



Parc national de la  
Mauricie

La Mauricie  
National Park

# Revision of La Mauricie National Park's management plan

Public Consultation Report, November 2021



## Introduction

The management plan for La Mauricie National Park is up for renewal in 2021. In order to generate new and bold ideas to guide the future management of the park, Parks Canada has done extensive engagement and consultation work with a wide range of participants, including partners, First Nations, managers of surrounding lands, visitors, youth and the general public. This approach was carried out in two phases:

- Phase 1: Conceptualization (January to March 2019 – February to March 2020)

Three ideas workshops were held in the winter of 2019 with more than 45 participants representing various organizations and entities related to the park, adjacent territories, natural resource conservation, and the region's recreational, tourist and cultural areas. The ideas and discussions that came out of these workshops fuelled thought on the future management plan and had a major influence on the directions that would be proposed in it.

In February and March 2020, Parks Canada implemented an engagement activity with elementary school children that asked them to write on a ribbon a few words that describe their dream park. The ribbon was then hung on a "wish tree." A total of 88 children participated, and among the main ideas submitted was to improve the range of activities related to the interpretation and observation of wildlife and the natural environment.

- Phase 2: Consultations on the draft management plan (May to August 2021)

Over 450 members of the public provided input through a website on the draft management plan and an online survey. Some thirty representatives, partners and organizations related to the park were also met by videoconference.

The following paragraphs summarize the main elements discussed during the Phase 2 consultations.

## What we heard

### **Agreement with the proposed directions:**

The consultations demonstrated strong support for the content proposed in the draft management plan. In discussions with Parks Canada, partners, stakeholders and First Nations indicated that they are generally comfortable with the content of the draft management plan, while offering several ideas.

The results of the online survey of over 450 people also demonstrated strong public support for the proposed strategies and objectives with over 90% of respondents choosing "completely agree" or "agree."

### **Importance of the mandate to protect the natural environment**

The survey responses and comments highlighted the importance that Parks Canada must place on protecting the natural environment. Preservation of natural environments and the

"nature" experience must be taken into account in all future actions by Parks Canada at La Mauricie National Park.

### **Willingness to integrate the national park into joint ecological connectivity initiatives**

Partners and stakeholders mentioned the importance of Parks Canada working collaboratively to protect ecological corridors. Wildlife, especially species at risk, does not remain within the park's boundaries and also travels outside the park. The new management plan will demonstrate Parks Canada's willingness to integrate this concern as several objectives relate to the implementation of collaborative conservation initiatives within and outside the Parks Canada administered territory.

### **Do not overdevelop the park**

The consultations demonstrated the public's desire to limit the development of the park, particularly with respect to new infrastructure. The directions of the next management plan and the reinforcement of zoning will take this into account and will give precise limits to possible future developments. Parks Canada does not intend to expand the developed areas, but rather to build on and eventually optimize existing infrastructure to better meet visitor needs, protect the environment and enhance the park's "nature" experience. The activity offer will also take into account the ecological importance of the territory and will aim to promote its conservation, to make visitors aware of its value, and to initiate them to the behaviours to adopt in a natural environment.

### **Accessibility**

The issue of accessibility was raised several times. It seems important to adapt certain infrastructures to allow access to people with disabilities, but above all, these measures must be accompanied by real experience offers that take into account the needs of these visitors. It is not only a matter of allowing people with disabilities to move around the park, but also of offering them opportunities to have pleasant and enriching experiences, just like other clients.

### **Authenticity rather than new technologies**

Several comments emphasized that "physical" contact with the natural environment should be favoured and that it would not be necessary to rely too heavily on new technologies. The importance of judicious use of new technologies in order to reap the benefits without detracting from the "nature" experience was stressed.

### **Limit the number and scale of events hosted in the park**

The public has repeatedly said that the national park should not be used to host too many large-scale events. Parks Canada should not seek to increase visitation and visibility through new major events. Parks Canada will give priority to small-scale activities that enhance opportunities to enjoy the national park without limiting access to non-participating visitors and with minimal environmental impact.

### **Dog access**

Many comments focused on the limitations caused by the dog prohibition in the park. Many visitors do not go to the park because they cannot bring their pets on the trails. Parks Canada has a mandate to protect wildlife and natural environments, and the presence of dogs can

cause conflicts with protected animals in the park. However, in the coming years, Parks Canada will conduct a pilot project for a dog trail in La Mauricie National Park that will allow dog owners to enjoy a hiking trail in the national park, in a setting that limits negative impacts on wildlife and natural environments.

**Present other perspectives of the park's history, including its creation and First Nations cultures and knowledge**

Many mentioned their interest in the presentation of the recent history of the national park, including the context of its creation, the establishment of the Parkway, etc.

Members of the public and partners also stressed the importance of working with First Nations to present their cultures and knowledge to the public. Collaboration between Parks Canada and First Nations will be a key element in the future management of the national park.

**Cohabitation between Parkway users**

Members of the public, partners and stakeholders all mentioned the issues related to cohabitation between Parkway users. Many said that the quality of the road surface and its winding character may attract a clientele more interested in the pleasure of driving than in enjoying the natural environment. Participants in the consultations mentioned noise-related nuisances for both visitors and wildlife, as well as public safety issues and accidents. Parks Canada understands these concerns. As part of the implementation of the next management plan, measures will be put in place to facilitate better use of the Parkway, which will promote harmonious cohabitation between users and greater safety in order to minimize noise pollution and reduce the number of accidents.

## First Nations' engagement and consultation

Along with public, stakeholder and partner engagement and consultation activities, Parks Canada has worked closely with First Nations. Parks Canada is developing a close relationship with the Atikamekw Nehirowisiw Nation and the W8banaki Nation, both of which are located near the park and to which the park is of great importance. Parks Canada has also submitted the draft management plan to other Nations with potential ties to the national park. Representatives from the Mohawk, Huron-Wendat, and Algonquin nations submitted comments.

The directions of the new management plan, whose implementation is connected to working with First Nations, will reflect their concerns. They will reflect the importance that Parks Canada places on relations with First Nations.

## Conclusion

The engagement and consultation activities were positive and rewarding. They demonstrated the importance of La Mauricie National Park for the public, partners, stakeholders and First Nations. The consultation will allow Parks Canada to improve its

approach to managing the national park. The elements discussed will be taken into consideration in the implementation of the new management plan and in the day-to-day management of the site.

The plan will be completed by the end of December 2021. It will then be approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the Parks Canada Agency and by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada.

In conclusion, Parks Canada would like to sincerely thank all the participants in the management plan consultation exercise who shared their ideas, hopes and vision for the future of La Mauricie National Park.

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