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Parc national des Pingualuit

QUÉBEC PREMIER JEAN CHAREST INAUGURATES FIRST NORTHERN PARK

Kangiqsujuaq, November 30, 2007 – The Premier of Québec, Jean Charest, officially opened the province's first northern park today, which will be known as the *parc national des Pingualuit*. Mr. Charest highlighted the importance of promoting and protecting the Pingualuit crater, formerly called the New Québec crater.

"I am proud to be inaugurating this first national park in northern Québec," said Premier Charest. "This natural site in Nunavik is exceptional and world renowned in scientific research. We have a public duty to promote and protect this fragile ecosystem."

The park covers an area of 1134 km². Its operations will be fully managed by the Kativik Regional Government. The request to establish *parc national des Pingualuit* came from the community of Kangiqsujuaq, which has long recognized the value and uniqueness of the site. The project therefore became part of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Line Beauchamp, noted that: "Thanks to the involvement of the Kativik Regional Government and cooperation of the community of Kangiqsujuaq, from the earliest stages of park planning, today we are able to protect and present the Pingualuit crater, which is unmatched globally. This is a great way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the *Parks Act*."

Although estimated at 1.4 million years old, the Pingualuit crater is young. It is distinguished by its lack of erosion and the exceptional quality of the water in Lake Pingualuk, among the purest in the world. As such, it attracts the considerable interest of scientists whose activities and studies contribute to knowledge while maintaining the ecological integrity of the site. The *Parc national des Pingualuit* also allows visitors to discover a sample of the interior landscapes of the Ungava Plateau.

Operational management by the Inuit

On March 23, 2004, the Government of Québec signed an agreement delegating operational management of the *parc national des Pingualuit* to the Kativik Regional Government. The five-year agreement provides for a \$3.9-million operating budget and \$5.7 million in capital investments. The park currently employs five people full time from the community of Kangiqsujuaq as well as the services of several others required to build various park facilities, such as a walking trail, huts and signs.

Other Nunavik park projects

Four other provincial parks are being planned for Nunavik. The *parc national Kuururjuaq* will cover 4274 km² in the Torngat Mountains and Koroc River areas. Public consultations were held on the proposal in March 2007. The plans for *parc national des Lacs-Guillaume-Delisle-et-à-L'Eau-Claire*, to cover an area of 15 000 km², will be subject to public hearings in June 2008, as announced at the Katimajit Forum last August. Two other parks are planned for the Cap-Wolstenholme sector near Ivujivik and the Baie-aux-Feuilles sector near the community of Tasiujaq. Planning for these two projects will begin in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

“Creating the *parc national des Pingualuit* as well as other parks in the coming years is part of the firm commitment of my government to present the cultural and territorial wealth of the Inuit,” said Mr. Charest.

Québec’s national park network now has 22 public parks which help achieve the goals of the Québec strategy on protected areas, the *Stratégie québécoise sur les aires protégées*.

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