

Amendments to *Leamy Lake  
Navigation Channel Regulations*

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT**

National Capital Commission

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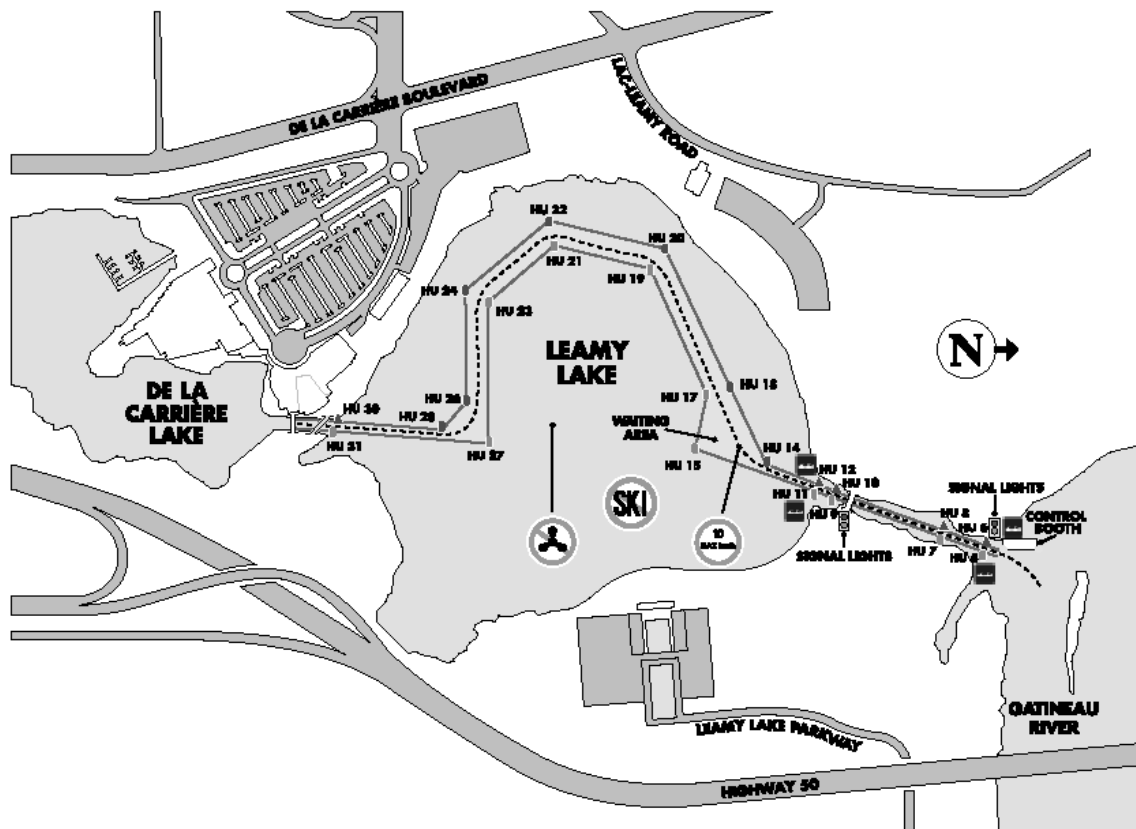
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## INTRODUCTION

To better meet the needs of users, the National Capital Commission (NCC) is studying three amendments to the *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations*. During the summer of 2003, the NCC organized a public consultation campaign to get the public's point of view on two amendments. This report presents the context, procedure and results of that public consultation.

## CONTEXT

The Lake Leamy navigation channel is a navigable waterway for pleasure and tourist vessels, which crosses Leamy Lake and links the Gatineau River to De La Carrière Lake in the Hull area of Gatineau (see Map 1: Leamy Lake Sector). The *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations* is one of the federal regulations that govern activity in the channel and is administered by the NCC. Its purpose is to ensure that the navigation channel is used in a safe manner and in a way that minimizes the risk of impact on the sector environment.



Map 1: Leamy Lake sector

The NCC is proposing three amendments to the *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations* to better meet the needs of users. Details of the proposed amendments are presented below.

**Amendment 1: Authorize non-motorized vessels to travel freely in the navigation channel**

The regulations currently stipulate that non-motorized vessels (such as canoes and kayaks) are permitted only outside the navigation channel. The regulations prohibit them from entering the navigation channel. This means that, in order to travel from one side of the channel to the other, non-motorized vessels must exit Leamy Lake to the Gatineau River and then re-enter Leamy Lake on the other side of the channel (see Map 1). Not only does this involve a detour, but some users feel it is not safe, as the mouth of the channel where it enters the river appears too narrow for certain users, and the river's current can be strong at times.

The NCC is prepared to authorize non-motorized vessels to travel freely in the navigation channel, as the channel is well marked with buoys and is supervised. Also, access to the channel by motorized vessels is controlled and the speed of motorized vessels is limited to 10 km/h. As well, other navigable waterways in Canada that are similar to the Leamy Lake navigation channel do not have a prohibition on non-motorized vessels. The Canadian Coast Guard was consulted, and is in agreement with this proposal.

**Amendment 2: Authorize temporary access to more than 25 motorized vessels on De la Carrière Lake during short-duration special activities**

The regulations currently stipulate that no more than 20 motorboats are permitted in the navigation channel at one time, and no more than 25 are permitted at any one time in the navigation channel and on De la Carrière Lake.

The amended regulations would authorize the NCC to permit temporary access to more than 25 motorboats in total in the navigation channel and on De la Carrière Lake during special activities that are of short duration. The maximum number of motorboats that would be permitted to travel in the navigation channel at any one time would remain at 20.

The NCC would consider each request to increase the number of motorized vessels in light of prescribed environmental and safety criteria.

### **Amendment 3: Modify the geographical coordinates of buoy HU-5**

The NCC would like to modify the geographic coordinates of buoy HU-5, which are set out in Schedule 1 to the *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations*, in order to move it about 1.5 metres as the current coordinates permit vessels to enter an area that is too shallow for many vessels.

#### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The objective of the public consultation was to gather comments from the general public and interested parties on the proposed amendments 1 and 2 to the regulations as well as on the general quality of the environment of the site in order to make an enlightened decision with regard to amendments to the *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations*. These comments also provided information for the environmental screening assessment that was conducted in relation to this project.

#### **Advertising**

The public was advised of the consultation process through the NCC's website starting July 25, 2003. Ads were placed in the main local newspapers (*Le Droit*, *Ottawa Citizen* and *The Ottawa Sun*) on Saturday, July 26 and Wednesday, August 6, 2003. A large number of user groups were also advised by e-mail and by telephone. As well, information was posted or distributed in areas where Leamy Lake users would be likely to go (boutiques, marinas, etc.).

#### **Public Consultation Procedure**

The public consultation was conducted through various means. Members of the public and interested parties were able to share their comments in the following ways:

- ◆ by filling out a questionnaire available on the NCC's website as of July 25, 2003;
- ◆ by answering a questionnaire administered by NCC employees between July 28 and August 29, 2003 at Leamy Lake Beach, at the Centre de plein air de la Ville de Gatineau or at the navigation channel control booth;
- ◆ by taking part in public meetings at the Centre de plein air du lac Leamy on August 16 and 23, 2003; or
- ◆ simply by sending their comments to the NCC by mail, by e-mail or by fax.

A total of 128 people or organizations shared their comments via one of the above-mentioned methods.

## **Public Opinion**

The NCC has reviewed all the comments received during the course of the consultation. Here is a summary of the responses to each question. Detailed comments are listed in Appendix 1.

1. What do you think about modifying the regulations to allow non-motorized vessels to circulate freely in the navigation channel?

A very large proportion of respondents agreed with this amendment.

Agreed: 83.6%                      Disagreed: 11.7%                      Undecided: 4.7%

Frequently, the respondents who agreed with this modification mentioned that if this amendment were accepted, it would be imperative that motorized vessels continue to follow the speed limit in the channel. The respondents who disagreed did so, in general, for reasons of safety.

2. What do you think about modifying the regulations to allow temporary access to more than 25 motorized vessels on De la Carrière Lake during short-duration special activities? It is understood that these activities would respect established environmental and safety criteria.

A majority of respondents agreed with this amendment.

Agreed: 64.8%                      Disagreed: 29.7%                      Undecided: 5.5%

Most of the respondents who agreed with this amendment made comments with respect to the environment. They said they would agree with this amendment only if there were non significant impact on the environment. Among other things, they encouraged the NCC to do more studies on the cumulative impact of various activities that take place on the lake and in Leamy Lake Park. They added that the maximum number of motorboats allowed should not be much higher than the current maximum.

Numerous respondents also specified that the number of special events during which more than 25 motorized vessels would be allowed in the channel and on De la Carrière Lake should not be excessive. Regular users should be able to continue enjoying the park and the lake on a priority

basis. Finally, respondents frequently mentioned that they agreed with the establishment of a list of criteria to guide the NCC to authorize events.

Respondents who disagreed with this amendment generally believed that Leamy Lake and De la Carrière Lake are used by enough motorized vessels and that the impact on the environment (oil and gas leaks, propagation of zebra mussels) and on users (noise, pollution) is great enough already.

### 3. Do you have any other comments on the natural environment of Leamy Lake?

Several respondents mentioned that Leamy Lake Park is an exceptional natural area — particularly since it is located in a very urbanized area. Most respondents made comments to the effect that they appreciate the beauty of the site and the quality of the landscaping in the area. Some comments were made about the Casino du Lac-Leamy's Sound of Light. Several people believed that holding this event caused environmental deterioration. Some also found it unfortunate that the park facilities and the recreational pathway are closed for a long period in order to hold this event.

Overall, the proposal to amend the *Leamy Lake Navigation Channel Regulations* was received favourably by most of the persons who were consulted.

## **PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Although an amendment to the regulations does not trigger the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), the NCC hired a consultant to evaluate the possible environmental impacts (EIS). The environmental assessment concluded that the proposed amendments would not involve any significant risk of negative effects on the environment and that no modification to the proposal or mitigation measures would be necessary. Please consult the document entitled “Évaluation environnementale préalable : Amendement au *Règlement sur le chenal de navigation du Lac Leamy*, Dessau-Soprin inc. Gatineau (Québec)” for more details.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Proposed amendments to federal regulations must go through the regulatory process, including examination of the proposed amendments by the Department of Justice and the opportunity for public comment on the proposal. The NCC will keep the public informed as this initiative works its

way through the regulatory process. Members of the public may obtain more information on this subject from the NCC at (613) 239-5555 or [info@ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:info@ncc-ccn.ca).



## **APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION**

### **Question 1: Authorize non-motorized vessels to travel freely in the navigation channel**

#### Comments

Good idea

In agreement if it is regulated

In agreement if it is safe

In agreement if speed is controlled

In agreement if all users are well informed

In agreement if a lane designated for non-motorized vessels within the channel

Non-motorized vessels should have priority over motorized vessels because they are better for the environment

Having to exit the channel and go out on the Gatineau River is not very safe

#### Issues

Channel is narrow, dangerous and not safe

Canoes/kayaks are too small

Non-motorized users do not know water safety, and are therefore dangerous and unpredictable

It is annoying for big motorized vessels, it would create problems when there are many vessels in the channel

Non-motorized vessels should not have access to the beach at all

### **Question 2: Authorize temporary access to more than 25 motorized vessels on De la Carrière Lake during short-duration special activities**

#### Comments

In agreement if the number is reasonable and kept at a minimum (not more than 30)

In agreement if short-duration events and not too many are organized during the season

In agreement if does not damage the environment

In agreement if safe

Would contribute to tourism activities

#### Issues

##### **environment**

Boats are polluting the lake

There are already many polluting activities

Would like to preserve the current environment

##### **safety**

Dangerous because many vessels on site

##### **site**

Channel already very small for 25 motorized vessels, lack of room, lake too small

**other**

Events could be organized on the River and a shuttle could link to the casino  
Motorized vessels should be prohibited on the lake  
Criteria are unclear

**Question 3: Do you have any other comments on the natural environment of Leamy Lake?**Comments

It is a great park, clean, maintained, safe  
Natural environment must be protected  
Great tourism potential  
Casino du Lac-Leamy's Sound of Light and other activities are damaging the environment  
Water in the lake is not clean  
There are a lot of seagulls  
Lots of pollution, park could be cleaner  
Recreational pathways are closed too early during Les Grands Feux  
Noise due to motorized boats  
Bathrooms are not clean  
Concerns about zebra mussel, algae, illicit activities

Suggestions

Re-naturalize the site  
Evaluate cumulative impacts  
Recreational pathway should be re-asphalted  
Add rest areas along pathways  
Add speed limit panels on pathways  
Organize exhibits during summer at the beach  
Add activities for children  
Free parking during the week  
More parking places for boats  
Increased access, more investments(?)  
Conservation officers should issue fewer tickets to members of the public