



# Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve

**Conservation plan**



September 2003



# 1. Plan and description

## 1.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

The plan of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve and its location are shown on the maps in Schedules A.1. and A.2.

The proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve is located in the North Shore backcountry, between 50°40' and 51°49' north latitude and 64°24' and 65°06' west longitude. It is situated approximately 50 km north/north-west of the Saint-Jean river. The proposed reserve is over 130 km long and the northern limit is the Labrador border.

It lies within the unorganized territory of Lac-Jérôme, in Municipalité régionale de comté de la Minganie.

The proposed biodiversity reserve covers an area of 1,575 km<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.2. Ecological overview

The area is in the Lower North Shore Plateau natural province. It protects natural environments characteristic of the Magpie lake massif natural region.

### 1.2.1. Representative elements

**Climate:** The territory is characterized by a cold, subpolar and subhumid continental climate, with a short growing season. It belongs to the bioclimatic field of mossy spruce stands.

**Geology and geomorphology:** The territory is wholly within the Grenville geologic province of the Canadian Shield. The bedrock is mainly mafic rock, in this instance anorthosite and gabbro or, less commonly, diorite and gabbro. In the central part of the biodiversity reserve, the rocky basement is also formed of metamorphic rock, namely gneiss, and intrusive rock, namely syenite and monzonite. In terms of its geomorphology, the dominant landscape is that of low hills and knolls covered with well-drained moraine deposits. The bottom of the Magpie river valley is covered with glaciofluvial sand and gravel sediments and the steepest slopes are covered with colluvial deposits. The altitude varies from 145 m to 980 m.

**Hydrography:** The drainage system is formed mainly of headwater basins. It has some fifty lakes of glacial origin which cover 10% of the area of the territory. The largest lake is Magpie lake, which is a widening of the river of the same name. Other than that body of water, which is 75 km long and covers a total area of 110 km<sup>2</sup>, the lakes in the biodiversity reserve are generally small, with very indented shorelines, all being of north-south orientation.

**Vegetation:** In the northern portion of the biodiversity reserve, the peaks are covered by old-growth softwood forests dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*). The steepest slopes are generally covered by dry heathland, a plant formation almost devoid of trees that consists of grasses, mosses and lichens. The valley bottoms are dotted with stands of trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*) or mixed hardwood tree species. The valley of the Magpie Ouest river contains Jack pine forests that are the easternmost such forests in Québec, making them of particular interest. Peat bogs may also be found in low-lying areas. Certain sectors have been disturbed by forest fires, particularly north of Nouel lake.

### 1.3. Occupation and main land uses

The land occupations and uses in the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve are shown on the map in Schedule A.3.

The entire territory lies within the Saguenay beaver reserve in which the Innu communities have special rights regarding the hunting and trapping of fur-bearing animals.

Eight land rights have been granted within the perimeter of the protected area, 2 leases for personal vacation purposes, 4 leases for rough shelters and 2 leases for commercial purposes (outfitting operation without exclusive rights on Magpie lake SENC).

## 2. Protection status

The proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve protects an area of exceptional interest from an ecological perspective and for its beauty.

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

- ✓ the preservation of representative environments of the Magpie lake massif natural region;
- ✓ the preservation of biodiversity in ecosystems;
- ✓ the acquisition of new knowledge concerning natural heritage.

## 3. Activities within the reserve

The activities carried on within the boundaries of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve are governed by the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01).

This conservation plan does not specify any prohibited activity other than those prohibited in a proposed biodiversity reserve by the Act; nor does it authorize any other activities, or set any additional constraints on the activities permitted by the Act.

### 3.1. Prohibited activities

It is important to note that under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*, the main activities prohibited in an area designated as a proposed biodiversity reserve are:

- mining, and gas or petroleum development;
- mining, gas or petroleum exploration, brine and underground reservoir exploration, prospecting, and digging or boring, where such activities necessitate stripping, the digging of trenches, excavation or deforestation;
- forest management within the meaning of section 3 of the *Forest Act* (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1);
- the development of hydraulic resources and any production of energy on a commercial or industrial basis;
- any new allocation of a right to occupy land for vacation resort purposes; and
- earthwork or construction work.

### 3.2. Activities governed by other statutes

All activities likely to be carried on within the boundaries of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve remain governed by the other applicable legislative and regulatory provisions, including those that require the issue of a permit or authorization or the payment of fees. The carrying on of certain activities may also be prohibited or limited by other Acts or regulations applicable within the boundaries of the proposed biodiversity reserve.

A special legal framework may, within the boundaries of the proposed biodiversity reserve, govern the permitted and prohibited activities in connection with:

- **Archaeological research** (especially the measures contained in the *Cultural Property Act* [R.S.Q., c. B-4]);
- **Development of wildlife resources** (especially the measures contained in the *Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife* [R.S.Q., c. C-61.1] and, where applicable, the measures contained in any applicable federal legislation);

- **Access** (especially the measures contained in the *Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State* [R.S.Q., c. T-8.1]);
- **Land rights** (especially the measures contained in the *Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State* [R.S.Q., c. T-8.1] and in leases issued by the Minister of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Parks).

### **3.3. Supervision of activities**

The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the application of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*, and is therefore responsible for the proposed biodiversity reserves established under that Act. The Minister will supervise and monitor the measures contained in the Act with regard to permitted activities in protected areas.

All other government departments and bodies will retain their responsibilities as set out in the legislative and regulatory texts that apply within a proposed biodiversity reserve.

The Minister of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Parks will supervise all activities subject to the Minister's authority within the territory of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve, in particular as regards permitted forms of land occupation.

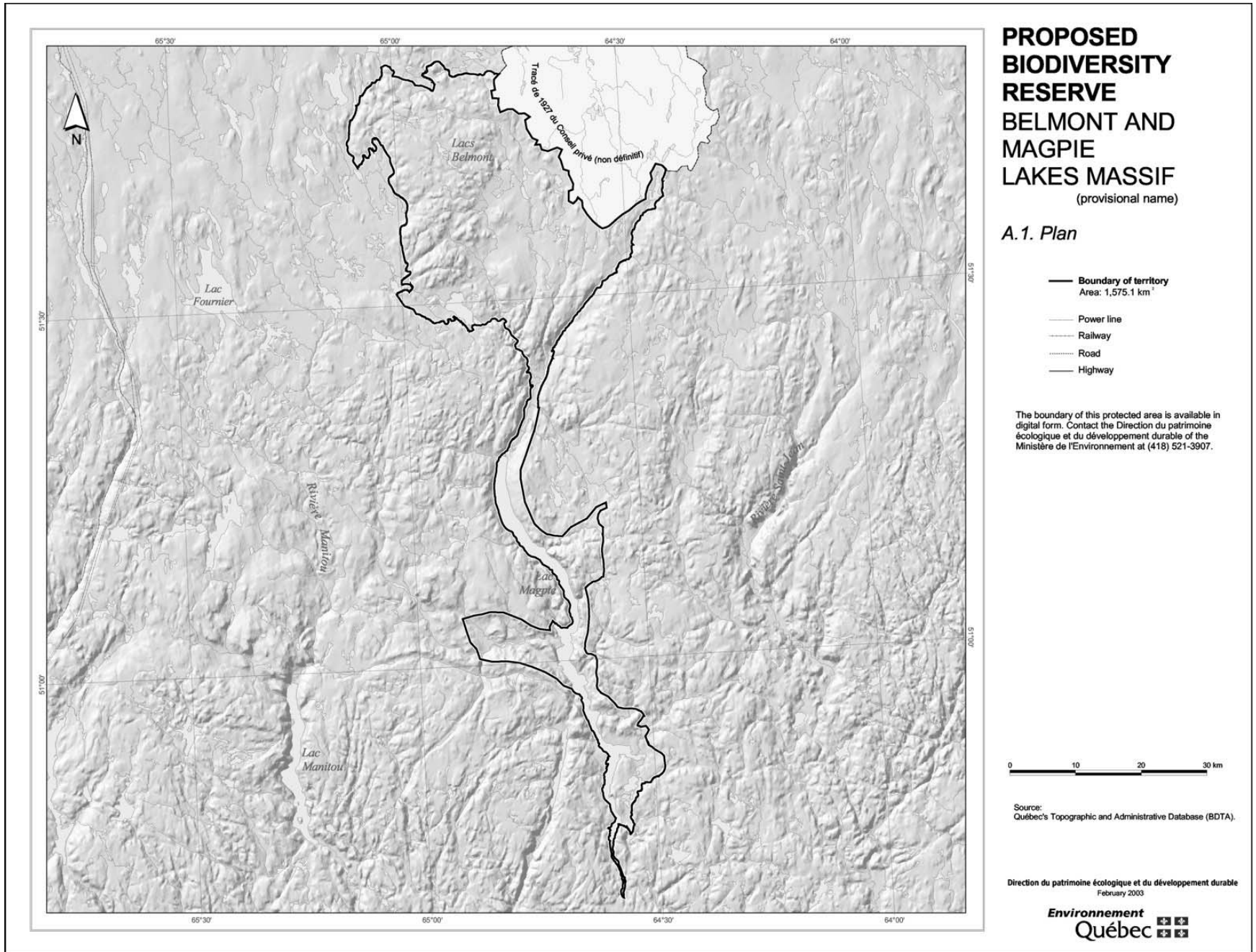
The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (FAPAQ) remains responsible for supervising the activities relating to wildlife protection and management that are under its responsibility.

## **4. Permanent protection status**

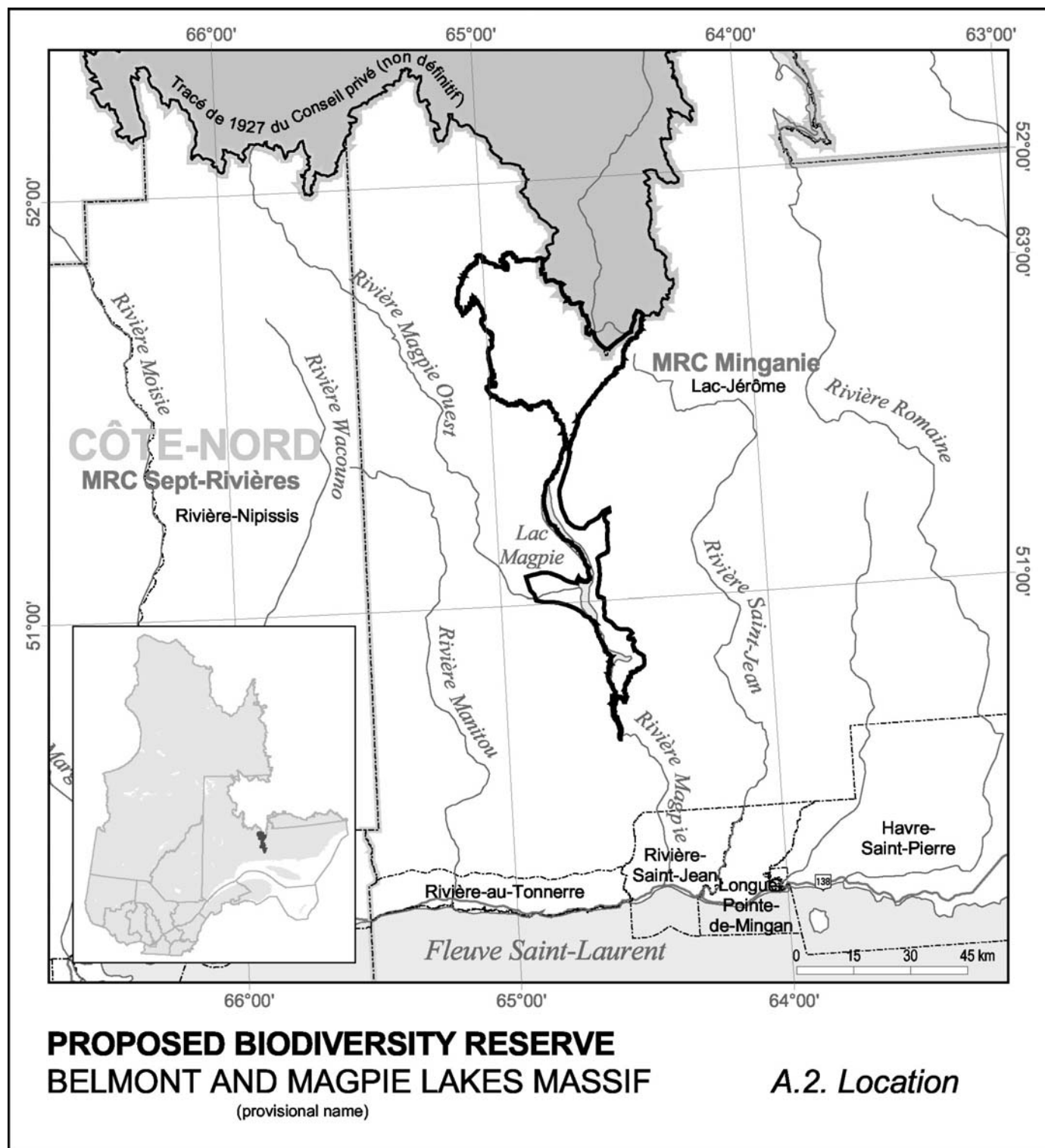
The permanent protection status envisaged for the reserve is "biodiversity reserve" status under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*.

## Schedules

### A.1. Plan of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



A.2. Map showing the location of the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve (provisional name)





**A.3. Map showing land occupation and uses in the proposed Belmont and Magpie lakes massif biodiversity reserve (provisional name)**

