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PR1.1b

Projets de réserves de biodiversité du lac Opasatica, du lac des Quinze, de la forêt Piché-Lemoine et du réservoir Decelles

Abitibi-Témiscamingue

6212-01-207

Des Quinze lake proposed biodiversity reserve

(provisional name)

Conservation plan



March 2004

1. Plan and description

1.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

The location and boundaries of the proposed Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve are shown on the map in the Schedule.

The proposed Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve is located in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue administrative region, between 47°30' and 47°43' north latitude and 78°59' and 79°12' west longitude. It straddles the territories of Municipalité de Rémigny in the north and Municipalité d'Angliers in the south, in Municipalité régionale de comté de Témiscamingue.

The proposed biodiversity reserve covers an area of 158.6 km². It is situated approximately 35 kilometres north/north-east of Ville-Marie, on the eastern shore of Des Quinze lake, which is a reservoir used for hydroelectricity generation. Along the edge of the reservoir, the boundary of the protected area corresponds to the 263.94-metre mark.

The proposed biodiversity reserve is divided by power transmission line 1339 (Rapides-des-Quinze/Rapide-7 substations) over a distance of about 12.5 kilometres. The right-of-way of the power line, which is 36.6 metres wide, is withdrawn from the proposed protected area.

The proposed biodiversity reserve is served by a network of forest roads accessible from Route 101.

1.2. Ecological overview

The proposed Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve is in the natural province of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands. It protects ecosystems representative of the Lake Témiscamingue Lowlands natural region. The topography of the territory is characterized by a complex of isolated hills. The elevation of the proposed protected area ranges from 218 to 373 m.

1.2.1. Representative elements

Climate: The territory is characterized by a mild subpolar, subhumid continental climate, with a long growing season. The proposed biodiversity reserve belongs to the balsam fir-yellow birch bioclimatic field.

Geology and geomorphology: The proposed biodiversity reserve is part of the Superior geologic province, whose basement is Archean (over 2.5 billion years). The substratum is formed by gneiss and felsic igneous rock, namely granitic rock. During the Quaternary period, the bedrock was covered by glacio-lacustrine clay and silt deposits.

Hydrography: The proposed biodiversity reserve forms part of the Rivière des Outaouais watershed. Des Quinze and Simard lakes, whose waters are retained by the D'Angliers dam, form the Des Quinze reservoir.

Vegetation: Almost nine tenths (87%) of the proposed biodiversity reserve is forested. Most stands (56%) are mixed. The dominant species is balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), most often associated with yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*). The forest cover is also made up of softwood and hardwoods, with each of these types of forest covering a little more than one fifth of the territory. The forest within the territory has not recently been harvested. Certain topographic depressions are occupied by peat bogs and alder groves which cover 4% and 3% of the proposed protected area, respectively.

1.2.2. Outstanding elements

The proposed biodiversity reserve is home to a few mature stands of tolerant hardwoods, in particular sugar maple-yellow birch stands. Such stands are rare in the natural province of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands. In the proposed protected area, they occupy a little more than 5% of the territory and are mostly found to the south of Des Guêpes and De la Hache lakes.

Although no archaeological sites have been inventoried there, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications is of the opinion that the land of the proposed biodiversity reserve has significant archaeological potential. The river system within the proposed protected area may hide vestiges of Amerindian occupation, as suggested by the recent discovery of artefacts west of Des Quinze lake that date back more than 1000 years.

1.3. Occupation and main land uses

The occupations and main land uses in the proposed Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve are shown on the map in the Schedule.

The Lac-des-Quinze dam, situated near the proposed protected area, is under the responsibility of Public Works and Government Services Canada. A 25 MW generating station is planned for the area. The reservoir feeds the Rapides-des-Quinze, Rapides-des-Îles and Première-Chûte generating stations, owned by Hydro-Québec.

Eight kilometres of forest road run through the proposed biodiversity reserve.

There are two private properties within the proposed biodiversity reserve. Fifty-eight land rights have also been granted within the perimeter of the proposed biodiversity reserve as follows:

- ✓ 50 leases for the construction of a rough shelter in the forest;

- ✓ 5 leases for personal vacation purposes (cottage);
- ✓ 2 Native camps; and
- ✓ 1 commercial lease for the establishment of an outfitting operation.

The proposed biodiversity reserve straddles eight traplines forming part of fur-bearing animal management unit (FAMU) 04.

2. Protection status

The proposed biodiversity reserve protects a mosaic of ecosystems of exceptional interest from an ecological perspective and for their beauty.

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

- ✓ the preservation of a mosaic of ecosystems representative of the Lake Témiscamingue Lowlands natural region;
- ✓ the preservation of biodiversity in ecosystems;
- ✓ the acquisition of new knowledge concerning natural and cultural heritage.

3. Activities within the reserve

The activities carried on within the boundaries of the proposed Des Quinze lake 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 Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve also 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) and provided under the regulation concerning motor vehicle traffic in certain fragile environments made under the *Environment Protection Act* (R.S.Q., c. Q-2));
- **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 prohibited and 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, as provided for under the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*.

4. Permanent protection status

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

Schedule

Map of the proposed Des Quinze lake biodiversity reserve (provisional name)

