

**Public Consultation – Proposal to allocate permanent status as biodiversity reserves to seven areas, and permanent status as an aquatic reserve to one area, in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Administrative Region**

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST PART OF THE PUBLIC HEARING**

**Quebec, October 18, 2012** – The commission of inquiry of the Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement (BAPE), chaired by Anne-Marie Parent who is assisted by Commissioner John Haemmerli, invites the public, groups, municipalities and organizations to participate in the first part of the public hearing on the *Projets de réserves de biodiversité pour sept territoires et de réserve aquatique pour un territoire dans la région administrative de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue*. These territories have been set aside and have been assigned a temporary protection status as proposed biodiversity reserves and aquatic reserve.

The sessions of the first part of this public hearing will begin on **November 6 at 7:00 p.m.** During this first part of the public hearing, the commission will hold sessions at the following locations :

<p><b>Beginning on</b>  <b>November 6 2012</b>  <b>7:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Courtroom</b>  <b>Val-d'Or (Dubuisson sector)</b>  <b>Maison du citoyen</b>  <b>1405, St. Philip road</b></p>
<p><b>Beginning on</b>  <b>November 6 2012</b>  <b>7:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Videoconference room</b>  <b>Ville-Marie</b>  <b>Basement of the church Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire</b>  <b>18, Notre Dame North</b></p>
<p><b>Beginning on</b>  <b>November 6 2012</b>  <b>7:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Videoconference room</b>  <b>Gatineau</b>  <b>Best-Western Cartier Hotel</b>  <b>Champlain room</b>  <b>131, Laurier street</b></p>

The sessions will continue the following days, in the afternoon and evening, depending on the needs of the public and the commission.

**Web broadcast of the public hearing**

The public sessions planned during the first part of the public hearing will be broadcast live in audio mode on the BAPE’s website at the following address: [www.bape.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca). This audio broadcast on the Internet will allow those who so wish to follow the unfolding of the public sessions.

## **A HEARING IN TWO PARTS**

### **1. Obtaining information**

The BAPE will hold a hearing in two parts, all of whose sessions will be open to the public. The first part of the hearing will allow the public and the commission to obtain information about the project and examine all its aspects. The Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, which is submitting this project, will begin by making the presentation. Afterwards, it will be called upon, as will the resource persons invited by the commission, to answer the commission's and participants' questions.

### **2. Voicing opinions**

During the second part of the hearing, planned in december 2012, the commission will obtain the public's opinion and suggestions. It will then hear any person, organization, group or municipality wishing to voice an opinion on the project, be it in the form of a brief or an oral presentation. Considered experts in matters pertaining to their community, their participation in the public hearing is essential.

## **AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION**

All of the documents pertaining to this project are available for consultation at the following regional consultation centres :

- Bibliothèque municipale de Rouyn-Noranda ;
- Bibliothèque municipale de Senneterre ;
- Bibliothèque d'Amos ;
- Bibliothèque La Bouquine de Ville-Marie ;
- Bibliothèque de Val-d'Or ;
- Bibliothèque de Témiscamingue ;
- Bibliothèque de Fort-Coulonge ;
- Bibliothèque Bowater de Gatineau ;
- Bureau du Conseil des Anicinapek de Kitcisakik.

Other centres may be added.

The entire file is also available at the BAPE office in Québec, 575, rue Saint-Amable, bureau 2.10, at Bibliothèque centrale de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, Pavillon Hubert-Aquin, 1255, rue Saint-Denis, local A-M100, as well as on the BAPE website at [www.bape.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca), under the heading « Mandats en cours ».

## **TO RECEIVE INFORMATION**

To be informed of the BAPE's activities in the specific case of the projects for biodiversity reserves for seven territories and aquatic reserve for one territory in the administrative region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, you can register by e-mail at the following address: [8reserves-abitibi-temiscamingue@bape.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:8reserves-abitibi-temiscamingue@bape.gouv.qc.ca). However, if you wish to receive information on each of the protected area projects for which the BAPE will hold a public consultation, you can register at the following address: [aires-protegees@bape.gouv.qc.ca](mailto: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.

For more information, you can get in touch with Ms. Renée Poliquin, commission secretariat coordinator, or with Mr. Alexandre Corcoran-Tardif, communications advisor, by calling the aforementioned telephone number. You can also reach the commission by e-mail at: [8reserves-abitibi-temiscamingue@bape.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:8reserves-abitibi-temiscamingue@bape.gouv.qc.ca).

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SOURCE: Alexandre Corcoran-Tardif, Communications Advisor  
418 643-7447, extension 538  
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**\*Technical sheet enclosed**

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**The Proposals**

The proposals presented by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs for the administrative region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue are intended to create seven biodiversity reserves, namely Lac Parent, Lac Wetetnagami, Lac Saint-Cyr, Dunes-de-la-Rivière-Attic, Wanaki, Basses-Collines-du-Ruisseau-Serpent and Vallée-de-la-Rivière-Maganasipi, and one aquatic reserve, Rivière-Dumoine.

Under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*, the main activities that are prohibited in these areas are forestry, mining and hydraulic operations. Activities such as hunting, fishing and traditional Aboriginal activities can continue to take place, and all current vacation rights are maintained.

The **Lac Parent Marshlands Biodiversity Reserve** is located within the territory of the Ville de Senneterre in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. It is situated roughly 35 km north-east of the Senneterre urban core, and roughly 25 km south of Lebel-sur-Quévillon. The proposed reserve covers an area of 402.8 km<sup>2</sup>, and despite its name, protects only a small portion of Lac Parent, namely the sector connected most directly to the marshland, accounting for roughly 4 km<sup>2</sup> of the lake's total area of 122 km<sup>2</sup>. The proposed reserve protects the marshlands themselves, along with adjacent land that impacts upon their quality, and a large wetland area.

The **Lac Wetetnagami Biodiversity Reserve** is located within the territory of the Ville de Senneterre in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. It is situated roughly 70 km north-east of the Senneterre urban core, and roughly 55 km south-east of Lebel-sur-Quévillon. The proposed reserve covers an area of 234.2 km<sup>2</sup> and would protect part of a low, till-covered hilly complex with rock outcrops, along with ecosystems based on less pronounced physical environments located further north, including Lac Wetetnagami. The proposed reserve at Lac Wetetnagami would play a significant role in helping to protect old-growth forests and numerous other environments hosting the main types of vegetation found in these ecosystems, namely black spruce-moss, black spruce-heath and balsam fir-white birch stands.

The **Lac Saint-Cyr Biodiversity Reserve** is located within the territory of the Ville de Senneterre in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. It is situated roughly 95 km north-east of the Senneterre urban core, approximately 90 km south-east of Lebel-sur-Quévillon and approximately 50 km west of the village of Obedjiwan. The proposed reserve covers an area of 143.1 km<sup>2</sup>. Although it excludes three large lakes (Mesplet, Cherrier and Saint-Cyr) and Rivière Saint-Cyr, the proposed reserve would nevertheless help to protect ecosystems in the Lac Mégiscane plains physiographic unit, since it would be the unit's only protected area. It would therefore protect an area where virtually all the land feeds the three excluded lakes. In addition, it would help to protect old-growth forests.

The **Dunes-de-la-Rivière-Attic Biodiversity Reserve** is located within the territory of the Ville de Senneterre in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. It is situated roughly 35 km east of the Senneterre urban core. It covers an area of approximately 77.1 km<sup>2</sup> and would protect a rare element, namely the eolien dunes, which are the reason for the area's considerable importance. Although small in size, the proposed Dunes-de-la-Rivière-Attic Biodiversity Reserve would protect a range of land forms and surface deposit types (glacio-lacustrine, sandy, organic, fluvio-glacial, glacial) that are under-represented in the natural region's existing network of protected areas. In addition, the new reserve would protect a large number of environments hosting vegetation types that are also under-represented in the region, including black spruce-sphagnum, black spruce-lichen, black spruce-moss, black spruce-heath, balsam fir-white birch, balsam fir-black spruce

and balsam fir-sphagnum stands. It would also protect a variety of major wetland areas, including ombrotrophic bogs and shrub swamps.

The **Wanaki Biodiversity Reserve** forms part of the Réservoir-Dozois unorganized territory, located in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. The reserve is situated roughly 65 km south-east of downtown Val-d'Or, close to the Algonquin community of Kitcisakik. It covers an area of 137.9 km<sup>2</sup> and would, virtually on its own, help to protect the physiographic types in the Lac Cawatose plains physiographic unit, including a large percentage of fairly flat land with fluvio-glacial deposits and small, till-covered, knolls with less specific morphology. The proposed reserve would also protect yellow birch stands, which are the most common type of natural vegetation in the Buttons de La Vérendrye natural region, as well as balsam fir-cedar stands. Overall, the area has maintained its natural appearance, and there are very few signs of human activity.

The **Basses-Collines-du-Ruisseau-Serpent Biodiversity Reserve** is located partly within the territory of the Ville de Témiscamingue and partly in the unorganized territory of Les Lacs-du-Témiscamingue, in the Témiscamingue RCM. It is situated roughly 25 km south-east of downtown Témiscamingue. It currently covers an area of 112.3 km<sup>2</sup> and would protect till-covered knolls and valleys that are representative of the Lac Esber low hills physiographic unit. It would be one of the only protected areas in this natural region to protect glacio-lacustrine deposits. It would also play a role in protecting the region's most common types of potential vegetation, namely yellow birch-fir-sugar maple, yellow-birch-fir, sugar maple-yellow birch and white pine stands. At the same time, it would also protect some much rarer hemlock forests and sugar maple-red oak forests

The **Vallée-de-la-Rivière-Maganasipi Biodiversity Reserve** is located in the unorganized territory of Les Lacs-du-Témiscamingue, which forms part of the Témiscamingue RCM. It is situated roughly 45 km west of the municipality of Rapides-des-Joachims and roughly 55 km south-east of the Ville de Témiscamingue. It covers an area of 89.6 km<sup>2</sup> and would mainly protect glacial deposits, rock outcrops and fluvio-glacial deposits commonly found in the Dumoine plateau natural region. It would also play a significant role in protecting old-growth forests, which account for two-thirds of its forest cover. In addition, it would protect an area that includes a habitat used by the bald eagle, a species designated as vulnerable.

The **Rivière-Dumoine Aquatic Reserve** is located in the administrative regions of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Outaouais. The portion situated in Abitibi-Témiscamingue lies mainly in the unorganized territory of Les Lacs-du-Témiscamingue, in the Témiscamingue RCM. However, the northern portion is located in the unorganized territory of Réservoir-Dozois, in the La Vallée-de-l'Or RCM. Virtually all the portion situated in Outaouais is located in the unorganized territory of Lac-Nilgaut, in the Pontiac RCM. The proposed reserve is roughly 140 km long. The southern section is located approximately 10 km west of Rapides-des-Joachims, and the towns of Témiscamingue and Belleterre are located respectively 85 km and 60 km to the west of the reserve. In all, the reserve would cover an area of 1,445 km<sup>2</sup>, and its main purpose would be to protect Rivière Dumoine, its valley and its immediate watershed. Because of its considerable size and length, the proposed reserve covers several ecological units and would play a role in protecting different types of physical environments in four physiographic units, namely the Lac Bruce hills, the Lac Desjardins hills, the Lac Memekin buttons and the Lac Esber low hills. In addition, it would provide significant representation for the natural region's old-growth forests.

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