



# Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve

**Conservation plan**



March 2003

# 1. Plan and description

## 1.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

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

The proposed Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve is located in the Nord-du-Québec administrative region, between 51°09' and 51°40' latitude north and 78°59' and 79°31' longitude west. It is situated 40 km west of the territory of the community of Waskaganish.

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

The proposed biodiversity reserve covers an area of 894.9 km<sup>2</sup>. To the west, its boundary follows the boundary between Québec and Ontario. To the north, it follows the shoreline of James Bay, and to the east the shoreline of Cabbage Willows bay and Rupert bay. To the south, it skirts the tributaries on the left bank of the Novide river.

## 1.2. Ecological overview

The proposed biodiversity reserve is in the natural province of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands. It protects peat bogs representative of the natural region of the James Bay Coastal Plain.

### 1.2.1. Representative elements

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

**Geology and geomorphology:** The land in the proposed reserve is part of the Superior geologic province, whose bedrock is archean (> 2.5 billion years). The substratum is formed by carbonate rock, mainly limestone and dolomite. This geological base is covered by organic deposits on the coastal plain, and by sand and glaciofluvial clay on the higher ground. The average altitude is 15 m, varying between 0 m and 72 m.

**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, with mainly small watercourses. The largest watercourse is the Novide river. The watercourses follow mainly rectilinear and parallel paths, in a general north-south direction. A small lake is found in the western part of the area.

**Vegetation:** Two-thirds of the proposed reserve is covered by oligotrophic and minerotrophic peat bogs. The higher ground, covered in mineral deposits, is home to very low-density stands of black spruce (*Picea*

*mariana*) and dry heathland. These vegetation groups cover 10% and 2% of the area, respectively. In terms of natural disturbances, 10% of the protected area has been affected by forest fires.

### **1.2.2. Outstanding elements**

The proposed biodiversity reserve is home to five plants likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable species: *Salix maccalliana*, Whiteberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*), *Thalictrum dasycarpum*, Prairie Sedge (*Carex prairea*) and Sartwell's Sedge (*Carex sartwellii*).

The Ministikawatin Peninsula is a mosaic of habitats used for nesting or as staging areas by the Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*), a wader that is rare in Québec.

There is also a species of amphibian, the Boreal Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris maculata*). This small frog species was formerly quite abundant in Québec, but is now a vulnerable species because of a worrying decline in its population, caused by habitat destruction.

### **1.3. Land occupation and use**

The land occupations and uses in the proposed Ministikawatin peninsula 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.

Half of the proposed reserve is classified as Category II 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). The western part of the proposed reserve is on Category III land, and the entire area is part of a beaver reserve. The Cree community of Waskaganish has special rights with regard to hunting, fishing and trapping, in particular for fur-bearing animals.

## **2. Protection status**

The proposed Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve safeguards a wetland of great ecological interest. The habitats it contains are home to several species in a precarious situation province-wide. The area also constitutes a landscape mosaic of high quality.

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

- ✓ the conservation of environments representative of the natural region of the James Bay Coastal Plain;
- ✓ the protection of threatened or vulnerable species of flora and fauna;

- ✓ the preservation of biodiversity in aquatic and peat-based 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 Ministikawatin peninsula 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 Ministikawatin peninsula 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 Ministikawatin peninsula 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 Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



[Click to enlarge](#)

### A.2. Map showing the location of the proposed Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



[Click to enlarge](#)

### A.3. Map showing land occupation and use in the proposed Ministikawatin peninsula biodiversity reserve (provisional name)



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