

ALBANEL-TÉMISCAMIE-OTISH PARK PROJECT

The government of Québec has confirmed its intention to work in partnership with the Cree Nation of Mistissini to create Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish Park, a vast park totalling 11,093 km², representative of the boreal forest in Northern Québec. This first inhabited park project in Québec is in keeping with the government's wish to set up a network of high-quality protected areas that is representative of the biodiversity of Québec, covering all regions and targeting 8 % of the surface area of its territory. A public hearing regarding the creation of this park was held in the communities of Mistissini and Chibougamau on January 14th and 15th 2006.

Proposed boundary :

With the exception of Category I lands, Poste Bay and Abatagouche Bay (where the Village of Mistissini is located), the park will preserve in its entirety the surface of the waters of Lakes Mistassini and Albanel, as well as a buffer strip around these two lakes. It will also encompass the upstream portion of Rupert River, from its headwaters in Lake Mistassini down to Lake Bellinger. In addition, much of the Témiscamie River watershed will be included, from the source of this river in the Otish Mountains down to Lake Albanel, as well as the historic canoe route corridor linking Coldwater Lake to Lake Témiscamie. A large portion of the Otish Mountains will be protected as will be Lake Naococane, north of these mountains. A part of the Wildlife reserve *des Lacs-Albanel-Mistassini-et-Waconichi* will be transformed into a park.

The Cree Nation of Mistissini involvement in park planning and management :

Since the beginning, the Cree Nation of Mistissini has been involved in the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish park planning process and will play a major role in the future park management. The master plan of this future park underscores the importance that the Cree Nation of Mistissini puts on the preservation of its cultural and natural heritages and the close ties that tallymen have forged with this immense territory which they have inhabited and used for thousands of years, and still do today. Tallymen have always been the custodians and protectors of the territory. They will continue to play this role once the park is created. The rights guaranteed to beneficiaries under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement will be maintained, particularly with respect to the harvesting right associated with hunting, fishing and trapping.

Zoning geared to conservation :

The park's zoning plan is the first tool that will be used to delimit sites requiring special protection. This plan introduces a new element in the current network of parks, namely areas specifically dedicated to the preservation of sites considered sacred by the Elders of Mistissini. A supplemental value at the spiritual, social and cultural levels is being added to the rich natural heritage of this territory.

Links :

The provisory master plan and the information sheets along with maps on the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish Park project may be found on the web site of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs : http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/parcs/ato/con-ATO_en.htm

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