

# CONSULTATION REPORT

GATINEAU PARK MASTER PLAN REVIEW

May 2005

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The National Capital Commission (NCC) is currently reviewing the *Gatineau Park Master Plan*. The objectives of the review are to establish a long-term vision, to protect the Park's natural and cultural resources, and to consolidate the Park's gains. The review process is divided into three phases: (1) an overview of the situation, issues and trends, (2) public consultations on the preliminary proposals, and (3) preparation of the new Master Plan.

The *Plan for Canada's Capital* (1999), which is the National Capital Region's principal planning document, sets out a number of new strategic orientations that have served as guidelines for the review. The current Master Plan was approved in 1990. In the first phase of the review process, the issues and problems facing the Park were identified from current documentation and targeted consultations of interest groups. They included a number of concerns that have arisen in the last ten years, including the growth of visitor numbers, greater fragmentation and increasing pressure on natural environments, urban development around the Park, and the lack of resources.

In the second phase of the process, the issues, trends and relevance of the proposed strategies were explained through a series of targeted consultations of agencies and municipalities. The current status of the Park and the recommended strategies were then presented at public consultation sessions on November 26 and 27, 2002, which were attended by nearly 120 people. Canadians also had an opportunity to express their views via the NCC's corporate website. More than a hundred comments, including briefs, letters and completed questionnaires, were received.

The Phase 2 consultations revealed a shared public sentiment to preserve the Park, although there was some divergence as to the strategies required. Some people asked for protection to be significantly increased at the expense of recreational activities, while others suggested maintaining the status quo or even increasing recreational use. However, a consensus emerged in favour of control of access to the Park, the control of harmful uses, rigorous enforcement of Park rules, the imposition of equitable user fees, a suitable legal status for the Park, a clear definition of which uses are compatible with and respectful of the Park's mission, conservation and enhancement of cultural landscapes and heritage, greater awareness of the Park's values, and involvement by user groups, associations and municipalities.

In the third phase, a final public consultation on the final draft of the Master Plan was held on October 27 and 28, 2004, and was attended by nearly 500 people. More than 240 documents, including letters, e-mails and completed questionnaires, were received from approximately forty agencies and organizations, the four municipalities concerned, and numerous NCR residents. The general orientation of the proposed plan, based on the conservation of natural environments, was well received. However, some user groups objected to the proposed bans or limitations on activities considered harmful to the Park, such as rock climbing,

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snowmobiling and mountain biking, on the basis that it would be unrealistic to adopt a mission focused on conservation, given that the Park is located in the Capital. Other groups objected to the proposed developments and the presence of large numbers of roads, which they felt hindered the Park's conservation mission. Some of the proposals, including the preparation of a Conservation Plan, a Recreational Service Plan and a Green Transportation Plan, were considered useful despite certain reservations about the methods used.

Many people felt non-motorized "compatible" or "respectful" recreation (terms to be defined) that were focused on education and not harmful to the environment, would be the best solution. In all cases, however, there was general agreement on the need for more partnerships between the NCC and interest groups or municipalities to implement and develop the Park's mission. Elements such as fair, flexible user fees that would not penalize low-income families, a legal status tailored to the Park's mission, and sufficient human and financial resources to control users, were all well received, although some clarifications and changes were requested to the terminology used in the plan and the implementation tools.

The consultations held throughout the Master Plan review process have helped acquire knowledge and perceptions held by both the NCC and the general public concerning the problems and issues facing the Park. The comments received have helped clarify and improve the orientations and content of the proposed Plan. Following a final round of corrections, the 2005-2015 Master Plan will be finalized and approved by the NCC in the course of 2005, and will then start to be implemented.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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The NCC has undertaken a review of the *Gatineau Park Master Plan*, and has organized consultations to ensure public involvement in the process. This report presents the content and results of the consultations (target groups, general public, municipalities) held during the three phases of the review.

With the Report introduces the program and content of the targeted consultations held during the first phase, followed by the results of the public and targeted consultations from the second phase, and lastly, the results of the second and last public consultations held in phase three of the process.

The consultations organized by the NCC offered an opportunity for stakeholders and the general public to take part in the three review phases. Many of the people involved said repeatedly how much they appreciated being involved in the process and being able to state their views on the Park in general and the proposals in particular. The exercise was also useful to the NCC, by allowing it to clarify its views, refine its perceptions of the Park's situation, develop collaboration and improve the proposed content of the revised Plan.

In all, between 2001 and 2005, some 1,000 people were directly involved, in one form or another, in the consultation activities. The NCC received a large volume of correspondence on the subject. Twenty newspaper articles were published, and approximately fifty reports were broadcast on radio and television programs. The level of participation and extent of the media coverage clearly reflects the Park's popularity and the NCR population's attachment to it. The issues relating to its planning and conservation are of particular strategic importance because the Park is an integral part of the Capital's reality.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Gatineau Park is a vast natural space covering an area of 361.1 km<sup>2</sup>, lying between the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers. It is one of the principal elements of the "Green Capital", as well as the NCC's largest landholding. It is used for a range of recreational activities by local residents and visitors to the Capital, and contributes in particular to the maintenance, in the Capital region, of natural ecosystems representative of the Canadian Shield. Its political and historical dimensions are highlighted by the presence of the Mackenzie King Estate and some official Canadian government residences.

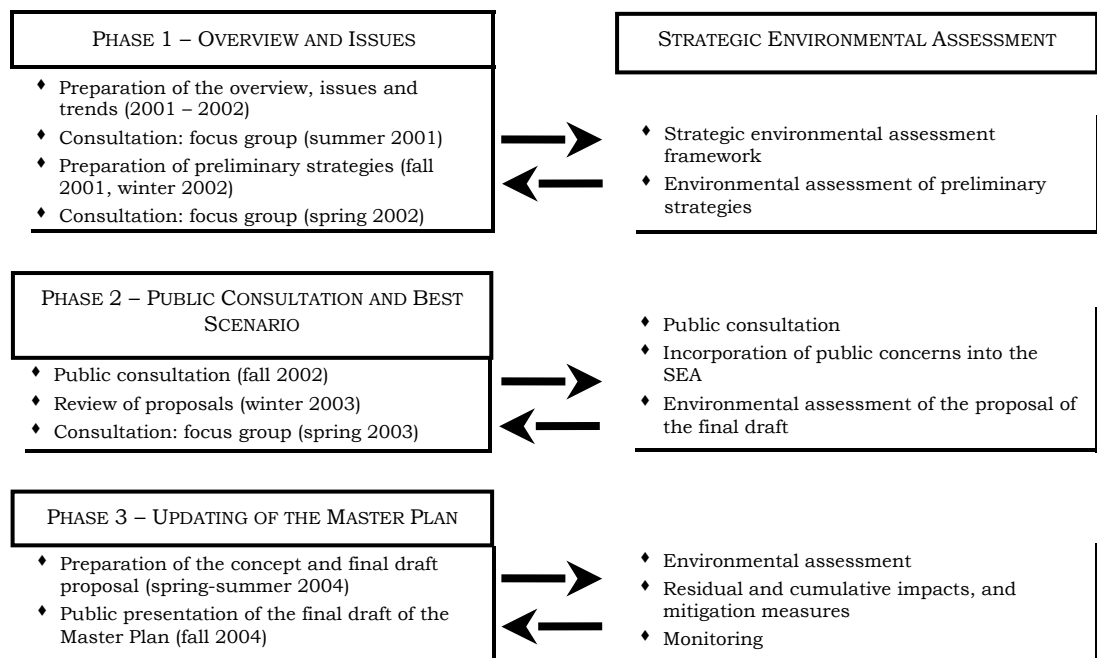
In the NCC's planning framework, the Master Plan presents the strategic directions as well as the land management, land use and land development objectives for federal lands, and also clarifies the directions set out in the *Plan for Canada's Capital*. The version of the Master Plan currently in force was adopted in 1990.

The purpose of the *Gatineau Park Master Plan Review* is to prepare a vision of the Park for the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The revised Plan will cover a ten-year period, from 2005 to 2015. The three principal goals of the review process are:

- To define a long-term vision for the coming decades;
- To protect the Park's natural and cultural resources;
- To consolidate gains and develop proposals for new programs.

As Figure 1 shows, the review process is divided into three phases. In the first phase, consultations with interest groups were held in late spring of 2001 and 2002. The second phase comprised broad public consultations in the fall of 2002. A third consultation with interest groups was held in June 2003. In the fall of 2004, a second public consultation was held to present the final draft of the revised Master Plan and obtain final comments.

**FIGURE 1**  
**REVIEW PROCESS**



The Revised Master Plan will be adopted and come into effect in 2005.

## 1.2 CONTEXT OF THE MASTER PLAN REVIEW

The new *Plan for Canada's Capital*, adopted in 1999, establishes a number of new strategic orientations and policies to be reflected in the Gatineau Park Master Plan. The 1990 version of the Master Plan has a number of deficiencies that need to be addressed, and the regional context has also changed with the creation of two new cities, Ottawa and

Gatineau, following amalgamation of some of the Capital's municipalities.

In addition, a number of concerns have emerged over the last decade concerning the preservation of the Park's natural environments and maintenance of the quality of the recreational experience. The risk of losing natural habitats, fragmenting plant and animal communities, breaking up landscapes and interrupting natural processes has increased. An increase in visitor numbers and the range of recreational uses, along with conflicts of use and overuse of certain areas, are also likely to affect the quality of the recreational experience available in the Park. Growth of the urban environment on the southern periphery of the Park has increased the demand for community uses (roads, energy transmission lines, transmission towers, etc). At the same time, resource cutbacks at the NCC during the 1990s have had an impact on the Park's interpretation activities and some aspects of its management. In short, the lack of means and information on the current state of the Park has generated concerns regarding the preservation and protection of the Park's heritage, in a context where pressure from users continues to increase.



## 2. PHASE 1: TARGETED CONSULTATIONS

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The basic objectives of the first phase of the review process were to identify the principal issues and propose some preliminary solutions. The realization of an overview of the Park's situation and issues were prepared on the basis of the available technical and scientific knowledge and the experience of various interest groups, associations, experts and NCC staff.

The stakeholders involved in Phase 1 were invited to attend two consultation sessions (focus groups). The first session was held on June 4-6, 2001, and the second on June 18 and 19 and July 11, 2002<sup>1</sup>. In the course of these two sessions, eleven workshops were held, involving nearly a hundred people representing more than 50 interest groups. The consultation reports from the two sessions contain details of the discussions and a list of participants. The NCC's Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Realty (ACPDR) was consulted twice during this phase, first to learn about the overview and issues, and second to validate the process and proposed solutions. The overview, issues and proposed strategies were also presented to the NCC's Executive Management Committee (EMC).

### 2.1 JUNE 2001 WORKSHOPS

The goals of the first focus group session were to review and define the problems and issues. They included:

- Working with NCC staff, experts and stakeholders that have an interest in Gatineau Park to obtain information in order to help define the issues and problems to be addressed in the *Gatineau Park Master Plan Review* (What is the current situation?).
- Preparing a theme-based overview of Gatineau Park, by means of interactive discussions between participants (What was the situation in the past?).
- Drawing together the elements to be included in the “vision” of Gatineau Park for 2015 (What will the situation be in the future?).

All the participants in this first targeted consultation acknowledged the growing pressures on the Park. Issues such as ecosystem preservation, the maintenance and impact of recreational and tourist activities,

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<sup>1</sup> Readers may consult the following documents for further details on the content and results of prior consultations:

Del Degan, Massé et Associés Inc., 2001. *Gatineau Park Master Plan Review – Phase 1: Overview, Summary, Issues, Trends – Preliminary Consultation – Summary of Workshops Held on June 4-6, 2001.*

Del Degan, Massé et Associés Inc., 2002. *Gatineau Park Master Plan Review – Phase 1: Overview and Issues – Consultation – Results of Workshops held on June 18 and 19 and July 11, 2002, at the Chelsea Visitor Centre.*

heritage protection and enhancement, infrastructure and transportation modes, the lack of legal status, the Park's educational mission and interpretation tools, user fees and Park planning were mentioned frequently. Possible solutions proposed by participants ranged from the integral conservation of the Park to a more open approach to recreation.

## 2.2 JUNE 2002 WORKSHOPS

The second consultation session was held the following year. Its purpose, following validation of certain issues, was to test the preliminary strategies. The principal goals were:

- To present the principal highlights, issues and trends relating to the Park, along with preliminary strategies;
- To obtain comments from and learn about the concerns of participants with regard to the content presented;
- To identify the strategies preferred by participants, from among those proposed.

These goals were achieved, thanks to the comments and suggestions made by participants at this second consultation session.

The preliminary strategies were formulated on the basis of the consensus on certain elements. Overall, participants were concerned with achieving a balance between preservation of natural environments and recreational uses. Many of the Park's users said ecosystem preservation would have to be tempered by the need for better access to the Park and recreational activities in a natural setting. However, the vast majority agreed with the following premises:

- Greater control over the Park by means of an equitable access strategy (universal user fees) and improved control over uses is needed (compatibility, follow up).
- Better knowledge of the Park's natural environments (overall health) is crucial.
- Proper protection of the Park's habitats and resources is essential.
- The importance of peripheral (or buffer) zones should be acknowledged and incorporated in the discussions.
- More stringent management of cars in the Park.
- More partnerships with communities and interest groups within a predetermined framework should be put in place.
- More education and awareness-raising for users and the general public should be put in place.
- Better legal tools for the Park should be defined and be available.
- Maintenance and improvement of spin-offs in the region's communities.

Given a choice between preliminary strategies A, B and C for each of the Park's strategic priorities (environment, recreation, regional integration, heritage and management), the participants generally preferred strategies B and C for recreation and regional integration, and strategy A for management. It was difficult to obtain a consensus for the environment and heritage themes, although participants were generally in favour of preserving the Park's natural environments and heritage. With regard to heritage, there was general agreement on the need for heritage enhancement to take place within an adequate framework.

### 3. PHASE 2: PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

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After the Phase 1 consultations with interest groups, comments were taken into account and the content of the preliminary strategies was modified accordingly. Then, two public consultations on November 26 and 27, 2002, as part of Phase 2 of the review process, the first at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the second at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau. Presentations were also made to the City of Gatineau and the Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM during the same period.

The principal goal of the public consultations was to present a summary of the overview, issues and preliminary proposed strategies for the Park in order to obtain comments, suggestions and opinions from the general public. The results of the environmental assessment of the preliminary strategies were also presented.

The two public consultations were held in the evenings, using the same format. Each session took place from 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and began with an open house during which the general public was able to learn about the content of the review from 21 large colour panels. NCC staff and representatives of the consulting firm commissioned for the review were on hand to answer questions. At around 7:00 p.m., the consultant and the NCC representatives gave a half-hour visual (PowerPoint) and oral presentation of the issues and proposed strategies. The public then had the opportunity until 9:30 p.m. to make comments, express opinions or offer suggestions for the Park's future. The NCC representatives and the consultant were able to clarify certain points as they were raised.

#### 3.1 CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION AND TOOLS

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The NCC produced a summary consultation document to aid the discussion and provide detailed information on the review. A questionnaire was also available to obtain comments and opinions from the general public. The documentation produced for the public consultations included the following:

- Master Plan Review – Gatineau Park – Summary Document: Phase 1, Overview, Issues, Trends and Strategic Solutions, For Consultation, NCC, 2002.
- A summary document of the issues and proposed strategies (2 pages), along with a questionnaire (6 questions) allowing participants to select the strategies they preferred, NCC, 2002 (Appendix 2).
- Environmental Assessment of Proposed Strategic Solutions – A Summary, NCC, 2002.
- Large bilingual colour panels (21) summarizing the content of the review.

- A bilingual PowerPoint presentation setting out the highlights, issues and proposed strategies for each strategic priority.

The texts were also available on the NCC's corporate website at:

[www.canadascapital.gc.ca/](http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/)

Members of the public were able to make comments on the review content and the proposed strategies by mail or e-mail until January 17, 2003.

The public consultations were announced in the written media and on the NCC's website, and advertisements were placed in *Le Droit*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and *The Sun* on November 16 and 21. Personalized e-mail messages were also sent to more than 100 individuals and interest groups.

## 3.2 PROPOSED STRATEGIES

The preliminary strategies presented by the NCC at the public consultations are set out in the document entitled *Master Plan Review – Gatineau Park – Summary Document: Phase 1 – Overview, Issues, Trends and Strategic Solutions, For Consultation*, NCC, 2002.

During Phase 1 of the review, the team identified five strategic objectives for the Park, namely the environment, recreation, regional integration, heritage and management. These aspects are considered to be strategic because of their significant impact on the future of the Park. Three strategies (A, B and C) were prepared for each of these objectives, for a total of 15 possible strategies. Each strategy represents an approach with a different emphasis on conservation and recreation. The “A” strategies ensure maximum environmental and heritage preservation, while the “B” strategies promote maximum environmental preservation in certain sectors of the Park, and the “C” strategies maintain existing conditions in the Park.

Below are the principal statements of the three strategies for each objective.

The natural environment, ecosystem sustainability:

- Strategy A Maximum preservation of ecosystems
- Strategy B Maximum preservation of targeted ecosystems
- Strategy C Preservation of existing conditions in natural environments

Recreation, the quality of the recreational experience:

- Strategy A A wilderness experience and educational ecotourism
- Strategy B A wilderness experience combined with a controlled recreational and tourist experience
- Strategy C A recreational and tourist experience in a natural environment

Regional integration, the Park's contribution to the sustainable development of the Capital:

- Strategy A A national conservation park in the Capital
- Strategy B A national park dedicated partly to conservation and partly to recreation
- Strategy C A national natural park in the Capital

Heritage, the Capital's inheritance:

- Strategy A Preservation of heritage integrity
- Strategy B Preservation of the Capital's heritage
- Strategy C Preservation of the Park's acknowledged heritage

Management, a strategic tool:

- Strategy A Global approach to conservation management
- Strategy B Conservation-oriented management
- Strategy C Management geared towards environmental protection

Each proposed strategy has a number of implications, the most important of which are presented in the document entitled *Master Plan Review – Gatineau Park – Summary Document: Phase 1 – Overview, Issues, Trends and Strategic Solutions, For Consultation*, NCC, 2002. At the public consultations, participants were able to make comments and choose between the proposed strategies for each strategic objective.

### 3.3 RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The public consultations generated a large number of comments, suggestions and opinions on the issues and proposed strategies, in the form oral or written comments at the consultations and written or electronic correspondence to the NCC. The written and electronic media also responded with articles and reports.

Nearly 120 people attended the two consultation evenings, 80 in Ottawa and 40 in Gatineau. They were able to read the explanatory panels, talk to NCC representatives and listen to presentations. Both audiences were extremely attentive to the presentations, and the time allowed for comments and questions was much appreciated. In all, 42 interventions and comments, equally divided between the two sessions, were made on the content of the *Gatineau Park Master Plan* review process. The NCC subsequently received 34 briefs or comments from organizations and individuals (see Appendix 1), and 58 completed questionnaires.

### 3.4 COMMENTS AND OPINIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Based on the information obtained from the consultations, briefs and written comments, the public responded favourably to the *Gatineau Park Master Plan* review process. People were aware of the need to review the

Master Plan, so that it will reflect new realities and changes in the Capital's social, economic and political context. The public expressed a deep attachment to the Park, and their experience as users or relatives of users often had an impact on their attitude to the vision of the Park for the coming decades.

Most of the comments reflected the same concerns and were related to: preservation of the Park's environment, its recreational use, and its management. A certain number of trends emerged from these concerning the desired future for the Park.

The verbal and written recommendations clearly reflected a desire to provide better protection for the Park while fostering recreational use (access and activities). Many people clearly understood that the Park's future and health depend on a balance between recreation and conservation. Preoccupations were also expressed about possible limitations on recreational use.

One point mentioned repeatedly was that the NCC should take the Park's urban situation into account by seeking to satisfy community needs first, and then ensuring conservation as best it can. This comment clearly shows the importance of the Park's regional context. Even so, the need for better protection seemed obvious to most participants, and many favoured more stringent controls for the Park.

The opinions, comments and briefs addressed many different aspects of the Park, and expressed a preference for one or other of the proposed strategies. Several focused on needs relating to specific activities (e.g. mountain biking, cross-country skiing, road cycling), while others mentioned the importance of management aspects, such as a legal status or user fees, in controlling the Park. Several comments were related to the impact of the presence of cars in the Park, while others mentioned the damage and conflicts caused by mountain biking and rock climbing.

In the following pages, some elements drawn from the interventions, briefs and written comments received by the NCC are listed under general headings.

**THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS AND STATEMENTS WERE MADE BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE NCC'S OWN POSITION.**

#### ACCESS AND ACCESS CONTROLS

- There is a need to control users and access in the Park before it is too late.
- Winter access to the Park should be improved.
- Access in some form is required, even if it is controlled.
- Visitor numbers should be managed rather than limited.
- It should be easy to access the Park, or people will be disappointed.

- Improvements should be made for individuals with reduced mobility.

#### BIODIVERSITY

- The Master Plan should contain a commitment to preserve biodiversity similar to that made by Parks Canada.

#### COMPATIBILITY OF USE

- Some uses should not be allowed in the Park (e.g. remote controlled planes in the Meech Creek Valley).
- Recreational activities that are incompatible with the natural environment should be eliminated.
- All motor vehicles, including cars, should be banned from the Park.

#### CONSULTATIONS

- Consultations should be held on specific proposals before the process has gone too far.
- Consultation results should be made available to the public.
- Community consultations should be based on a different approach, using the "Community Based Social Marketing method" (Douglas Mackenzie Moore).

#### ECOLOGICAL LINKS WITH PERIPHERAL AREAS

- The Park's links with the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers should be developed.
- Connections are possible to the south with the green corridors (e.g. the Moore farm) and peripheral federal lands, which should be annexed to the Park.
- The Park should be extended northwards.
- Conservation of the Park would require a reduction of external stress factors
- The Park should be managed taking into account the watersheds approach.

#### FEES

- Fee policies are unfair.
- The imposition of fees brings with it a risk of price increases that will affect low-to-moderate income families.
- Fees should be charged for visitors in cars.
- A toll system should be introduced for cars.
- Tollbooths should be introduced to discourage cars from using the parkways.



- More budget should be allocated to ensure control of the activities allowing to reduce the pressure of the enhancement.
- A revenue-generating fee system should be introduced (user-payer) and used to preserve the Park.

#### HEALTH OF THE PARK

- The *1990 Master Plan* acknowledged the need for a system to measure the Park's health. Today, it is apparently still not possible to establish the Park's global health. Additional scientific resources should therefore be made available.
- A scientific advisory committee should be created.

#### LEGAL STATUS

- The *1990 Master Plan* said legal status would help strengthen control of the Park. A legal status is required, even with the proposed "C" strategies, to make sure the right solutions are implemented.
- The lack of legal status leads to serious management problems.
- A legal protection status is required to halt fragmentation of natural environments and ensure the Park's sustainability.
- Responsibility for managing the Park should be entrusted to Parks Canada.

#### MANAGEMENT (LEASE, SELF-GENERATED INCOME, TOLERATED USES, PRIVATE LAND)

- Long-term leases and the revenue generation policy raise a number of questions.
- There is too much tolerance in the Park.
- The NCC does not have the resources to measure the Park's health.
- The quality of the services that are delivered should be maintained in the Park.
- The Park is facing management problems because it does not have sufficient resources.
- There are not enough conservation officers to control the spread of users (cyclists) and to apply the law.
- Illegal trails should be mapped.
- There are not enough natural environment protection officers.
- There is a lack of an ecosystem management program.
- Clear planning goals should be ranked in priority order, and achieved in that order.
- Follow-up measures should be put in place.

- The managers (NCC) should be accountable to the public, and a permanent consultation process should be introduced.

#### MANAGEMENT OF PERIPHERAL LAND

- Lands located close to the Park's boundaries should be used to reassert the Park's mission, and should therefore not be sold unless this function is taken into account.
- The NCC has helped intensify urban use in peripheral areas by disposing of its land to be used for development.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES – NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

- The B and C strategies could pose a serious threat to the Park's ecosystems.
- Roads fragment natural ecosystems and have an impact on wildlife and plants.
- Preservation zones for limited use should be identified, and recreational activities should be redirected towards less sensitive zones.
- The white-tailed deer are overusing their habitats, suggesting the effects of a shortage of wolves.
- Natural processes have been interrupted. Fire is an element of renewal for escarpment habitats.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

- The NCC has a duty to form partnerships with organizations, and the organizations, in return, have a responsibility towards the Park and the NCC.
- The NCC should foster partnerships such as those for Camp Fortune. The partners should receive due consideration.
- An open approach to partnerships is required, so that the Park can become a conservation area belonging to the public.
- For-profit organizations should not be given priority.
- Some of the Park's partners should be supported financially.

#### PERIPHERAL RESIDENTS

- People living close to the Park should be made accountable for Park conservation.

#### RECREATION (MOUNTAIN BIKING, ROAD CYCLING, CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, NUDISM, BEACHES)

- Trails should be created specifically for mountain bikes.
- The lodging capacity inside Gatineau Park should be increased.
- The quality of cross-country ski trail markers should be improved.

- All activities should not necessarily be concentrated in Gatineau Park.
- The site of the Carbide Willson ruins should be available for families.
- Issues relating to mountain biking should be addressed in the Revised Master Plan.
- There are no conflicts between mountain bikes and pedestrian users of the Park.
- The Park is becoming the playground of the Ottawa Region.
- The Park is being invaded by cyclists.
- Non-motorized activities and ecotourism (cross-country skiing, hiking, etc.) should be given priority.
- Recreation in the Park should move towards ecotourism, incorporating standards known to be viable.
- Rock climbing is one of the satisfying ecotourist activities that should be favoured.
- The Park should remain accessible for respectful recreational activities, especially for local residents.
- A monitoring plan is required for cycle-based activities, to control their spread (mountain biking needs to be monitored).
- Mountain biking should be concentrated in the Camp Fortune area and limited to specific trails elsewhere in the Park.
- Snowmobiling is properly supervised in the Park.
- Recreational infrastructure that does not promote self-propelled activities should be reduced.
- Motorized recreational activities should be eliminated.
- Maintenance budgets for mountain bike trails should be increased, and network maintenance techniques improved.
- Activities should be balanced according to the intensity of uses and to infrastructure availability.
- The Park should allow access to its cross-country ski trails, to attract high-level competitions.
- The Park's recreational aspect should be preserved on the basis of ecological premises.
- Snowmobile infrastructure should be preserved in the Park, given the positive economic impact of the sport on the region's communities.
- The road network should be organized so as to foster road-based cycle activities.

#### REGIONAL NEEDS AND CONTEXTS

- Decisions regarding Park policies should consider the impacts on residents and the City of Gatineau.

- The Park cannot possibly satisfy all needs.
- It is normal that there are a lot of people in the Park, given its proximity to the Capital.
- There would be political issues to any decision aimed at reducing the number of Park users.
- A realistic approach reflecting the regional context is required, but the status quo must be avoided.
- Discussions on the Park's future should be held with the municipalities.

#### SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH

- The Park should become a research and experimental site.
- There is insufficient scientific knowledge to assess the Park's health.
- The biophysical research fund budget is insufficient.
- The NCC should initiate studies on recreation in the Park.
- A water quality control program is needed for the lakes.

#### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- The strategic environmental assessment cannot produce an accurate appraisal of the proposed strategies without adequate information on the Park's current environmental health and a realistic projection for the future.
- To overcome the Park's lack of resources, a scientific advisory committee should be formed to establish its current environmental health, using the scientific resources available in the Capital.

#### TARGETED PROPOSALS

- The Master Plan should contain specific proposals, with well-defined targets, so that results can be measured and opinions formed.
- Selecting a vision for the Park is somewhat abstract.
- The level of fragmentation should be established by applying usage buffer zones along each side of trails and roads.

#### TRANSPORTATION – ROADS – CARS

- A bus service should be made available to visitors.
- Car speed limits should be reduced in the Park.
- Entrance visibility should be enhanced with gateways and better signage.
- Construction of the Mackenzie King Estate access road should be suspended until new information is available.
- No other road developments should be permitted.

- There are too many cars in the Park.
- Road construction is incompatible with protection of the Park.
- The impact of traffic must be considered.
- Cars bring more noise and pollution.
- The municipal roads are too busy.
- Construction of McConnell-Laramée could cause the southern portion of the Park to be lost to the urban environment.
- The parkways should be closed to traffic on a specific date.
- New road infrastructure crossing the Park should be prohibited.
- A transportation plan should be developed, based on all available alternatives (shuttles, tolls, etc.).
- Road construction should be stopped, and the number of cars reduced.
- McConnell-Laramée is important for the region, and has been 30 years in the making.
- A “door-to-door” public transportation service could be introduced during the winter to bring skiers to the Park, as is the case in Oslo (Norway).

#### USER EDUCATION

- The focus of the Park should be education and awareness, rather than exploitation.
- Leisure allows for education, which favours the “C” strategies.
- Education is a way of influencing user behaviour.
- Users should be made aware of environmental values by means of educational leaflets.

### 3.5 QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was used at the public consultations and on the Internet (Appendix 2) to obtain comments and opinions on six separate questions, namely (1) preservation of natural environments at the expense of recreational activities; (2) an increase in recreational use in certain sectors of the Park; (3) emphasis of the Park’s national scope and character; (4) the Park’s contribution to economic development; (5) the most and least appropriate recreational uses; and (6) the respondents’ choice of strategy A, B or C for each strategic objective.

Generally speaking, the questionnaire responses fell into two categories, one focused on maximum preservation and the other on increased recreational use of the Park. The same trends appeared to apply with regard to the Park’s national character and its contribution to regional development. Basically, respondents who wanted maximum preservation suggested reducing or containing recreational activities, enhancing the Park’s national character and contributing less to economic development. Those who wanted more recreational use acknowledged

the need to maintain environmental quality, but questioned the Park's national character and suggested a greater involvement in regional economic development.

With regard to the question of appropriate and non-appropriate activities, it was generally agreed that motorized activities should be eliminated and non-motorized activities encouraged. Some respondents felt that activities such as mountain biking, downhill skiing, rock climbing and snowmobiling were appropriate while others felt they were not.

In the final question, respondents were asked to select option A, B or C for each of the five strategic priorities. All the options received considerable support, but option C, tending towards B, was favoured by more respondents. At the same time, some respondents suggested combining options B and C. Of the five strategic priorities addressed, recreation and environmental protection generated the most interest.

### PUBLIC PARTNERS

A presentation similar to that made at the public consultations was given to the City of Gatineau's Urban Planning Advisory Committee on November 18, and to the Council of the Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM on November 25. Both presentations were well received, and some comments and suggestions were made, as follows:

- More attention should be paid to the Park's general health, and information related to its health should be given to users.
- Contacts between the Park and Pontiac are virtually non-existent. The municipality of Pontiac would also like to benefit from the Park's economic spin-offs.
- Recreational associations could be asked to help with Park management.
- The Park should have a vision that will ensure its sustainability.
- The idea of exploring alternative sites outside the Park for some activities, so as to relieve pressure on the Park, is interesting.
- The NCC should be more proactive in cancelling residential leases that are inconsistent with the Park's mission.
- A task force composed of Park and municipal employees could be created for certain specific concerns, in addition to planning.
- A watershed-based management approach should be introduced.

## 3.6 MEDIA COVERAGE

Media coverage of the public consultations consisted of five articles in the Ottawa and Gatineau press. Two editorials were published on December 2 and 3, 2002, in *Le Droit*, while the Ottawa Citizen published three articles on the Master Plan review, one on November 29, 2002, and two on January 9, 2003.

The article published on December 2 in *Le Droit*, entitled “*Le parc, NOTRE parc!*” (the Park, OUR Park), discussed the importance of the planning exercise, not only for the NCC but also for the Park’s many users. It invited readers to take an interest in the process and to understand both the issues and the choices available, while encouraging the NCC to adopt a “happy medium” between “overprotection and overuse” of the Park.

The article published on December 3 in the same newspaper, whose title translates as “*Mountain Bikes Could Be Banned From Gatineau Park*”, was aimed at users, and more specifically at mountain bikers. The author concentrated on the fact that the scenarios under consideration for the revised plan would prohibit harmful activities, and used a citation from a regional mountain bike pioneer to highlight the need for careful reflection on how the sport was practised in the Park. The author also quoted a Gatineau municipal councillor on the subjects of unfair fees and the need to listen to users and groups that are respectful of the natural environment, rather than penalizing them.

*The Ottawa Citizen* article entitled “*Development not in plan for Gatineau Park: NCC*”, published on November 29, 2002, emphasized the statements contained in the *Plan for Canada’s Capital, 1999*, and described both the Park and the environmental and recreational strategic priorities. Citing an NCC spokesperson as saying that no net loss of Park ecosystems would be tolerated, the author presented the three basic strategies and invited readers to submit their views to the NCC by January 17, 2003.

On January 9, 2003, *The Ottawa Citizen* published a text entitled “*Gatineau Park: tourism plans threaten wilderness role*”. The author, a resident of Aylmer, expressed his own opinion of the Gatineau Park Master Plan Review, stating that growing visitor and user numbers in the last decade had caused considerable damage to the environment, and that the construction of new roads would fragment the Park and have a negative impact on some animal and plant species. He also thought the NCC’s goal of increasing visitor numbers was contrary to the mission of protecting and conserving Gatineau Park’s ecosystems.

The final *Ottawa Citizen* article, published on January 9, 2003, and entitled “*When public interest, property rights clash*”, described two proposals that would affect certain residents and landowners. The first was the construction of an access road to the Mackenzie King Estate, a favourite destination for the Park’s many visitors. The second was the creation of a cycle trail between Chelsea and Cascades. The author pointed out that these projects would have impacts at a number of levels, and proposed a public hearing to identify solutions that were respectful of private ownership and also met the requirements and needs of the growing number of visitors to the Park.

### 3.7 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS EXPRESSED AND RECEIVED

All comments received during the process were in favour of protecting and conserving the Park in order to maintain the current situation. Following on from this basic agreement, two separate trends emerged, the first in favour of limiting and controlling recreational activities in order to increase protection, and the second in favour of developing the Park's recreational function. In addition to the specific issues raised by interest groups, associations and certain individuals, most respondents expressed surprise that the Park had no legal status.

Everyone agreed that the Park should remain accessible, although some form of fee structure should be envisaged.

A number of participants in the process were worried about the Park's health, and suggested that the NCC should increase the number of control, supervision and protection staff. Several participants also raised the possibility of having education and awareness programs on resource protection, aimed specifically at Park users.

Other comments were made, including the following most frequently mentioned points:

- Gatineau Park should be considered first and foremost as a protection and conservation area.
- The public should be involved in the Master Plan Review and in every other process connected with the future of Gatineau Park.
- Access is a significant problem, and many respondents mentioned the high number of cars in the Park.

Lastly, most of the comments recommended that any solutions proposed should be realistic and applicable in the context of Gatineau Park.



## 4. PHASE 2: TARGETED CONSULTATIONS

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Following the fall 2002 public consultations, the NCC continued to work on a preliminary draft of the Plan that would reflect the issues addressed and comments made. A third targeted consultation of interest groups and organizations was held in June 2003, primarily to obtain comments on the preliminary version of the revised Master Plan. The comments were then used to improve the Plan's contents and produce the final draft.

The interest groups and organizations affected were invited to workshops, and had all received copies of a document presenting the content of the preliminary version. The participants met in focus groups, and were able to express their opinions on the proposed solutions.

The main objectives of the June 2003 workshops were as follows:

- To present a summary of the main concerns relating to the Park, along with an overview of the review process so far;
- To present the content of the preliminary proposal;
- To obtain participants' comments on the content as presented.

The consultations included two workshops, held on Monday June 16 and Tuesday June 17, 2003, at the Gatineau Park Visitor Centre in Chelsea. In both cases, a bilingual presentation briefly summarized the review process, concerns about the Park and the content of the preliminary version of the revised Plan. Approximately 30 people (see list in Appendix 3) attended the workshops. Bruno Del Degan, Project Manager for Del Degan, Massé et Associés Inc., gave the presentation and answered questions from the audience. A bilingual questionnaire on 14 aspects of the proposal was also handed out to participants.

### 4.1 WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Generally speaking, the participants asked for clarification of certain elements of the proposal (e.g. a definition of "respectful activities", the criteria used to determine the admissibility of activities, what constitutes "harm" to the environment, the transportation plan, etc.). Overall, they agreed that the NCC was heading in the right direction, and in some cases felt that the proposals responded perfectly to the concerns they had expressed. However, they did not feel the proposals would result in more dialogue between the NCC and Park users' associations. There was unanimous agreement on the fact that the NCC was working to preserve the Park's resources in the longer term, and conciliation of recreation and conservation was highlighted as the route to follow.

Many participants felt the Park's conservation mission should allow for the continuation of respectful tourist and recreational activities. Collaborative initiatives with community organizations and municipalities should be extended to develop and structure the Park's

recreational potential. At the same time, some participants felt research was needed to collect more information on the health of the Park, for example by monitoring changes in sensitive areas. Others felt the Park needed an appropriate legal status to preserve its mission, and the need for greater control and user fees to help conserve the Park's resources was also mentioned. Lastly, participants suggested developing attractions in peripheral areas as a way of relieving pressure on the Park itself.

The following comments and observations relate to various elements that participants felt should be included in the revised Plan:

- The “environmental education” and “interpretation” components should play a greater role in the Park’s mission and recreational supply.
- The Park’s architectural and historical heritage and its cultural landscapes should be improved as representative elements of Canadian heritage (the O’Brien house, the Willson house, Wakefield Mill, the Meech Creek Valley).
- User access, and especially informal access points, should be controlled (e.g. off-road motor vehicles (quad, snowmobiles)), and an awareness campaign should be instituted.
- Ecological links with peripheral areas should be better identified, and mechanisms to preserve and implement them should be included in the Plan.
- Greater synergy is required with the rural community to enhance the Park’s tourism spin-offs – for example, tourist accommodation. All neighbouring municipalities should benefit from the Park’s economic impacts, and the quality of the Park’s tourist attractions should therefore be maintained.
- Access to the Park (e.g. from Wakefield and Pontiac) by different means of transportation should be improved. The Pontiac municipality feels it is at a disadvantage, since it is located at some distance from the Park and has no direct vehicular or recreational links with the activity and reception centres further to the east. This could be overcome in the future by building a reception centre at the Luskville Falls.
- The NCC should grant more resources and means to help the Park achieve its goals (e.g. universal user fees, access management, patrols).
- Municipalities and community partners (e.g. Friends of Gatineau Park) should be involved upstream in controlling access and entrance points (e.g. through municipal by-laws), in overseeing uses, and in the Park’s educational mission. An ongoing or permanent consultation procedure should be introduced for user groups.
- Following an analysis of their impacts and potential mitigation measures, certain recreational activities should be eliminated, restricted or moved from sensitive sites (e.g. rock climbing on the Escarpment, mountain biking) to avoid damaging the environment.

- Community activities should be maintained on their existing sites, which are in any case no longer in their natural state. However, community activities that are not compatible with the Park's conservation mission should be rationalized.
- Access should be further limited in conservation zones, and the Conservation Plan should be continually updated as part of an ongoing process. The Park should be viewed as a conservation unit within which certain areas have been made available for controlled activities that are compatible with its mission.
- An assessment matrix should be devised to identify “compatible and respectful” activities. The revised Plan should contain a procedure and criteria reflecting the seasonal aspect and impacts of activities. It should also stipulate which activities are “compatible” and which are not.
- Both the capacity of the environment and the quality of the recreational experience should be considered when selecting sites for and managing activities.
- Compatible competitive sports should be accepted on existing infrastructure only. Some participants would like the Park to maintain or improve its presence in cross-country skiing at the local and national levels, which would involve correcting deficiencies in some of its installations (improving the existing parking lot and trail network, or creating a new high-level network).
- Gatineau Park is not a city park, and some participants felt its mission was not the same as that of the NCC.
- The Park needs a proper legal status so that it is permanently protected. This would send a clear message about its mission and orientations.
- Universal user fees would be an acceptable strategy, but allowances should be made for low-income users. Fees would necessitate more thought on access points from surrounding land and on the informal use of the Park. Revenues derived from user fees should be reinvested in the Park.
- The revised Master Plan should contain further details of the proposed Green Transportation Plan.

## 4.2 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT OF THE WORKSHOPS

The workshops were greatly appreciated by participants, who praised the quality of the information and the bilingual aspect of the presentations. Generally speaking, a consensus emerged in favour of the following points:

- The need for better control.
- The imposition of equitable user fees.
- A need for a clear definition of what constitutes a “compatible” and “respectful” activity.
- More emphasis on conservation of natural environments.

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- Limitations on certain uses in more sensitive areas.
  - A case-by-case analysis of the environmental impacts of certain activities, to identify the best possible mitigation measures (avoid generalizations).
  - An adequate legal status to protect the Park's mission.
  - Conservation and enhancement of the Park's cultural landscapes and heritage.
  - More education and awareness-raising on the Park's values.
  - Greater involvement by user groups, associations and municipalities.

## 5. PHASE 3: PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

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The NCC held a second and last round of public consultations after completion of the first two phases, to examine the preferred option of the Gatineau Park Master Plan. The aim of the consultation was to present the vision, strategic objectives and proposals contained in the final draft of the Plan, along with the results of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and to obtain comments from members of the public. Similar presentations were made to the Pontiac, La Pêche, Chelsea and Gatineau Municipal Councils.

The public consultations were held on October 27 and 28, 2004, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian Museum of Nature, located respectively in Gatineau and Ottawa. They took place in the evenings, between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., and were similar in format to the Phase 2 consultations, beginning with an “open house” session with 20 large colour panels describing the significant elements and proposals from the Plan. At around 7:00 p.m., the consulting firm commissioned for the review process (Del Degan, Massé et Associés Inc.) made a visual and oral PowerPoint presentation lasting approximately half an hour, after which the audience was able to comment on and express their opinions on the proposed Plan. Throughout the process, representatives from the NCC and the consulting firm were on hand to clarify certain points and answer questions from the audience.

### 5.1 DOCUMENTS AND CONSULTATION TOOLS

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The NCC prepared and distributed a number of documents in both official languages, presenting the Plan’s proposals, in order to ensure that the public was well informed and able to participate effectively in the consultation process. A questionnaire was also devised to obtain comments and opinions. The documents listed below were produced and used during the consultation:

- The Master Plan Review – Gatineau Park – Summary Document – Preliminary Master Plan, For Consultation, NCC, 2004.
- Gatineau Park Master Plan – Draft, NCC, 2004.
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment – A Summary, NCC, 2004.
- A summary document of several pages briefly reviewing the proposed vision and mission for the Park, along with the strategic aims, planning concept, proposals relating to each sector of the Park, and the results of the strategic environmental assessment.
- A two-page summary presenting the results of the strategic environmental assessment.
- A six-question questionnaire on the Plan’s proposals.
- A series of 20 large, full-colour, laminated panels presenting the highlights of the Plan.

- A 20-minute bilingual PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Plan's proposals.

Most of these documents, including the questionnaire, were available via the NCC's website at:

[ncc-ccn.gc.ca](http://ncc-ccn.gc.ca)

The general public had until November 30, 2004, to make comments and submit completed questionnaires. As for Phase 2, the Phase 3 consultations were announced in the National Capital Region's written and electronic media, and on the NCC website.

Furthermore, a opinion poll on Gatineau Park was administered on behalf of the NCC to residents of the National Capital Region between November 22 and 28, 2004 to verify some of the strategic solutions.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS

The general mission proposed in the final draft of the Revised Master Plan is to welcome Canadians and other visitors, allowing them to discover Canada's natural environment and to recognize sites that bear witness to the country's history. In emphasizing the conservation of natural and cultural environments, the Park will in future be defined as the "Capital's conservation park", where it will also host recreational and educational activities that are compatible with the goal of protecting the natural environment. A total of six strategic objectives were derived from the Park's mission, as follows:

- Environment: Conservation of significant ecosystems and natural environments.
- Recreation: A respectful recreational experience within a preserved natural environment.
- Regional integration: The Capital's conservation park.
- Heritage: Conservation of cultural landscapes, archaeological resources and archaeological heritage relating to the Capital.
- National symbol: A Canadian commitment to conservation and communication of the environment.
- Management: Conservation-oriented management of all activities.

For each strategic objective, the Plan contains a number of general proposals explaining the aims and actions to be taken in the period 2005-2015. A planning concept sets out the vocation of Park land based on the strategic objectives, and involves:

- An extended central, unbroken conservation area;
- Protected ecological corridors adjacent to the Park;
- Sites for respectful recreational activities, preferably close to the Park's boundary;
- Accessible service areas near the visitor reception areas;
- Better signage of Park boundaries and entrance gates;

- Further enhancement of the Park's heritage, cultural landscapes and national symbolism.

The Plan contains separate proposals for each sector of the Park, addressing problems specific to that sector. Implementation mechanisms including a zoning system and specific policies (e.g. privately owned properties) complete the proposed Plan. A strategic environmental assessment of the Plan's impacts was also carried out. The results showed that, generally speaking, the revised Plan would have a positive impact on the environment and would not increase the cumulative negative impacts.

### 5.3 RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The public consultations has raised considerable interest from the National Capital region population. Nearly 500 people attended the two sessions, listening carefully to the presentations and taking full advantage of the time allowed for comments and questions.

A questionnaire was handed out to participants in order to obtain their opinions of the Plan's proposals. The questionnaire was also available online via the NCC's website. It comprised six questions addressing the principal proposals of the Plan. A copy is attached to this report, in Appendix 6.

Following the two consultation evenings, the NCC received more than 250 comments, in the form of 97e-mails, 63 letters and 84 completed questionnaires (26 by hand and 58 online) from individuals and organizations alike. Of the letters and e-mails, 117 were from individuals and 43 from organizations or associations. Table 1 shows the number of written documents (letters and e-mails) from the different types of organizations. A full list of these organizations can be found in Appendix 5.

TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATION	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Snowmobile clubs and associations	19
Rock climbing groups	5
Mountain biking group	1
Pro-environment group	4
Residents' association	2
Groups of ramblers, hikers and cross-country skiers	6
Tourism promotion institution	1
Government department	1
Municipality	4
TOTAL	43

Generally speaking, the comments addressed specific proposals (e.g. rock climbing), but did not question the overall strategic objectives of the plan.

### 5.3.1 MEDIA COVERAGE

The written and electronic media followed the process closely. There were two cycles of media coverage for the public consultations. First, in mid-October, the NCC invited the region's media to a meeting at which the final draft of the proposed Master Plan was presented. Representatives of the NCC and the consulting firm were available to answer questions from journalists. The initiative produced seven articles in the region's daily and community newspapers, including four editorials and three letters to the editor, along with sixteen radio reports and seven television reports.

Nine of the region's media attended the two public consultation evenings. A total of five newspaper articles, eight letters to the editor, seven radio reports and four television reports were produced as a result (see the tables in Appendix 4 for a full list).

### 5.3.2 COMMENTS AND OPINIONS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Members of the general public who attended the two consultation evenings generally had specific interests in the Master Plan. They included rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking and snowmobile enthusiasts, who attended in large numbers and spoke at length. The environmental groups were also represented, although to a lesser extent. Residents from the region with an interest in the Park also attended the meetings. Comments are followed in italics by the NCC's response, as included in the Final Version of the Master Plan.

The following paragraphs present the general and specific comments made by members of the public at the consultation evenings and in subsequent correspondence (e-mails and letters to the NCC). These latter are grouped by strategic proposal and theme.

#### 5.3.2.1 GENERAL COMMENTS

The main general comments and suggestions made on the format and content of the plan are set out below.

- Most individuals and organizations agreed that there is a need to provide proper protection for the Park, and agreed with the general conservation-oriented focus of the proposed Master Plan.
- The Plan lacks a formal, strongly worded commitment establishing the Park's *raison d'être* (e.g. a Park for the people of Canada, etc.).

#### The NCC's Position

*Section III of the Plan has been amended to take this comment into account.*



- The Plan is somewhat vague with regard to the direction of future action. Similarly, it contains no indication of the associated costs and the funding available for commissioning purposes. The public should be informed of the budget available for implementation of the Plan.
- The Plan should include a plan of action and a timetable. A summary table of the Master Plan's actions and objectives, along with monitoring indicators, should be prepared and incorporated into the revised Plan.
- A communication plan reporting on the progress of the Plan should be prepared.

The NCC's Position

*These elements will be drawn up once the NCC has approved the Plan, and will be included in the Commissioning Plan in the next phase of the process.*

- The chapter on the Park's history should include a reference to public pressure against deforestation in the 1930s.

The NCC's Position

*We agree with this comment. The historical section of the Plan (Chapter 1.3) has been amended to include this fact.*

- Certain words and expressions should be defined and explained more clearly, or their translation improved (e.g. precautionary principle, extreme sports, visitor capacity, extensive recreation, "respectful" recreation, etc.).

The NCC's Position

*The Plan has been amended to take this comment into account.*

- The Plan should contain separate theme-based maps illustrating hydrology, vegetation, rare plants, the trail network, and so on, so that the individual maps are not overly detailed.

The NCC's Position

*This comment is interesting. However, we feel the maps in the Master Plan are sufficient for the purpose of presenting a compilation of georeferenced data in support of the text.*

- The Plan should include a list of rare and vulnerable species with an explanation of the related information.

The NCC's Position

*A list of species and their habitats will be included in the Conservation Plan, but would be too detailed for the Master Plan.*

- The Plan's strategic objectives should be classified in priority order.

The NCC's Position

*All the strategic objectives are important and each plays a role in achieving the Park's mission. It is true that the environmental strategic objective underpins all the others, since it takes into account the policies set out in the Plan for Canada's Capital, and the analysis of the situation, the social context and national trends in the management of natural areas. An implementation order is, however, identified for certain*

*proposals when needed. One of the aims of the Commissioning Plan, which will be drawn up following approval of the Master Plan, is to establish a priority order for the proposals.*

- The proposed Plan is well balanced, but the control and application of Park regulations needs to be improved (e.g. dogs).
- The Plan will provide greater protection for the Park’s natural and cultural heritage.
- The proposed Plan lacks formal public policy analysis techniques and a cost-benefit assessment of the proposals.

#### The NCC’s Position

*The strategic environmental assessment of the Plan, produced in parallel, ensured that the proposals were consistent with environmental objectives and with corporate and government environmental policies. A cost-benefit assessment will be carried out as part of the Commissioning Plan, in accordance with the NCC’s process on project management.*

- There seems to be some contradiction between the Plan’s pro-environmental orientation and its proposals (e.g. improved access and maintenance of existing recreational activities versus conservation and more stringent control over access).

#### The NCC’s Position

*The Plan must address all the strategic objectives if it is to achieve the Park’s mission. The orientations, general proposals and planning concept distribute the various functions throughout the territory. The text has been revised to explain this more clearly. The underlying intention is to place conservation as a priority, while allowing the general public to continue using the Park (chapter 5.1 – Mission).*

- The notions of “tranquility” and “sanctuary” should be introduced into the definition of compatible recreation.

#### The NCC’s Position

*The text of the Plan (Chapter 5.3.2) has been amended accordingly.*

- The Park’s “political” function is considered unnecessary.

#### The NCC’s Position

*The political function is directly related to the NCC’s mandate and mission, and has therefore been maintained. It is a core element of the notion of Capital City. Having said this, we believe the political function should be respectful of the natural environment in which it takes place.*

- Objectives concerning the promotion of health and physical fitness for Canadians should be added to the Plan.

#### The NCC’s Position

*Section 5.3.2 of the Plan refers to physical and mental health.*

- New buildings in the Park should be based on innovative development and ecological construction criteria (e.g. green roof).

### The NCC's Position

*This comment is interesting and will be passed on to project managers.*

- Shelters in the Park should better be exploited as accommodation facilities.

## 5.3.2.2 ENVIRONMENT

### CONSERVATION MISSION

#### Comments Received

Most of the people who made comments were generally in favour of the proposals relating to conservation of natural environments, even if they disagreed with some specific proposals (e.g. the ban on rock climbing). Some people felt it should be a priority to maintain the Park as a natural protected area, and that the conservation efforts of today would ensure a quality outdoor recreational experience for the visitors of tomorrow. Others felt ecological integrity should be the main priority. Many people considered the Park to be a space devoted to nature and solitary enjoyment of natural environments, not a playing field, while some were concerned about the future quality of the Park's environment. One proposal suggested defining the Park as a pro-environmental recreational area devoted to the wilderness experience.

Some people felt the conservation mission could be implemented without actually building a fence around the Park. Although the Plan's conservation focus was considered to be a step in the right direction, its approach was regarded as too drastic. Some people disagreed with the proposed mission, focused on the conservation of natural environments, on the basis that it was unrealistic and counter-productive within the context of the Capital. In other words, the Plan placed too great an emphasis on conservation. The banning of activities would prevent certain groups from enjoying the natural environment. The Park is not an "aquarium", but an integral component of the region's social and recreational life – in other words, and urban or semi-urban park.

In contrast to this, other participants, such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Ottawa Valley section (CPAWS, OV)<sup>2</sup>, felt the proposed mission emphasized recreation to the detriment of conservation, contrary to the orientations set out in the *Plan for Canada's Capital, 1999*. Some thought the Plan would not foster conservation, due to its "hands-off" approach to roads in the Park, the large number of activities allowed, the fact that recreation is encouraged in conservation zones (e.g. south of Wolf Lake), and the overemphasis of commercial development. The CPAWS pointed out that the developments proposed or inferred in the Plan will leave very little unused space and will transform the Park into something resembling an urban or semi-urban park. It suggested refocusing the Park's mission on conservation of natural diversity and a fair and

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<sup>2</sup> Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Ottawa Valley section (CPAWS, OV), a national organism involved in Parks and natural habitats conservation.

ecologically sustainable use of its resources, compatible with the preservation of the Park's ecological integrity.

#### The NCC's Position

*Following an analysis of the Park's current state, as well as concerns relating to ecosystem health, the evolution of recreational activities, new natural area management approaches, the region's economic and social trends and the orientations set out in the Plan for Canada's Capital, the NCC believes the conservation mission established for the Park is essential in ensuring a sustainable future for the Park's natural ecosystems, cultural landscapes and recreational experiences. Accordingly, conservation must continue to be a priority mission for the Park, in order to provide future generations access to a preserved natural heritage area within the Capital region. Thus, the development of existing and new activities will be limited until the Conservation Plan has been prepared (5.3.2.5).*

#### CONSERVATION PLAN

##### Comments Received

Several individuals and organizations thought the idea of a Conservation Plan was very good. On the other hand, some wondered about the time frame, which they felt was too long (one year would be sufficient) or too short. Of these, the CPAWS thought the introduction of interim conservation measures would be necessary until the Conservation Plan has been finalized, along with specific goals or targets for the Conservation Plan. It also mentioned the need to establish a research schedule as quickly as possible, along with meetings with scientists and the involvement of government agencies with conservation experience, such as Parks Canada. Some participants also asked for the general public to be involved in the preparation of the Conservation Plan.

Others thought the Plan in its present form did not prioritize the actions required, the principal threats to be addressed or the mitigation measures to be applied. They felt the Plan should contain clarifications as to the role of the advisory committee formed to supervise the application of the Conservation Plan. The new committee would play a vital role, since the NCC's resources and expertise in this area are seen as limited. The Recreational Services Plan should also be tied to the Conservation Plan.

#### The NCC's Position

*A Conservation Plan is certainly an important element in the development of an information and management tool that will guarantee the preservation of the Park's significant natural ecosystems. In the revised Plan (chapters 5.3.1.1 and 5.3.6.4), the NCC states that it will work with selected scientific advisors and other collaborators over the next three years to produce the Plan. The role to be played by an advisory committee will be defined in the early stages of the preparation of the Conservation Plan. The existing research plan will be revised in light of the new Conservation Plan, as stipulated in Chapter 5.3.6.5. Chapter 5.3.2.5 of the Plan also states that the development of existing and new recreational activities will be limited*

*until the Conservation Plan is being prepared. In addition, the Recreational Services Plan (Chapter 5.3.2.5) will be prepared after the Conservation Plan, in order to coordinate the data and observations and harmonize the recommendations.*

## ECOLOGICAL LINKS AND GREEN CORRIDORS

### Comments Received

Many participants agreed with the proposal to protect the Park's ecological links. Some even felt the Park's boundaries should be extended westwards (Onslow) to provide better ecological links, while others said the municipalities should be asked to protect natural lands in areas adjacent to the Park by prohibiting urban development. It was suggested that the green corridors running across the Moore Farm land and the Larrimac golf course and along Breckenridge stream should be incorporated into the Park as ecological links. According to the CPAWS, wildlife migration corridors and crossings should be created along McConnell-Laramée (e.g. tunnels or overpasses), since the link to the Champlain corridor is located south of the new road. Others proposed a similar solution for the Saint-Raymond Boulevard.

### The NCC's Position

*Chapter 5.3.1.2 of the Plan stipulates the need to establish and preserve ecological links and green corridors, and identifies the municipalities and private landowners as partners in the achievement of this goal. The Plan has been amended to take into account the suggestion of partnerships with organizations. The corridors mentioned above are shown on the sector maps.*

*A wildlife tunnel under McConnell-Laramée is already identified in the plans for this road.*

## RIPARIAN ENVIRONMENTS AND WATERBODIES

### Comments Received

Some people felt the riparian environments of Meech Lake, Kingsmere Lake and Philippe Lake need greater protection, and proposed that lake degradation factors and condition should be monitored. The NCC should work with the Chelsea municipality in order to protect Meech Lake. Mousseau Lake should be opened to the public.

### The NCC's Position

*This suggestion appears on the sector maps as a proposal for Philippe Lake and Meech Lake. Mousseau Lake will remain closed to the public for safety reasons, and will thus contribute to the Park's political function. The NCC monitors the lakes in accordance with existing protocols.*

### 5.3.2.3 RECREATION

#### RESPECTFUL RECREATION

##### Comments Received

Some stakeholders, including the CPAWS, felt this expression should be explained in more detail and should also refer to the quality of the recreational experience, not just the environment. According to the CPAWS, the term “compatible recreation” would be more appropriate. Low-impact, self-propelled experiences should be encouraged, as should activities that foster learning about the natural environment. Some people wondered why snowmobiling and rock climbing were not considered respectful of the environment.

Participants felt it was important to limit the range and scope of activities in the Park, so as to preserve the natural heritage. Only those activities requiring a minimum level of facilities should be authorized. An overall perspective of recreational uses in the Park is required. The CPAWS observed that, in addition to the zoning structure, a better evaluation system to assess the acceptability of recreational activities should be introduced, based on the real impacts of the activities in question. Off-road motorized activities should be excluded, and incompatible activities displaced. Only quality recreational experiences that are respectful of the environment should be permitted

Other participants, including Club Skinouk<sup>3</sup> (Relais Plein-Air), would like to develop the potential for sports activities (e.g. hiking, cycling, swimming, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, inline skating) and concentrate them in the south-western sector of the Park (Gamelin to Mont-Bleu), which has sufficient carrying capacity and the necessary infrastructure (e.g. parking lots). Among other things, the organization asked for the development of new hiking and snowshoe trails between the Relais and the Forsyth mine, an extension of the existing network with a 5 km loop for national-calibre sports activities, and the enhancement of existing trails (nos. 22, 26 and 29) in the Forsyth mine sector as a tourist attraction.

##### The NCC’s Position

*The text of Chapter 5.3.2 of the Plan has been amended to clarify the notion of “respectful recreation” and to emphasize the educational aspect. This latter aspect is also covered by Chapter 5.3.5.6. The elements raised in the second paragraph have been included in the Plan (Chapter 5.3.2). Rock climbing and snowmobiling are addressed below. The Gateway sector is able to host recreational activities. Any new activities will be examined for compatibility with the Conservation Plan (5.3.2.5) and with desired intensity levels, as set out in the management parameters shown on the zoning tables. Competition level mountain biking activities and competitive cross-country skiing will only be encouraged in the Park if they do not require specific new infrastructure (5.3.2.9). The Recreational Services Plan mentioned in*

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<sup>3</sup> Club Skinouk is a local organization involved in the development of cross-country skiing, cycling and mountain biking that oversees the Relais Plein-Air and operates from the Mont-Bleu sports centre in Gatineau.

*Chapter 5.3.2.7 will provide additional clarification once the Conservation Plan has been implemented.*

## ROCK CLIMBING

### Comments Received

Many individuals and rock climbing groups expressed deep disagreement with the proposal to ban rock climbing on the Eardley Escarpment until the Conservation Plan has been implemented. Their main arguments in favour of their position included the lack of scientific justification and research into the actual impacts of rock climbing on the Escarpment, which they felt was very low compared to other activities, the limited area of wall concerned (less than 3% of the total according to some users), the acknowledged pro-environmental awareness of climbers, the beneficial nature of rock climbing for health, its “ecotourist” aspect and resulting economic benefit spin-offs for the region, the strategic location of the Escarpment and the lack of alternative rock walls in the region, the historical and traditional value of rock climbing in the Park (50 years of existence), and the willingness of rock climbing associations to work with the NCC on self-regulation, supervision, user education and the provision of information on rock wall ecosystems. Many climbers felt the ban would simply encourage informal use of the rock wall. The solution would be to involve users in the task of controlling the activity and lifting the ban until other solutions can be implemented. A 250-name petition was submitted by the *Gatineau Access and Conservation Working Group* in support of this position.

On the other hand, a certain number of participants agreed with the proposed ban, due to the sensitivity of Escarpment ecosystems and the integral conservation orientation retained for the sector.

The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC), Ottawa section, a nationally-recognized rock climbing and mountaineering association, admitted that rock climbing does indeed have an impact on the Eardley Escarpment’s ecosystems, that it should be structured, and that the NCC has a duty to manage the Park in accordance with environmental legislation and standards. The ACC would like to represent the rock climbing community on an ongoing basis in dealings with the NCC, to ensure environmentally responsible use of the Escarpment. It proposed that the NCC should:

- Adopt a balanced approach to rock climbing that takes into consideration access to as well as the protection of the Escarpment's environment;
- Establish a collaborative relationship with the ACC in this respect;
- Officially treat rock climbing as a recognized activity, provided it is properly controlled through sound environmental management, respectful practices and ongoing education of climbers.

The ACC also proposed immediate collaborative initiatives to learn about and mitigate the impacts of rock climbing, along with short-

term actions to inform the Capital's rock climbing community (e.g. communication program, code of conduct, etc.).

#### The NCC's Position

*In view of the fact that rock climbing is present on the Escarpment, and the type of experience it provides, this activity could continue to take place, on a reduced number of walls or cliffs of the Escarpment while the Conservation plan is being prepared, in order to minimize the environmental impacts on the fragile ecosystems of the Escarpment. To achieve this objective, the following steps will be taken:*

- *Immediately following the approval of the Master Plan, the NCC wishes to pursue a partnership arrangement with representatives of recognised interest groups to reach an agreement by September 2005. This agreement will include parameters determining the way the activity should be practised on the Escarpment, including the reduction of the number of walls or cliffs designated for the activity, access to the walls, the period during which the activity is permitted, control measures, and any other provisions determined to be necessary. This agreement would govern rock climbing until the Conservation Plan come into effect.*
- *If no agreement can be reached on a reduction in the level of and locations for rock climbing, the NCC will impose temporarily a stop to the activity, starting in September 2005, and will maintain this prohibition until the Conservation Plan is in effect.*
- *Under both of these scenarios, the Master Plan will be amended to incorporate the conclusions of the Conservation Plan.*

#### SNOWMOBILING

##### Comments Received

19 snowmobile associations in Ontario and Québec that use the trails, including the Québec and Ontario snowmobile club federations and snowmobile clubs from the Ottawa Valley and Ontario regions (see the list in Appendix 5), objected to the proposal to ban snowmobiling from the Park in the next five years. In their view, there is no research or data to prove that snowmobiling has a negative impact on the natural environment. The arguments they used to support their position included the temporary seasonal nature of the activity (eight weeks per year), which reduces its possible impacts, the fact that it requires less infrastructure, the importance of the Park's trails in providing access to the Québec snowmobile network, the substantial economic repercussions of the activity for rural communities in winter, easy access to natural winter landscapes, the user-friendliness and popularity of the activity among people of all ages, and technological improvements to the vehicles themselves (quieter, less pollution). They also observed that the snowmobile trails are located in the least used sector of the Park, along existing roads. It would be both difficult and expensive to develop alternative trails outside the Park, not to mention the loss of money invested to develop the existing trails. The Ottawa Valley snowmobile clubs, which manage the trails, have their own patrollers who oversee the



safety and conduct of users. Apparently, other parks have recently agreed to reintroduce snowmobiling.

Some people agreed with the proposal to ban snowmobiling over a timeframe of up to five years. Generally speaking, they based their arguments on the fact that off-road motorized recreation is incompatible with the Park's mission, and that snowmobiling is considered to have negative repercussions on wildlife and the quality of the non-motorized experience.

#### The NCC's Position

*In view of the Park's mission, the importance of its conservation function, the choice to give priority to recreational activities that are respectful of the natural environment, and recent trends in Canada to ban snowmobiling in conservation parks, the NCC has decided to maintain the proposal to gradually eliminate all motorized recreational activities from the Park (5.3.2.12). Snowmobiling is incompatible with the Park's conservation mission and with the types of recreational experiences offered to visitors. The NCC will work with stakeholders to help them find alternative route outside of the Park.*

#### OTHER OFF-ROAD MOTORIZED VEHICLES

##### Comments Received

Some participants were upset at the noise caused by remote-controlled model aircraft in the Meech Creek Valley. The proposal to ban this activity was favourably received.

Other participants felt it was also necessary to ban motorboats from the Park's waterbodies, except those used by Park staff (surveillance) and residents of the east shore of Meech Lake. Boats should be inspected to prevent the introduction of harmful aquatic plants (e.g. the spiked water milfoil).

It is proposed that off-road motorized excursions should be banned in the Park, and informal use of off-road vehicles (e.g. quad bikes) controlled, especially in the western sector.

Some participants, however, asked for official recognition of off-road motorized activities.

#### The NCC's Position

*Off-road vehicles are already banned in the Park. This activity does not meet the Park's recreational goals, namely for activities that are respectful of the natural environment, and observation or contemplation activities. The ban is therefore maintained, and will apply to all motorized activities (e.g. personal watercraft). An interim measure will be introduced to take into account the presence of cottages on the north shore of Meech Lake; this will involve gradually replacing the engines used on all watercraft by less powerful engines, e.g. under 10 HP. In the longer term, the Plan suggests working with the Meech Lake Association and the relevant authorities to eliminate motor craft altogether from the Park.*

## MOUNTAIN BIKING

### Comments Received

Some participants felt the Plan in its proposed form did not express a clear intention concerning mountain biking. They wondered if the activity would be able to continue on some of the trails currently used by mountain bike enthusiasts (e.g. trails 1, 15 and 30) and suggested that it be permitted on trails 1, 24, 50, 52 and 53. Other participants felt it would be inappropriate to concentrate mountain biking activities at Camp Fortune, since this would maximize the impacts in one sector. Moreover, the trail network at Camp Fortune would not meet users' requirements (limited distance and level of difficulty). Some people disagreed with the ban on mountain biking, which they considered to be non-pollutant, silent and with an impact equivalent to that of hiking. A network of trails should be developed specifically for mountain bikes. According to the National Capital Mountain Bike Association (NCMBA<sup>4</sup>) and the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), two associations involved in the promotion of mountain biking, conflicts between mountain bikers and other trail users could be solved through better management (maintenance, trail design), appropriate mitigation measures and education of trail users. They claimed that mountain biking does not have a greater impact on the environment than other trail uses. The possibility of involving user groups such as the NCMBA and the IMBA in trail management, maintenance and design should be considered.

Some participants, however, agreed with the proposal to concentrate mountain biking activities at Camp Fortune and to limit the number of trails on which the activity is permitted, in view of its environmental impact and its incompatibility with hiking. They asked for better control over speed and trail use.

### The NCC's Position

*Mountain biking is authorized when practised in accordance with Park rules, i.e. on authorized trails and in a respectful way in compliance with the code of ethics. The activity can foster discovery of and learning about the natural environment. Mountain biking, if practised in this way, is compatible with the NCC's mandate and with the Park's mission as a site for discovering Canada's natural environment. The Plan will better explain this position. Camp Fortune is the best location for competitive mountain biking, and this orientation has been maintained. Trails 15 and 30 will continue to be accessible to mountain bikes, along with most of trail 1. The possible closure of the portion of trail 1 located in the integral conservation zone will be examined in light of the Conservation Plan. This proposal has therefore been revised.*

*Management of the Park's trails, including deciding which types of use will be permitted (pedestrian only or cycling and pedestrian), is a managerial function that is guided by the Master Plan. The relevance of providing dedicated mountain biking trails will be considered in the*

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<sup>4</sup> National Capital Mountain Bike Association (NCMBA) et International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), two organizations involved in the promotion of mountain biking.

*Recreational Services Plan (Chapter 5.3.2.7). The Master Plan already provides for different groups to be involved in the management of activities (Chapter 5.3.3.6).*

## CYCLING

### Comments Received

Cycling is considered to be a non-pollutant ecological activity that fits in with the Park's mission. The Plan should state that cycling is encouraged on the parkways. Some people suggested that the parkways should be closed to vehicular traffic for longer periods on weekends (until 1:00 p.m.) to allow cyclists to enjoy the park unhindered by cars. Permanent closure of the Fortune Parkway to vehicular traffic was also proposed.

The Chelsea Nordiq<sup>5</sup> association asked for the northern loop of Gatineau Parkway (between P8 and P9) to be improved (e.g. resurfacing, year-round lighting, artificial snow, etc.) for cyclists, skiers, inline skaters, runners and cross-country skiers.

### The NCC's Position

*The parkways were designed to enable Canadians to discover the Park's natural environment and cultural landscapes, and to provide access to different sites. Chapter 5.3.6.8 of the Master Plan proposes the preparation of a Green Transportation Plan, in accordance with the general guidelines set out in Chapter 8.3.3. The Master Plan's orientations recommend the use of transportation methods other than cars to access the Park. The information in the Green Transportation Plan will be used among other things to decide the appropriateness of temporary or permanent closures of parkways or parkway sections. The parkways are used only occasionally for self-propelled excursions (e.g. Sunday mornings). The Park authorities are responsible for the planning of this program.*

*Some of the suggestions made above would not help improve the recreational experience available to Park visitors, focused on discovery of the natural environment in a conservation park. For example, lighting and artificial snow would not be considered appropriate.*

## HIKING, RAMBLING AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

### Comments Received

Hiking (or rambling) meets the conditions for respectful recreation set out in the Plan. Some of the Capital Region's rambling and hiking clubs, including the Ottawa Rambling Club and the Ottawa Rideau Trail Club<sup>5</sup>, pointed out that small groups of hikers wishing to explore the Park should be permitted in the conservation zones (C1, C2), due to the very low impact of the activity and the environmental code of ethics applied by their members. A ban on hiking in the conservation zones might affect the activities of the region's hiking and rambling clubs, which would then have access to only 25% of the Park's total area. This would not, in their opinion, be sufficient to

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<sup>5</sup> Two local organizations involved in hiking, rambling and cross-country skiing.

provide an isolated wilderness experience. The informal hiking trails should not be mapped or mentioned officially, in order to preserve their character and maintain low usage. They should, however, remain accessible. Some so-called “informal” trails have historical value, especially in the Western sector (e.g. the "old fire rangers' trail", the "First Nations trail"). These trails should be described as “ungroomed” rather than “informal”, and access should be permitted.

Activities with no environmental impact should be freely permitted in the Heart of the Park sector. Off-trail cross-country ski and showshoe enthusiasts using unmarked, ungroomed trails, felt strongly that these activities should be allowed in the conservation zones, since they have virtually no impact on the environment. Organizations such as Chelsea Nordiq and the National Capital district branch of Cross-Country Canada<sup>6</sup> also mentioned the local and national importance of the Park’s network of cross-country ski trails. They asked the NCC, as a priority, to develop a network of high-level competition trails with proper infrastructure (e.g. parking, service buildings). Chelsea Nordiq asked for the certified competition trail network at Camp Fortune to be restored with some additions (e.g. a 5-km loop, an amphitheatre, lighting, signage, etc.), in order to enhance the Park’s cross-country ski facilities.

#### The NCC’s Position

*The informal trails will be eliminated in order to protect natural habitats, as stipulated in Chapter 5.3.1.8 and the sector-based proposals. On the other hand, individual off-trail hiking will be permitted in all zones, including zones C1 and C2, provided repetitive use by hikers does not result in permanent damage or marks, and provide no other contra-indications are identified (e.g. wildlife habitats requiring protection).*

*The type of experience offered in priority by the Park, in accordance with its mission, involves recreational activities that are respectful of nature and provide a better appreciation of the environment. Although cross-country skiing has always been practised in the Park, no new infrastructure designed specifically for competitive events will be built (5.3.2.9).*

#### EXTREME SPORTS

##### Comments Received

Some participants felt the notion of “extreme sport” should be defined more clearly in the Plan.

##### The NCC’s Position

*The text of the Plan has been amended accordingly. The definition of “extreme sport” has been clarified and it is clearly stated that this type of activity will not be permitted in the Park, since it is inconsistent with the Park’s mission.*

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<sup>6</sup> Cross-Country Canada is a national organization involved in promoting cross-country skiing and competition.

### 5.3.2.4 REGIONAL INTEGRATION

#### THE CAPITAL CONSERVATION PARK

##### Comments Received

The Park's positioning as the "Capital Conservation Park" generated numerous questions, with some participants suggesting that the affiliation with the Capital creates too close a tie between the Park's development and the Capital's development. CPAWS proposed a "national" position instead, more in line with the situation of a natural protected area mentioned in the Canadian and Québec strategies on biodiversity and protected areas. Other participants felt the conservation mission and the Park being a complement to the Recreational offer in the NCR were mistakes; roads (vehicular traffic) and peripheral urban development are described as major threats, when in fact the Park needs to remain as it is, accessible. Others believed the Park is an integral part of the social and recreational life of the Capital, and the notion of transforming it into a conservation park is unrealistic (Relais Plein-Air). The southern sections of the Park (the Gateway Sector), which are located close to residential sectors and are easily accessible, should be used as an urban park devoted to public enjoyment, especially since their natural state has already been significantly altered. Some participants thought the Park should not focus on tourism, but should not be a conservation park either.

##### The NCC's Position

*Gatineau Park forms part of the Capital, in that it provides an opportunity, within the Capital Region, to protect the natural environments of a portion of the country, to uphold the Canadian values of natural heritage conservation and environmental quality, and to present these elements to Canadians and visitors in particular. The NCC's mandate is clearly defined in the National Capital Act, and incorporates all these aspects. The Park should therefore be associated with the functions of the Capital. In addition, the functions of the Park's various sectors differ, and the Gateway and Parkway sectors, located closest to the city population, have a more pronounced visitor reception and recreational function than the others, although they still contribute to the conservation message identified as a priority for the Park.*

#### ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

##### Comments Received

Several participants felt there were too many roads and too much vehicular traffic in the Park. Some suggested closing some roads and "renaturalizing" them, or at the very least, reducing the volume of vehicular traffic, especially in the undeveloped portions of the Park. The road network was considered to be responsible for significantly more cumulative damage to the environment than many of the recreational activities slated for elimination in the Plan.

Others felt plans to build the new McConnell-Laramée Boulevard were contrary to the environmental objectives, and questioned the validity of the project.

The comments on the Green Transportation Plan were generally favourable. However, a handful of participants including CPAWS thought that a time period should be identified for its realization. CPAWS also thought the Plan should clearly state that no new roads would be authorized in the Park, and that it should examine the entire road network over a 50-year timeframe to take into account peripheral urban growth, which will influence the demand for new roads in the future.

In peak periods, it would be interesting to consider the introduction of shuttles from peripheral urban nodes (e.g. Wakefield, Chelsea, etc.). Use of the parkways by daily commuters should be discouraged. Public transit (buses) should be introduced.

On the other hand, some participants felt there was insufficient access to western sectors of the Park. Others questioned the proposal to limit vehicular traffic in the Park, given the lack of public transit and other viable alternatives that are yet to be put in place. The road network offers easy access for all, especially the elderly and disabled.

With regard to safety, some participants felt the speed limit on Park roads should be reduced. Others felt the addition of cycle paths along the Park's roads would improve the safety of cyclists.

The Ministère des Transports du Québec asked that the Plan not contain any limitations that might hinder the proposed construction of Highway 50 within the proposed corridor in the Park.

Park maintenance vehicles should use an ecologically acceptable fuel or an alternative, low-pollutant technology.

#### The NCC's Position

*The proposals on transportation for the Plan state that when a road is no longer necessary, the NCC will proceed with "renaturalization" (6.2.6.3). The La Pêche Lake sector is particularly affected by this proposal. However, some roads in the Park are essential for regional development, and they will remain untouched. The McConnell-Laramée Boulevard is considered essential. Every possible study has been carried out in recent years to identify the layout that would have the least impact on the natural environment. Numerous mitigation measures are planned, and the NCC's approval for the chosen layout is conditional on their application.*

*The Green Transportation Plan proposed in Chapter 8.3.3 will examine alternative methods of transportation. It will contain recommendations to improve Park access and mobility of Park users by other means of transportation other than the automobile that are more respectful of the Park's mission and Canada's national and international environmental commitments.*

*The policy prohibiting the construction of new local and regional roads that would fragment the Park has been clarified, and now states that the proposed Highway 50 will be permitted on Park lands provided it does not fragment the natural environment.*

*The western portion of the Park is considered well served by the Eardley-Masham road considering the activity in that sector.*

## RECEPTION AND INFORMATION CENTRE

### Comments Received

Some participants disagreed with the idea of increasing the number of reception centres for Park visitors and users. Some questioned the proposed secondary reception points (e.g. Luskville), which would enhance access and increase visitor numbers in a way that is contrary to the mission of conserving the Park's natural environments. No studies have been carried out to support the need for secondary reception points. Certain participants felt enlargements of existing parking lots would be sufficient to meet needs, while others suggesting closing parking lots because they felt there are too many. Secondary access points specifically designed for local users were proposed. Other participants, including the Kingsmere Property Owners' Association, supported the idea of additional reception points, since they would help control access to and use of the Park, and limit their impacts. It also asked for assurance that existing parking lots would not be enlarged.

### The NCC's Position

*The Planning Concept in Chapter 5.4.2 proposes that access and visitor service points to activities should be concentrated around the Park's boundaries, to foster the conservation of natural environments in central areas. A more structured reception network in specific locations will help the Park to fulfill its mission by emphasizing the dissemination of knowledge and the provision of better additional services. The reception points will also help control activities in the Park. Heavy infrastructure (e.g. reception buildings) will be permitted only at the main reception points, namely Chelsea, Gamelin and Philippe Lake. The secondary reception points will offer secondary services such as parking areas and interpretation booths, but there will be no main buildings. Most of the proposed secondary reception points (Luskville, Meech Creek Valley, Wakefield, La Pêche Lake, Relais Plein-air) have been designated as such in order to structure or enhance locations that already play a reception role. In some cases a more detailed analysis will be required before adding new services. Only one potential new visitor reception point has been proposed, and it will be created only if plans to enhance the tourism potential of the mining heritage are implemented in the south-western portion of the Park (Quyon). The Plan's description of the service point hierarchy has been clarified accordingly.*

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Comments Received

The Plan should address the notion of integration and partnerships strategies with the region.

### The NCC's Position

*Some of the Plan's proposals recommend partnerships as a way of achieving the Park's mission – for example, developing ecotourism, research, heritage and sustainable transportation (Chapter 5.3.3.3); promoting recreational sites located outside the Park in order to reduce*

*pressures on the Park (Chapter 5.3.3.4); and the development and delivery of interpretation programs (Chapter 5.3.5.11).*

#### 5.3.2.5 HERITAGE

##### MEECH CREEK VALLEY

##### Comments Received

Some participants disagreed with the proposal to develop agro-tourism in the Meech Creek Valley, since it was contrary to the Plan's environmental objectives. CPAWS felt that the Valley should not be sacrificed to agro-tourist development. If this were to be the case, the term "agro-tourism" should be clearly defined to avoid over-development for tourism purposes. Certain participants suggested that the Valley's natural environments should be restored. Others agreed with the Plan's proposal, proposing that the Valley be officially designated as a cultural landscape.

One participant wondered about the relevance of cattle farming in the Valley. The cattle erode the Creek banks and pollute the water. In addition, nobody appears to be monitoring conservation of the Valley.

##### The NCC's Position

*The Valley is an excellent site to acknowledge the role of farming and rural life in the history of the Park, the region and Canada as a whole. The NCC has an important role to play in terms of interpretation and the promotion of ecotourism. The Plan's proposals for the Valley have all been maintained, including the recognition as a cultural landscape. Specific environmental problems relating to water quality in the Creek will continue to be monitored*

#### 5.3.2.6 MANAGEMENT

##### USER FEES

##### Comments Received

Generally speaking, the individuals and organizations who took part in the consultations were in favour of a user fee applicable to most users. Some thought the current fee structure was unjust, and proposed that fair and reasonable fees be charged for all activities. The Kingsmere Property Owners' Association<sup>7</sup> even supported the idea of user fees for residents. Different payment options should be offered (day passes, seasonal passes, electronic systems, parking, etc.). Fees for cars should be a priority. Many of the people who were in favour of fees also felt the resulting revenues should be reinvested in the Park. The collection of fees from tourists and the federal government should be a priority.

Other participants expressed doubts as to the viability of user fees, given the investments and resources required (bureaucracy), which they felt would eat up any profits made. Because the Park is a public

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<sup>7</sup> Kingsmere Property Owners Association (KPOA), the association of Kingsmere Lake residents.



natural area, located close to population centres, with the mission of promoting public health, some participants thought public access should be free, and any form of user fee would be inappropriate. Regardless of the option chosen, free access for low-income households should be preserved.

#### The NCC's Position

*The proposal concerning user fees (Chapter 5.3.6.7) has been maintained. The comments and suggestions made will be taken into consideration when it is implemented, to ensure that the chosen solutions are fair. Further consultations will be held on this subject at the appropriate time.*

### LEGAL STATUS

#### Comments Received

Generally speaking, participants were in favour of clarifying the Park's legal status, although some found the formulation of this objective in the Plan to be somewhat ambiguous. Some organizations, including CPAWS, mentioned the need to grant the Park special legal status similar to that of a national park, and suggested that parks in other jurisdictions could be consulted in order to identify the legal tools available. Legal status was considered a priority for the Park's future and integrity. Some went so far as to say that the Park should be designated as a national park under the responsibility of Parks Canada. The general public should be informed of any changes made to the Park's legal status.

Some organizations, including the Meech Lake Association<sup>8</sup>, disagreed with the notion of a special legal status for the Park, arguing that the Park already has the powers it needs to ensure good management.

#### The NCC's Position

*The NCC agrees that the Park's legal and regulatory structure could be improved to ensure long-term protection of its environment and better management of the activities that take place within its boundaries. A number of options will be examined in the next year, as proposed in the Plan (Chapter 8.3.2).*

### RESOURCES

#### Comments Received

Generally speaking, regardless of whether they supported a conservation focus or a recreation focus, most of the organizations and individuals who took part in the consultations mentioned the lack of human and financial resources available for supervision and control of the Park and realization of the Plan. The lack of supervision appears to be particularly severe in the western portion of the Park. Participants felt a sufficient number of additional patrol officers or conservation officers was essential to enforce Park regulations and

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<sup>8</sup> The association of Meech Lake residents.

achieve the Plan's objectives. Ecowatch proposed a standard of two patrol officers per sector. The Plan should contain a commitment to increase the resources available for this function. A larger percentage of the Park's budget is required to control access points and informal activities to ensure protection of the Park.

#### The NCC's Position

*Chapter 5.3.6.6 of the Plan addresses these elements and stipulates the need for better control over visitor numbers. The resources available to fund the Plan's provisions are established by other NCC processes, including the Commissioning Plan and the annual budget planning exercise.*

### PRIVATE PROPERTY AND RESIDENTIAL USE

#### Comments Received

Some participants agreed with the private property acquisition strategy, saying that properties should be bought when they come up for sale, and suggesting the creation of a property purchase fund. As soon as they are purchased the properties should be demolished, not leased to tenants.

Others suggested that private properties immediately peripheral to the Park should be included in the acquisition strategy, in order to consolidate the Park's ecological links. Acquisition of the riparian properties around Meech Lake and Kingsmere Lake should also be a priority. Private property acquisition in general should be a priority for the next fifteen years. Some participants mentioned the need to halt residential development in the Park, especially at Meech Lake. The Park's planning and management process has lost its credibility as a result of the NCC's casualness towards private properties and new construction. It would be useful to work with the municipalities.

The Meech Lake Association felt the presence of a small number of residents in the Park would not compromise the NCC's vision or it's the management of the Park. The Kingsmere Lake residents, for their part, would like more information on the Park's acquisition priorities and subject properties. The custodial role played by residents of the residential enclaves in the Park should be addressed in more detail in the Plan.

#### The NCC's Position

*The NCC maintains that it is important to pursue the long-term goal of acquiring all land within the Park's boundaries. It would prefer to acquire properties by mutual agreement, in accordance with the priorities identified in Chapter 6.2.1. However, the Plan has been adjusted to better situate this proposal within the text as a whole by adding a statement about acquisition in section 5.3.6.1. This proposal is extremely important as a means of controlling the Park as a whole and ensuring its sustainability. The text of the Plan has also been amended to acknowledge the role that could be played by residents in protecting the Park (5.3.5.10).*

## RESEARCH

### Comments Received

The Park's natural environment, recreation and heritage elements have not been sufficiently researched. Participants supported the creation of an advisory committee composed of scientists, to work on the Park's research strategy.

### The NCC's Position

*Chapter 5.3.6.4 of the Plan acknowledges the importance of consulting experts in order to better identify specific environmental, recreational and heritage issues. Research is also addressed in the proposals (5.3.2.14, 5.3.4.9, 5.3.5.10 and 5.3.6.5).*

## 5.3.2.7 COMMUNICATION AND NATIONAL SYMBOLISM

### GAMELIN TOWER

#### Comments Received

Some individuals and organizations, including CPAWS, objected to the construction of an observation tower at the Gamelin reception area. Many felt this project was contrary to the environmental protection focus expressed in the Plan, and no research has been done to confirm the need for additional services or structures. The investment required by the tower would be put to better use in conservation initiatives.

Promotion of the Park as a tourist destination should be limited.

#### The NCC's Position

*The Gamelin reception area will become strategically more important once McConnell Laramée has been built, providing a more direct landscaped access route from the Capital Core. Gamelin will be one of the best sites for interpretation activities and programs aimed at making the Canadians know the importance of natural spaces. This aspect is of direct relevance to the NCC's mandate as defined in the National Capital Act. The role played by Gatineau Park and the NCC in the Capital, in terms of the protection of natural environment and recognition of the country's international commitments and its involvement in environmental protection, deserves to be more widely known. The distribution of information on Park activities will also be an important activity at the Gamelin reception area. The proposal referring specifically to the observation tower has been removed, but may be reassessed when the Gamelin Visitor Reception area is analyzed in more detail.*

## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

### Comments Received

The individuals and organizations involved in outdoor activities in the Park (e.g. Alpine Club of Canada) and environmental organizations (e.g. CPAWS) felt there is a lack of public consultation and

transparency in the decision-making and management process. Users' groups and the general public should be involved more closely in the management (e.g. control, supervision, etc.) and planning of the Park. Greater use should be made of voluntary work. Communications and cooperative initiatives with users and partners (e.g. municipalities, the OBNL, associations) should be improved, and users and partners alike should be more involved. A Park users' committee is being proposed.

More use could be made of the NCC website to circulate research results and other information to users' groups and partners.

#### The NCC's Position

*The NCC intends to intensify its efforts to increase opportunities for public discussion and involvement. Some of the Plan's proposals reflect this intention – for example, 5.3.3.5, 5.3.3.6, 5.3.3.7 and 5.3.3.9. The existing opportunities for meetings, combined with the Plan's proposals, are believed to be sufficient in increasing the involvement of Park users.*

#### INTERPRETATION

##### Comments Received

Some participants asked for more resources to be allocated to the interpretation program. Efforts should focus on brochures rather than kiosks, boards and so on, which, according to environmental organizations such as CPAWS, would require additional support structures but would not necessarily achieve the desired educational goal. Others, however, were in favour of maintaining interpretation services at their current level, with no new investments.

A shuttle service focused on the interpretation of the Park should be set up for the elderly.

#### The NCC's Position

*The Plan highlights the importance of communicating with visitors and improving their knowledge of the Park's natural and cultural resources. Indeed, communication and transmission of knowledge is one of the five functions identified for the Park. The educational role is associated with the NCC's national mandate of helping visitors to discover and enjoy the country's wealth. Some of the Plan's proposals refer to this element, notably in section 5.3.5, but also in section 5.3.4. The Plan has been amended in order to better structure the notion of interpretation, among other things by adding a statement concerning the updating of the interpretation plan to ensure that it is directed towards the priorities identified in the Master Plan, and to help educate visitors about the importance of conserving the Park's natural and cultural resources (Chapter 8.6.6). The specific communication and interpretation methods to be used for this purpose will be selected individually for each project.*

*The question of the shuttle has been addressed under the "Roads and Transportation" heading. The above proposal will be examined in the Green Transportation Plan proposed in Chapter 8.3.3.*

## SIGNAGE

### Comments Received

Several participants mentioned the need to improve the signage relating to trails and other elements of the Park (location, direction, interpretation).

The trails should have identifying names related to the Park's history, instead of numbers.

### The NCC's Position

*This comment is already addressed in the Plan, mainly in the sector proposals and especially in the Gateway Sector section.*

*The possibility of naming the trails will be considered, if appropriate, in light of the Interpretation Plan.*

## 5.3.2.8 IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

### ZONING

#### Comments Received

1. The list of activities allowed in conservation zones C1 and C2 should be clarified. Users' groups such as the *Ottawa Rambling Club* and the *Rideau Trail Association* consider that access to zones C1 and C2 should be authorized in order to allow for a "wilderness" experience (low-impact use). In contrast, other participants felt tighter supervision and control of access to these zones would be appropriate, in view of their conservation objective. The conservation zones should be extended northwards.

Visitor experiences and level of services should be established for each of these zones.

2. The entire shore of La Pêche Lake, except the recreational area in the east, should be designated to conservation.
3. The "Agro-tourism/Conservation" zone should be changed to a conservation zone.
4. The "Reception" zones should be reduced in size, in favour of conservation zones.  
The "Extensive Recreation" zones near Eardley and in the Parkway sector should become conservation zones.
5. Fishing should be prohibited in Kingsmere Lake (zone R1).
6. Prohibited access should be the exception, not the rule.
7. The "Institutional" zoning designation acknowledges the existence of educational facilities, but does it allow for it to be extended, or merely maintained in its present condition?

#### The NCC's Position

1. *The informal trails will be eliminated in order to protect natural habitats, as stipulated in Chapter 5.3.1.8 and the sector-based proposals. On the other hand, individual off-trail hiking will be*

*permitted in all zones, including zones C1 and C2, as long as repetitive use by hikers does not result in permanent damage or marks, and provided no other contra-indications are identified (e.g. wildlife habitats requiring protection). This is set out in zoning tables C1 and C2.*

*The Plan establishes the type of experience sought by visitors and the level of service objectives in the zone tables.*

- 2. The extensive recreation area around La Pêche Lake corresponds to the space required for canoe-camping activities, and has been maintained. If the Conservation Plan identifies this area as a significant ecosystem, certain modifications may be recommended.*
- 3. Development of the Meech Creek Valley as a site that is representative of the region's past rural and farming activity is a valid goal and one the NCC intends to pursue, in collaboration with the Chelsea municipality, as a way of fulfilling its mandate. The zone designation has been maintained, included in the area plan, areas set aside for the conservation of natural areas, the preservation of cultural landscapes and the development of ecotourism.*
- 4. Three "Reception" zones have been identified: Gamelin, Chelsea and Philippe Lake. They will offer reception and general interpretation services, along with certain support services (e.g. sanitary facilities). The "Extensive Recreation" zone situated near the Eardley road encompasses the farmland located at the foot of the Escarpment, through which a horse trail runs. The Plan proposes to maintain this activity. The "Extensive Recreation" zone in the Parkway sector includes virtually all the Park's trails. The Plan proposes to concentrate trails in this sector in order to preserve the Heart of the Park sector, where only less intensive and less structured activities will be permitted.*
- 5. Fishing falls under provincial jurisdiction (Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec).*
- 6. Although Gatineau Park is a conservation park, and considering its mission is to welcome Canadians and visitors and help them discover Canada's natural environment, access bans are considered to be the exception, not the rule, even in the conservation zones. Access will be prohibited in certain circumstances, to protect sensitive habitats or rehabilitate specific natural areas. The proposal has therefore been maintained.*
- 7. The "Institutional" zone designation acknowledges the existence of the buildings, and allows for the possibility of extensions or new buildings in compliance with the 1975 agreement between the NCC and the Québec government concerning part of the zone.*

#### ACCEPTABILITY MATRIX

##### Comments Received

Some participants questioned the absence of the acceptability matrix.

Others felt the process to determine the compatibility of uses should be transparent.

### The NCC's Position

*Under the National Capital Act, the NCC has the power to approve any land use changes and modifications to buildings on federal land. Regulations and internal procedures are put in place to support this legal obligation. A new matrix-based decision support tool will be examined once the Master Plan has been approved, to help make decisions on the new activities and land uses in conformity with the Plan and the zoning regulations. The NCC makes a commitment, in the Plan, to consult the general public on any proposed amendments to the Master Plan.*

## 5.3.2.9 SECTORS

### GATEWAY SECTOR

#### Comments Received

Some individuals and organizations were concerned about the preservation of natural environments in the Gateway Sector, in view of the proposed McConnell-Laramée Boulevard and its impact on ecosystems. It was felt that very little had been done in the Plan to conserve the Gateway Sector.

Others felt this southern sector should be treated as an urban park with unlimited access.

The Lac des Fées amphitheatre should be closed.

### The NCC's Position

*The NCC approved McConnell-Laramée taking into account its importance for regional development. Following numerous studies and consultations, this particular route was identified to have the least impact, but it will nevertheless result in some fragmentation of natural environments. A large number of mitigation measures will, of course, be applied. The Gateway Sector is the portion of the Park located closest to the city, and is thus the most sought-after for urban recreational activities. The NCC maintains the proposal to keep this sector as part of the Capital's conservation park, and sees several opportunities for it to play its role by advertising the natural environment and Canada's environmental protection commitments and by offering more services at the Gamelin entrance gate. One of the most important proposals for this sector is that relating to the closure and renaturalization of informal trails.*

*The Plan has been amended to state that the use of the Lac des Fées amphitheatre will be reassessed to bring it into line with the Park's mission.*

### PARKWAY SECTOR

#### Comments Received

The range of permitted uses should be limited, and no new uses should be authorized. The approach applied to the Mackenzie-King Estate is too tourist-oriented, and threatens to destroy the Estate's character. Conservation efforts should be made in a greater portion of

the Estate. Other participants agreed with the proposed approach (commemorative integrity statement), but suggested the inclusion of a detailed program for the Estate's landscape and tree elements. In addition, the reception area and parking lot should be monitored to assess the impact of the new road and establish the optimal capacity of the parking lot.

Pink Lake should be included in the integral conservation zone.

The Carbide Willson ruins are already overused, and no additional use should be permitted.

Parking lot P12 at Meech Lake should be closed at 11 p.m. (Meech Residents' Association).

Vehicular traffic should be banned from the Fortune Parkway between the Ridge parking lot and Dunlop Road, and on the Gatineau Parkway loop, north of Meech Road.

No new recreational link should be developed between Meech Lake and the Meech Creek Valley.

#### The NCC's Position

*The "Extensive Recreation" zone in the Parkway Sector includes most of the Park's trail network. The Plan proposes to concentrate trails in this sector in order to preserve the Heart of the Park, where only less intensive, less structured activities are permitted. A study has been carried out on the Mackenzie-King Estate concerning a management strategy to ensure conservation of the cultural landscape. This strategy is based on a commemorative integrity statement. It will structure all future work on the Estate, including improvements to the parking lot and the visitor reception area. The Estate is clearly a part of the NCC's mandate, and provides an excellent opportunity to showcase this portion of Canada's history and Mackenzie King's contribution to the creation of the Park.*

*An "Extensive Recreation" zone has been designated around Pink Lake to take into account the trail that surrounds it. The trail allows visitors to discover the Lake's ecological importance, along with amenities put in place to preserve the natural environment.*

*Development of the Carbide Willson ruins will help inform Canadians about the history, genius and achievements of this major figure in Canada's industrial history who lived in the Capital Region and left his mark on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The proposal reflects the objective of conserving and developing the Park's cultural and national heritage.*

*The suggestion to close the parking lot and part of the Fortune Parkway will be examined in the Green transportation Plan.*

*The recreational trail between Meech Lake and the Meech Creek Valley already exists and is part of the Transcanadian Trail.*



## PHILIPPE LAKE CRESCENT SECTOR

### Comments Received

Some participants disagreed with the proposal to further promote the sector's historical, agricultural, industrial and political heritage, in order to avoid increasing user numbers to unacceptable levels.

The size of the reception zone should be reduced in favour of the conservation zone.

### The NCC's Position

*Development of the Meech Creek Valley (which is in this Sector) as a site that represents the region's past rural and farming activity is a goal that the NCC will pursue in collaboration with the Chelsea municipality, as a way of fulfilling its mandate.*

## HEART OF THE PARK SECTOR

### Comments Received

The sector should continue to be conservation-oriented.

No additional signage should be installed at Mud Lake, and the proposed reception area at Luskville should not be developed.

The Prime Minister's cottage at Mousseau Lake should be moved to a peripheral area of the Park.

### The NCC's Position

*The sector's principal focus will continue to be conservation. However, where opportunities exist to educate Canadians and visitors about specific natural environments located close to existing trails, including the Mud Lake environment, the NCC believes it is important to notify this fact, in a way that is tailored to the environment.*

*The proposal concerning the Luskville reception point states that a more specific analysis of the needs and context must be carried out in order to establish whether or not a new reception point would be appropriate.*

*The NCC maintains and supports the presence of the Prime Minister's cottage as a contribution to the Park's national symbolic function.*

## LA PÊCHE LAKE SECTOR

### Comments Received

Some participants thought the proposed La Pêche Lake interpretation centre should not be built, while others thought it should be built on the east shore, not the west.

The extensive recreation zone south of Wolf Lake should become a conservation zone.

### The NCC's Position

*The proposed La Pêche Lake interpretation centre would be housed in an existing building, the Haven Centre, which is a former fishing camp. It would be accessed by boat only. The text of the Plan has been clarified accordingly.*

*The Wolf Lake extensive recreation zone has been rezoned as an integral conservation zone.*

### 5.3.3 OMNIBUS SURVEY

An opinion poll was administered on behalf of the NCC, to residents of the National Capital Region between November 22 and 28, 2004, on the subject of Gatineau Park. Some 503 people answered the four poll questions (see Appendix 7). The poll had a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4\%$  and 95% reliability.

The poll revealed that:

- 80% of respondents believe strongly or very strongly that the Park helps make the National Capital Region unique;
- 75% of respondents agree strongly or very strongly that the NCC should place stringent controls on activities known to have negative impacts on the Park's natural environment (e.g. rock climbing on Eardley Escarpment, off-trail mountain biking);
- 95% of respondents agree strongly or very strongly that, if an activity threatens the protection of rare or endangered species or other significant elements, the NCC should fulfill its duty as a responsible manager by prohibiting the activity or relocating it in a more appropriate place;
- 83% of respondents agreed strongly or very strongly that the NCC should increase its efforts to raise public awareness of the Park's importance as a natural environment.

This results, as those from the public consultation sessions, were taken into account in the final version of the Plan.

## 5.4 MUNICIPAL CONSULTATION

The final draft of the Master Plan was presented to the Gatineau, La Pêche, Chelsea and Pontiac Municipal Councils, for comments and opinions. All the municipalities supported the notion of a mission for the Park focused on conservation and the welcome of Canadians and other visitors, but expressed some reservations concerning specific or local elements of the Plan. The following pages set out the main comments made by the individual municipalities on the Plan's various strategic objectives.

## ENVIRONMENT

### City of Gatineau

- The Plan should clearly indicate the ecological links to be protected, including the one at the Moore Farm. Specific protection means should also be identified (Gateway Sector).
- Where possible, lands adjoining the Park and belonging to the Federal government (e.g. the Champlain corridor) should be used in priority before private property to maintain buffer zones and ecological links.

### Municipality of Chelsea

- The Larrimac golf course should be a recognized ecological link to the Park.
- The Park is a valuable natural environment, and municipal land management policies help preserve it (e.g. minimum subdivision standards).
- In the Meech Creek Valley, there is a need to investigate the environmental impacts of farm animals, along with any remedial measures that may be required, especially along Meech Creek. Ideally, the study should take the form of a comparative assessment of the impacts of cattle farming versus arable farming.
- The municipality invites the NCC to join its task force on watersheds, to help preserve the hydric system.

### Municipality of Pontiac

- The environmental impacts of Camp Fortune were considered to be greater than those caused by some of the activities that will be banned in the Park (e.g. snowmobiling, rock climbing), and this is inconsistent with the Park's mission.

### The NCC's Position

*The goal of preserving significant ecosystems is still the one that will protect the Park in the long term as the Capital's conservation park, thus contributing to the NCC's mission. It is important to preserve ecological corridors, and this requires the cooperation of partners such as the municipalities for land not owned by the NCC. The Moore Farm, the Champlain corridor and the Larrimac golf course have all been identified as ecological corridors.*

*Compatible and respectful recreational activities continue to be welcomed in the Park. However, the Park cannot meet all the recreational needs of the entire regional population. The enhancement of heritage and history of the Meech Creek Valley continue to be desirable.*

## RECREATION

### City of Gatineau

- Recreational and sports activities such as the Keskinada Loppet should continue to be held in the Park.

### Municipality of Chelsea

- The Plan should encourage cross-country skiing by proposing the creation of a cross-country skiers' meeting point. The Chelsea municipality and the Canadian Ski Museum could be partners in this initiative.
- There should be a hiking trail through the Park to connect the Hollow Glen sector and Chelsea village centre. The trail between the Larrimac golf course and Meech Lake should be kept.
- The parkways should be closed to vehicular traffic for longer periods on Sundays, so that visitors can enjoy the Park unhindered by cars, and also to encourage non-motorized activities.
- Visitor numbers at some recreational facilities now exceed their carrying capacity. Blanchette beach should be closed.

### Municipality of Pontiac

- The Plan should permit snowmobiling in the Park, or if not, it should propose alternative snowmobile trails. Some dedicated trails should also be created for quad bikes; this would help control their presence in the Park.
- Rock climbing should be allowed at certain sites, and climbers should be given information on the site's ecosystems.
- An interpretation centre could be built at the bottom of the Escarpment, on a site recently sold by the NCC. Rock climbing activities could be concentrated here.

### Municipality of La Pêche

- All existing snowmobile trails should be maintained because of their economic importance and their strategic importance to the network. Access to the trails should be controlled rather than banned.

### The NCC's Position

*Compatible and respectful recreational activities continue to be welcomed in the Park. However, the Park cannot meet all the recreational needs of the entire regional population. Partners should develop recreational activities at other sites, to relieve pressure on the Park. Motorized activities are not acceptable in the Park, and some activities with serious impacts on fragile natural environments will have to be moved to other sites. The role of the Park as a component of the Capital region and its contribution to the NCC's mission, have both been emphasized in the Master Plan. This orientation will require certain changes in priorities, with the conservation function taking first*

*place. Interpretation programs will help promote this function by conveying information on Canada's natural and cultural environments.*

## REGIONAL INTEGRATION

### City of Gatineau

- The Park's contribution to the region's sustainable development should take into account other planning documents and the political positions taken by elected authorities.
- The City is against the proposal to close portion of Gamelin Street between the Parkway and the Lac-des-Fées sector.
- The City does not agree with the proposal to remove the corridor planned for the Highway 550 bypass that has been in the Region's Transportation Plan for 30 years.
- The NCC is invited to evaluate, with the City of Gatineau and the STO, the possibility to develop a public transit corridor, along the emergency access road that links Saint-Raymond Boulevard to Gamelin Street.

### Municipality of Chelsea

- The Visitor Centre reception area at Chelsea contributes to the vitality of the village centre, and to the village's identity. The village centre is a gateway to the Park, and the municipality, in conjunction with the NCC, would like to make it attractive for visitors. The issues raised by the presence of vehicular traffic in the village must, however, be considered.
- Feasibility studies concerning the introduction of shuttles to access the Park from the village could be carried out in conjunction with the municipality, with the goal of reducing vehicular traffic in the Park.
- The function of the O'Brien House should be established in conjunction with an advisory committee composed of Meech Lake residents, the Chelsea municipality and the NCC.
- The NCC should consider existing and future municipal trail networks in its planning.
- The NCC should consult the Ministère des Transports du Québec in order to clarify the proposed location of the new Highway 50.
- The Green Transportation Plan is an excellent idea that has already been implemented by other parks throughout the world.

### Municipality of Pontiac

- Gatineau Parkway should be accessible from Notch Road.
- The NCC should join forces with the municipalities in local projects to develop potential attractions outside the Park – for example, in Quyon (beach, historic canal) with the Pontiac municipality.

### Municipality of La Pêche

- Parking lots could be built in neighbouring villages (e.g. La Pêche, Chelsea), and a Park shuttle service could be offered.
- The La Pêche municipality should be involved in planning the proposed secondary access point at Wakefield, since the roads around the Wakefield Mill Inn are already congested.

### The NCC's Position

*The Park's role in the region must be directed in future towards environmental protection. It may be possible to undertake cooperative initiatives with the municipalities, but the conservation mission and the mission of informing Canadians about their natural and cultural heritage must always be present. The NCC no longer wishes to replace the municipalities for the provision of local recreational services. The Green Transportation Plan will consider alternative means of transport that are consistent with environmental goals, and will also examine possible departure points for the shuttles and other transportation services. Discussions with the municipalities concerned will be held if and when such opportunities are identified.*

## HERITAGE

### Municipality of Chelsea

- The heritage elements of the Meech Creek Valley should be preserved and developed in partnership with the *Gatineau Historical Society*.

### Municipality of Pontiac

- The Farrell Farm site offers potential for interpretation.

### The NCC's Position

*Enhancement of heritage is one of the Plan's major strategic objectives. Collaborative initiatives through partnership agreements are mentioned in Chapter 5.3.5.11. A Heritage Conservation Plan will identify conservation and development objectives and priorities.*

## MANAGEMENT

### Municipality of Chelsea

- The custodial role of Park residents should be emphasized.
- Informal use of certain portions of the Park (e.g. Meech Lake island) causes problems for Chelsea residents.
- The Park has an impact on crime rates, which have increased in Chelsea.
- The introduction of a general user fee may have negative impacts (informal avoidance) and be difficult to apply, not to mention the considerable investments required. Voluntary contributions by users may be a less expensive, easier-to-implement alternative.

- Local residents in the sectors concerned should be consulted on the use and closure of informal trails.

#### Municipality of Pontiac

- A foundation should be created to finance the projects proposed in the Master Plan.
- A volunteer program for Park supervision and conservation work would be useful and would motivate the local population.
- Sites outside the Park could be advertised in the NCC's promotional kits, under partnership agreements.
- Partnerships between the NCC and organized clubs (e.g. snowmobiling) should be encouraged.

#### Municipality of La Pêche

- The partnership between the NCC and the La Pêche municipality needs to be improved.
- A percentage of the revenues generated by user fees should be paid to the municipality, because Park visitors use municipal roads.

#### The NCC's Position

*Consultations will be organized on the subject of user fees, at the appropriate time, to ensure that the choices made are as fair as possible. Management choices should reflect the functions and orientations set out in the Plan, by emphasizing the conservation of natural and cultural environments and the provision of information to Canadians.*

#### IMPLEMENTATION TOOL - ZONING

##### City of Gatineau

- There does not seem to be a connection between the ecological value and sensitivity of the zones and the functions and zoning designations proposed.
- Could "collective housing" be permitted in the institutional zone?
- Municipal leisure activities should be concentrated in the institutional zone and in the least ecologically sensitive areas of the Park.

##### Municipality of Chelsea

- Biological culture projects should be authorized and encouraged in the Meech Creek Valley.
- The NCC's land at the junction of Scott Road and Old Chelsea Road should be given a community function, so that it can be used for village celebrations and sports activities (soccer).

### The NCC's Position

*The zoning is based, in the first place, on the ecosystems. The proposal related to the integration of municipal recreational activities in the institutional zone along Cité-des-Jeunes Boulevard in the City of Gatineau is maintained. The biological culture projects are desirable in the Meech Creek Valley and according to the Plan proposals are feasible.*

### POLICY

#### City of Gatineau

- NCC should direct the land acquisition priority towards private lands located within the Park's limits and for which there is strong pressure for short term development, i.e. lands that are located along existing roadsides.

### The NCC's Position

*The policy on land acquisition identifies the criteria for the prioritization of land acquisition. The lands subject to short term development within the boundaries of the Park are part of the land acquisition priorities.*



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## 6. CONCLUSION

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The purpose of the Gatineau Park Master Plan review is to update the Park's planning process and set guidelines for Park management in the period 2005 to 2015. In order to involve the public and take their opinions into account in the context of the Master Plan, consultations took place at each of the three phases of the project. Interest groups, community associations, residents, municipalities and staff as well as NCC Advisory Committees were part of the process.

In the first phase (2001-2002), 11 workshops were attended by more than 50 target groups. The workshops helped refine the diagnosis of the Park's current status and identify the main issues to be considered in the review. The meetings highlighted some major concerns from the last decade, including growing user numbers, increase in the fragmentation of Park habitats, pressure on natural environments, urban development around the Park, the lack of resources and so on. Preliminary strategies, each with a different level of conservation, were devised and submitted to interest groups as well as NCC personnel and Committee members.

In the second phase (2002-2003), public consultations were organized in order to present more detailed preliminary strategies for the six priority areas selected, namely environment, recreation, regional integration, heritage, management and communication. More than 120 people attended one of two evening sessions held in the fall of 2002, at which the issues and proposals were presented. The consultations were well attended by individuals and organizations, clearly illustrating the interest and importance of the Park for the National Capital Region. The participants felt that certain priority actions should be included in the Plan, such as the need for better control, an equitable user fee structure, better conservation of natural environments, compatible and respectful recreational activities, an appropriate legal status, heritage conservation and enhancement, greater awareness of Park values, and more involvement by user groups, organizations and municipalities. In short, it was proposed that the NCC should ensure the conservation of the Park's natural environments while maintaining recreational activities compatible with this objective. Two workshops with interest groups and target organizations were then held in 2003 to analyze and improve the content of the preliminary proposals.

In the third phase (2003-2004), a final round of public consultations was organized in October 2004, to present the final draft of the Master Plan. Nearly 500 people attended one of the two evening sessions at which the Plan's proposals were presented. A substantial amount of documentation was provided, along with a questionnaire. Almost 250 written submissions were sent to the NCC on different aspects of the Plan. An opinion poll was conducted in November 2004 among a sample of 500 NCR residents. User groups, environmental organizations and the region's residents were mostly in favour of the Plan's general orientation towards better conservation of natural environments in order to ensure the Park's sustainability.

Many participants, however, questioned the validity of proposals relating to ban or limit activities considered detrimental to the environment or to the quality of the recreational experience in the Park, including rock climbing, snowmobiling and mountain biking. Low-impact self-propelled activities and environmental education were considered compatible with the Park's mission. The Plan's proposals relating to ecological links, user fees, legal status, sufficient resources, partnerships, research, and additional planning or implementation mechanisms (e.g. Conservation Plan, Green Transportation Plan, etc.) were welcomed. Some participants considered the objective of positioning the Park as the Capital's conservation park to be unrealistic, while others felt it would be preferable to position the Park as a natural protected area within the national network. In short, the final draft of the Master Plan was favourably received, in spite of disagreements on how to control use in line with the Park's mission, and the need for minor improvements to clarify certain concepts (e.g. respectful recreation).

Many people welcomed and thanked the NCC for the opportunity to participate. The input provided by the interest groups, the general public and the municipalities has been extremely important and valuable to the evolution of this planning process. The ideas, comments and dedication to this exercise clearly indicate a strong sense of commitment to this valuable treasure that we all want to enjoy and maintain for further generations.

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Bruno Del Degan, F.Eng., M. Sc.

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Claude Gagné, Urban Planner,  
OUQ, ICU

# APPENDIX 1

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LIST OF DETAILED BRIEFS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED  
FOLLOWING THE FIRST ROUND OF PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS IN  
FALL 2002

## LIST OF BRIEFS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM ORGANIZATIONS

1. Unité régionale de loisir et de sport de l'Outaouais (URLSO)
2. Outaouais Mountain Biking Advocates (OMBA)
3. Action pour la protection des forêts du Québec (APFQ)
5. Relais plein air du parc de la Gatineau et de la Keskinada Loppet (Title: Refuge global)
6. Transport 2000 Canada
7. Creative Wheel Consulting
8. Wakefield Mill Developments Inc. (WMD)
10. National Capital Mountain Biking Association (NCMBA)
11. Cross-country Canada – National Capital District
12. Regional Council on the Environment and the Development of the Outaouais (CREDDO)
14. The Alpine Club of Canada
15. Club Skinouk
16. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
17. Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec
18. Ottawa Regional Skijoring Club
19. Meech Lake Association
20. Eco-Watch
21. Chelsea XC Ski Club

In addition, 18 individuals submitted comments in the form of briefs or formal texts.

# APPENDIX 2

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QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE FIRST ROUND OF PUBLIC  
CONSULTATIONS, 2002

# Gatineau Park Master Plan Review

## Public Consultation

### 1 Summary of Issues and Proposed Strategies

The NCC has undertaken a review of the 1990 Master Plan following the adoption of the *Plan for Canada's Capital, 1999*, which establishes policy statements for the Park and identifies it as one of the Capital's natural heritage areas.

In the first phase of the review, analyses and consultations with interest groups have helped identify some important issues for the Park's strategic priorities, namely the natural environment, recreation, regional integration, heritage and management. The principal issues are:

- ❖ A lack of means, reference points and knowledge with which to identify the Park's overall conditions, in order to ensure the sustainability of its natural systems;
- ❖ An increase in Park use and its impacts on the possibility of maintaining a quality recreational experience;
- ❖ The proximity of urban and rural communities, the growing demand for a range of different uses in the Park, and their impacts on its integrity;
- ❖ A reduction in the role of interpretation and the consequences for the Park's mission of raising public awareness about heritage conservation and development;
- ❖ The absence of certain management tools, including a formal status for the Park, control over the territory and access points, user fees, etc.
- ❖ The impacts of budget cutbacks.

The NCC has prepared three strategies for each strategic priority, with a view to directing the Park's vision in accordance with the *Plan for Canada's Capital* and involving the public in the selection process. Each strategy comprises a set of solutions offering an approach of a certain intensity, ranging from maximum preservation (A strategies) to preservation of the existing conditions (C strategies), via maximum preservation in certain target zones (B strategies). The solutions and statements explaining the various strategies are presented in detail in the Phase 1 summary document, available in PDF format on the NCC's website. A one-line summary of the solutions proposed for each strategic priority is given below.

The natural environment: ecosystem sustainability

- Strategy A Maximum preservation of ecosystems
- Strategy B Maximum preservation of targeted ecosystems
- Strategy C Preservation of existing conditions in natural environments

Recreation: quality of the recreational experience

- Strategy A A wilderness experience and educational ecotourism
- Strategy B A wilderness experience combined with a controlled recreational and tourist experience
- Strategy C A recreational and tourist experience in a natural environment

Regional integration: contribution to sustainable development

- Strategy A A national conservation park in the Capital
- Strategy B A national park dedicated partly to conservation and partly to recreation
- Strategy C A national natural park in the Capital

Heritage: the Capital's inheritance

- Strategy A Preservation of heritage integrity
- Strategy B Preservation of the Capital's heritage
- Strategy C Preservation of the Park's acknowledged heritage

Management: A strategic tool

- Strategy A Global approach to conservation management
- Strategy B Conservation-oriented management
- Strategy C Management geared towards environmental protection

The NCC would like to receive comments from NCR residents and all Canadians on the strategic solutions most likely to ensure a sustainable future for Gatineau Park. If you wish to express your preferences and views, please answer the attached questionnaire.

In the next phase of the review process, a management concept will be prepared, based among other things on the results of public consultations relating to the proposed strategies.

## 2 Response and Comment Form

The purpose of this form is to obtain comments and responses from participants on the issues identified and strategies proposed by the NCC for the Revised Gatineau Park Master Plan. The response form contains six questions, the last of which allows you to state which of the proposed strategies you prefer.

### Questionnaire

1. Do you think it would be preferable, for the future of the Park, to emphasize maximum preservation of natural environments, even if this means cutting back on the number and type of recreational activities permitted in the Park?

If so, which activities do you think should be reconsidered or cut back, and where?

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2. Do you think it would be preferable, for the future of the Park, to increase recreational use in certain sectors of the Park?

If so, which activities do you think should be added, and in which sectors?

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- 3. Do you think it would be preferable, for the future of the Park, to emphasize the Park’s national scope and national aspect, in spite of its regional context, in order to ensure its conservation?

If so, how do you think this should be done?

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- 4. Do you think it would be preferable, for the future of the Park, to make a greater contribution to the economic and social development of the Capital?

If so, how do you think this should be done? If not, what position(s) should be taken?

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- 5. In your opinion, which recreational uses are the most appropriate for the Park? Which are the least appropriate?

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6. Which of the strategies presented is most likely to secure a desirable future for the Park?

For each strategic priority, place an X in the box corresponding to the strategy you prefer.

	<b>A Strategy</b>	<b>B Strategy</b>	<b>C Strategy</b>
Natural environment			
Recreation			
Regional integration			
Heritage			
Management			

The NCC thanks you for your interest and participation in the Gatineau Park Master Plan Review.

Response forms may be left on the reception table at the entrance, returned by January 15 to the following address, or faxed (by the same date) to the following number:

# APPENDIX 3

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LIST OF GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT ATTENDED THE  
WORKSHOPS ON JUNE 16 AND 17, 2003

### Chelsea Visitor Centre

<u>Workshop of June 16, 2003</u>	<u>Workshop of June 17, 2003</u>
Marc Fortin, Collines-de l'Outaouais Local Development Centre	Alison Woodley, Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment
Jean Claude Guay, Unité régionale de loisir et de sport de l'Outaouais	Steven Montgomery, Alpine Club Ottawa
Isabelle Léger, Unité régionale des loisir et de sport de l'Outaouais	Antoine Chabot, Association deltaplane
Bruce Campbell, Mayor of Pontiac	Brian Middlemiss, Association des motoneigiste du Pontiac
Michel Bélanger, Planning Coordinator, Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM	Marie-Elaine Rouleau, Coalition pour la survie du parc de la Gatineau
Daniel Le Pape, Urban Planner, City of Gatineau	Muriel How, CPAWS
Stéphane Mougeot, Urban Planner, Municipality of Chelsea	Dominique Larocque, Creative Wheel Consulting
	Jacques Demers, CREDDO
	Ian Huggett, Ecowatch
	Joe Laberge, Ecowatch
	Bill Royds, Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
	Pascal Girard, Keskinada Loppett
	Louis-Marie Poissant, Friends of Gatineau Park
	Jean Hugues Martin, Multi-Trek
	Steve MacDonald, Ottawa Inline Skating Club
	Derek Medland, Outaouais Mountain Biking Advocates
	Stéphane Lévesque, Relais Plein-Air
	Marie-Andrée Charron, Relais Plein-Air
	Jim McCarthy, Ski Ontario - Cross-Country Canada
	Jacques Dumont, Skinouk and Relais Plein Air
	Michel Prévost, Société d'histoire de l'Outaouais
	Scott Findlay, Université d'Ottawa
	Gaetan Provencher, Vélo-route trans-Québec

### List of Associations Submitting Comments and Questionnaires

<b>Groups and Associations</b>
Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable (CREDDO)
Association des motoneigistes de Pontiac
Cross Country Canada, National Capital District (Ontario)
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society – OV Gatineau Park Committee
Friends of Gatineau Park

# APPENDIX 4

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LIST OF RADIO AND TELEVISION REPORTS AND ARTICLES  
PUBLISHED FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS OF  
OCTOBER 27 AND 28, 2004

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PERSON INVOLVED	SUMMARY
<u>October 14</u> 11:55: 90 sec. 15:45: 11 min. 16:56	CJRC	André Joly Annick Charette	J-R Doyon F. Lapointe	Forthcoming consultations Pressure on the Park Review Park zoning Conserve the Park's ecology
<u>October 14</u> 12:06: 20 sec.	CJOH	Michael O'Byrne	François Lapointe	User fees Increased conservation
<u>October 14</u> 12:12: 30 sec. 15:03: 1 min. 16:02 17:02 17:32	CFRA	Brian Lilly	L. Bureau J.R. Doyon	Snowmobiling & motor boats are out Focus on conservation End to motorized activities Public meetings coming up
<u>October 14</u>	CBO	Brent Brambury	Jean Langlois, CPAWS	Radical change and step in right direction Park as natural area first and recreation second Conservation zones in centre and recreation zones on borders of park
<u>October 14</u> 16:34 17:33	CBO	Carolyn Adolph	J.R. Doyon Jean Langlois	NCC unveiled 10 year plan Conservation focus Displacement of activities such as rock climbing NCC considers user fees to help pay for conservation efforts
<u>October 14</u> 15:30: 1 min.	CBOF	Rachel Gaulin Chantal Payant	L. Bureau	Limit activities with conservation in mind Fair user fees Green transportation
16:45	CBOF	Rachel Gaulin	Entr. L. Bureau	
<u>October 14</u> 18:16: 110 sec.	CJOH	Norm Fetterley	M. Comeau F. Lapointe Public	10 year development and conservation plan Possible entry fee Interviews at the Champlain Lookout with three people supporting user fees
<u>October 15</u> 6:35: 80 sec.	CBO	Sean Eckford	Jean Langlois	NCC applauded for master plan NCC should go further to obtain legal status
<u>October 15</u> 6:02: 30 sec.	CFRA	Norman Jack	J.R. Doyon	Elimination of powered rec sports NCC holding public meetings

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>October 15</u> 8:34: 50 sec.	CBO	Sean Eckford	J.R. Doyon	NCC new master plan to protect biodiversity Core of park protected with rec activities on the borders
<u>October 15</u> 7:02: 30 sec	CFRA	Norman Jack	L. Bureau	Ban snowmobiles and motor boats NCC says this move towards conservation is to allow park to survive in future
<u>October 15</u> 6:10: 25 sec. 6:46: 30 sec. 12:11: 25 sec.	New RO	Kurt Stoodley Jenna Fyfe Karen Solomon		Newspaper headline NCC plan proposed user fees and protecting biodiversity Banning motor boats and snowmobiles
<u>October 15</u> 5:49: 65 sec. 6:18: 40 sec.	CJRC	Eric Tremblay	J.R. Doyon	Preserve ecological balance in the Park
<u>October 15</u> 8:29: 7:05 min. 8:56	CJRC	Daniel Séguin	M. Comeau	The Park's fragile balance Banned activities to include snowmobiling Listeners' comments
<u>October 15</u> 7:34: 50 sec.	CBOF	Pascale-Marie Dufour		Protect the Park Fewer activities
<u>October 15</u> 17:31: 101 sec.	CFGS	Pierre Donais		Snowmobiling to be banned in the Park
<u>October 15</u> 17:35: 4 min.	CBOFT	Michel Picard	L. Bureau	Master Plan Consultations Ban pollutant activities such as snowmobiling to preserve the Park
<u>October 15</u>	Le Droit	Charles Thériault	M. Comeau Sophie Jacob of the MTQ Sylvain Marchand, Ass. des motoneige de l'Outaouais	Snowmobiling banned in the Park Motorboats, rock climbing and mountain biking may be banned Focus on conservation and eliminate pollutant activities Distribute costs among users Keep the 50 out Consultations

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>October 15</u>	Ottawa Citizen	Patrick Dare	Editorial	Saving park a worthy goal NCC doing right thing but public will be sceptical Emphasis on conservation Credibility problem when it comes to roads – support for McConnell Laramée, why is NCC allowing road when visitor growth is an issue NCC needs to be more specific to show evidence of why certain activities need to be moved or banned Fee should be reasonable and exempt foot or cycling traffic, need serious discussion
<u>October 15</u> With map showing recreational and conservation areas	Ottawa Citizen	Dave Rogers	L. Bureau J.R. Doyon M. Comeau	Restrict park use Higher fees, new fees Ban or move recreational activities Reduce cars Park used first for conservation, then for recreation Public consultations
<u>October 16</u>	Le Droit	Charles Thériault	Pierre Gravel of the Alpine Club of Canada, Ottawa Valley section Louise Poirier	Climbers insulted Climbers have used the Park since 1940 and respect the environment Climbers could be custodians of the Park Alternative solutions needed for rock climbing and mountain biking
<u>October 16</u>	Le Droit	Pierre Bergeron	Editorial	Visitor reception Conservation function Primary function to welcome people, wildlife and plant life Measures required to ensure the Park's sustainability Is the threat really that big? Action taken, but beware of a ban-based culture that puts people off the Park Park's mission clear: to welcome visitors Challenge is to maintain a balance between the Park's various functions User fees should be reasonable Take part in the public consultations
<u>October 18</u>	CKCU Radio	Dana Christiansen	L. Bureau	General orientations of the Plan User fees



DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>October 18</u>	Low Down to Hull and Back	Ian Lordon	L. Bureau	Plan's orientations User Fees, Motorized activities Escalade, Zoning
<u>October 19</u>	Ottawa Citizen		Letter to the Editor	Support for the Plan's general orientation
<u>October 19</u>	Charlatan	Karen Pinchen	L Bureau	Plan's general orientations User fees
<u>October 20</u>	Citizen	Noel Taylor	Editorial Column	High fees would ruin Gatineau Park Pink Lake path closure questioned Has never seen a patroller
<u>October 20</u>	Citizen	Tara Robertson	Letter to the Editor	Keep fees low for students.
<u>October 20 and October 22</u>	Aylmer Bulletin West Quebec Post	Ian Huggett	L. Bureau	GP to restrict snowmobiles, rock climbing, highways General comments on Plan's comments Accent conservation
<u>October 25</u>	Citizen	Ian Huggett	Editorial	Independent field audit by Eco Watch Illegal or unauthorized activities in the park in western area of park Need for more conservation officers Boundaries of the park Woodlots and possible cutting of trees in the park NCC now focusing on safeguarding the park
<u>October 25</u>	Rogers 23	Martine Bolduc	L. Bureau	Plan's general orientations Mountain biking
<u>October 26</u>	Citizen	Meaghan King	Letter with photo	Educating climbers more sensible than ban Questions research on impact of activity on the Escarpment Most climbers are conscious of environment Park should educate climbers
<u>October 27</u>	CBOFT	Nathalie Tremblay	Annie Gaudreault Alpine Club of Canada	Climbers want to work with the NCC
<u>October 27</u>	CJRC			NCC will hold public consultations
<u>October 27</u>	CBOF			NCC will hold public consultations. Plan proposed by NCC would limit certain activities, including rock climbing. Measures introduced for ecological reasons.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSULTATIONS

October 27 – Gatineau

David Savoie, Le Droit  
Photographe, Le Droit  
Daniel Drolet, The Citizen  
Tanya Lapointe, CBOFT  
Alain D'Entremont, CBOF

October 28 – Ottawa

Corinna Roman, CBO Radio  
Anna Maria Tabunar, CJOH  
Camera, The New RO  
Mike Ceasar, The Low Down to Hull and Back

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>October 27</u>	CBOFT	Tanya Lapointe	François Lapointe	Consultations this evening Focus on conservation
<u>October 28</u>	Le Droit	David Savoie	L. Bureau Sylvain Marchand	NCC defends its plan Snowmobiling and rock climbing Rock climbing group would like better dialogue with the NCC Ecological groups support the Plan
<u>October 28</u>	CFRA	Shelly Maclean Norm Jack	News	NCC to hold public meeting tonight Snowmobilers and rock climbers say they have no impact
<u>October 28</u>	CJRC	Eric Tremblay		At the public consultations, a hundred or so people severely criticized the Gatineau Park Master Plan Review presented by the NCC.
<u>October 28</u>	Citizen	Daniel Drolet	Pierre Gravel, Alpine Club of Canada Sylvain Marchand, Snowmobile Club Bruno Del Degan J.R. Doyon	NCC under fire at consultations, mostly from snowmobilers and rock climbers Environmental impact of activities NCC not working with these groups
<u>October 28</u>	CJRC	Eric Tremblay	M. Comeau	Questions raised about Plan proposals, especially snowmobiling and the impacts of certain activities
<u>October 28</u>	CBOFT	Nathalie Tremblay		Yesterday evening, the National Capital Commission held its first public consultations on the future of Gatineau Park. The NCC wants to reduce the number of activities in the Park to protect the environment
<u>October 28</u>	New RO	Cory Adkins		A public consultation session on Gatineau Park was held at the Nature Museum Thursday evening. National Capital Commission are hoping to find a happy medium between those who have concerns about conservation and recreation enthusiasts
<u>October 28 and 29</u>	CJOH	Anna Maria Tabunar	M. Comeau Ian Huggett	The proposal for the preservation of Gatineau Park is coming under fire by recreational users. At a public meeting Thursday night, rock climbers were particularly vocal in their opposition to the plan. The report points out that NCC officials appeared to be short on answers.

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>October 29</u>	CBO	Corinna Roman	L. Bureau	NCC gets earful on Gatineau Park Master Plan Some want more conservation, others more recreation Snowmobile and rock climbers Natural trails – Chelsea resident Cumulative impact of activities and visits
<u>October 30</u>	Le Droit			Correction of steps following consultations
<u>October 31</u>	Citizen	Lettre	Art Campbell	Can't Share Trails People not respecting trail rules Have volunteers maintain trails
<u>October 31</u>	Citizen	Lettre	Douglas Cornish	Biggest Threat to Gatineau Park is housing Curb development in Park Monitor residential use, not visitors
<u>November 1</u>	CBO	Corinna Roman	L. Bureau	Environmentalists are questioning the NCC's ability to follow through with its master plan for Gatineau Park. Jean Langlois of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society says that the latest plan could be just another wish list for the park because the NCC's track record so far has proven that they either don't have the tools to enforce the rules, or the NCC just lacks the will. Lucie Bureau of the NCC says that it is just a matter of prioritizing what and when certain items and plans can be implemented.
<u>November 3</u>	Le Droit	Lettre	Bruce Campbell Mayor of Pontiac	Master Plan is a slap in the face for Pontiac
<u>November 5</u>	Citizen	Lettre	Andrew Craig	Move Martin's Cottage out of Gatineau Park and make land accessible

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>November 10</u>	Low Down to Hull and Back	Mike Ceasar	Bruno Del Degan Michel Viens Bruce Davidson (MEC) Bruce Robinson (Ontario Federation of Snowbilers) Bruce Campbell (Pontiac Mayor) Robert Bussière (La Pêche Mayor) Muriel How (CPAWS) Ian Huggett (Ecowatch)	NCC fields protest, praise over park plan Public consultations on Master Plan 25% more conservation in Park Capital's Conservation Park Issues were rock climbing, snowmobiling, and limiting urbanization of the park.
<u>November 10</u>	Low Down	Lettre	Jean-Paul Murray	NCC ignores own rules Questions sale of land parcels within GP and construction permits issued for private property in the Park
<u>November 12</u>	Le Droit	Lettre à M. Beaudry	Sylvain Marchand	Surprised by Plan's contents. Snowmobiling has changed in recent years Trails through the Park are important to the Ottawa Valley and Ontario networks Difficult to create new trails outside the Park Understands the NCC's goal of preserving the Park but asks it to reconsider the ban on snowmobiling
<u>November 12</u>	CJRC	Eric Tremblay		The Ottawa Valley section of the Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec criticizes the National Capital Commission's attitude
<u>November 19</u>	Citizen	Lettre	Andrew McDermott	NCC ignores its park policy Questions sale of land parcels within GP and construction permits issued for private property in the Park
<u>November 20</u>	CBOF	Alain D'Entremont		Opinion of public consultations. Reminder to send comments by November 30.

DATE	MEDIA	JOURNALIST	PEOPLE CONCERNED	SUMMARY
<u>November 24</u>	Low Down	Mike Ceasar	Lucie Bureau Jean-René Doyon	Demolition of houses in Meech Creek Valley Renaturalization of valley reaffirmed in 2005 Master Plan Meech Creek Valley Land Use Concept states 50% of land to be renaturalized Historical value of homes in valley evaluated by FHBRO
<u>November 24</u>	Low Down	Mike Ceasar	Jean-René Doyon	Critics slam NCC for new homes in Park Building permits issued by Chelsea for private properties NCC land acquisition within the park
<u>December 2</u>	Citizen	Letter	Francois Lapointe	Response to MacDermott Letter

# APPENDIX 5

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LIST OF GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS SUBMITTING COMMENTS  
OR BRIEFS FOR THE OCTOBER 2004 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

1. Eco Watch
2. Scott Findlay, Environmental Department, Ottawa University
3. The New Woodlands Preservation League
4. Kingsmere Property Owner Association
5. Meech Lake Association/ Association du Lac Meech
6. Ottawa Rambling Club
7. Rideau Trail Association
8. Skinouk and Relais plein air
9. National Capital Mountain Bike Association (NCMBA)
10. Cross-country Canada/National Capital District
11. Chelsea Nordiq
12. Fédération québécoise de la montagne
13. Scouts Canada, Rideau Area Scouting- Voyageur Council
14. College Algonquin- Outdoor Adventure Program
15. Club Alpin Canada
16. Gatineau Access and Conservation Working Group
17. Mountain Equipment Co-op
18. Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club
19. Ashton & District Snowmobile Association
20. Athens & District Snowmobile Association
21. Leeds and Grenville Snowmobile Association
22. Kemptville Snowmobile Club
23. Richmond Snow Rovers Snowmobile Club
24. Beautiful Eastern Association of Snowmobile Club
25. South Dundas Snowmobile Club
26. Nation Valley Snowmobile Association
27. Morrisburg Chapter for Snowrama
28. Girls on snow
29. Fédération des clubs de motoneigistes du Québec
30. Club Les Ours blancs
31. Association des motoneigistes de la vallée de la Nation inc.
32. Club des Voyageurs des Collines et Ravins
33. Club des maraudeurs inc.
34. Club Moto-neige Pingouin
35. Association des motoneigistes de la Vallées de Gatineau inc.
36. Club Motoneige Éclair de Pointe-Gatineau inc.
37. Tourisme Outaouais
38. CPAWS

Ministère des Transports du Québec

Municipality of Pontiac

Municipality of La Pêche

Municipality of Chelsea

City of Gatineau



# APPENDIX 6

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SIX-QUESTION QUESTIONNAIRE HANDED TO THE PUBLIC AT  
THE OCTOBER 2004 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

1-

Do you think the proposals are sufficient to ensure preservation of the Park and maintenance of recreational activities that are respectful of the environment (e.g. Conservation Plan)? Would you suggest any changes?

2-

Do you think the proposals will help Gatineau Park to play its role as the “Capital’s conservation park” while contributing to the sustainable development of the region (e.g. partnerships, complementary role in the region, interpretation)? Can you think of any other actions that might be envisaged?

3-

Do you think the proposals will improve the protection and development of the Park’s natural and cultural heritage and help Canadians to understand their different facets (e.g. interpretation)? Do you have any suggestions?

4-

Do you think the proposals will help improve Park management (e.g. legal framework, user fees)?

What avenues should be considered?

5-

Should any of the sector-specific proposals be altered or removed, or can you think of any proposals that should be added?

6-

Would you like to make any other comments?

# APPENDIX 7

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OPINION POLL ON GATINEAU PARK ADMINISTERED ON BEHALF  
OF THE NCC ON NOVEMBER 22 TO 28, 2004

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

***“Gatineau Park is one of the elements that makes Canada’s Capital Region so unique.”***

Do you:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Neither agree nor disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Do not know/No answer

2. If certain recreational activities such as rock climbing or off-trail mountain biking were harmful to Gatineau Park’s natural environment, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*“The NCC should exercise more control over activities that are harmful to the natural environment, in order to protect the Park for future generations.”*

Do you:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Neither agree nor disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Do not know/No answer

3. As the agency responsible for Gatineau Park, the NCC is required to protect certain elements of the Park, including rare animal and plant species. If one or more of these elements were to be endangered by a recreational activity, how should the NCC fulfill its duty to protect the Park? *Please select one of the following options:*

- a) By moving the activity to a more appropriate site in the Park
- b) By banning the activity throughout the Park
- c) Do not know/No answer

4. In view of the NCC’s mandate to protect the Park and its ecosystems, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

***“The NCC should increase its efforts to raise public awareness of the Park’s importance as a natural environment.”***

Do you:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Neither agree nor disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Do not know/No answer