



Saint-Elzéar karst biodiversity reserve and Bonaventure river estuary aquatic reserve projects

Consultation of the public

Québec, August 18, 2006 – Mr. Claude Béchar, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, has entrusted the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) with the mandate of holding a consultation of the public on the Saint-Elzéar karst biodiversity reserve and Bonaventure river estuary aquatic reserve projects. They are situated in the Appalachians Natural Province, whose territories have been set aside and have been assigned a temporary protection status as biodiversity and aquatic reserves. This mandate begins today August 18 and will end on December 20, 2006. The commission in charge of examining the project and holding the consultation of the public will be chaired by Mr. Alain Cloutier.

Documentation made available

Beginning today **August 18 2006**, the BAPE is making available the documentation pertaining to these protected areas, including notably the draft conservation plans of the territories in question as well as the protection and management frameworks for the proposed Saint-Elzéar karst biodiversity reserve and the Bonaventure river estuary aquatic reserve.

This documentation will be put at the public's disposal at the BAPE office in Québec City, located at 575, rue Saint-Amable, bureau 2.10 and in Montréal, at the central library of Université du Québec à Montréal, Pavillon Hubert-Aquin, 1255, rue Saint-Denis, local A.M. 100, as well as at the following regional consultation centres:

- Bibliothèque Françoise-Bujold, 95A, rue Port-Royal, Bonaventure;
- Micmacs of Gesgapegiag Band Council, 100, boulevard Perron, Maria;
- Municipality of Saint-Elzéar, 148, chemin Principal, Saint-Elzéar.

The documentation can also be consulted at any time on the BAPE's website at the following address: www.bape.gouv.qc.ca under the heading "*Mandats en cours*".

Work of the BAPE

The BAPE commission will hold a public hearing with the objective of closely associating the public and community partners in this initiative. The first part of this public hearing will be held on **Wednesday, September 20, 2006 beginning at 7:00 p.m.** The sessions will continue on the following days depending on the needs of the participants and the commission. This first part of the public hearing will be held at **Salle D of Place Bonaventure en Gaspésie**, located at 105, avenue de Grand-Pré in **Bonaventure**. The second part of the meeting is planned for the month of **October 2006**.

Once the consultation of the public has ended and the commission's report has been drafted, the BAPE will submit its report to the Minister, who will make his recommendation to the

government concerning the possibility of conferring on the set aside territories a permanent protection status and the applicable conditions, if any. Ultimately, it will be up to the Cabinet to rule on the permanent nature of the proposed biodiversity and aquatic reserves.

To receive information

To be informed of the BAPE's activities in the specific matter of the Saint-Elzéar karst biodiversity reserve and the Bonaventure river estuary aquatic reserve, it is possible to register by e-mail at the following address: bonaventure-st-elzear@bape.gouv.qc.ca.

However, if you would like to receive information pertaining to each of the protected area projects for which the BAPE will hold a consultation of the public, you can register at the following address: aires-protegees@bape.gouv.qc.ca.

In both cases, you can also register by calling 418 643-7447 or, toll-free, 1 800 463-4732.

Individuals wishing to obtain more information can get in touch with Julie Olivier, communications advisor, by calling the aforementioned telephone numbers or by e-mail at the following address: bonaventure-st-elzear@bape.gouv.qc.ca.

– 30 –

SOURCE: Julie Olivier
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***Technical sheet enclosed**