’s current policy in favour of wind energy. The Cree territory in the James Bay region hosts 60% of Québec’s total exploitable wind energy sites. The participant also pointed out that some of the most promising wind energy sites currently being examined are located around the periphery of the proposed park (Mr. Matthew Coon Come, Mistissini hearing, p. 25). They include Mont Stefansson and the Marie-Victorin plateau in the Monts Otish.

Some of the organizations supportive of the creation of the park were aware of these projects and raised them in the course of the public in a mainly unfavourable way. For example, the Alliance de recherche université-communauté monts Valin-monts Otish

1. Letter from Mr. Marcel Grenier, Service de la coordination et des orientations of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, dated February 22, 2006.

at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, despite its favourable view of wind energy in general, felt that wind energy development around the proposed park would be completely inappropriate. It pointed out that the construction of windmills and energy transmission lines around the periphery of the proposed park would irreversibly and perpetually alter the ecological integrity of a portion of the Monts Otish, as well as their tremendous but as yet undeveloped recreational and tourist potential. The Alliance explained that, in a park composed of mountains or tundra, with wide open spaces, where the landscape is an intrinsic and vital component, it would be wrong to construct wind energy facilities that would significantly alter the surrounding landscape. It also pointed out that the area's remote location, harsh climate and accumulations of ice in the winter would make the task of operating windmills both complex and extremely onerous (ATO 002).

The Comité de l'environnement de Chicoutimi also described the idea of wind energy developments in the immediate vicinity of the proposed park as a source of considerable concern. In its view, wind energy development on the mountains adjacent to the park would be visible over long distances and would therefore be contrary to the Provisory Master Plan for the park, which evokes and emphasizes the need for an intact landscape heritage. The Committee felt it was vital to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed wind energy developments by ensuring that they were integrated as far as possible into the surrounding landscape. Visual mitigation is particularly important in view of plans to develop the region's natural and cultural heritage through the creation of the park, and to develop a broad range of sporting, ecotourism and outdoor activities. In the Committee's opinion, the development and anticipated use of the park would be significantly compromised if the visual impacts of the windmills cannot be properly mitigated (ATO 008, p. 3).

According to Nature Québec/UQCN, wind energy development around the proposed park would compromise the visual quality of the project due to the combined effects of altitude and the lack of tree vegetation in the Monts Otish landscape. Its opinion was therefore that this type of development should not take place within the visual corridor of the Monts Otish (ATO 012, p. 19).

It is certainly legitimate for the Cree community to want to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Québec's wind energy development potential to diversify and broaden the base of its social and economic development. It is up to the community to identify the best avenues for development. However, the development of wind energy projects in the region may well be incompatible with the mission of the proposed park, the visual characteristics of the Monts Otish environment and its ecotourism potential.

One possible approach to the development of the region's wind energy potential would be to collaborate with the Cree Nation of Mistissini in order to establish zones in which wind energy would be prohibited on land adjacent to the proposed park. Clearly, such zones would have to be defined using criteria relating among other things to the intrinsic visual value of the various landscape components and the aspects of the landscape that must be preserved in order to develop the ecotourist potential of the proposed park. Once these zones have been identified, they could be superimposed over maps of the areas with exploitable wind energy potential in order to determine where wind energy development can take place without compromising the potential for other types of social and economic development suited to the present and future needs of the communities in question.

The Chibougamau-Mistissini-Otish Sector Access Road

As mentioned in the Provisory Master Plan, a single road would provide access to the proposed park from Chibougamau. The road in question is Route 167, running to Mistissini village and then continuing as a gravel surface to Lac Albanel. On the other hand, the Rivière Rupert sector, the Monts Otish core and Lac Naococane would only be accessible by air. In winter, bush planes fitted with skis would be the only means of transportation to the more isolated sectors of the proposed park. In view of the difficulties raised by this situation, in terms of safety, facility of access and use, the Plan raises the possibility of constructing a multipurpose road. The new road would be an extension of Route 167, connecting the Lac Albanel sector to the south-western portion of the Monts Otish, where prospecting for diamond is currently taking place. It would run mostly parallel to the Rivière Témiscamie, thus facilitating and reducing the cost of canoe-camping excursions and providing overland access to the south-western sector of the Monts Otish. The Plan points out that such a road would open up new possibilities for activities and services within the proposed park.

The Council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini clearly expressed its support for the proposal to extend Route 167 northwards by creating the multipurpose road mentioned in the Provisory Master Plan. According to the Council's representative at the hearing, such a road would reinforce the ecotourist potential of the proposed park and the social and economic development potential of the Cree and James Bay communities. It hoped the ongoing consultation process relating to the Nord-du-Québec region transportation plan would involve all the communities, including the Cree Nation of Mistissini, and would consider their respective interests (Mr. William Mianscum, Mistissini hearing, p. 9 and 10).

The participants who addressed the issue of creating the new multipurpose road were unanimous in their support for it. For example, the James Bay Regional Conference of Elected Officers said the road would allow the former Campbell Resources mine at Eastmain to resume operations, and would also enable Chibougamau and Chapais to benefit from future diamond mining activities in the Monts Otish area (ATO 006, p. 7 and 8).

It was also for this reason that the Ashton-Soquem Joint Venture thought road access to the north along the Chibougamau-Mistissini-Otish pole would become a sustainable development tool for the region. It also asked for the park by-laws to permit heavy traffic along the road, as is currently the case for the Route du Nord connecting Chibougamau to James Bay (ATO 009).

The Commission économique et touristique de Chibougamau was in favour of the multipurpose road, since it would provide access to the vast Rivière Eastmain (Eastmain River) zone, a sector with significant mining potential that is currently hosting the most extensive mineral exploration initiative ever to take place in Québec. It also thought the road would be necessary to provide tourists with access to the proposed park (ATO 011, p. 5). The Chambre de commerce de Chibougamau agreed with this view, and supported the idea of building the road and creating the proposed park (ATO 019).

Participants from all communities and all sectors were therefore unanimous in their support for the proposal to extend Route 167 northwards. The Cree community, the James Bay community, their elected officers and representatives of different social and economic sectors – indeed, all the authorities concerned by the proposed park and represented in the public consultation process – believed it was important to construct a road leading to the south-western sector of the Monts Otish. It would therefore be appropriate to examine the proposal within the general context of the park creation project. It would also be appropriate for the by-laws and regulations governing traffic on the new road to reflect the park's conservation goals.

For Sustainable Inter-Community Cooperation

At the Chibougamau hearing and in many of the briefs, one of the topics addressed was the need for close cooperation between the various communities affected by the park project. According to the participants, this type of cooperation is required to ensure as many positive spin-offs as possible from the project, both for the communities and for the region as a whole.

In the opinion of the Commission économique et touristique de Chibougamau, the park creation project would require close cooperation from all the human components of the surrounding community, who would then have to learn to live with the restrictions imposed by the park while attempting to derive as many benefits as possible from it. The Board agreed that the Cree Nation of Mistissini should be involved in the management of the park, and felt it would also be appropriate for the social and economic community of Chibougamau to be represented on the authority created to manage the park. It objected to the idea that the SEPAQ would be solely responsible for managing activities in the proposed park, since this would prevent the Chibougamau community from developing products and services capable of generating jobs and economic spin-offs for the community as a whole. The proposed park should therefore be regarded as a lever to facilitate the creation of small tourist firms, and should serve to promote the region as a whole, in all its social, economic and cultural diversity (ATO 011, p. 4 and 6).

The Groupe faune régional du Nord-du-Québec, in its brief, referred to the creation last November of a joint corporation composed of representatives from the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the SEPAQ, which will be responsible for managing both the proposed park and the Réserve faunique des Lacs-Albanel-Mistissini-et-Waconichi. The Groupe was in favour of the Cree Nation's involvement in the management of the park. It was aware of the structural potential of the project for the region's economic growth, and suggested that organizations from James Bay, especially the Town of Chibougamau, should take steps to forge business contacts with the Mistissini Crees at the earliest opportunity. In the Groupe's opinion, the proposed park offers an ideal opportunity for partnerships between the two communities aimed at ensuring a regional economic recovery and the development of social and economic prospects in the region as a whole (ATO 020, p. 5 to 7).

The park project appears to present an opportunity for a new regional dynamic that would trigger socio-economic recovery and development. This new dynamic could also provide opportunities for synergy and complementarity in the supply of tertiary economic activities within the territory of the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the James Bay community of Chibougamau. These new opportunities should be seized, in order to create a new context conducive to the emergence of sustainable social and economic cooperation between the two communities.

The new tourism development prospects offered by the project could help create conditions conducive to cooperation between the communities. It would therefore be desirable for the park management partnership currently being prepared to adopt a structure, procedures and practices that would facilitate the emergence of broader cooperation between the communities concerned.

Conclusion

The public hearing revealed a favourable consensus concerning the Albnel-Témiscamie-Otish National Park project, on the part of the Cree Nation of Mistissini, the James Bay community and non-governmental environmental conservation and protection organizations. Among other things, this consensus is based on the fact that the creation of the park is considered an opportunity for a socio-economic restructuring and recovery throughout the entire region. It also reflects the importance of the project for Québec's conservation efforts in general, and its specific commitments in that area particular.

With regard to the Aboriginal aspect of the project, a certain number of measures and administrative procedures need to be identified and introduced in order to structure the operations of the new park. The representatives of the Cree Nation of Mistissini want these measures to reflect the leading role that the Nation will be called upon to play in the creation and operation of the park. Concerns were also expressed regarding potential conflicts that may arise between the traditional rights of the Crees on the one hand and the park's mission and its ecotourism potential on the other. To clarify the situation, it was proposed that the notion of priority for Aboriginal rights granted by the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* and the Peace of the Brave Agreement, in particular for hunting, fishing and trapping, should be included explicitly in the *Parks Act*.

The public hearings generated a significant number of proposals concerning the boundaries of the proposed park and the conservation approach selected by the Government. Most of these proposals take a similar view, in that they suggest modifying the boundaries of the proposed park to bring them into line with best conservation practices and to ensure that they are better able to provide the level of protection required for the park. Whether it was to protect tracts of water in the park, maintain the biological diversity and quality of the park's water resources or preserve landscape integrity, most participants agreed on the need to extend the park's boundaries by incorporating four sectors, namely Mont Stefansson and the Marie-Victorin plateau of the Monts Otish sector, the Rivière Témiscamie drainage basin (or at least its primary basin), the woodland caribou habitat in the vicinity of Lac à l'Eau Froide and Lac Cosnier, and the Lac Mistassini spillway, including the upstream portions of the Rivières Pépeshquasati, Chéno and Takwa. As far as the woodland caribou is concerned, the park project would create a situation conducive to the introduction of a vulnerable species recovery plan, provided the animal's habitat is included in the park.

With regard to the possibility of developing wind energy facilities on sites adjacent to the proposed park, it would be appropriate for the authorities concerned to work together in order to identify zones within which this type of development would be prohibited. Decisions in this respect would take into account landscape quality and topography, as well as the potential for ecotourism development. A map of these zones with potentially exploitable wind energy sites would then be superimposed on maps of exclusion zones in order to identify sites on which wind energy facilities could be developed without harming landscape quality of the Park.

A regional consensus also emerged on the need to extend Route 167 along the Chibougamau-Mistissini-Otish axis. Such a road would enhance the ecotourism potential of the new park by improving access and safety, and would also foster general socio-economic development in the region.

Lastly, the new dynamic offered by the project appears to create a context that is favourable to the emergence of a sustainable collaborative socio-economic relationship between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the James Bay community as a whole. The new tourist development prospects arising as a result of the park's existence would certainly create a situation conducive to real cooperation between the communities. It would therefore be desirable for the park management partnership to adopt a structure, procedures and practices that will facilitate the emergence of cooperative initiatives.



Qussai Samak

Appendix 1

**Information on the
Mandate**

The Mandate

The mandate entrusted to Mr. Qussaï Samak, a member of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, under the *Parks Act* (R.S.Q., c. P-9), was to hold a public consultation.

The mandate was received on December 9, 2005 and began on January 14, 2006.

The Minister's Representative

Qussaï Samak, Member of the Bureau
d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement

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The Public Hearings

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		Briefs
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Mr. Jean-François Lamarre		ATO 013
Ms. Martine Landry		ATO 022
Mr. Jimmy McLeod		
Mr. Willie Loon		Opening prayer
Mr. Marc Mercier		ATO 003
Mr. Sylvain Roberge		
Ms. Kathleen Wapchee-Benac		
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Association de l'exploration minière du Québec		ATO 001
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Ashton-Soquem Joint Venture	Mr. Ghislain Poirier	ATO 009

Comité de l'environnement de Chicoutimi		ATO 008
Commission économique et touristique de Chibougamau inc.		ATO 011
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Nature Québec/UQCN		ATO 012
Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes		ATO 010
Ressources Majescor		ATO 026
Canadian parks and Wilderness Society		ATO 016
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Uranor Inc.	Mr. Serge Genest	ATO 004
WWF-Canada –Québec Office		ATO 015

In all, 26 briefs and ten verbal presentations were submitted to the representative of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks.

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