



The Ministère des Ressources naturelles publishes its quarterly *Newsletter from Québec – Forests* to inform the world community about its achievements in the field of forestry. The publication, which deals with different aspects of forest management in Québec, allows the Department to remain in contact with its foreign partners.

In Brief

April 2003

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New Forest Management Units in Québec

(by Rémy Charest, Direction de la planification et des communications)

In December 2002, the delimitations of 59 forest management units, along with the northern limit for commercial timber allocations were made public. The new subdivision, which will replace the 114 common areas currently in use, was one of the products of the May 2001 forest system review.



The new delimitations are designed to ensure territorial stability in the management of Québec's forests, and will help foster sustainable development. However, they exclude the territory covered by the Québec-Cree agreement, for which discussions are still underway.

The new forest management units emerged from an extensive public consultation process involving groups with an interest in forest management, including the wildlife, Aboriginal, industrial, municipal, union and other communities. The Ministère des Ressources naturelles considered the recommendations made by the various communities in favour of a division based principally on historical criteria, i.e. the experience and operational habits of agreement holders and other forest users in the same areas.

The proposed northern limit for commercial timber allocations has been changed only slightly from the version submitted for consultation. Beyond this limit, the Minister cannot grant new agreements to forestry companies, but may authorize certain forest management activities that are tailored to suit the area's fragility and designed to meet the needs of local communities. The MRN will continue with its research, in order to document the terms and conditions for such interventions.



Additional information on the forest management unit delimitations and the northern limit for commercial timber allocations may be obtained from the maps available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.mrn.gouv.qc.ca/forets/consultation/consultation-delimitation.jsp>



Twenty-six Forests Classified as Exceptional Forest Ecosystems in Québec

(Summary of a paper by André R. Bouchard, Normand Villeneuve and Nicole Lavoie, Direction de l'environnement forestier)

In February 2003, the classification of 26 forests as exceptional forest ecosystems (EFEs) was announced.

The Department's intention to grant the same legal protection to nearly 100 such forests by 2004, and ultimately to as many as 200 was also confirmed. The first sites to obtain EFE classification include 17 old growth forests and nine rare forests, covering a total area of slightly over 40 square kilometres, spread over ten of Québec's administrative regions.



These forests are of special interest for the preservation of biological diversity because of their rarity or age. They will be managed in future in accordance with the provisions relating to exceptional forest ecosystems in Québec's *Forest Act* (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1, 2001, c.6). Generally speaking, forest management and mining activities are prohibited in such forests.

Preston Lake Old Growth Forest

Old-growth maple forests, such as the Preston Lake forest in the Laurentian Mountains, have escaped logging and major natural disturbances. They comprise a combination of young trees, three-hundred-year-old trees, snags and ground residue at different stages of decomposition. In the centre of the photograph is a huge yellow birch tree measuring more than a metre in diameter

(Photo: Jean-François Bergeron)

Other Target Areas

When the *Forest Act* was amended by bill 136 in May 2001, the Department had already identified a number of potential areas from its 1996 and subsequent surveys, but decided to proceed with classification in phases involving groups of a dozen or more sites.

In addition to the first group of 26 recently classified sites, the MRN has already completed the public consultations required by the *Forest Act* for a second group of forests spread over seven administrative regions. The boreal forest is a primary target for this second classification phase, which also includes a number of forests sheltering



threatened or vulnerable species. A third group of potential EFEs will also be submitted for public consultation before the end of 2003.

EFEs: Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification

Exceptional forest ecosystems are forests with high conservation value, and are key elements of Québec's forest heritage. The task of identifying and protecting EFEs in the private and public forests is first and foremost a social and environmental responsibility, and a component of sustainable forest management in Québec.

In the coming years, however, it may also take on a new economic role, as the identification and protection of EFEs is likely to become a factor in the granting of forest certification, gradually becoming a requirement for many purchasers of forest products. In fact, certification is slowly but surely becoming essential on the wood product markets.

Brief descriptions of the 26 forests are available on the MRN's website at:

www.mrn.gouv.qc.ca/forets/connaissances/connaissances-ecosystemes.jsp

Profile of Québec's Southern Forests

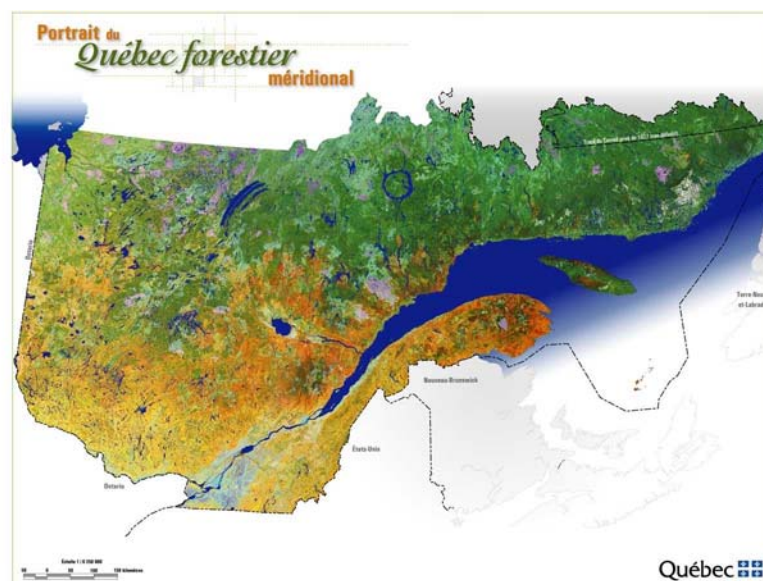
(by Jean-Pierre Létourneau, Direction des inventaires forestiers)

A satellite image map is a “profile” drawn from a set of geometrically corrected, calibrated images that have been digitally assembled along with various thematic covers. The map of Québec's southern forests is derived from more than 80 Landsat images.

The map shows the state of the forests, the distribution of principal forest cover types, stand development stages, logging operations and natural disturbances. It also contains a variety of theme-based information on elements such as highways, forest roads, management unit boundaries, forest management methods, vegetation classes and so on.

The derivatives available to clients include:

- Satellite image maps for each management unit, in paper or digital form, to a scale of 1:250,000;
- A general map entitled *Profile of Québec's Southern Forests*, offered as a colour lithographic print on paper or in digital form, to a scale of 1:250,000.





Further information is available on the website of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles at the following address:

<http://www.mrn.gouv.qc.ca/forets/connaissances/connaissances-inventaire-cartes-spatiocartes.jsp>