



Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve

Conservation plan



March 2003

1. Plan and description

1.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

The plan of the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve and its location are shown on the maps in Schedules A.1 and A.2.

The proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve is located in the Nord-du-Québec administrative region, between 50°28' and 50°44' latitude north and 78°29' and 79°54' longitude west. It is situated 125 km northwest of ville de Matagami and 85 km south of the Cree village of Waskaganish.

It lies within the territory of municipalité de Baie-James.

The proposed biodiversity reserve covers an area of 668.8 km². To the west, its boundary mainly follows the course of the Missisicabi river. To the north, it runs along the southern limit of existing mining rights to the Obamsca river, and then to the east follows the course of the river. To the south, the boundary of the proposed biodiversity reserve ends at Pimapuwesu and Tissot lakes.

1.2. Ecological overview

The proposed biodiversity reserve is in the natural province of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands. It protects peaty zones representative of the natural regions of the Turgeon River Plain and the Lower Rupert River Plain.

1.2.1. Representative elements

Climate: The land is characterized by a subpolar, subhumid continental climate, with a middle growing season. It belongs to the bioclimatic field of mossy spruce stands.

Geology and geomorphology: The land is part of the Superior geologic province, whose bedrock is archean (> 2.5 billion years). The substratum is mainly formed by felsic rocks, covered mainly by organic deposits, but also by glacial and glaciofluvial sediments of sand, silt or clay. Cochrane till, a limestone deposit of glacial origin, covers 10% of the total area and is found almost exclusively in the natural region of the Turgeon River Plain. The proposed reserve is located on a broad plain whose altitude increases gradually from 115 m to 250 m along a northwest/southeast axis.

Hydrography: The protected area is a peaty wetland that is part of the watershed of Hannah and Rupert bays. The drainage system is well developed, comprising major watercourses whose sinuous, subparallel courses follow a general north-north-east – south-south-east orientation. Several lakes dot the area, the largest of which are Tissot and Pauli lakes in the south.

Vegetation: Almost three-quarters of the proposed biodiversity reserve is covered by oligotrophic and minerotrophic peat bogs. The vegetation includes stands of black spruce (*Picea mariana*), dry heathlands and groups of jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*). These vegetation groups, generally established on mineral deposits, cover 25.5% and 1% of the area, respectively.

1.3. Land occupation and use

The land occupations and uses in the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve are shown on the map in Schedule A.3.

No rights in land have been granted within the perimeter of the protected area.

60% of the land in the proposed biodiversity reserve is classified as Category II land, and the remaining 40% is Category III land under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement signed in 1975 and the Act respecting the land regime in the James Bay and New Québec territories (R.S.Q., c. R-13.1). In addition, the entire area is part of the Rupert beaver reserve. The Cree community of Waskaganish has special rights regarding hunting, fishing and trapping in the area, in particular with respect to fur-bearing animals.

2. Protection status

The proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve safeguards a wetland of great ecological and landscape interest.

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

- ✓ the conservation of representative environments in the natural regions of the Turgeon River Plain and the Lower Rupert River Plain;
- ✓ the maintenance of biodiversity in peat-based and forest ecosystems;
- ✓ the ongoing sustainable management of fur-bearing animals;
- ✓ the acquisition of new knowledge concerning natural heritage.

3. Activities within the reserve

All activities carried on within the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve are governed by the provisions of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act* (S.Q. 2002, c. 74).

This conservation plan does not specify any prohibited activity other than those prohibited in biodiversity reserves 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

For reference purposes, 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 activities 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;
- earthwork, backfilling or construction work.

3.2. Activities governed by other Acts

All activities carried on within the boundaries of the proposed Missisicabi plain 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.

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

- **Archaeological research** (especially the measures contained in the *Cultural Property Act* [R.S.Q., c. B-4]);
- **Utilisation of wildlife resources** (especially the measures contained in the *Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife* [R.S.Q., c. C-61.1], the regulation on beaver reserves and the *Act respecting hunting and fishing rights in the James Bay and New Québec territories* [R.S.Q., c. D-13.1]);

- **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, where applicable, in leases issued by the Minister of Natural Resources).

3.3. Supervision of activities

The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the application of the *Natural Heritage Conservation Act*, and is also 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 all the legislative and regulatory texts that apply within a proposed biodiversity reserve.

The Minister of Natural Resources will supervise all activities subject to the Minister's authority within the territory of the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve, in particular as regards permitted forms of land occupation.

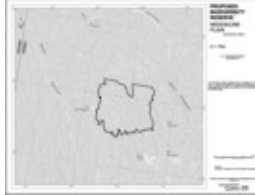
The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (FAPAQ) remains responsible for supervising the activities relating to wildlife protection and management that are under its responsibility.

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 Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



[Click to enlarge](#)

A.2. Map showing the location of the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



[Click to enlarge](#)

A.3. Map showing land occupation and use in the proposed Missisicabi plain biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



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