



This document was produced by:  
Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs  
Direction des parcs nationaux  
880, chemin Sainte-Foy, 2<sup>e</sup> étage, Local 2.50  
Québec City (Québec) G1S 4X4

### **PRODUCTION TEAM**

#### **Text:**

Louis-Philippe Caron (MFFP)  
Alain Thibault (MFFP)  
Jean-François Lamarre (MFFP)

#### **Collaboration:**

Catherine Noiseux (KRG)  
Lucile Drouineau (KRG)  
Charlie Munick (KRG)  
Christian Pelletier (MFFP)

#### **Maps:**

Joël Bleau (MFFP)

#### **Page layout:**

Marie-Michèle Émond (MFFP)

#### **Cover photo:**

Alain Thibault

Legal Deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales  
du Québec, 2022  
ISBN 978-2-550-92413-5 (PDF)  
ISBN 978-2-550-92571-2 (Imprimé)

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# INTRODUCTION

Québec's national parks (Figure 1) permanently conserve areas representative of Québec's natural regions or natural sites classified as outstanding, in particular because of their biological diversity, so that they can be used by present and future generations for educational and extensive recreational purposes.<sup>1</sup> This master plan applies the principles and orientations from the *Parks Act* and from the Policy for Québec National Parks, published in 2018. It sets guidelines for the development and management of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, and was prepared by the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP), in conjunction with the national park's operator.

The establishment and management of Québec's national parks are governed by the *Parks Act*, which gives power to the Minister responsible for regulating certain aspects of national park operations, in particular with respect to zoning. Zoning is a vital tool for both planning and management, since it helps to enforce the conservation and accessibility aspects of the national parks' mission. As a process, it involves dividing up the territory and adjusting the level of preservation according

to the natural, cultural and landscape heritage in each sector. This exercise is set out in the *Parks Regulation* and the resulting zoning for the national park is presented in the master plan so that it can be considered upstream of all planning and development projects.

The Policy for Québec National Parks sets out the orientations for the province's national parks, along with the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in their management. These orientations are based on the national parks' mission and are intended to guide the actions of the various stakeholders, based on factors that influence the context in which the national parks are developed.

As mentioned earlier, the master plan sets guidelines for the development and management of a national park, based on current zoning and the Policy's orientations. It is intended mainly for the organizations responsible for operating the national parks, a task that has been delegated to the Kativik regional Government (KRG) in Nunavik and the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq)<sup>2</sup> in southern Québec. Since

it is also circulated publicly, it can also serve as a point of reference for local and regional actors to help them achieve their mission and objectives, and for the general public, as a guideline for individual initiatives.

This document begins by reviewing the steps leading to the creation of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, and goes on to describe the current profile of the area, its current zoning, land development, the specific orientations arising from the Policy and the implementation of the master plan.

Since the elements making up the national park's area and periphery continue to evolve, the need to review the master plan and its orientations will be assessed every ten years, in light of available data and conservation or access needs.

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1 Recreational activities that require only basic equipment and that are characterized by low-density land use.

2 In the context of the national parks, this means the area located south of the areas covered by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement.

Figure 1 - Québec National Parks



- National Parks<sup>1</sup>:**
1. du Mont-Orford
  2. du Mont-Tremblant
  3. des Grands-Jardins
  4. de la Jacques-Cartier
  5. de la Gaspésie
  6. du Fjord-du-Saguenay
  7. de la Yamaska
  8. des Îles-de-Boucherville
  9. du Bic
  10. d'Aiguebelle
  11. de Miguasha
  12. de l'Île-Bonaventure-et-du-Rocher-Percé
  13. du Mont-Saint-Bruno
  14. de la Pointe-Taillon
  15. de Frontenac
  16. d'Oka
  17. du Mont-Mégantic
  18. des Monts-Valin
  19. des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie
  20. d'Anticosti
  21. de Plaisance
  22. des Pinguiluit
  23. Kuururjuaq
  24. du Lac-Témiscouata
  25. Tursujuq
  26. d'Opémican
  27. **Ulittaniujalik**
- Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park**
- Natural region: B33 - George River Plateau**

<sup>1</sup>. Order of establishment under the *Parks Act*

# 1. MASTER PLAN CONTEXT

The Parc national Ulittaniujalik master plan is one of a set of documents prepared by the MFFP and the KRG to implement the Policy for Québec National Parks. All these documents are connected and cannot be used in isolation, since none of them, taken individually, presents all the facets of managing a national park, from planning, operation and oversight to protection and reporting. It is the combination of all these tools, taken together, that allows for consistency of action and ensures that the national park is managed in such a way as to achieve its mission of conservation and accessibility. The implementation and monitoring tools are described in the Policy for Québec National Parks.



Photo: Alain Thibault



## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARC NATIONAL ULITTANIUJALIK

### 2.1 CREATION

In 1982, the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche (MLCP) laid the foundations for the creation of Québec's national parks in the Policy on Parks. The initial plans for the national park network called for protection of areas representative of each of the 43 natural regions established as part of a province-wide territorial division process. In 1988, the Monts Pyramides sector was designated as an area of interest representative of the George River Plateau natural region (Figure 1).

The MLCP then took steps to designate specific sites of interest located north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, including the Monts Pyramides sector, as proposed parks in the public land use plan under preparation at the time. The purpose of this was to ensure that no forestry, mining or energy work would take place in these areas until and if they were granted legal status as national parks by the Québec government.

In 1992, the area designated to protect the Monts Pyramides region was set aside by ministerial order number 92-170 of June 18, 1992 by the Minister of Energy and Resources. This process ensured that no staking, map

designation, mineral research and mineral exploration work would take place in an area of 1,935 km<sup>2</sup>.

That same year, the MLCP unveiled its action plan for parks entitled “La nature en heritage” (“Nature as a Heritage”). The new plan ended the moratorium on the creation of parks decreed in 1986 to consolidate and develop existing parks. It also provided for park status to be granted to numerous areas, including some in Nunavik. In these latter cases, the MLCP said it wanted to involve the regional community in the development and management of the parks, emphasizing the fact that the communities concerned would be consulted and that the process would comply fully with the Northern agreements.

In 1998, the Regional Master Plan for Land Use in the Kativik Region was published by the KRG, which is responsible, among other things, for land development in Nunavik. The plan designated all the potential parks in the area under the KRG's responsibility.

In 2002, the KRG and the Québec government, represented by the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (FAPAQ), entered into an

agreement on the development of parks in Nunavik. The agreement set out the respective roles of the FAPAQ and the KRG in the various steps leading to the creation of a national park.

A few years later, in 2008, the Monts Pyramides area was assigned national park reserve status, which provided provisional protection until permanent status could be granted. Similarly, land was set aside to create the Rivière George protected area. Together, these two areas protected almost the entire Rivière George territory from commercial resource operations.

A working group composed of representatives from the Government department responsible for national parks in Québec at that time, as well as the KRG, the communities of Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kawawachikamach and Kuujjuaq, the Makivik Corporation, the Nunavik Tourism Association and the two outfitters concerned (Pyramid Mountain Camp and Helen Falls), was set up in 2010. Its aim was to talk to the regional community in order to garner local support for the proposed national park. It was as a result of this group's recommendations that the size of the proposed national park was increased from 1,935 km<sup>2</sup> to 5,293 km<sup>2</sup> and the name Ulittaniujalik was selected.

Public hearings were held from November 21 to 24, 2011, in compliance with the *Parks Act* and the environmental and social impact evaluation and assessment procedure set out in the Environment Quality Act. The consultation was organized jointly by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) and the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC). The KEQC is responsible for evaluating and assessing development projects under provincial jurisdiction, including national parks, located in the area covered by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) and located north of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel. Although most of the opinions expressed during the consultation were favourable, several stakeholders from Kangiqsualujjuaq objected to the inclusion of the territory used by the Helen Falls outfitter in the national park.

Concurrently, the environmental and social impact evaluation and assessment procedure continued. On October 13, 2013, a certificate of authorization approving the creation of the national park was issued by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs, in accordance with the KEQC's decision. However, the authorization was conditional upon the continuation of discussions concerning the territory used by the Helen Falls outfitter.

To continue the discussions and address the advantages and disadvantages of including the

Helen Falls sector in the national park, a second public consultation was held in January 2014 in Kangiqsualujjuaq. At the meeting, it was pointed out that national park status would help in controlling visitor movements and activities, in particular with respect to sport fishing. Most of the opinions expressed at the end of the consultation were favourable, and as a result, the Northern village of Kangiqsualujjuaq, the Qiniqtiq landholding corporation of Kangiqsualujjuaq, the Makivik Corporation and the KRG adopted resolutions to support the inclusion of the Helen Falls territory in the national park.

Lastly, on March 10, 2016, the regulation approving the establishment of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, covering an area of 5 293.1 km<sup>2</sup>, came into force, officially creating the 27<sup>th</sup> national park in Québec's network.

## 2.2 DELEGATION OF OPERATIONS

Section 5 of Mandate B.6 of the Agreement concerning Block Funding for the Kativik Regional Government, signed by the KRG and the Québec government in 2004, stipulates that management of the operations, activities and services of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik is delegated to the KRG.

In accordance with section 8 of Mandate B.6, the KRG has set up a harmonization committee composed of representatives from the MFFP, the KRG, the Northern villages of Kangiqsualujjuaq and Kuujjuaq, the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach, the Qiniqtiq landholding corporation of Kangiqsualujjuaq and the Nayumivik landholding corporation of Kuujjuaq, the Makivik Corporation and the Pyramid Mountain Camp and Helen Falls outfitters. The committee is mandated to discuss the management, activities, conservation work, research activities and development of the National Park. It is also responsible for ensuring that the activities offered to visitors will not have a negative impact on traditional Inuit and Naskapi land use.

In addition, and in compliance with section 6 of the *Parks Act*, the Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks entrusted the KRG with the power to carry out maintenance, development and construction work in the national park.



Photo: Alain Thibault

### 2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

The Parc national Ulittaniujalik covers an area of 5 293.1 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the second-largest national park in Québec. It is located roughly 20 km south of the Kuururjuaq National Park and borders the land set aside to create the Rivière George protected area. Combined with the Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada, these areas form a virtually unbroken protection corridor stretching north-south over a distance of almost 600 km. The national park is located on Category II and Category III public land, as defined by the JBNQA. It extends from 57° 00' to 58° 30' of latitude North and from 64° 00' to 66° 00' of longitude west (Figure 2).

The Parc national Ulittaniujalik protects a 130 km stretch of the Rivière George. Its boundary was established so as to follow the boundaries of the Rivière George and Rivière Ford drainage basis along the majority of its perimeter.

The boundaries of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik are those proposed in the provisional master plan and at the public hearings held in 2011, with the addition of an area of roughly 17 km<sup>2</sup> located south-west of the national park. This latter area is a parcel of land situated in the Rivière George drainage basin in which active mining titles had been granted. Since none of these titles were renewed when they expired, it was possible to include this area in the national park when it was created.






The technical description of the national park sets out the official boundaries of its territory and can be found as a schedule to the *Regulation respecting the establishment of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik* (<http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ShowDoc/cr/P-9,r.23.2/>).



Photo: Alain Thibault

Figure 2 - Land use around the Parc national Uliittaniujalik



- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | Québec National Parks                            |  | Category I Lands                                |
|  | Canada National Parks                            |  | Category II Lands                               |
|  | Reserve of territory for protected area purposes |  | Caribou calving area north of the 52nd parallel |
|  | Active Mining Claims                             |   |   |

## 2.4 RIGHTS

Some rights arising from the JBNQA, the Northeastern Québec Agreement (NEQA) and the presence of outfitters are in force in the territory of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik (Figure 3).

### 2.4.1 Agreements

The JBNQA and the NEQA grant harvesting rights to their respective beneficiaries. This differentiates the Parc national Ulittaniujalik and other national parks located north of the 55th parallel from those in southern Québec where, except for sport fishing, wildlife harvesting is prohibited. In the national parks located in the area to which the agreements apply, Cree, Inuit and Naskapi beneficiaries may travel, hunt, fish and trap and establish camps for those purposes. The rights of JBNQA and NEQA beneficiaries therefore take precedence over the regulations governing national parks.

The JBNQA and the NEQA state that the principle of priority harvesting by Indigenous people must be applied, and they also delimit area-dependent common and priority use zones for the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi people. The Parc national Ulittaniujalik is located in the Inuit priority use zone, where they have the exclusive right to practise traditional subsistence activities. However, the NEQA also establishes a zone that is shared by the Inuit and Naskapi for caribou hunting. This zone includes most of the national park's area south of Lac Tasirlaq.

Within this zone, the Naskapi may hunt caribou even though the Inuit have priority use.

To regulate harvesting rights and resource management in the area covered by the agreements, the JBNQA also introduced a land regime dividing the land into three categories. A 447 km<sup>2</sup> block of Category II land under the responsibility of the Qiniqtiq Landholding Corporation of Kangiqsualujjuaq is located in the Lac Qamaniauq and Lac Tasirlaq sector. This area consists in public lands in the domain of the State on which JBNQA beneficiaries have exclusive hunting, fishing and trapping rights. On this land, non-beneficiary visitors who wish to fish must not only hold a sport fishing licence issued by Québec and an authorization issued in accordance with the Parks Regulation, but they must also obtain permission from the landholding corporation

Lastly, the national park includes a 327.5 km<sup>2</sup> parcel of timber logging rights granted to the village of Kangiqsualujjuaq under the JBNQA. In this parcel, the beneficiaries concerned may cut timber for personal and community use, in accordance with a logging plan approved by the MFFP's Forest Sector. In addition, they may harvest wood for personal use or as an activity incidental to their harvesting rights under the JBNQA and the NEQA over the entire area of the national park.

### 2.4.2 Outfitters

When the Parc national Ulittaniujalik was created, the operating areas of two outfitters were included within its boundaries. These outfitters are operated independently and are represented on the harmonization committee.

In accordance with section 8.1 of the *Parks Act*, the two outfitters signed a contract with the Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, giving them exclusivity to offer sport fishing in their respective portions of the national park. The contract does not permit them to offer hunting within the national park's boundaries. The outfitters charge their customers a fee for access authorizations, plus a fee for the authorizations needed to fish, as provided for in the *Parks Act*. These fees are devolved to the outfitters.

Visitors to the national park who wish to practise sport fishing on the Rivière George must use the services of these outfitters. However, visitors who travel down the Rivière George may fish for immediate consumption outside the outfitters' operating areas. In accordance with the working group's discussions, fish cannot be released back into the water, unless this is required by a regulation or law governing fishing in the Zone 23 North.

### 2.4.2.1 Pyramid Mountain Camp

The Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitter has been in business since the 1960s. Its reception and lodging buildings are located on a plateau on the western shore of the Rivière George, opposite Pyramid Mountain. The Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitter operates in an area of 367 km<sup>2</sup>, located entirely within the boundaries of the national park, other than for a portion described in the lease granted by the Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN), namely an enclaved area of 0.2 km<sup>2</sup> on which the outfitter's buildings are located. The outfitter's owners have also built a landing strip near the camp. Although this strip is in the national park, it can be used for the outfitter's activities without authorization from the national park's director.

At the present time, the Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitter welcomes visitors from early August to mid-September to fish for Atlantic salmon, Arctic char, brook trout and lake trout. To maintain the outfitter's unique nature, and for the sake of uniformity, the KRG won't develop infrastructures near its facilities. In addition, to ensure that both can benefit from their respective presence, an agreement has been signed to harmonize the outfitter's activities with those of the national park. For example, the outfitter's infrastructures may serve as a gateway and base for visitors to the national park, including those who wish to travel down the Rivière George.

### 2.4.2.2 Helen Falls

The southern portion of the operating area of the Helen Falls outfitter, which belongs to Entreprises S. Annanack Inc., is located in the Ulittaniujalik national park. The reception and lodging buildings, however, are located outside the national park, roughly 3 km from its northern boundary, except for a building used as a shelter for customers fishing at Helen Falls. Although this building is located inside the national park, the outfitter has priority to use it. A landing strip is situated near the main camp and could be used to access the national park with permission from the outfitter owners.

The site is currently used as a point of arrival for Rivière George and Rivière Ford descent circuits, and for temporary storage of canoes before they are taken back to the Pyramid Mountain Camp at the end of the summer season.

## 2.5 Use of adjacent land

The area adjacent to the national park is used by JBNQA and NEQA beneficiaries and by outfitters. Basic infrastructures have been built and traditional activities are taking place there (e.g. hunting, fishing, berry picking). Other than for these uses, the land has not been developed, and its mineral, energy and forestry resources are not exploited.

The land set aside for the Rivière George protected area (Figure 2), to the north and south of the national park, provide additional protection for the river's drainage basin, since mineral, energy and forestry resource exploration and extraction activities are prohibited.

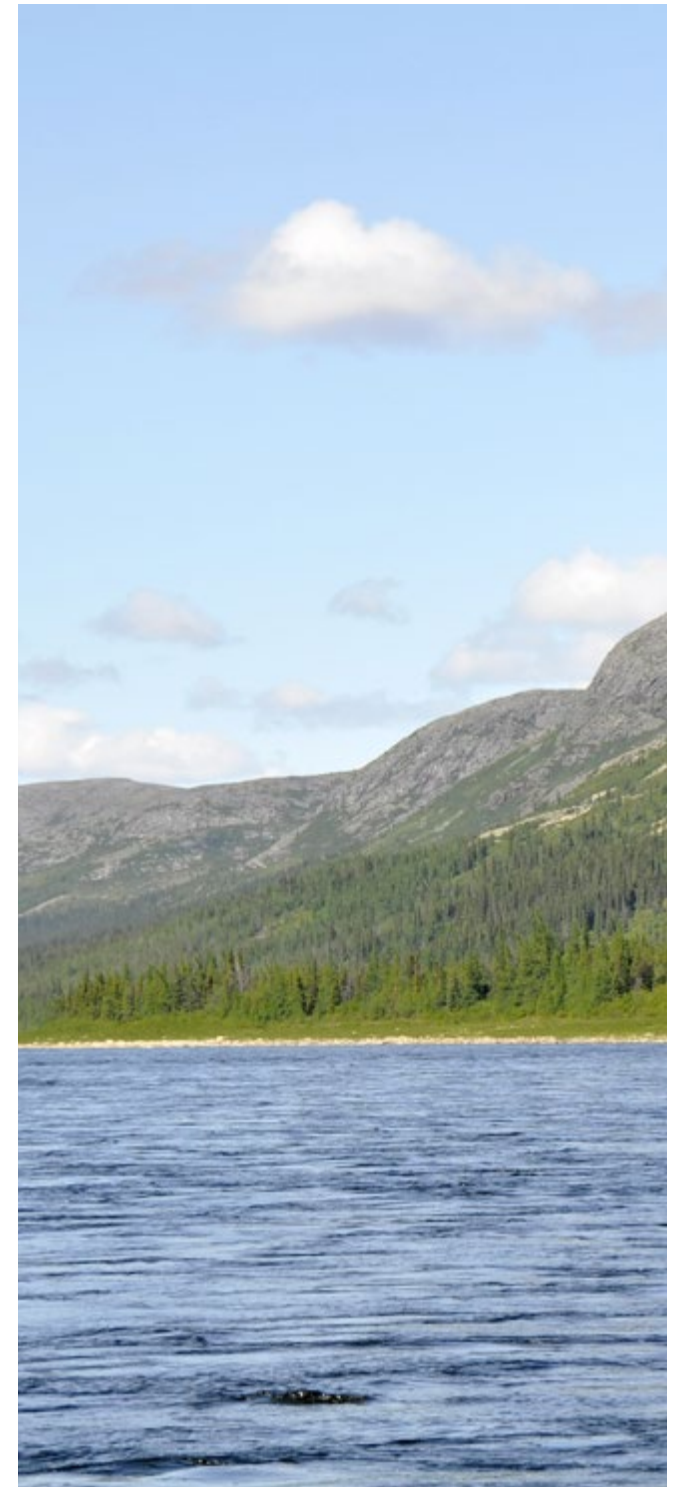


Figure 3 - Rights in force in Parc national Ulittaniujalik

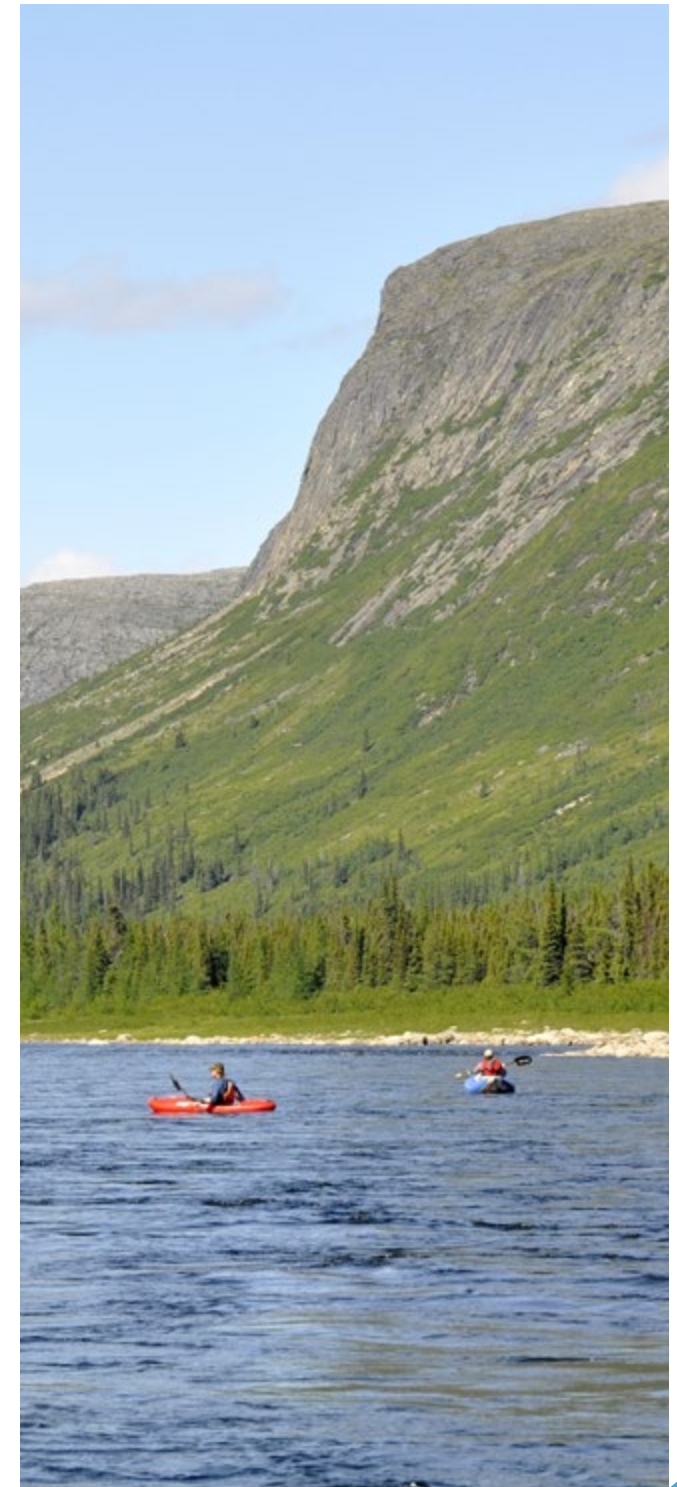
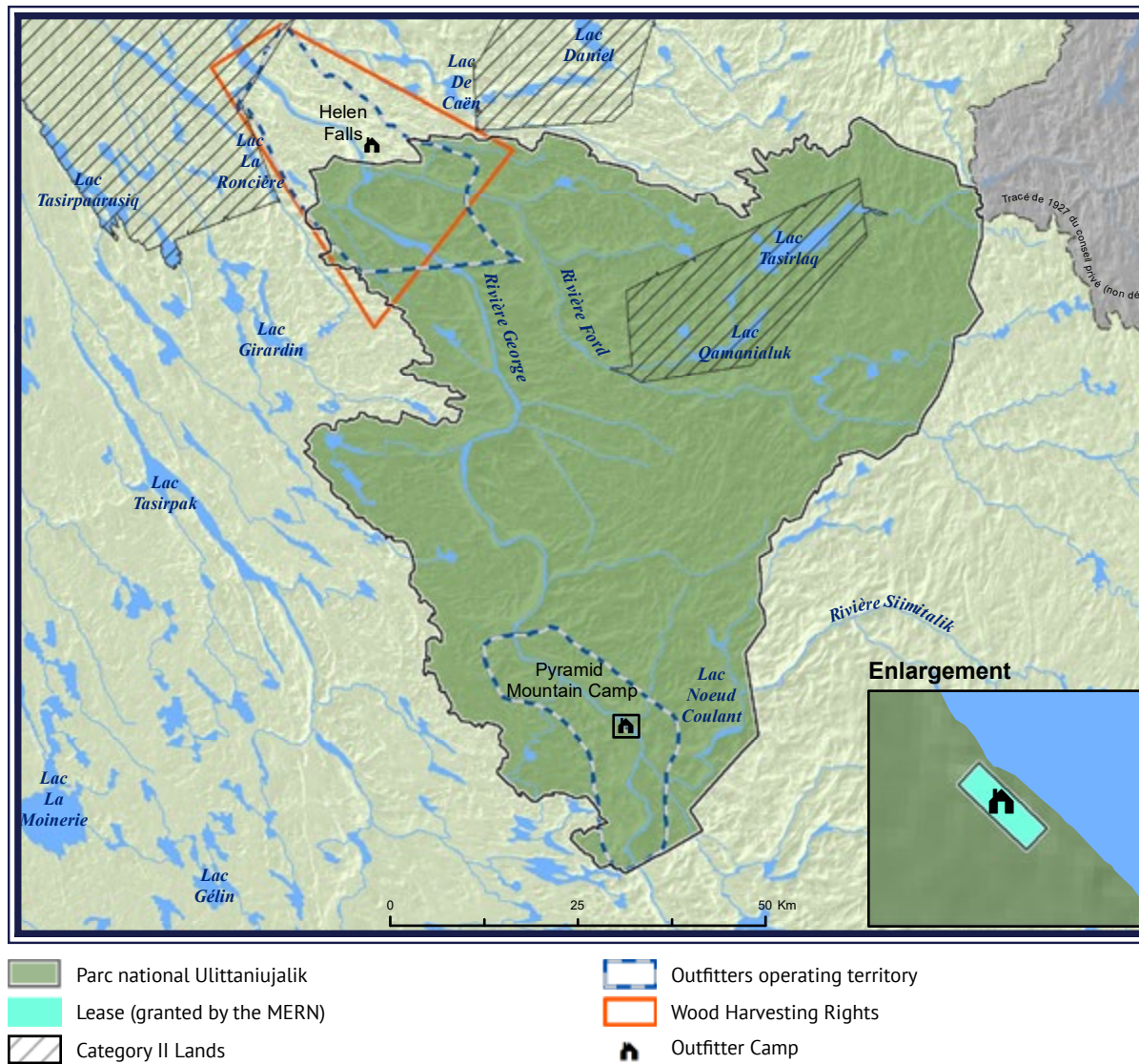


Photo: Alain Thibault



# 3. HERITAGE PROFILE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

## 3.1 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The national park preserves a sample representative of the George River Plateau natural region, which extends from the source of the Rivière George near Schefferville to Keglo Bay, on the eastern coast of Ungava Bay. The George River Plateau is a vast peneplain sloping slightly from east to west. It is characterized by its vast area and its slightly undulating relief with occasional outcrops that escaped glacial erosion. The mostly rocky surface is hummocky and carved by a small number of large valleys. It appears to have changed very little since it was formed, and most of the transformation is due to the recurrent passage of Quaternary glaciers that levelled the mountains and overdeepened the valleys. The Rivière George crosses the plateau over a distance of 565 km, including a segment of roughly 130 km in the national park. The landscapes preserved by the national park vary depending on their exposure and altitude.

## 3.2 NATURAL HERITAGE

Nearly half the area of the national park is a large barren complex composed of a mosaic of scrubland, mossy areas, meadowland and bare or lichen-covered rock. The other vegetation units are mostly meadows and mossy areas, along with some mossy black spruce stands or spruce-moss stands in the valleys of the Rivière George and its main tributaries. There are three threatened plant species in the area, including one fern species designated as threatened and two hepatica species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable.

The Park protects a portion of the habitat used by the George River herd of migratory ecotype woodland caribou. The herd's population has declined radically in the last few decades, from more than 800,000 animals in the 1990s to roughly 8,100 according to the 2020 inventory. In addition, the national park protects a 2 270 km<sup>2</sup> portion of a caribou calving area north of the 52<sup>nd</sup> parallel defined by the *Regulation respecting velopment of wildlife*. It is important to note that the boundaries of these wildlife habitats are adjusted every five years, based on the locations of calving areas from previous years. Sport hunting of caribou,

which was one of the region's main attractions for many years, has been prohibited since 2012 for the George River herd specifically, and since February 1, 2018, for Nunavik as a whole.

In addition to caribous, the national park also hosts black bears, muskoxen and, occasionally, moose, polar bears and harbour seals. As for species at risk, wolverines, designated as threatened, and polar bears, designated as vulnerable, have both been observed, as have the least weasel and rock vole, both of which appear on the list of species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Québec.

According to the available data, roughly 100 bird species frequent the national park, including roughly 60 that are presumed to nest there. An inventory carried out in the summer of 2010 confirmed nesting by 31 species, five of which were at risk, including the harlequin duck, golden eagle and peregrine falcon, all of which have been designated as vulnerable species. The short-eared owl and rusty blackbird are both on the list of species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable. With regard to federal legislation, the short-eared owl is also listed under the Species at Risk Act.

In addition to the Rivière George, which flows across the national park, there are many other watercourses and lakes in the national park, including the Rivière Ford, Lac Qamanialuk and Lac Tasirlaq. Fishes in these lakes and rivers are mainly salmonid species, including the Arctic char, lake trout and brook trout. As for the Atlantic salmon, its presence in the national park is limited to the Rivière George and the downstream portion of the Rivière Ford.

### 3.3 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Northern Québec's prehistory is represented by two major cultural sequences: the predecessors of the Amerindians (Paleo-Indians) and the predecessors of the Inuit (Paleo-Eskimos). In Nunavik, there are more Paleo-Eskimo archaeological sites. However, in the Monts Pyramides sector, there are traces of Amerindian occupation extending back to the Archaic period, between 9 500 and 3 000 years ago, along with protohistoric and historic occupations by the Cree, Innu and Naskapi peoples. However, sites extending back to the Archaic period are rare in the region.

Numerous archaeological sites have been identified to the north and south of the national park. In the north, near Ungava Bay, the sites are associated with the Inuit or Paleo-Eskimo tradition, while to the south, they are associated more with the Amerindian tradition. No sites were identified in the national park before the inventories carried out prior to its creation. However the use of

Inuit and Naskapi geographic names suggested that archaeological sites might in fact exist. Subsequently, sites associated with Thule, Inuit or undetermined occupation were found within the area of the national park, some in the vicinity of Lac Qamanialuk and Lac Tasirlaq. These high plateaus have long been an Inuit meeting point for caribou hunting. Hunters came from the Kuujuaq and Kangiqsualujjuaq regions, as well as from the Labrador Sea, to hunt. The archaeological sites around Lac Tasirlaq and Lac Qamanialuk bear witness to this occupation, and there are probably other sites that have not yet been discovered.

One very important cultural site is located near Coude Sanningajualuk on the Rivière George. During the consultations with the inhabitants of Kangiqsualujjuaq, it was noted that the sector was traditionally used as a campsite by Inuit using this area.

The national park's territory has also been marked by recent outfitter history. Bob May, who managed the former Fort George River trading post from 1943 to 1952, was the first to build an outfitter camps on the Rivière George. In 1955, he built a camp at Helen Falls to host salmon fishers in the summer and caribou hunters in the fall. In 1963, he established a new camp much further south, opposite Pyramid Mountain. Two satellite camps were subsequently built along the river, at Big Bend to the north, near Coude Sanningajualuk, and Little Pyramid, roughly 18 km to the south.

In the early 1970s, Willie Emudluk, an Inuk from Kangiqsualujjuaq who had a fishing camp north of the national park, built another camp at Lac Qamanialuk. His goal was to prolong his operating season by offering caribou hunting to his customers.

Today, the Big Bend, Little Pyramid and Lac Qamanialuk sites have been abandoned, and only the Pyramid Mountain Camp and Helen Falls sites are still in use.

## 3.4 LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

The landscapes preserved by the national park vary significantly, depending on exposure and altitude. The area can be divided into four main landscape units (Figure 4).

### 3.4.1 The Valley of the Rivière George

This valley runs across the entire territory of the national park and supports numerous large spruce and larch forests as well as some white birch and balsam poplar stands, at the northern limit of their range. The river's Coude Mistintshuk sector was overdeepened during the major Quaternary glaciations, and exhibits the U-shape characteristic of a glacial valley.

The Rivière George, running south to north, has numerous small sections of rapids or waterfalls before reaching Helen Falls, 5 kilometres from the northern boundary of the national park. These falls, 20 metres in height overall, are composed of a series of ledges 2 to 3 metres in height, along with pools frequented by Atlantic salmon, over a distance of roughly 3 km. The banks of the Rivière George are punctuated by piles of rock blocks forming crests reshaped by pressure from the ice during spring breakup. They form continuous segments ranging from several hundred metres to more than a kilometre in length, with an average height of 4 to 5 metres above the river.

### 3.4.2 The Rivière George Plateau

The Rivière George Plateau is situated on either side of the valley of the same name, and has a standard, relatively undifferentiated relief. It is transected by some tributaries of the Rivière George, including the Gasnault, Mitshu, Nutillilik and Imaapik rivers, and by several glaciofluvial gorges. The plateau supports alpine arctic vegetation associated with the forest tundra, dominated by scrubland, meadowland, mosses and lichens.

Although they are visible at several points in the national park, it is on this plateau, in the Pyramid Mountain sector, that the shorelines associated with the Naskaupi glacial lake, which occupied the depression formed by the passage of the glacier during the last glaciation period, are the clearest. These former shorelines are visible today in the form of green strips, contrasting with the somewhat bare sides of the outer edges of the depression. The name "Ulittaniujalik" refers to these former shorelines within the landscape. Pyramid Mountain itself is the most obvious and spectacular example.

### 3.4.3 The Lac Tasirlaq and Lac Qamanieluk Plateau

This plateau has an altitude that is generally above 500 metres. It is characterized by vegetation associated with the arctic tundra, in which trees are generally not found. Lac Tasirlaq, covering an area of slightly over 50 km<sup>2</sup>, is the largest lake in the national park. Generally

speaking, the plateau's watercourses include numerous cascades and small waterfalls.

The former Naskaupi lake left its mark on the plateau. Roughly one kilometre north of the eastern end of Lac Tasirlaq is a glaciolacustrine delta indicating the maximum level of the glacial lake. This sector also hosts the most important glaciofluvial complex in the national park. It is located east of Lac Tasirlaq, in the form of a 15-kilometre valley with an imposing esker, numerous kettles, spreads, eroding talus slopes and areas of frozen ground.

### 3.4.4 Lower Rivière Ford

The Rivière Ford flows through a wooded valley dominated by mossy spruce forests. Peat bogs have formed near the river mouth, on the left bank of the river. The peat bogs shelter the national park's largest complex of palsas and thermokarsts, respectively permafrost humps

generally covered with a layer of peat and ponds formed by permafrost melt.

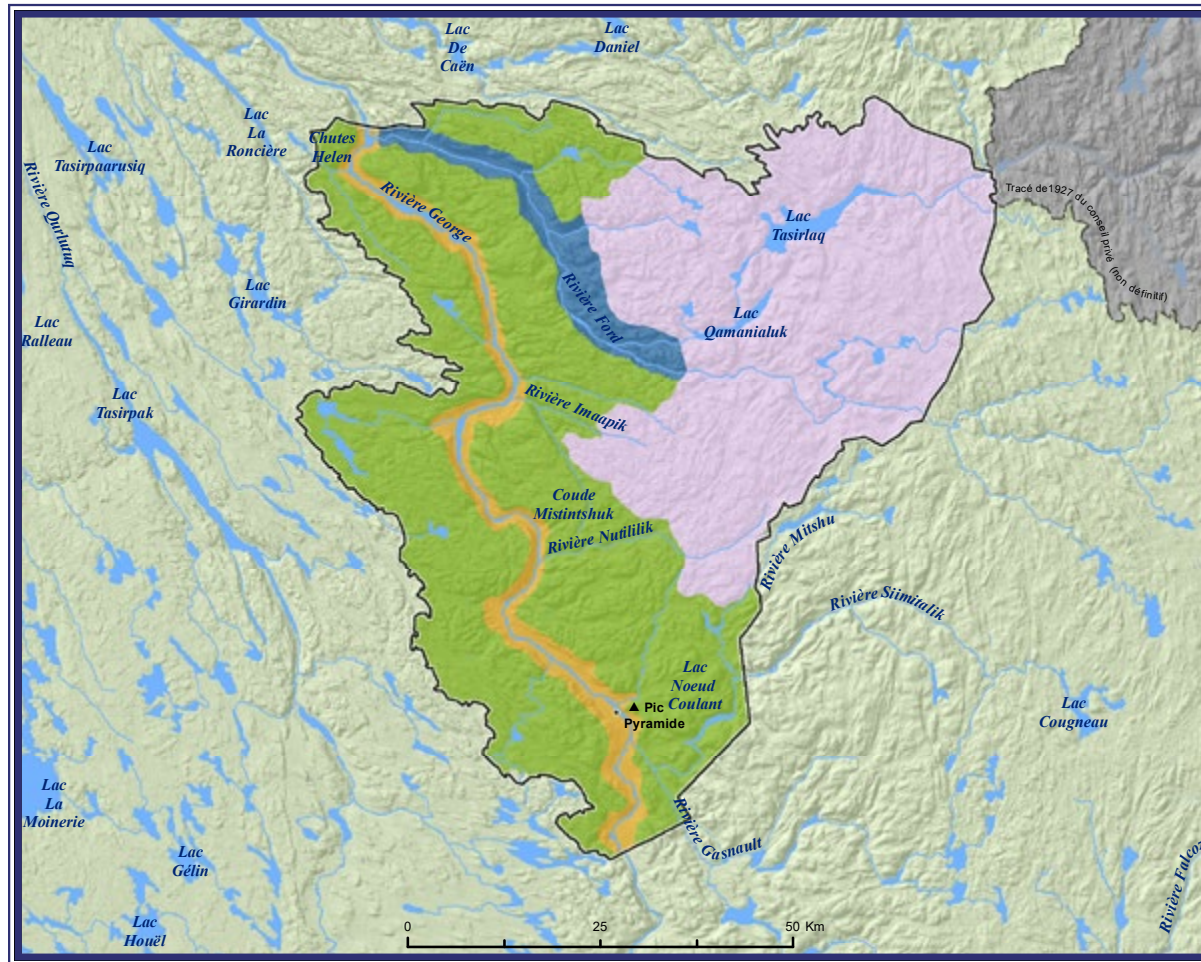
A rock escarpment roughly six kilometres long with an elevation of around 280 metres is situated in the Rivière Ford valley, on the left bank. This type of escarpment provides a habitat conducive to birds of prey, including the rough-

legged hawk, royal eagle and gyrfalcon. There are also a number of calcicole and calciphile plant species at this location. A wide variety of glacier-associated phenomena can be observed in the river mouth sector.



Photo: Alain Thibault

Figure 4 - Landscape units in the Parc national Ulittaniujalik



Parc national Ulittaniujalik

**Landscape Units**

- George River Valley
- George River Plateau
- Lac Tasirlaq and Lac Qamanialuk Plateau
- Lower Ford River



Photo: Alain Thibault



# 4. ZONING

Zoning is an essential planning and management tool used to ensure that the conservation and accessibility mission of the national parks is upheld. Zoning consists in dividing the territory of a national park into portions in order to regulate the level of preservation based on the natural, cultural and landscape heritage elements present in each portion. Zoning is therefore a way of guiding work in the field with a view to achieving long-term preservation. The zoning process is carried out in collaboration with park management teams and is based on the latest knowledge of the park and peripheral areas. The guiding principle underlying the process is to ensure that a national park's natural and landscape heritage is well-protected, while fostering the development of the national park.

Zoning of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, as defined by the *Parks Regulation*, includes four types of zones, each with its own level of preservation and use. They are: the maximum preservation zone, the preservation zone, the natural environment zone and the services zone. The zones are as agreed upon by the working group and presented at the public hearings for the provisional master plan (Figure 5).

It is important to note that the directives and regulations associated with the zoning plan

do not, in any way, limit the exercise of the harvesting right granted to JBNQA and NEQA beneficiaries.

**Table 1 - Area of the different zones in the Parc national Ulittaniujalik**

Zones	Area (percentage)
Maximum preservation	9.1 km <sup>2</sup> (0.2%)
Preservation	3,175.9 km <sup>2</sup> (60.0%)
Natural environment	2,101.5 km <sup>2</sup> (39.7%)
Services	6.6 km <sup>2</sup> (0.1%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,293.1 km<sup>2</sup> (100%)</b>

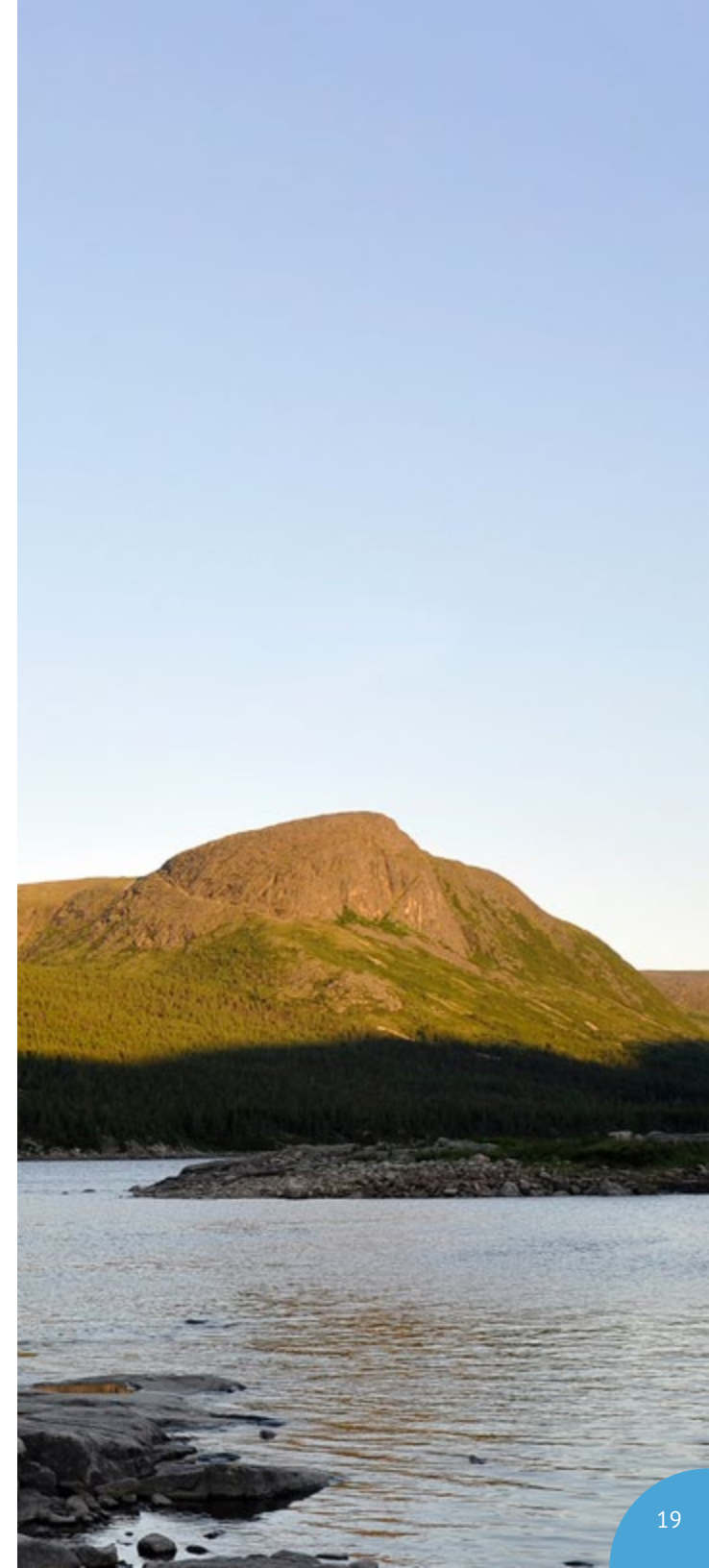
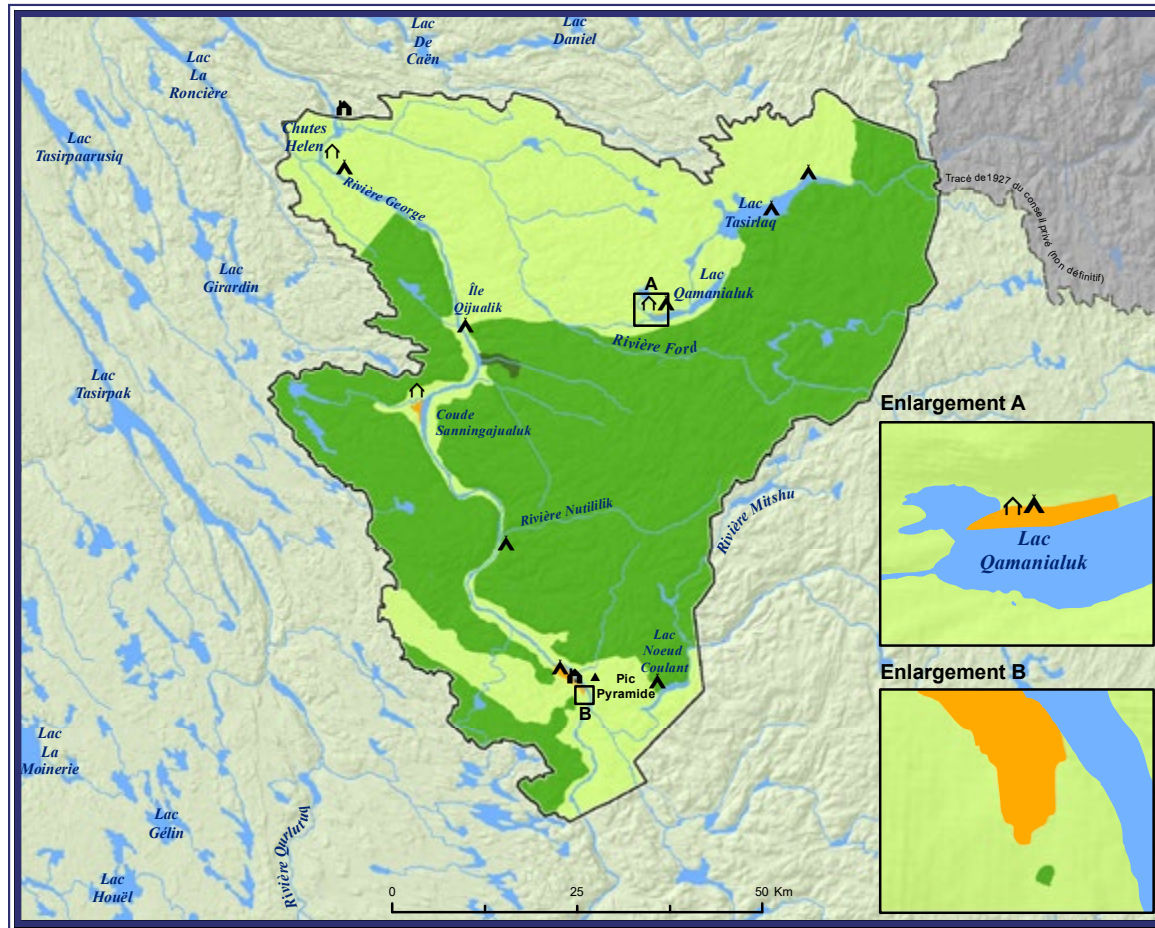


Figure 5 - Zoning of Parc national Ulittaniujalik



Parc national Ulittaniujalik

**Zoning**

- Maximum Preservation
- Preservation
- Natural Environment
- Services

Outfitter Camp

**Potential Infrastructures**

- Shelter
- Rustic Camping

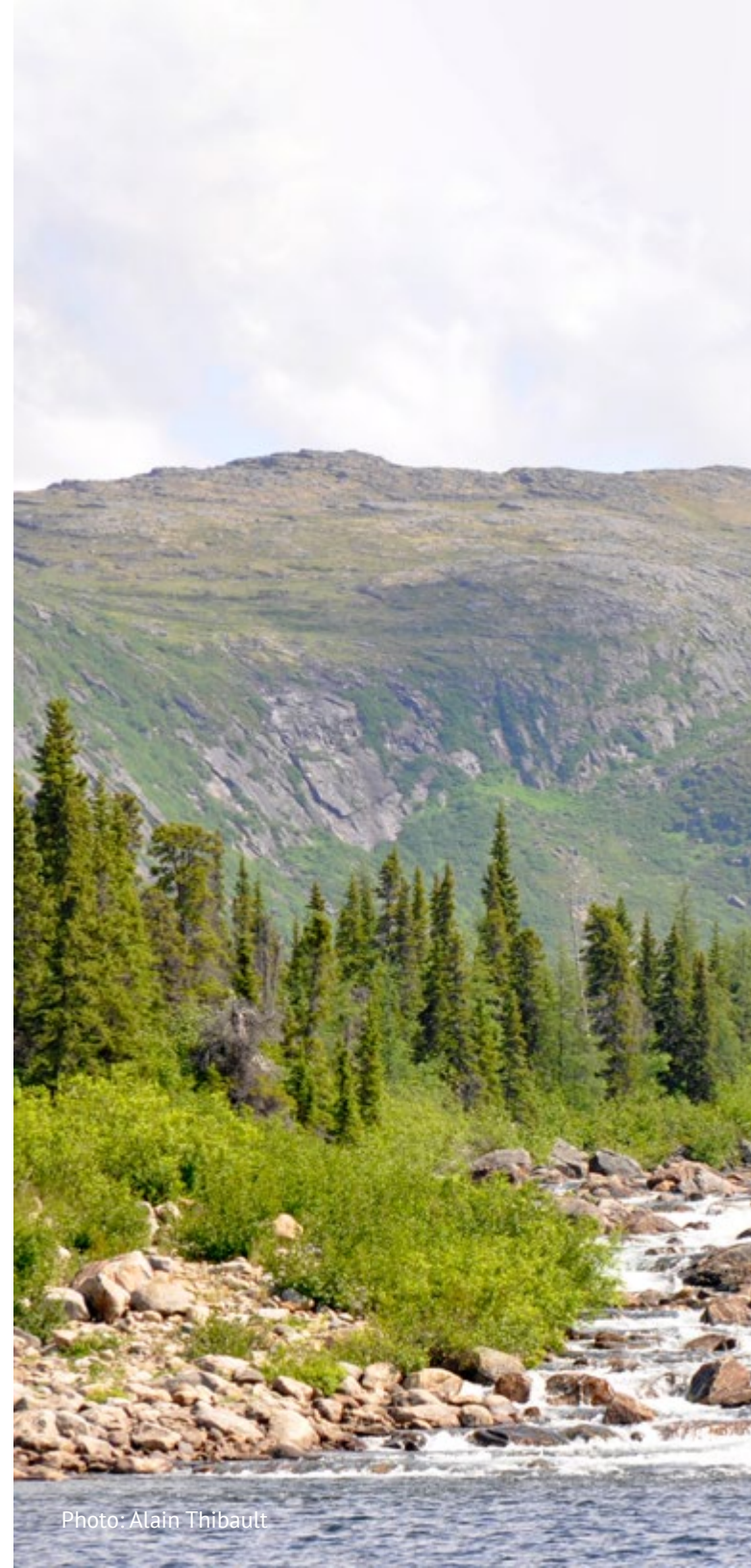


Photo: Alain Thibault

#### 4.1 MAXIMUM PRESERVATION ZONE

The maximum preservation zones include the portion of a national park's territory set aside exclusively for protection of the natural, cultural and landscape heritage and accessible only occasionally for management or research purposes. Development is not permitted.

A maximum preservation zone of slightly over 9 km<sup>2</sup>, accounting for 0.2 % of the national park's territory, has been established in the Coude Sanningajualuk sector of the Rivière George. This zone protects a sector of cultural importance to the Inuit, who have often used it as a campsite. JBNQA and NEQA beneficiaries can access the sector without limitations and harvest wildlife.

#### 4.2 PRESERVATION ZONE

The preservation zones apply to the portion of a national park set aside mainly to protect the natural, cultural, and landscape heritage, which can be accessed only by methods that have little impact on the environment.

In the case of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, these zones cover an area of 3 176 km<sup>2</sup>, or roughly 60.0 % of its territory. Their purpose is to protect representative elements or portions of the national park that bear witness to the natural region, so that they are able to develop with minimal interference from human activity. The areas in question offer a rich natural heritage conducive to discovery and education.

The three main preservation zones were established to protect elements of landscape units, as well as sectors with some level of vulnerability. The first zone, covering an area of 2 313 km<sup>2</sup>, is located on the east bank of the Rivière George and covers a portion of the Lac Tasirlaq and Lac Qamanialuk Plateau, as well as a portion of the Rivière George Plateau. The other two zones cover a total area of 844 km<sup>2</sup> and are situated to the west of the Rivière George. Along with the lower altitude plateaus in this sector, they complete the representation of the Rivière George Plateau sector.

Lastly, a very small preservation zone, covering an area of 0.1 km<sup>2</sup>, is located on the west bank of the Rivière George, near the Pyramid Mountain sector. It was created to protect a balsam poplar stand, since this type of forest is very rare at this latitude (see enlargement B of Figure 5).



### 4.3 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ZONE

The natural environment zones cover the portion of a national park used for development of the natural, cultural and landscape heritage in a way that fosters accessibility. In the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, they have been delimited according to present and future development needs. Natural environment zones cover an area of slightly less than 2 101.5 km<sup>2</sup>, or roughly 40% of the national park's territory. They include the main natural circulation pathways between the various points of interest in the national park, and also the locations used most for subsistence activities.

The natural environment zone covers the Rivière George, where sport fishing is permitted,

as well as a strip of land along its banks, varying in width according to the slope. In the southern portion of the national park, on the eastern bank of the Rivière George, the ambiance zone broadens to allow for sport fishing in the Pyramid Mountain, Lac Nœud Coulant and Rivière Gasnault sectors. On the western Rivière George Plateau, a winter access corridor from Kuujjuaq has been zoned for natural environment. Lastly, the northern portion of the national park has also been included in the natural environment zone, first because it is used by the populations of Kangiqsualujjuaq and Kuujjuaq for their traditional subsistence activities, and second because part of this area is covered by a community logging right under the JBNQA.



Photo: Alain Thibault

#### 4.4 SERVICES ZONE

In Nunavik's national parks, service zones are normally set aside for the development of visitor lodging facilities and landing strips.

Three service zones have been delimited in the Parc national Ulittaniujalik , covering a total area of 6.6 km<sup>2</sup>, or 0.1 % of the national park's territory. They form the national park's

main access and service areas, and are situated around Pyramid Mountain Camp, where the outfitter's buildings and a landing strip are located, and at two former outfitter's sites along the Rivière George and Lac Qamanialuk.





# 5. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

## 5.1 RECEPTION AND RELATED SERVICES

Given the nature of Nunavik, national park reception facilities are built in host communities rather than in the parks themselves. The Parc national Ulittaniujalik team is based in Kangiqsualujjuaq and uses the reception and service buildings developed for the Parc national Kuururjuaq. In addition to being used as a visitor reception centre, the building hosts a theme-based exhibition presenting the characteristics of the two parks.

Since the Parc national Ulittaniujalik can be accessed by taking a charter flight directly from Kuurjuaq, a visitor reception and public information building will be developed there as well. This same building will also be able to welcome visitors in transit to the Kuururjuaq and Pingualuit national parks. A permanent exhibition on the natural and cultural attractions in the Parc national Ulittaniujalik and the other national parks in Nunavik will also be developed. The building will have an open area for use by community groups and for cultural sharing events.

Secondary centres are planned in Kawawachikamach and Schefferville because of their links to the national park. Most of the standalone descents of the Rivière

George depart from these two locations. A permanent exhibition will also be developed in Kawawachikamach, with permission from the Naskapi Nation Council.

For logistics and safety reasons, all non-beneficiary visitors will be required to register at one of the service centres before entering the national park, and to check out when leaving the national park.

## 5.2 LODGING

The main infrastructures to be built in the national park (Figure 5) are associated with lodging for visitors descending the river by canoe. Rustic campsites composed of platforms for tents and dry toilets will be built at the busiest locations along the Rivière George, which for the time being are concentrated at the mouth of Rivière Nutillilik, on the plateaus opposite Île Qijualik and on the banks of the river a few kilometres upstream of Helen Falls.

Similarly, shelters may be built alongside the Rivière George, on the plateau located downstream of Helen Falls and near Coude Sanningajualuk, and in the Lac Qamaniauk service zone. The exact locations of these shelters have yet to be determined.

Based on information from monitoring of visitor numbers in the Lac Tasirlaq and Lac Qamaniauk sectors and in the Lac Nœud Coulant sector, rustic campsites could be developed to protect sectors in which vegetation is rare or fragile. Lastly, if user numbers in the Pyramid Mountain sector increase sufficiently to justify additional campsites, discussions will take place with the owners of the Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitter to identify a location that will satisfy the requirements of everyone concerned.

In addition to these permanent infrastructures, there are also plans to establish temporary winter campsites, as needed. The locations under consideration for these campsites are Lac du Nœud Coulant, Lac Qamaniauk and Lac Tasirlaq.



# 6. ORIENTATIONS

National parks are managed with guidance from the three orientations in Policy for Québec National Parks:

- > Continue the development of Québec's national park network.
- > Ensure the conservation of the natural, cultural and landscape heritage.
- > Contribute to the quality of life of citizens and communities.

A variety of tools are available to structure the proposed approach, based on the issues specific to the parks in question. With regard to the national parks located in Nunavik, the MFFP and the KRG are the main stakeholders responsible for the actions needed to achieve the Policy's orientations. Local or regional actors including the Northern villages, landholding corporations, environmental agencies and private citizens wishing to become involved on their own behalf can also play a role. In the case of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, all this translates into the orientations set out below.

## 6.1 IMPROVE THE CONFIGURATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK

There are no plans to expand the national park for the time being. In the coming years, if the regional community asks for additional land to be included in the national park, the MFFP and KRG will consider the request and will decide whether or not the additional land will contribute to the national park's mission of conservation and accessibility.

## 6.2 ADOPT AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

In most cases, the national park must be managed in such a way as to leave free rein to the natural processes that influence existing ecosystems. However, interventions are sometimes needed to protect particular species, maintain equipment or restore damaged sites. An adaptive approach allows the national park's management to react to observed changes, consider the steps taken and acquire new information with a view to continuous improvement.

## 6.3 DEVELOP THE NATIONAL PARK USING BEST KNOWN PRACTICES

The primary consideration when developing the national park is to protect the natural, cultural and landscape heritage. This is reflected in the different planning tools that guide work in the field. Projects must therefore be planned properly, from design to completion, with the primary goal of minimizing impacts. In some cases, the precautionary principle must be applied if doubts persist.

First, before any development project is implemented, the national park's management must ensure that it complies with the zoning established pursuant to the *Parks Regulation*. Projects must also be consistent with the Policy's orientations and with the various guides and guidelines prepared by different government departments and agencies. Lastly, the work done must be in compliance with the national park's conservation plan, which sets out all aspects relating to conservation of the land and the natural, cultural and landscape heritage elements. In other words, projects and work must not constitute a short, medium or long-term hindrance to any protection, restoration or knowledge acquisition activities designed to ensure the conservation of the national park's natural, cultural and landscape heritage.

Characterization work is required to locate the best sites for projects, identify any mitigation measures that may be needed, rule on a project's acceptability and, where applicable, reassess certain parameters. This helps to avoid or mitigate the anticipated impacts of new developments on sensitive elements such as wetlands and special-status species. If repercussions are feared, it is vital that best planning practices are used and that the work is subject to strict conditions. As mentioned earlier, a project that has too many anticipated impacts for the host environment must be altered, moved or abandoned.

It is with this in mind that the KRG must set development and management objectives for the national park, to ensure that the national park's territory is protected and developed in a respectful way, that access is maintained and that the supply of services is improved.

#### 6.4 ASSIST THE OUTFITTERS WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR PRACTICES

The MFFP has entered into agreements with the Pyramid Mountain Camp and Helen Falls outfitters to structure certain aspects of their activities in the national park. The purpose of these agreements is to establish conditions for resource use, ensure proper waste management and preserve biodiversity and landscapes within the national park. The MFFP, in collaboration with the national park's team, provides assistance to the outfitters, in particular with regard to maintaining the quality of the land they occupy.



## 6.5 FOCUS KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION ON CONSERVATION ISSUES

The national parks are points of reference that provide opportunities for research and knowledge acquisition activities in different fields. Knowledge acquisition efforts should focus in priority on projects with direct impacts for land conservation and reconciliation of use. In Nunavik, all such projects must first be approved by the harmonization committee of the park concerned.

The heritage protection plan for the parc national Ulittaniujalik, prepared by the KRG, is the main planning tool for conservation-related actions. It sets out the main issues and vulnerabilities and identifies knowledge acquisition and environmental monitoring needs.



Photo: Kativik Regional Government

## 6.6 MONITOR THE CONDITION OF THE NATIONAL PARK

The condition of the national park's natural heritage must be monitored to ensure that it can be preserved for present and future generations. Monitoring is used to measure the national park's condition and identify changes as they appear, so that the related management methods can be adjusted.

The KRG has identified a number of indicators that can be used to monitor and structure the use of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik. These indicators mainly focus on the condition of the Rivière George and changes to the composition of the vegetation layers. For example, monitoring measures have been introduced to measure the relative importance of the shrub layer, which has increased in recent years.

This type of monitoring program must be maintained, and must also be adjusted over time, among other things by adapting the list of environmental indicators that are monitored and the data collection protocols used.

## 6.7 PROMOTE THE NATIONAL PARK'S BENEFITS AND CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS

Knowledge acquired on various conservation issues should, when disseminated via the educational programs offered by the national park's team, allow visitors to enrich their discovery experience and stimulate their interest in heritage protection. In some cases, it may be appropriate to disseminate the information in annual reports, press releases, newsletters or tickets, and to use media for public information. Tools and guides may also be published. This will help the population to understand the effort invested and the work still to be done, and to appreciate the national park's benefits for the community.

## 6.8 ENTER INTO A REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION DYNAMIC

The impacts of using land adjacent to a national park may have significant consequences for that national park's ecosystems, and hence for its biodiversity conservation efforts and the discovery experience available to visitors. In the case of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik, mining activities in adjacent areas may have impacts inside the park. None of the drainage basins is located entirely within the park, and the related habitats, including the Rivière George, are not exempt from the potential impacts of situations arising outside the park's boundaries.

The operation of Nunavik's national parks is headed by the KRG's Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks Department, which also oversees a variety of other spheres including hunting, fishing, trapping, land planning, the Uumajuit program for wildlife protection and various environmental aspects. Its actions in these spheres, combined with the work of the committees set up under the agreements and the harmonization committees created for Nunavik's national parks, help to ensure that the situation of these national parks is taken into consideration when decisions are made. This is essential in order to sustain ecosystem viability at regional level.

## 6.9 FOSTER ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL PARK

The opportunity to explore nature and develop an appreciation for natural environments, cultures and landscapes must be available to everyone and must be reflected in the national park's supply of activities. Depending on the context, the national park team must maintain or develop a varied supply of activities so that there is something for everyone, for example by offering outdoor activities with different levels of difficulty for visitors. The same applies to discovery activities, which should be accessible to novices while giving more experienced visitors the chance to learn more.

In Nunavik, transportation costs can be an obstacle to visitors who wish to access the national parks. Accordingly, in 2017 the KRG set up the Nunavik Parks Initiative for Beneficiary Access. The aim of the Initiative is to reduce the cost of staying in the national parks for JBNQA and NEQA beneficiaries, by providing a discount on activities and by reimbursing a portion of their air travel costs.



Photo: Alain Thibault



#### 6.10 PUBLICIZE THE NATIONAL PARK AS A SITE FOR EDUCATION, CONTACT WITH NATURE AND PROMOTION OF A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

The Parc national Ulittaniujalik's conservation and accessibility mission, as well as the discovery and outdoor activities offered in the national park, mean that it is an ideal place for education, contact with nature, traditional activities and promotion of a physically active lifestyle.

The national park's team must take actions that allow it to benefit from the various programs developed for Nunavik by the KRG and by the government departments and agencies concerned to raise awareness about the national park. In addition, since every national park exists within its own specific regional context, special initiatives must be developed in collaboration with local stakeholders.

## 6.11 STRENGTHEN TIES WITH INDIGENOUS NATIONS

The national parks are ideal locations to forge stronger collaborative ties with the First Nations and Inuit and to build a meeting space conducive to a mutual understanding of cultures. This is especially true in Nunavik, since the host communities through which the national parks are accessed are Indigenous villages.

The Inuit and Naskapi cultures should form an integral part of the visitor experience at the Parc national Ulittaniujalik. Exhibitions, activities

and tours offered by the KRG in the national park should encourage visitors to discover these cultures.

In addition, and in compliance with the Sivunirmut Agreement, priority is given to Inuit and Naskapi people for jobs at the Parc national Ulittaniujalik. In line with the Policy for Québec National Parks, professional development opportunities should also be made available to these employees.

Lastly, the national park's harmonization committee should establish and maintain relationships based on trust, partnership and mutual respect.



## 6.12 INCREASE SPIN-OFFS FOR THE COMMUNITIES

The partnership culture is already an integral part of the national parks network. In addition to providing complementarity of products and services, it has helped to create business opportunities in the region.

To increase the spin-offs for neighbouring communities, partnerships that develop individuals, regional products, innovations and culture should be introduced or continued. The same applies to the acquisition of products and services needed for the national park's operations. This alignment of the region's strengths and attractions is key in reinforcing a sense of belonging to the national park.



Photo: Norman Dignard

# 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan is designed to guide the management of the Parc national Ulittaniujalik for the ten years following its publication. In the coming years, the MFFP and the KRG will implement the actions under their respective

responsibility, to ensure that the national park is managed in the best possible way. The following table summarizes the actions to be taken and the body responsible.

**Table 2 - Summary of Actions**

Responsibilities	MFFP	KRG
<b>Improvement of the national park's configuration</b>		
Analysis of the relevance of changing the boundaries and zoning	√	√
<b>Structuring of operations</b>		
Compliance with the national park's orientations and zoning	√	√
Compliance with the conditions on the certificate of authorization of October 31, 2013	√	√
<b>Land conservation</b>		
Authorization for work and activities requiring the Minister's approval	√	
Planning and sustainable development of the national park		√
Adaptive ecosystem management		√
Coordination of knowledge acquisition and authorization of scientific research projects		√
Monitoring of environmental indicators		√
<b>Supply management and development</b>		
Client management and development of the visitor experience		√
Management of the supply of educational and outdoor activities		√
Management of access rights and fees for activities and services		√



Photo: Alain Thibault

Responsibilities	MFFP	KRG
<b>Asset maintenance</b>		
Maintenance and protection of buildings, sites and heritage landscapes		√
Management of infrastructures and assets		√
<b>Surveillance and protection</b>		
Maintenance of boundary integrity	√	
Surveillance by wildlife protection officers and park wardens	√	√
Regulatory compliance	√	
Introduction of safety measures		√
<b>Communication and external relations</b>		
Public promotion of conservation achievements	√	√
Presence in the regional community (e.g. harmonization committee)		√
Partnership agreement		√
Public information on the national park's health		√



Photo: Alain Thibault

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