

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# Gatineau Park Master Plan

*January 2021*

AS AMENDED AND CONSOLIDATED AS OF JUNE 19, 2024

Canada

National Capital Commission  
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**Gatineau Park Master Plan**  
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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE



It is with genuine pleasure that I present this update of the Gatineau Park Master Plan, which outlines a clear and comprehensive vision for managing the Capital's conservation park for years to come.

Gatineau Park is a truly remarkable place. It serves to foster biodiversity and conserve wildlife habitat, and is home to many plant and animal species at risk. As the second-most visited park in Canada, it is a beloved destination for outdoor experiences for both residents of, and visitors to, the Capital. Its breathtaking scenery is the backdrop for year-round recreational activities, and its popularity is a powerful driver of economic activity in the Capital Region. As we know from our studies of natural capital, it provides a wealth of valuable ecological services, such as air quality control, water filtration, carbon storage and climate regulation.

The stewardship of the Park — its protection and improvement — is a core element of the National Capital Commission's (NCC) mandate. The presence of this natural wonder just minutes from the urban core is one of the Capital's defining characteristics.

The Gatineau Park Master Plan, which guides the long-term planning and management of the Park, was last updated in 2005. With advances in conservation best practices, continued increases in annual visitation and the growing urgency of combatting climate change, the review and renewal of the plan was well timed.

This process, which launched in 2017, has been comprehensive. It benefited from a robust series of public consultations, both in-person and online, as well as many meetings with local officials, stakeholder groups and the Algonquin Nation.

The result is a reinvigorated master plan which will ensure that the Park is well positioned to thrive, while achieving the necessary balance between conservation and recreation. While the overall goals of protecting ecological integrity and enhancing the Park remain the same, the renewed plan contains some changes in policy, which are detailed in the pages that follow.

As the CEO of the NCC and an enthusiastic Park user myself, I thank the many Canadians whose input proved so valuable.

I also thank the NCC team who have put so much energy and effort into ensuring this project's success, and by extension ensuring that Gatineau Park will continue to serve Canadians while protecting the Capital Region's rich natural legacy for many years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tobi".

Tobi Nussbaum  
Chief Executive Officer

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Gatineau Park

Gatineau Park is the largest natural area in Canada's Capital Region. It is the national capital's conservation park. It contributes to the region's natural and cultural heritage, and its conservation is at the heart of the National Capital Commission's (NCC) mandate.

Spanning a distance of some 50 kilometres between the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers, Gatineau Park covers 36,131 hectares, or 7.7 percent of the total area of the National Capital Region. It is located northwest of the Ottawa–Gatineau metropolitan area, and its territory overlaps four municipalities: Gatineau, Chelsea, La Pêche and Pontiac.

This green space plays a key role in maintaining the biodiversity and integrity of regional ecosystems, and provides a number of ecological services. With some 50 lakes spread out across its territory, the park is essentially covered by forests. Its location promotes the presence of diverse ecosystems and rich biodiversity, including a number of species at risk. It is also a recreation area that is highly frequented by residents and visitors. Every year, more than 600,000 people choose it as their destination. There are 2.6 million visits annually, with residents of the region accounting for 90 percent of that number.<sup>1</sup> Cultural heritage is an attraction that is increasingly sought after by visitors. It provides a cultural experience of national significance and historical value.

### Master plan

The Gatineau Park Master Plan is a component of the Capital Planning Framework. It is strongly aligned with the directions in the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067. It guides land planning and supports the review of proposals and initiatives requiring federal approval.

In 2017, the NCC began a review of the 2005 master plan to update its vision, objectives and policies. The exercise was also designed to adapt to changes in the park's situation and its needs. During the review of the master plan, five public consultation workshops and one forum were held. The public, members of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, municipal, provincial and federal representatives and elected officials, the Public Advisory Committee, regional partners and NCC staff were consulted. The new master plan also integrates the results of recent reports and studies.

An assessment of the current state of Gatineau Park indicates that it contributes significantly to the ecological integrity of the entire National Capital Region. Gatineau Park is proof that sustainable coexistence is possible between recreation and nature.

Gatineau Park facilitates connection with nature, and offers a variety of outdoor recreational activities that respect its conservation mission. It also provides visitors an opportunity to discover many cultural landscapes, as well as heritage and historical resources.

### Four key goals

The vision outlined in the master plan promotes exceptional and inclusive experiences—experiences where all visitors feel invited to connect with nature and culture in this great conservation park. The common thread of this plan is to provide quality outdoor recreational opportunities, while also defragmenting ecosystems.

Four key goals, and their strategic directions, form the basis of the planning concept that will guide long-term park planning and management.

**Conserving nature:** Conserving the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park, so that people can connect with a healthy natural environment and support the sustainability of the ecological services it provides, fostering resilience to climate change, and highlighting features that demonstrate the park's role in the region.

**Providing recreational and cultural experiences in nature:** Offering outdoor recreational activities and cultural experiences that are in line with Gatineau Park's conservation priorities.

**Promoting equitable and sustainable access:** Providing a quality experience and promoting a healthy environment, by transitioning to sustainable transportation and equitable access to Gatineau Park's activity sites.

**Fostering engagement and collaboration:** Creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility with respect to Gatineau Park, and fostering engagement to protect the park.

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## The planning concept

Ecological connectivity is a key component of the master plan's planning concept. It is fundamental to maintaining ecological integrity and promotes rich biodiversity by enabling species to circulate and adapt to changes. It concerns both the ecological links outside the park and the free movement of species within its limits.

Between the park and adjacent natural environments are corridors, often forested, that act as ecological corridors, connecting the park to these environments.

A characterization study conducted in 2012<sup>2</sup> revealed 12 ecological corridors that connect the park to three large natural environments: large tracts of forests to the northwest, the Ottawa River and the Gatineau River.

In all areas of the park, there are exceptional environments to protect. There are a number of ecosystems that protect species at risk and sensitive habitats where natural processes occur. In the planning concept, great importance is placed on the La Pêche Lake and Eardley Escarpment ecosystems, the latter of which is the richest and most fragile ecosystem in the park.

Gatineau Park offers an enchanting setting for enjoying contact with nature through environmentally respectful outdoor activities. The park's recreational activities will be managed in a way that maintains the quality of this popular environment in the long term.

Outdoor recreation sites are distributed to have a higher density of activity near the urban areas, southeast of the park.

The degree of conservation will therefore gradually increase as you move away from the Capital's urban area.

In all areas of the park, the number of unofficial trails will be reduced. This will be done to protect sensitive habitats, and increase the quality and quantity of habitats. Environmentally respectful outdoor activities will be allowed where there is the least environmental impact, for example, activities taking place on trails and in officially designated areas, or providing access to lakes.

The structured activity hubs at Camp Fortune and around Philippe and Meech lakes will continue to support a variety of outdoor recreation activities requiring specific facilities.

Five welcome areas will serve as information centres. They include the primary one in Chelsea, those at Philippe Lake and the Relais plein air, as well as the one south of the Gatineau Parkway, along with a new welcome area west of the park, in the Luskville area. Travel will increasingly take place using means of transportation other than cars, which can be organized at the welcome areas and at the main and secondary entrances. Access points at the park's periphery already lead to the trail network without the need to drive through the park.

Collaboration between organizations and visitor engagement are key to achieving the objectives of the master plan. Protecting park resources is a shared responsibility, based on active land management and collaboration with all levels of government, including municipalities, non-profit organizations, business partners, community groups, the scientific community, residents and visitors.

Furthermore, this plan initiates a process for reconciliation with Indigenous communities with respect to their traditional use of this part of Algonquin territory, and their ongoing physical, cultural and spiritual connections with the land in Gatineau Park.

The park is divided into 10 land use designation areas that specify the authorized activities or uses in a given area. They support the implementation of the park's vision and goals. They also ensure that interventions and activities are spatially and functionally consistent.

With this new master plan, Gatineau Park is taking another step in its evolution. Over the next decade, the NCC will place priority on conservation of the park's ecological integrity. It will also encourage those who use the park to take action in support of its conservation.

It is only with the help of all concerned—groups, associations, partners, residents and visitors—that this will be possible. In this way, future generations will be able to continue to enjoy this Capital treasure.

As stated in the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067, the health of our green spaces, including Gatineau Park, is "a collective and shared responsibility."

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2 Del Degan, Massé and Associates. Identification and Characterization of Ecological Corridors Adjacent to Gatineau Park, study report prepared for the National Capital Commission, October 2012



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# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

Gatineau Park is the most significant natural space in the National Capital Region. This federal conservation park is an example of the natural landscapes that are representative of the Canadian Shield. It contributes to the region's natural and cultural heritage and its conservation is at the heart of the National Capital Commission's (NCC) mandate.

Linking the present to the past, the remnants of its historical uses show how important the park was at the time to Indigenous communities and European and American newcomers. This special place adds to the quality of life of residents and visitors to the region. It contributes to their well-being and health, connecting them to nature through the beauty of its landscapes and the richness of the natural ecosystems found there.

This natural area plays an important role in maintaining the biodiversity and integrity of regional ecosystems and provides ecological services. Interspersed with some 50 lakes spread out across its territory, Gatineau Park is essentially covered by forests. Its location promotes the presence of diverse ecosystems and rich biodiversity. The park is home to more than 5,000 species, including some not found anywhere else in the province. More than 150 plant and wildlife species at risk in Canada and/or Quebec have been identified in the park, including rare plant species. The presence of such a natural territory near a major capital is rare.

Gatineau Park is a key component of environmental conservation efforts in the Capital Region. It is also a recreational area that is very popular among residents and visitors. It is the second-ranked park in Canada in terms of annual visitors, after Banff National Park. Eighteen times smaller than Banff, it has a higher concentration of visitors based on its surface area.<sup>1</sup> Every year, more than 600,000 people choose it as their destination. There are 2.6 million visits annually,<sup>2</sup> with residents of the region accounting for 90 percent of that figure.

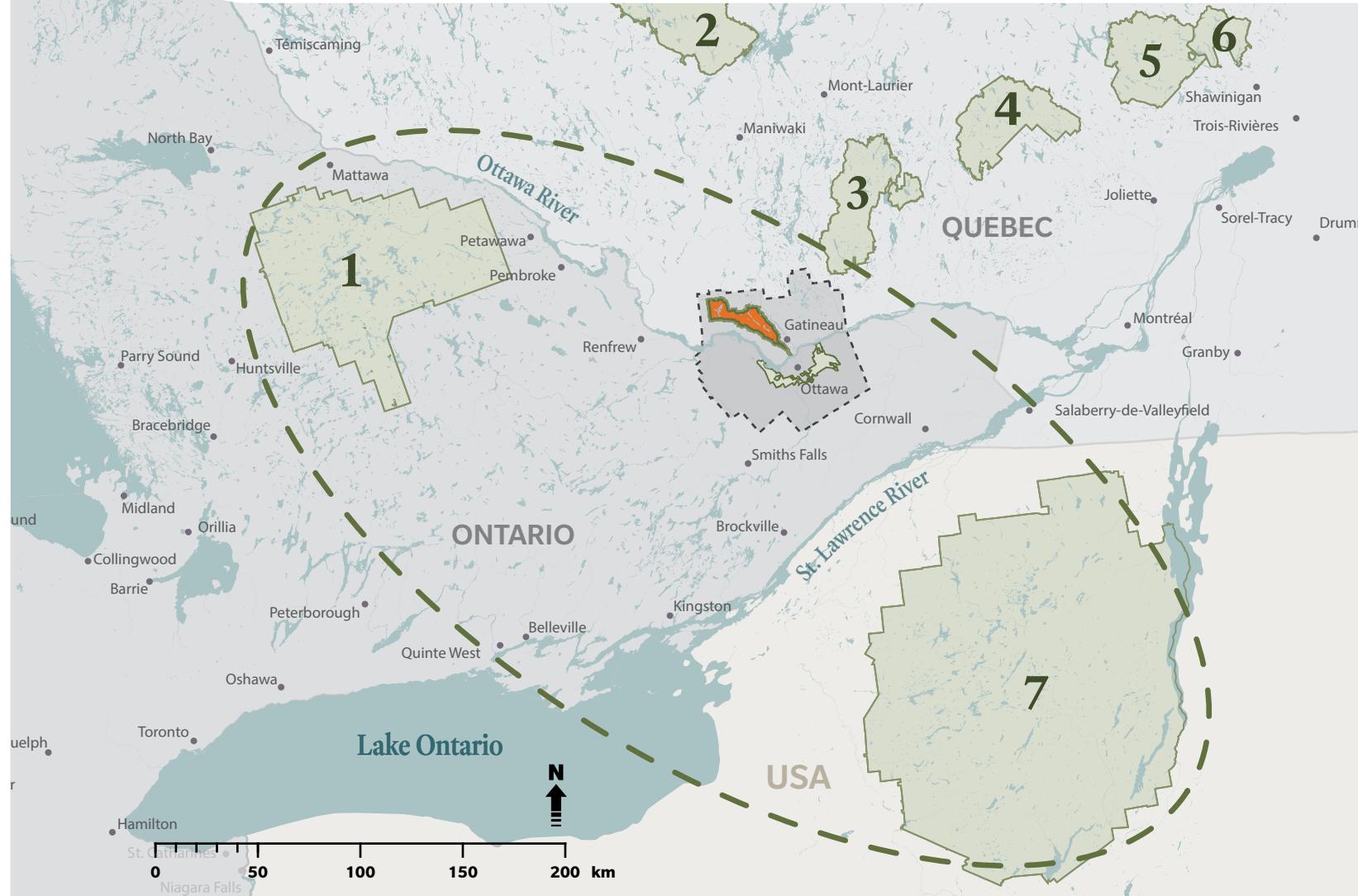
Gatineau Park offers road, mountain and winter biking; swimming and paddling; picnics and camping; cross-country skiing, downhill skiing and snowshoeing, as well as hiking and rock climbing.

Cultural heritage is a recognized attraction that is increasingly sought after by visitors. It tells the stories that link peoples to this territory over time; stories that talk about relationships with nature, recreation, industry, agriculture, early settlements, and Indigenous presence and culture. In Gatineau Park, the local, regional and national significance of the built heritage, the archaeological resources and the historic parkways and gardens are of great appeal. The tangible and intangible heritage of this magnificent park deserves to be showcased. It provides a cultural experience of national significance and historical value.

1 Number of annual visits per km<sup>2</sup>  
 2 Environics Analytics, 2017

**Map 1: Parks Network – National Scale**

- |   |                                 |          |                                   |          |                              |
|---|---------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
|  | National Capital Region         | <b>1</b> | Algonquin Park                    | <b>5</b> | Mastigouche wildlife reserve |
|  | Algonquin to Adirondacks region | <b>2</b> | La Vérendrye wildlife reserve     | <b>6</b> | La Mauricie national park    |
|  | Gatineau Park                   | <b>3</b> | Papineau-Labelle wildlife reserve | <b>7</b> | Adirondack Park              |
|  | Other parks                     | <b>4</b> | Mont-Tremblant national park      |          |                              |



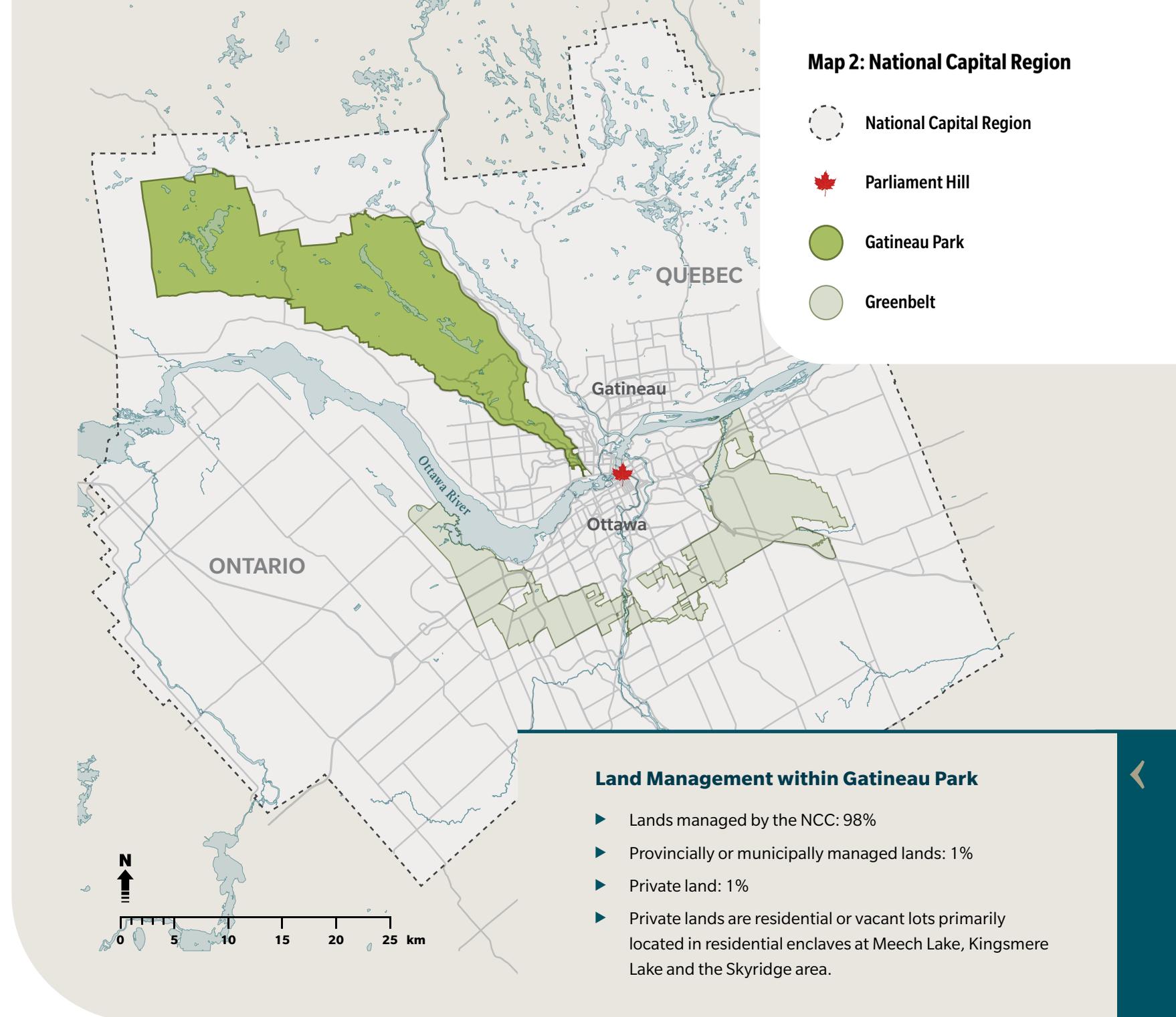
## 1.2 General Description and Location of the Park

Gatineau Park is located within 150 kilometres from other important protected natural areas. These include Adirondack Park in New York State, Algonquin Park in Ontario, Thousand Islands National Park, and La Vérendrye and the Papineau-Labelle wildlife reserves in Quebec.

Spanning a distance of some 50 kilometres between the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers, Gatineau Park covers 36,131 hectares, or 361 square kilometres or 7.7 percent of the total area of Canada's Capital Region. It is located northwest of the Ottawa – Gatineau metropolitan area, the fifth largest in the country, with a population of over one million. Some 200 kilometres away is the greater Montréal area, the most densely populated area in Quebec.

Gatineau Park is surrounded by rural areas, most of which are agricultural. Its southern section extends into the urban areas of Gatineau, which distinguishes it from Canadian national parks. Its territory overlaps into four municipalities: Gatineau, Chelsea, La Pêche and Pontiac. It is adjacent to the City of Ottawa.

Most of the land in Gatineau Park is federally owned. Some, however, is privately owned. It is subject to municipal and provincial planning and regulations.



## 1.3 Context of NCC Planning

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### PLANNING AND MANDATE

The Gatineau Park Master Plan helps the NCC fulfill its role as a long-term planner for conservation, land use and showcasing sites of significance within its territory. It supports its mission under the *National Capital Act*: prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance.

In 2017, the NCC began a review of the 2005 master plan to update its vision, objectives and policies. The exercise was also designed to adapt to changes in the park's situation and its needs.

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### NCC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The NCC plans and guides the use and development of federal lands in Canada's Capital Region to ensure that the Capital reflects its national stature. It works with various stakeholders to protect and showcase the Capital's natural and cultural character.

The Gatineau Park Master Plan is a component of the Capital Planning Framework. It is strongly aligned with the directions in the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067, a foundational planning framework document for the NCC. It is a planning tool and a collection of policies for supporting decision making.

The master plan is also guided by the NCC's Sustainable Development Strategy, 2018–2023, which aligns with the Government of Canada's Sustainable Development Strategy. The NCC outlines a targeted and ambitious environmental leadership program in the Capital Region. Its strategy is comprehensive in scope and must be integrated into all NCC corporate plans, strategies, policies and activities. In December 2020, the NCC was designated under the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* as one of the entities required to report on its contribution to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

## 1.4 Federal Legislative and Planning Framework

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### FEDERAL LAWS

- ▶ Gatineau Park is located on federal lands and is therefore subject to federal legislation. In addition to the *National Capital Act*, a variety of federal laws, policies and strategies apply to it and guide how it is managed. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
- ▶ *Species at Risk Act*;
- ▶ *Impact Assessment Act*;
- ▶ *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*;
- ▶ Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation;
- ▶ Canadian Biodiversity Strategy;
- ▶ Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

As steward of federal lands, the NCC must protect the habitats of legally protected species, and a conservation park must provide quality habitat to conserve its biodiversity.

Certain standards and policies regarding heritage and archaeological resources also apply. These include the following:

- ▶ The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada;
- ▶ Treasury Board Policy on Management of Real Property;
- ▶ Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) Code of Practice; and
- ▶ Memorandum of Understanding for the Co-management of Archaeological Resources, established in 2017 by the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, the Algonquins of the Pikwakanagan First Nation and the NCC.

Respecting these government laws and commitments is key to the NCC's decision making for park planning and management.



## 1.5 A Precious Legacy

For centuries, the Ottawa Hills were a source of hunting, fishing and berry-gathering resources for the nomadic Anishinabe who lived in the region. The confluence of the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers was a meeting place for commercial and cultural trade and exchange, which made this place important. It was sometimes even a place of war between the peoples of the St. Lawrence Basin and the Great Lakes. The archaeological sites found in what is now Gatineau Park are a testament to their presence.

From the 17th to the 19th century, French explorers and coureurs des bois criss-crossed the park as part of the fur trade. In the 19th century, the first settlers arrived there to cultivate the land and harvest the forest. Later, American, Irish and French Canadian families followed them. The end of this century also saw the arrival of mining.

On the shores of Meech Lake and Kingsmere Lake, the resort industry began to flourish in the early 20th century. In 1903, Frederick Todd proposed a general plan for the region to the Ottawa Improvement Commission. This plan included urban and suburban parks, including a nature reserve around Meech Lake. He also recommended the purchase of land to implement this plan. In 1915, Sir Herbert Samuel Holt tabled a report recommending the creation of an expanded commission to implement this plan. He also put forward the idea of a national park. In 1927, the government of William Lyon Mackenzie King established the Federal District Commission (FDC). The new entity had the authority to acquire the lands for the proposed park.

In the early 1920s, recreational development and activities began gradually appearing in the park, with the support of organizations such as the Ottawa Ski Club. In 1934, the fear of forest loss in the Ottawa Hills as a result of logging gave rise to the Federal Woodland Preservation League. This organization, chaired by Roderick Percy Sparks, lobbied the government to acquire land. It ceased operations in 1947 when the FDC established a Gatineau Park advisory subcommittee, which was chaired by Sparks until 1954.

In 1938, the King government allocated the FDC its first-ever budget to make the first woodland acquisitions deemed important to conservation. When he died, William Lyon Mackenzie King bequeathed to the Canadian people his 231-hectare estate, which was added to the park. The estate was named after its donor. At that time, the FDC expanded the park's federal properties by 12,800 hectares.

In 1950, the Gréber Plan proposed beautifying the Capital with a 33,000-hectare park for outdoor recreation. The Acquisition of land for the park continued under the authority of the NCC, which was created in 1959. A development plan completed in 1968 laid the foundations for the park's land use. It also showcased its recreational functions, symbolic qualities and natural beauty. Various construction projects were carried out to improve access to the park and recreational activities for residents and visitors. It was during these decades that the parkway network was built to facilitate access to the park and its splendour.

In the early 1970s, 4,000 hectares of Quebec Crown land were added to the park under an agreement with Quebec's Ministère des Ressources naturelles. By the end of the decade, the park's area totalled 35,650 hectares.

In the early 1990s, the NCC acquired Camp Fortune and the Meech Creek Valley, bringing the total park area to 36,131 hectares. A master plan, adopted in 1990, emphasized a balance between recreational and conservation activities. This approach was consistent with the NCC's new mandate to animate the Capital, and this plan strengthened the park's recreational offerings.

With the 1999 Plan for Canada's Capital, Gatineau Park became a Category II natural heritage area.<sup>3</sup> Its protection and management were now intended to first conserve ecosystems, and thereafter to provide recreational activities. This international designation gave precedence to natural processes, and promoted the restoration of natural heritage.

After the federal government's *Species at Risk Act* came into force in 2002, and after a series of studies to determine the park's health, the 2005 master plan made a more pronounced shift toward protecting plants and wildlife and their natural habitats. Gatineau Park was becoming the Capital's conservation park. Since then, the NCC has increased its efforts to monitor the health of the ecosystems and integrate conservation concerns into park management.

<sup>3</sup> Category II Protected Area as defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



## 1.6 The Park Today

An assessment of the current state of Gatineau Park indicates that it contributes significantly to the ecological integrity of the entire National Capital Region. Gatineau Park is proof that sustainable coexistence is possible between outdoor recreation, ecological processes within ecosystems and urban life in the Capital. The analysis of the current state of the park and the public consultations suggest that the master plan should focus on the following themes.

### Roles of the Park

- ▶ Gatineau Park continues to be the Capital's conservation park. It is home to natural ecosystems and cultural resources of national significance.
- ▶ Visible from the heart of the Capital, Gatineau Park is an important feature of a green capital. It reflects the importance Canadians place on the environment, and enriches the experience of visitors.
- ▶ Gatineau Park promotes contact with nature and offers a variety of outdoor recreational activities that respect its vocation as the Capital's conservation park. It also provides opportunities for discovery of numerous cultural landscapes, as well as heritage and historical resources.
- ▶ Gatineau Park's ecosystems provide multiple ecological services to residents and visitors. These services include air quality enhancement, climate regulation, water filtration, carbon storage and biodiversity-promoting habitats. These services provided by nature represent several millions of dollars per year.
- ▶ With its proximity to the Capital Region's urban core, Gatineau Park makes an important contribution to the region's economic development and the quality of life of residents.

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## TRENDS AND EVOLUTION

- ▶ Gatineau Park remains one of the most highly visited conservation parks in Canada.
- ▶ The importance of green spaces to people's physical and mental health is increasingly documented.
- ▶ The regular emergence of new trends in recreation, mounting interest in cultural destinations and the ever-growing number of visitors to Gatineau Park are putting significant pressure on the ecosystems.
- ▶ Residential areas on the periphery of Gatineau Park place pressure on the park (limitation of potential ecological links, creation of unofficial trails, increased traffic, changes in landscape).
- ▶ The creation of entry points and use of unofficial trails exacerbates habitat fragmentation in Gatineau Park. This affects the quantity and quality of natural habitats necessary for the survival of the plants and wildlife that live there, including species at risk.
- ▶ Gatineau Park is experiencing the effects of climate change, which include a significant increase in extreme weather events (such as high winds, drought and heavy rains), impacts on biodiversity and natural processes, heat islands and many other effects. These have a major impact on the park's infrastructure and the NCC's ability to respond in order to maintain the recreational offering.

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## OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

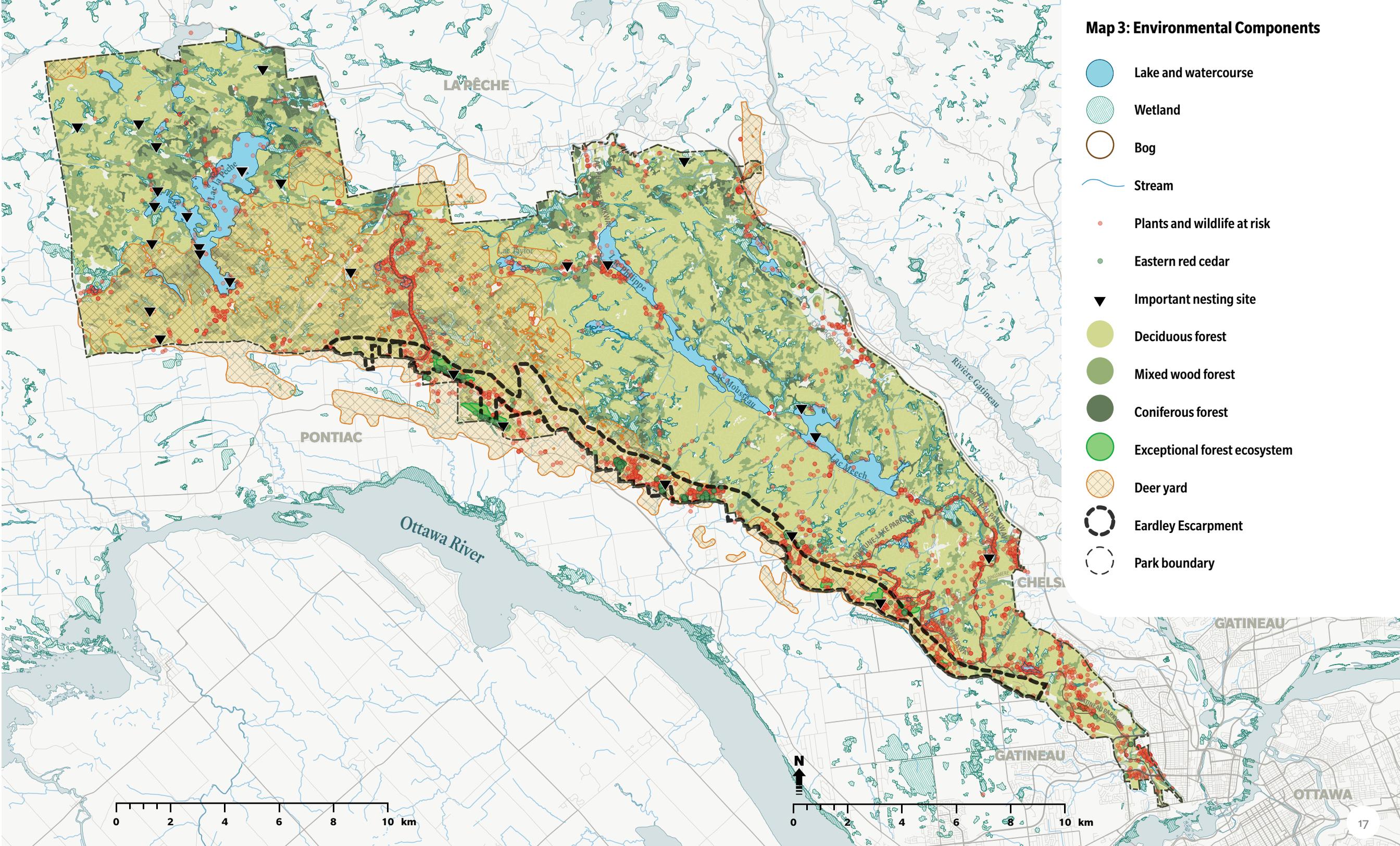
- ▶ The ecological integrity of Gatineau Park and its sustainability depends on environmental, social and economic factors, and efforts made in response to pressures.
- ▶ To conserve native wildlife and plants over the long term, the ecological links between Gatineau Park and the surrounding natural environment must be maintained.
- ▶ There is a need to recognize the park's significance to today's Indigenous peoples and the cultural heritage derived from the various communities that have occupied the park's territory.
- ▶ The programs offered to the public in Gatineau Park provide an opportunity to make a significant contribution to education and awareness, as well as to messaging on the park's conservation, its rules and regulations, and its code of conduct .

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## CHALLENGES REGARDING PARK USE

- ▶ Because public transit services are limited, the predominant mode of transportation used to access Gatineau Park remains the automobile. This creates inequity in terms of public access. The use of cars within the park or at its entry points is a source of increasingly regular local traffic congestion, wildlife collisions, greenhouse gas emissions and feelings of a lack of safety on parkways due to vehicle speeds.
- ▶ Currently, the high concentration of visitors in certain places and at certain times is problematic, and there are very few means of managing visitor numbers in Gatineau Park. Varying levels of skill, as well as the practice of different activities at the same activity site sometimes lead to conflicts between users.
- ▶ Many visitors violate Gatineau Park regulations, which has an impact on ecological integrity, the visitor experience and safety.
- ▶ The development and certain uses of private property in Gatineau Park could have a significant impact on the integrity of the area.
- ▶ Camp Fortune is an intensive recreational activity area in Gatineau Park where there are many new demands for activities. This site currently hosts a number of activities (downhill skiing with lift, aerial park, downhill mountain biking, biathlon and firing range) and provides a starting point for the trail network extending elsewhere in the park.
- ▶ The protection and management of Gatineau Park are administered under the powers conferred by the *National Capital Act*. The public and park managers have expressed a desire to have more appropriate legal tools to manage the park as a conservation park.
- ▶ There is a growing demand for night and evening activities in Gatineau Park, which could affect nocturnal wildlife.

Map 3: Environmental Components



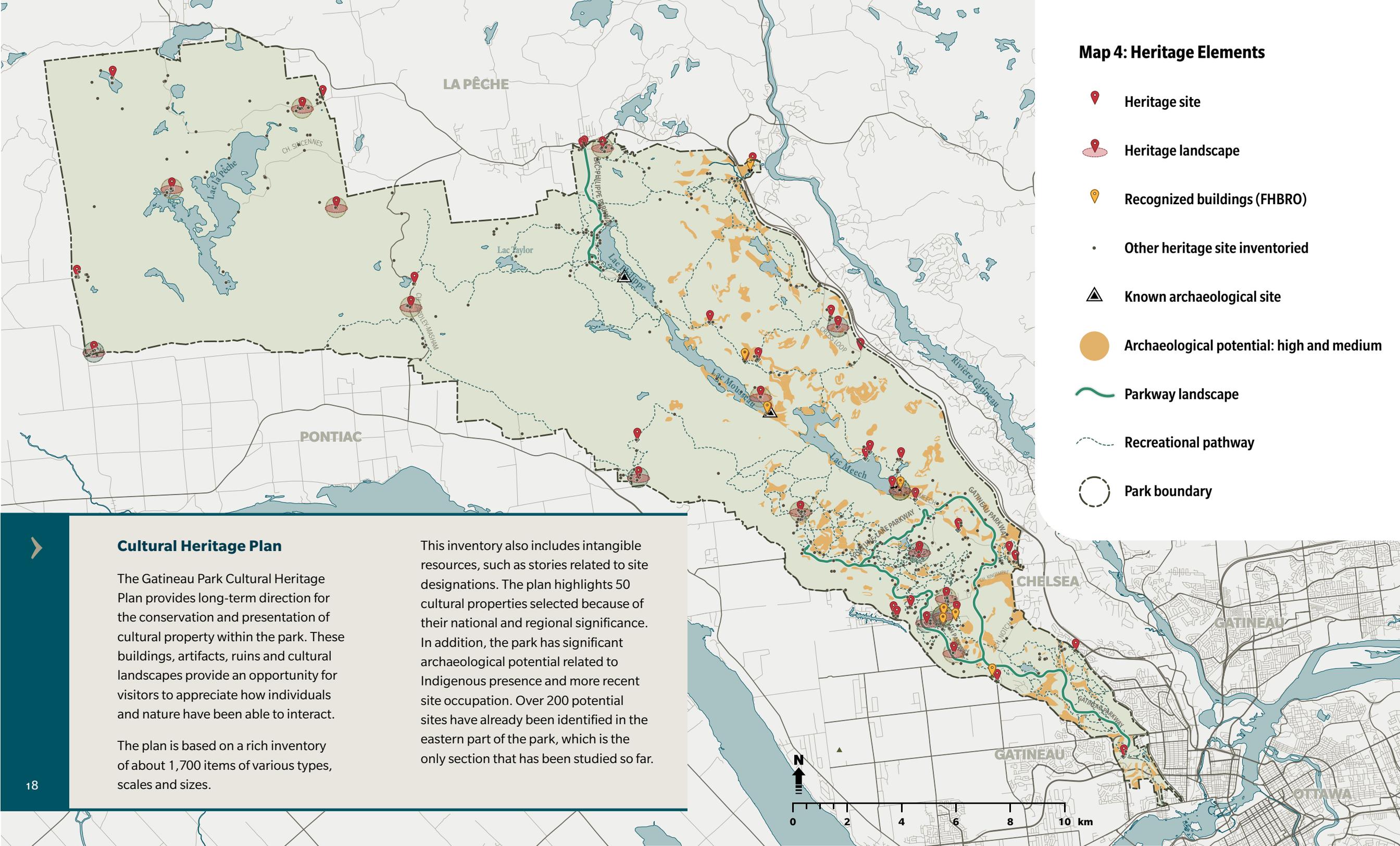
- Lake and watercourse
- Wetland
- Bog
- Stream
- Plants and wildlife at risk
- Eastern red cedar
- ▼ Important nesting site
- Deciduous forest
- Mixed wood forest
- Coniferous forest
- Exceptional forest ecosystem
- Deer yard
- Eardley Escarpment
- Park boundary

0 2 4 6 8 10 km

0 2 4 6 8 10 km

**Map 4: Heritage Elements**

-  Heritage site
-  Heritage landscape
-  Recognized buildings (FHBRO)
-  Other heritage site inventoried
-  Known archaeological site
-  Archaeological potential: high and medium
-  Parkway landscape
-  Recreational pathway
-  Park boundary



**Cultural Heritage Plan**

The Gatineau Park Cultural Heritage Plan provides long-term direction for the conservation and presentation of cultural property within the park. These buildings, artifacts, ruins and cultural landscapes provide an opportunity for visitors to appreciate how individuals and nature have been able to interact.

The plan is based on a rich inventory of about 1,700 items of various types, scales and sizes.

This inventory also includes intangible resources, such as stories related to site designations. The plan highlights 50 cultural properties selected because of their national and regional significance. In addition, the park has significant archaeological potential related to Indigenous presence and more recent site occupation. Over 200 potential sites have already been identified in the eastern part of the park, which is the only section that has been studied so far.

# 1.7 Planning Process and Public and Stakeholder Participation

Public consultation is the cornerstone of all NCC planning. The development of the Gatineau Park Master Plan was therefore based on this approach from the beginning of the project. Five consultation workshops were held:

<b>Phase 1 – Fall 2017</b>	<b>Existing Conditions and Thoughts on the Park’s Future</b>
<b>Phase 2 – Spring 2018</b>	<b>Vision and Strategic Directions</b>
<b>Phase 3 – Winter 2019</b>	<b>Planning Concept, Strategic Directions, Land Use Designations and General Policies</b>
<b>Phase 3 – Spring 2019</b>	<b>Specific Policies</b>
<b>Phase 4 – Fall 2020</b>	<b>Final Plan</b>

During the review of its master plan, the NCC called on various stakeholders. It consulted with the public, municipal, provincial and federal representatives and elected officials, the Public Advisory Committee, regional partners, and its own staff.

The NCC also met with representatives of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation on a number of occasions. These discussions helped develop a better understanding of the importance of this territory to this community. They also helped provide a better understanding of how to improve cultural exchanges with the First Nation, including its participation in park activities and operations, and how to showcase its culture.

The current master plan incorporates the results of recent studies and reports. The NCC also held a forum, inviting the public to hear experts from various parts of North America. In total, more than 5,500 participants helped shape the plan.

The current plan presents a long-term vision with strategic directions to achieve it. It is an essential and effective tool to support decision making and park management. It is based on research, trend monitoring, ecosystem health status and consultations. The NCC also draws on best practices and innovative ways to conserve, showcase and restore the park, while ensuring that it remains a place where people can connect with nature through quality recreational experiences.

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## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the key comments received, here are the expectations.

- ▶ Protect the park and its ecosystems.
- ▶ Limit urban development in and around the park.
- ▶ Improve accessibility to reduce vehicle traffic within the park.
- ▶ Ensure the park’s educational role.
- ▶ Ensure access to the park for all to enjoy.
- ▶ Ensure the balance between recreation and sustainability.
- ▶ Seek legal protections.
- ▶ Improve control over residential use.
- ▶ Develop tools to monitor ecosystem health.

A consultation report prepared by the NCC presenting the results in a more comprehensive manner is also available on the website.



## 2

# Vision

### — *Vision Statement*

*Gatineau Park is an exceptional natural environment in the Capital Region that must be protected for current and future generations so that they can enjoy its precious contribution to nature conservation, outdoor recreation, and the discovery of history and culture.*

## 2.1 Vision 2067 for Gatineau Park

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE VISION STATEMENT

Located in the heart of Canada's Capital Region, Gatineau Park is first and foremost a place for the conservation of natural ecosystems. It is home to a variety of rare and at-risk species, as well as their habitats. The park is called upon to continue its contribution to the sustainable environment of the Capital Region and quality of life of its residents.

The park and its natural and cultural treasures will be protected as a legacy for future generations and a symbol of Canadians' commitment to protecting the environment. These natural ecosystems will remain vibrant and will contribute to the ecological diversity unique to the landscape of Canada's Capital. The conservation of ecological integrity is the park's main objective. The park will make a vital contribution to the resilience of the National Capital Region. The park will be a natural laboratory for research, monitoring and knowledge development to inform decision making and public education.

Recreation and outdoor learning activities will continue to make an invaluable contribution to the health and well-being of visitors. They will provide opportunities for people to connect with nature while respecting the ecological integrity of the park. Each visit will provide the opportunity to learn from the contributions of previous generations. Throughout the park, visitors will be invited to discover cultural landscapes and heritage buildings commemorating historical events and daily life, as well as the history, traditions and culture of the Anishinabe Algonquin people, which are key elements of the park.

Access will be more equitable for all park visitors, regardless of their means or mobility. Various forms of public and active transportation will promote sustainable access to the park.

Stewardship of the park is a shared responsibility through the collaboration and active participation of residents, community groups and visitors. Together with its municipal, regional, provincial and federal partners, the NCC will work to protect the park's ecological integrity and cultural heritage. Private landowners and commercial tenants will also contribute to the collective effort to protect the park for future generations.



## Indigenous Perspective

The park offers unique and exceptional scenery and a wide range of experiences to visitors who visit and enjoy it. During walks and outdoor activities, they can enjoy this rich nature in a variety of ways. Rene Tenasco, a member of the Algonquin Anishinabe community, offers an inspiring perspective for the park, which is rooted in a thousand-year-old culture and which, as the dialogue continues to evolve, will necessarily play a growing role in how we view Gatineau Park.

### **Akī Pimādziwin (the land and its health)**

In Anishinabe culture, many teachings express the importance of nature by evoking values and disciplines.

In the Anishinabe account of Creation, nature was created in its entirety long before the first human being set foot on the Earth. There are many legends about the wonders of wild nature, the animals, the waters and the air. From land to marshes to valleys and mountain peaks, life was plentiful. It was a time in the history of nature when everything interacted in line with the teachings of the laws, in a great whole that would become the Earth Covenant.

Our legends speak of a time in the history of the Earth when there was an understanding of the language of nature, for every creature had received a living spirit that was subject to the established territories of those lands. Diversity was in everything and everything remained pure and in balance with nature as long as nature itself lasted. Death, rebirth and continuous growth were part of nature's design. This is how she took care of herself, being both a source of change and stability in her responsibility to plan for a life free from the danger of the threat of her destruction. Despite the difficulties, the Earth has respected its covenant to this day.

In the history of the Anishinabe, the teachings impart a vision of the world where humans and nature speak the same language. They tell us of a time when nature, in all her being, taught humans how to live, how to adopt a way of life and codes of conduct likely to preserve their means of subsistence through common sense and by adopting solid moral values in their interactions with the

environment. Our legends bear witness to a life of peace and tranquillity, a life in harmony with the instructions given to us by the Creator.

To this day, and despite the turning points in the history of civilization, we still believe in the reality of the Anishinabe system of knowledge derived from nature. We believe it is a healing tool in nature's struggle for survival. The challenge is to convince all peoples to embrace change and to demonstrate the will to repair the evil we inflict, and continue to inflict unnecessarily, on our natural environment—and to reconcile with it.

The term "sustainable development" should not be used lightly. We are all part of the same humanity and we all have the intrinsic ability to understand what are the legitimate ways to survive in the environment in which we live.

The reality we must accept is that nature does not need humanity for its survival. It is quite the opposite. In this regard, Gatineau Park is a living model.

*Megwetch*, thank you.

René Tenasco

Ashkabewis



# 3

## Goals and Strategic Directions

### Premises

The planning and management of Gatineau Park is based on the following basic premises. These premises form the basis of the master plan.

- ▶ There are limits to Gatineau Park’s ecological resources and its capacity to support recreational activities. It can’t be everything to everyone. Human activities in the park are managed in a manner that does not compromise the ecological integrity of the park, while promoting the appreciation of nature.
- ▶ Gatineau Park remains a welcoming place that plays an important role in providing recreational opportunities for visitors, but it also must be used in a respectful and sustainable manner.
- ▶ Protecting Gatineau Park is a shared responsibility that requires active land management and collaboration with all levels of government, including municipalities, participation with community groups, partners from the business community, residents and visitors.
- ▶ Decision making regarding Gatineau Park is open, transparent, and based on science and evidence.
- ▶ Gatineau Park is federal public land. This park is therefore subject to federal legislation. Compliance with these laws is paramount in the NCC’s decisions regarding the park’s use and management.

## The Goals

The four major goals and their strategic directions outlined in this chapter form the basis of the planning concept and measures that will guide long-term park planning and management.



CONSERVATION



EXPERIENCE



ACCESS



COLLABORATION  
AND ENGAGEMENT



### 3.1 Conserving nature

Conserving the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park, so that people can connect with a healthy natural environment and support the sustainability of the ecological services it provides, fostering resilience to climate change, and highlighting features that demonstrate the park's role in the region.





Gatineau Park is a vast natural environment for plants and wildlife. It is unique in that it is situated in the heart of the National Capital Region. It is therefore close to residents, who benefit from its presence for their well-being. The park's ecosystems and adjacent natural areas provide many services, including air and water purification, the regulation of micro-climates and rainwater runoff, and natural control of pests by predators that live there.

It is important to protect the park as a whole, because its entire territory is home to ecosystems and habitats that are important to many native wildlife and plant species. There are exceptional forests, including eastern red cedar and white and red oak groves. The park is also an excellent natural laboratory for scientific research. The results of the research conducted there support park management decisions, and are useful to the scientific community and public education.

Visitors must enjoy the park in an environmentally respectful manner. The footprint associated with recreational activities must be reviewed to maintain a quality park recreational experience in a sustainable manner. As is the case with Canada's national parks, the park as a whole is identified as a category II conservation park, as defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Despite its large territory, Gatineau Park remains a small conservation park compared with neighbouring provincial and federal parks in Quebec and Ontario. It is therefore essential to protect the natural connections that link it to the

natural spaces surrounding it. Ecological corridors that ensure this connection allow species to move, and are particularly important in the context of climate change, which can force species to migrate. Innovative ways will need to be found to maintain ecological connectivity to surrounding lands, which are under municipal and regional jurisdiction. These means will need to be developed in collaboration with regional partners, landowners and conservation organizations interested in the long-term protection of natural heritage, regional ecosystems and native biodiversity.

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## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Ensure the protection of ecosystems, including natural processes, species at risk, native species and their habitats.
2. Maintain Gatineau Park's ecological links to the other natural areas in the region.
3. Reduce the fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats in Gatineau Park.
4. Reduce the impact of invasive species on Gatineau Park ecosystems and habitats.
5. Continue scientific research and monitoring related to the natural environment in Gatineau Park.
6. Reduce the impact of infrastructure on the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park.

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## IUCN CATEGORY II:

"Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities."



## 3.2 Providing recreational and cultural experiences in nature

Offering outdoor recreational activities and cultural experiences that are in line with Gatineau Park's conservation priorities.





Gatineau Park offers recreational activities that respect its mandate as the Capital’s conservation park. A symbol of a green capital, the park is a popular recreation area for residents and visitors alike. It greatly enhances the quality of life in the region.

The increase in the number of visitors to the park and the regular emergence of new recreational trends require the NCC to evaluate their impact and consequently their acceptability in terms of the park and its ecosystems.

The park provides outdoor activities that contribute to health and well-being. It creates an opportunity to learn about the importance of the environment while appreciating the region’s nature, culture and history.

Moreover, several sites are a testament to past land occupation, and tell the stories of the communities that lived where the park is today. Sharing this heritage, developing a better understanding of the archaeological potential of sites, and protecting heritage buildings and other tangible and intangible assets are essential to maintaining meaningful contact with the past.

Ultimately, outdoor activities provide opportunities for residents and visitors to deepen their relationship with nature. Positive experiences in nature then lead to a desire to protect the environment. Achieving conservation goals and providing quality recreational and cultural experiences require ensuring that the right activity is undertaken in the right place at the right time.

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## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Provide an environmentally friendly, quality outdoor recreational offer that is adapted to the conditions of the sites and that is compatible with maintaining the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park.
2. Manage visitor density to allow for a quality recreational experience.
3. Provide places for contemplation and well-being, as well as places suitable for outdoor activities, including sports that have a low environmental impact.
4. Protect the heritage assets and archaeological resources of Gatineau Park.
5. Enhance knowledge of nature, and the park’s history and culture through educational and interpretive activities.
6. Promote the friendly and respectful sharing of recreational infrastructure among users.

### 3.3 Promoting equitable and sustainable access

Providing a quality experience and promoting a healthy environment by transitioning to sustainable transportation modes and equitable access to Gatineau Park's activity sites.





Transportation and traffic in Gatineau Park are linked to many other objectives. A key objective is to support a range of appropriate travel options to protect the ecological integrity of the park and give everyone a chance to enjoy the park.

Visitors can access the park from various locations. They do this through a network of recreational trails, local roads and parkways that lead to a wide range of activities. Through this network, scenic parkways offer a multi-modal experience in an attractive setting. At various access points, welcome areas provide information, making people's visits more enjoyable.

The popularity of the park has led to an increase in motor vehicle traffic, and this has had an impact. Measures should be considered to progressively reduce the impact of transportation on visitor experience as well as on the environment (e.g. mitigation of potential impact on wildlife, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, reduction of potential conflicts between users of various modes of transportation on the parkway and other roads in the park).

Access to and travel within the park should become less and less dependent on cars and rely more on more efficient means of transportation with less ecological impact on ecosystems. Such an approach will enhance the overall visitor experience.

Parking lot improvements, in addition to measures to encourage the adoption of alternative modes of transportation, will be limited to parking areas on the periphery of the park or just inside its boundaries.

Besides vehicle access, entry points all around the park encourage active mobility by connecting surrounding neighbourhoods to the network of official trails. Providing incentives for adopting active means of mobility will also encourage visitors to enjoy the park in different ways.

Access to activity sites could become more enjoyable, sustainable and equitable by introducing alternative, convenient and affordable transportation services. Such services could also help visitors of different age and income groups, as well as those without access to a motor vehicle or with special accessibility needs, to enjoy the park.

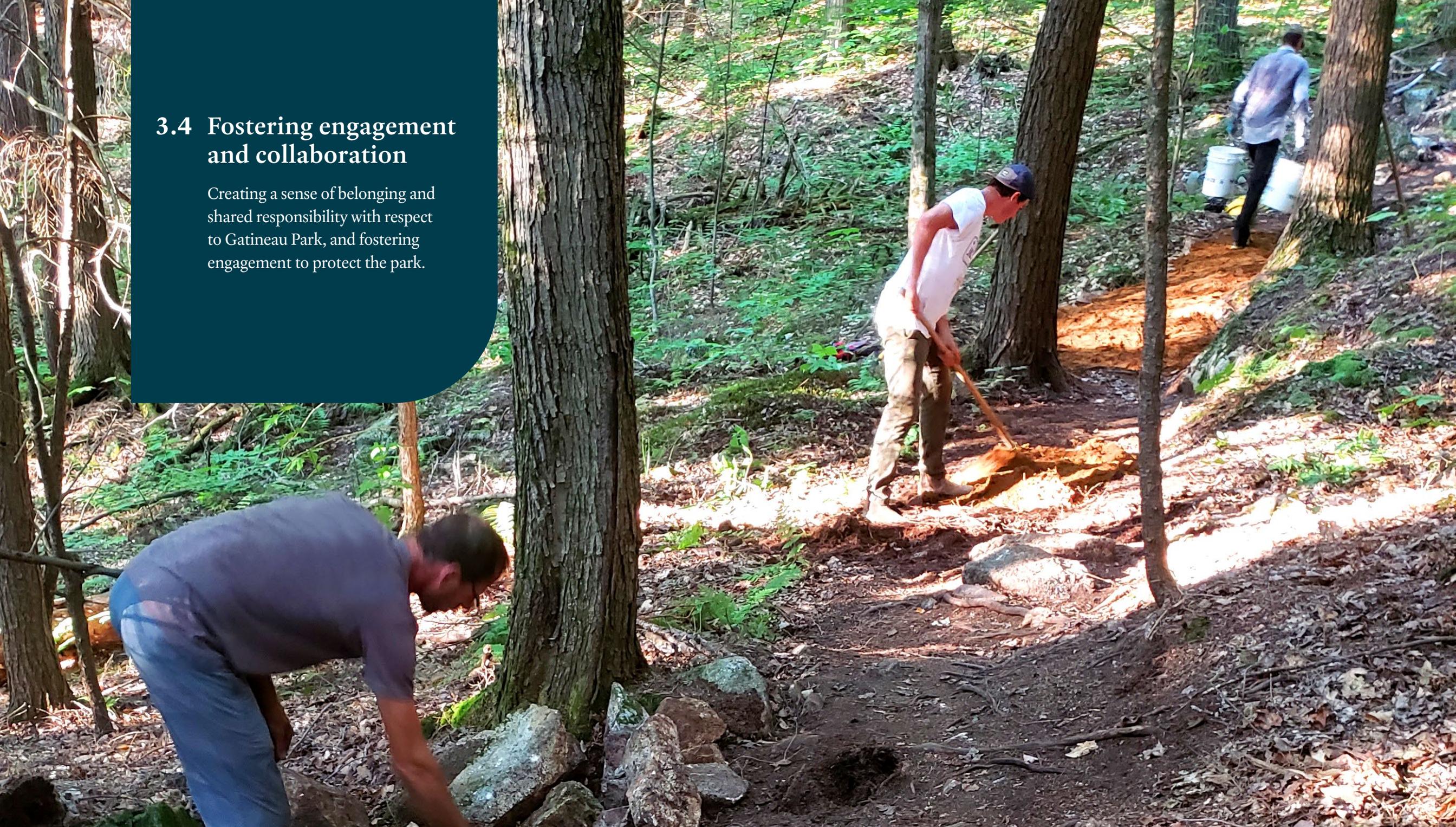
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## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Manage transportation to Gatineau Park and its activity sites to foster a quality experience for all visitors.
2. Reduce the impact of motor vehicles on the environment and experience of all visitors within the park, especially during busy periods.
3. In collaboration with regional organizations, gradually reduce reliance on personal motor vehicles by improving access to Gatineau Park by alternative means, including public and active means of transportation.
4. Allow a broader diversity of people to experience nature in Gatineau Park, regardless of their level of mobility or financial capacity.
5. Provide visitor reception services.

### 3.4 Fostering engagement and collaboration

Creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility with respect to Gatineau Park, and fostering engagement to protect the park.





Gatineau Park is a place that engenders many positive associations. Given its location, it is important for Gatineau Park to be successfully integrated with the surrounding region at many levels, including ecosystem conservation, provision of ecological services, access, economic growth, tourism and recreation, scientific research, and heritage conservation.

The park brings a variety of benefits to the community, and contributes to the region's growth. It creates interest for people to live nearby; it provides a place that supports the creation of businesses providing outdoor-related goods and services; and it attracts numerous users who enjoy the businesses that are established in the heart of villages and that cannot be found within the park. On the other hand, the conservation of the park's ecological integrity, the maintenance of the quality of the outdoor experience that is possible there and the

transition to a different way of accessing the park require local support and collaboration from regional partners and stakeholders.

Collaboration among organizations, visitor engagement and partnership building are all critical to achieving the master plan's objectives. To address budget limitations and ensure public engagement in the park's objectives, openness to shared management approaches will be required. By understanding the park's importance, community groups, residents and visitors will be motivated to help manage and protect its natural and cultural assets. They can contribute knowledge about the park and its history. They will help protect the special features that attract them to the park, and will help ensure that everyone can benefit from them. In addition, the NCC will continue to work with Indigenous communities in the region to highlight the meaning of this land for these communities and to contribute to cultural exchanges.

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## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Promote the importance of Gatineau Park to the region.
2. Encourage open communication with visitors, organizations and the general public.
3. Collaborate with Indigenous communities on programs that integrate their knowledge of nature and traditional culture into the management of Gatineau Park.
4. Work with municipal, provincial and community partners, as well as public transportation authorities, to achieve the shared goals of nature and heritage conservation, quality of life, park access and regional vitality.
5. Work together to fund the protection of Gatineau Park and maintain its recreational offer.
6. Engage and collaborate with visitors to deliver a quality experience (e.g. working together to create a code of conduct and complying with regulations).
7. Engage the public and partners in voluntary citizen science programs for ecological monitoring, building and maintaining a sustainable trail network, and protecting ecological connectivity.
8. Promote recreational sites outside of Gatineau Park, to provide outdoor activities that are incompatible with park functions, or that are over-represented in the park.



## 4

# Planning Concept

The planning concept for Gatineau Park is a graphical representation of the long-term vision for the park (“where we want to go”). It illustrates the key ideas that will guide the park’s planning and management over the next 50 years. Through a simple image, it shows in a concrete way how goals and objectives will be achieved on the ground, and indicates, in a comprehensive and coherent manner, the distribution over the park’s territory of the actions and strategies that flow from the vision.

This planning concept proposes changes in response to certain issues encountered in the park, while maintaining certain existing conditions that remain desirable. It does not necessarily involve changes throughout.

## 4.1 Ecological Connectivity

Gatineau Park continues to be the Capital's conservation park. Gatineau Park is home to a large concentration of native wildlife and plant species, including many species at risk. Maintaining the ecological integrity of its entire land area is therefore necessary and, in order to do so, ecological connectivity must also be maintained between the park and other natural areas in the region.

Ecological connectivity is a key component of the planning concept. It is fundamental to maintaining ecological integrity, and promotes rich biodiversity by enabling species to circulate and adapt to changes. This is a central part of the design concept. It concerns both ecological connections outside the park and the free movement of natural species within its boundaries. Thus, the conservation of ecological connectivity is necessarily a collective responsibility.

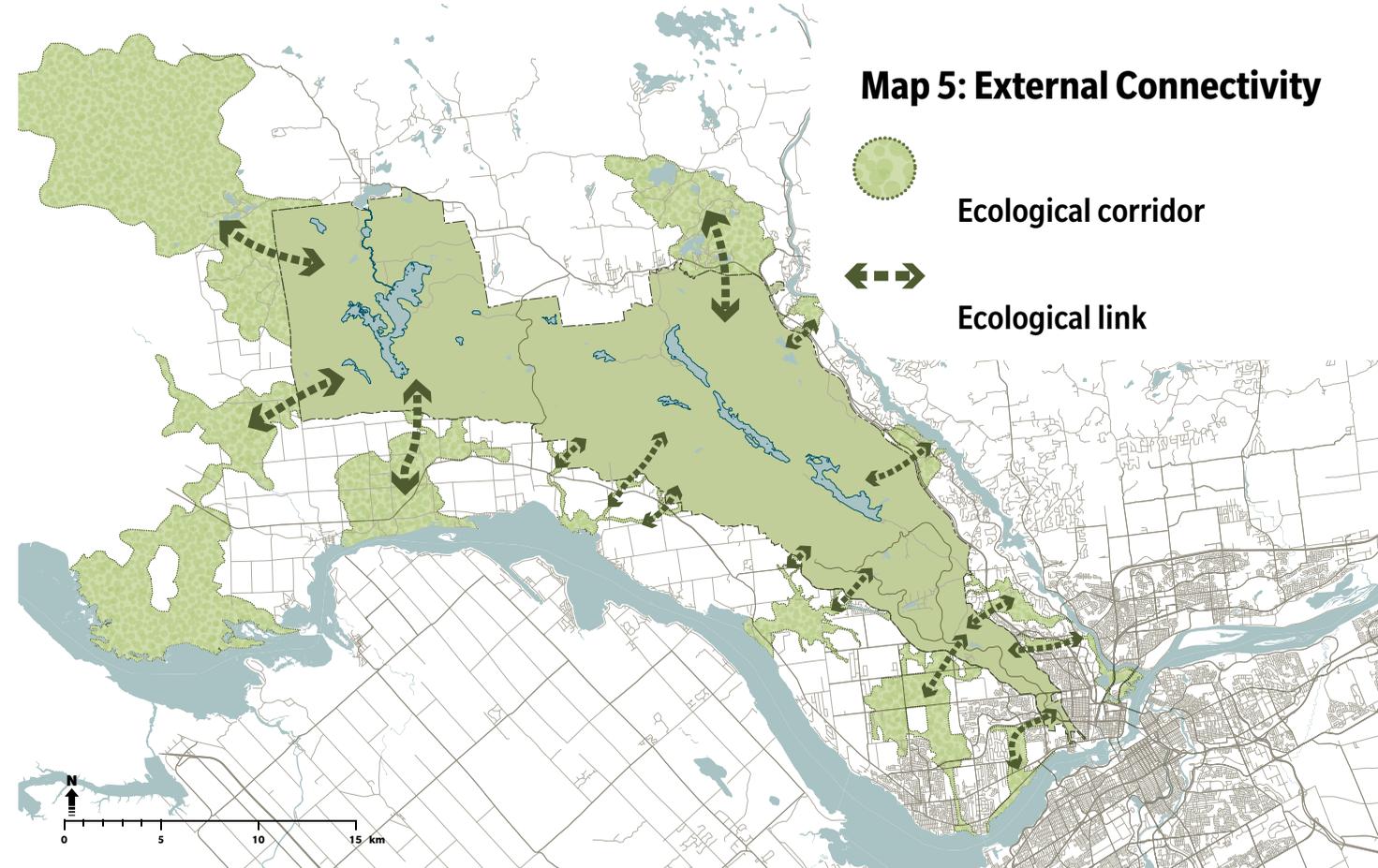
### EXTERNAL CONNECTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS

Gatineau Park is part of a network of natural areas and regional, provincial and national parks. Between the park and adjacent natural areas are corridors, often forested, that act as ecological corridors, connecting the park to these environments.

This network of ecological corridors ensures the sustainability of wildlife, plants and ecological functions on a regional scale by facilitating some functions such as feeding, dispersal and reproduction, as well as access to shelter. It also facilitates essential processes such as nutrient flow and genetic exchange. Corridors also contribute to the resilience of the park's ecosystems to climate change.

A characterization study conducted in 2012<sup>1</sup> identified 12 ecological corridors that connect the park to three main natural areas: the forests to the northwest of the park, the Ottawa River and the Gatineau River.

<sup>1</sup> Del Degan, Massé and Associates. *Identification and Characterization of Ecological Corridors Adjacent to Gatineau Park*, study report prepared for the National Capital Commission, October 2012



## INTERNAL CONNECTIVITY: DEFRAGMENTATION OF PARK HABITATS

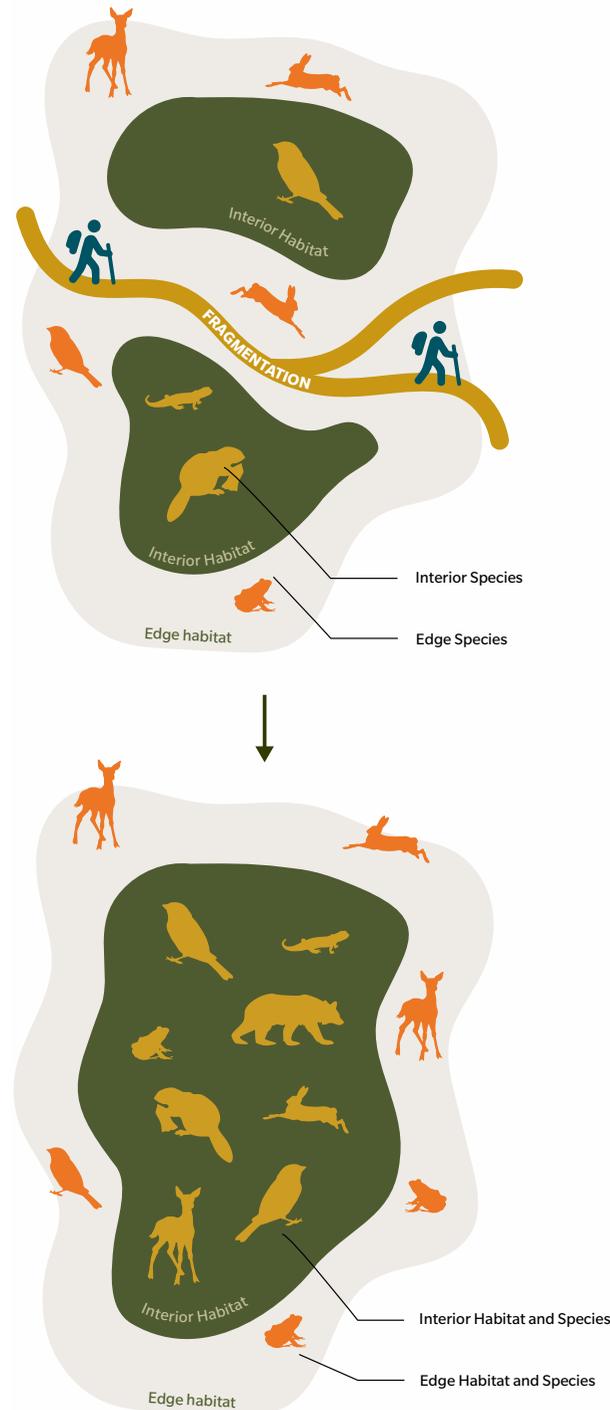
Internal connectivity within Gatineau Park is essential to conserving and maintaining the habitats of the diverse species that make up the park's ecosystems. The size of continuous natural spaces has an impact on the type and size of habitats within ecosystems and, by extension, the types of species likely to live in the park. The greater the continuous natural spaces, the greater the chances of conserving biodiversity, because the safe movement of species facilitates genetic exchange and access to breeding grounds, food and protection, which are essential for native plants and wildlife. It is also more likely that the park will be home to species that are at the top of the food chain, as these species, essential to balanced ecosystems, require larger territories than the park provides.

Fragmentation of ecosystems by road and recreational infrastructure reduces habitat size and quality. This results in the loss of habitat necessary for species that require large areas to survive. The defragmentation of natural spaces is therefore fundamental to conserve a greater diversity of species. The use of Gatineau Park must take these realities into account in order to conserve its ecosystems.

### EFFECT OF HABITAT FRAGMENTATION

Habitat fragmentation can be caused by the creation of roads, energy corridors, trails and other infrastructure in an intact natural area. Its effects are as follows:

- reduction of quality habitats;
- reduction in habitat size;
- introduction of invasive species;
- barrier to movement;
- risk of wildlife collisions;
- increased prey exposure to predators;
- disturbance of sensitive animals;
- easy access for prohibited activities (e.g. poaching);
- safety issues related to unmapped trails.



## 4.2 Important Lands Outside the Park

Several properties outside Gatineau Park contribute to its ecological integrity or provide access to existing sites for outdoor activities within the park. Many of these lands are owned by the NCC, and some of them are within the ecological corridors.

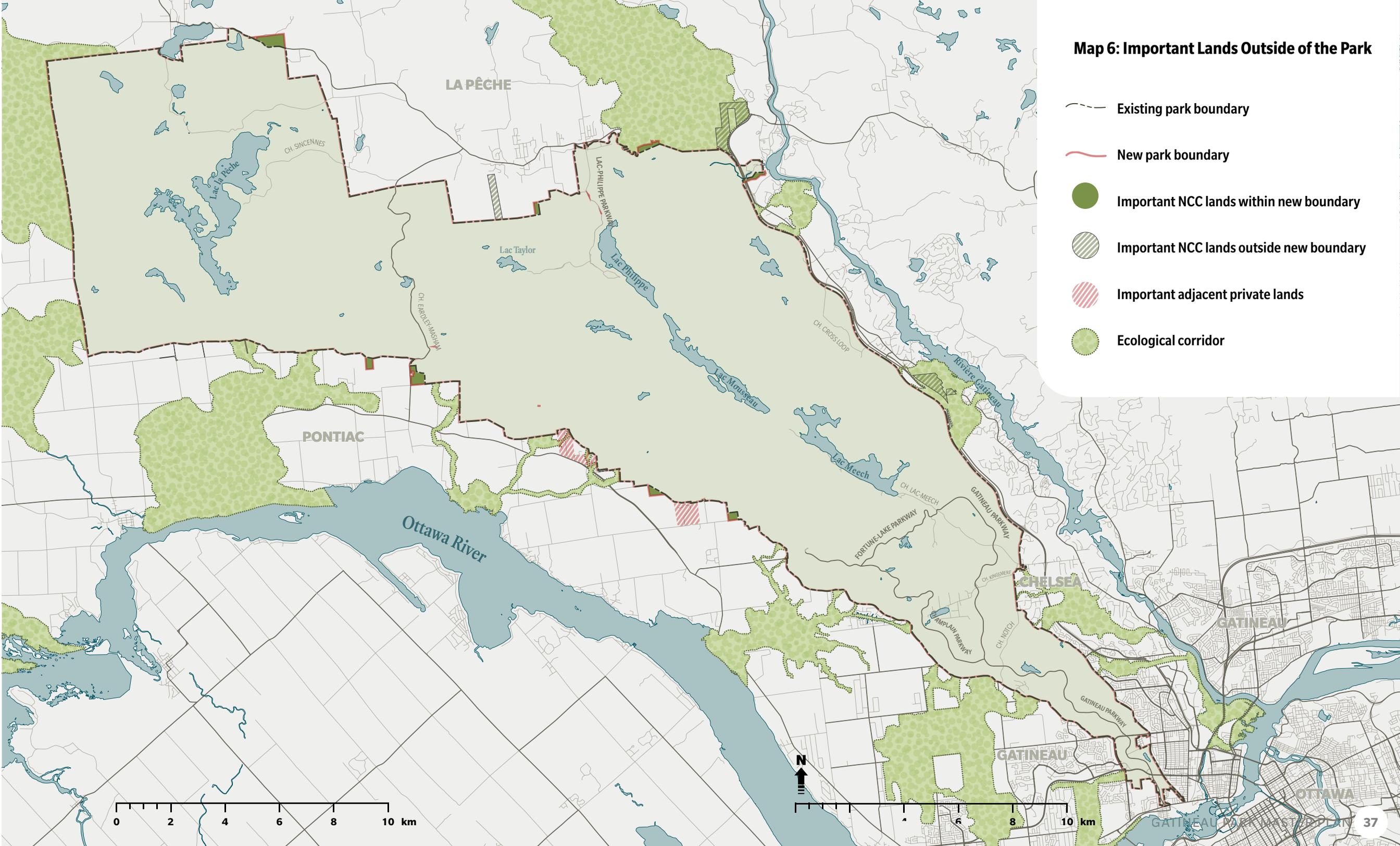
The park boundaries will be adjusted to include NCC lands that are adjacent to the park and that have ecological value. These lands total 130 hectares, and will bring the total area of the park to 36,261 hectares.

Although ecological corridors are essential to the ecological integrity of the park and the region, they will remain outside the boundaries of the park.

Finally, a few private lands in the southwest of the park, which will remain outside the park boundaries, are used informally to get to activity sites and have therefore been identified as essential to the park's operation. The NCC will strive to develop official access to one of them.

**Map 6: Important Lands Outside of the Park**

- Existing park boundary
- New park boundary
- Important NCC lands within new boundary
- Important NCC lands outside new boundary
- Important adjacent private lands
- Ecological corridor



## 4.3 Description of the Planning Concept

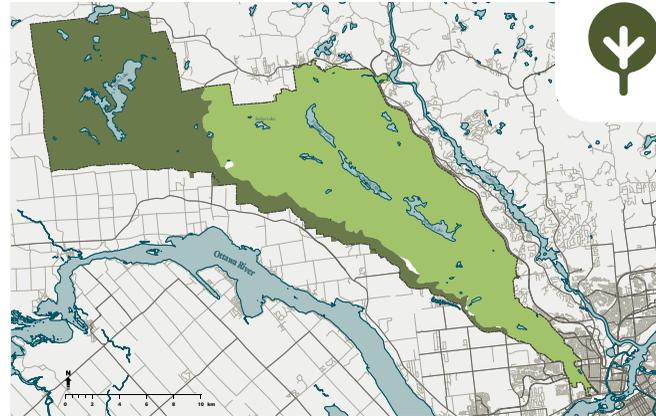
The central theme of the master plan is to sustainably maintain and protect Gatineau Park’s ecological integrity by conserving the ecosystems and limiting habitat fragmentation. It aims to maintain the park’s biodiversity and ecological services for the region, as well as provide a place to connect with nature through environmentally friendly outdoor activities.

The park’s planning concept clarifies how the distribution of areas for outdoor activities can enhance the park’s internal and external ecological connectivity, and thereby conserve its ecological integrity.

Proximity to nature and outdoor activities contributes to the well-being of residents and visitors. These features make people aware of the importance of a healthy environment and inspire them to want to conserve natural spaces.

The planning concept supports the implementation of the vision and the four goals outlined in the previous chapters. The first three goals focus on conservation, recreational and cultural experiences in nature, and equitable access. They are connected to the sites. The fourth goal, which is engagement and collaboration, is cross-cutting; it supports the first three by engaging everyone to ensure the park’s long-term ecological integrity.

### CONSERVATION



Gatineau Park is, first and foremost, a place for conserving ecological integrity. The purpose of the planning concept is to conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes.

As illustrated in Map 3, “Environmental Components,” throughout the park, there are exceptional areas to protect. The park has a number of ecosystems, which are home to species at risk and sensitive habitats where natural processes take place.

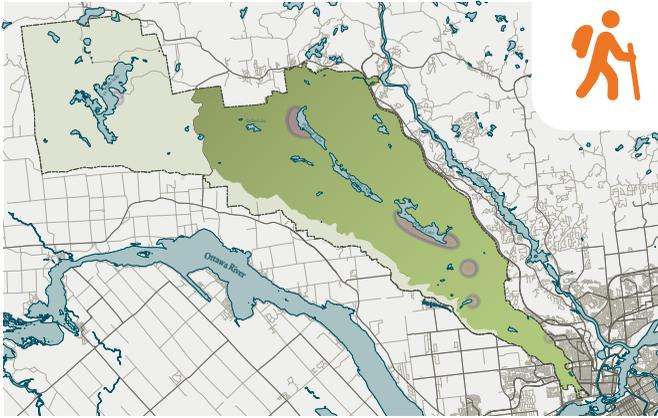
In the planning concept, particular importance is placed on the La Pêche Lake and Eardley Escarpment ecosystems. The Eardley Escarpment is the richest and most fragile ecosystem in the park. Its southern exposure gives it a warm, dry microclimate. There are numerous species at risk there, along with rare plants that are normally found in the US Midwest.

The La Pêche Lake ecosystem and adjacent natural areas on the park’s boundaries form a sufficiently large natural space to accommodate large predators and species that generally avoid human activity. Due to the area’s low level of fragmentation and rich biodiversity, as well as the presence of certain plant communities that are rare in the rest of the park, the area is attractive to species with large home ranges.

The ecological corridors adjacent to Gatineau Park are also part of the planning concept. They form about a dozen corridors that primarily follow waterways and woodland areas, connecting the park’s ecosystems to regional natural areas.

In all areas of the park, the number of unofficial trails will be reduced to protect sensitive habitats and increase the quantity and quality of available habitats. Environmentally friendly outdoor activities will be allowed where there is the least environmental impact. The degree of conservation effort will therefore gradually increase as one moves further from the Capital’s urban area.

## EXPERIENCES IN NATURE



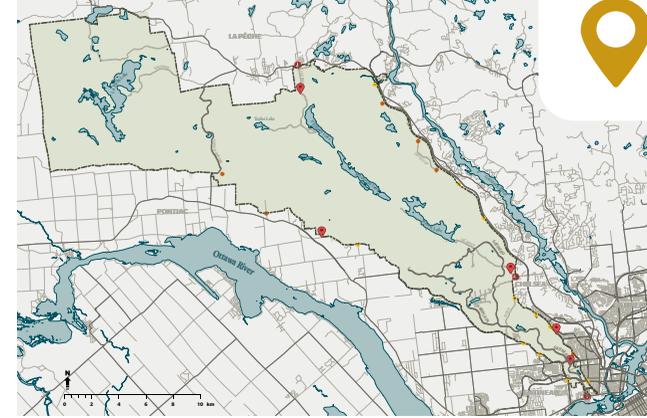
The planning concept is based on collaborative, responsible and environmentally friendly recreation. It also aims to provide a sustainable, recreational experience in nature by distributing activities and visitors based on the areas that can best accommodate them. Outdoor recreation sites are distributed to allow a higher concentration of activity near the urban centres, i.e., in the southeastern part of the park. This concentration of recreational infrastructure gradually decreases as one moves toward the conservation area in the northwest.

The structured activity hubs at Camp Fortune and around Philippe and Meech lakes will continue to support a variety of outdoor recreation activities requiring specific facilities, and the trail network will be reviewed to limit habitat fragmentation.

No activities are permitted in the La Pêche Lake area and the Eardley Escarpment, which are dedicated to plant and wildlife conservation. The exception is the beach area and canoe-camping sites at La Pêche Lake, and some very targeted areas of the escarpment, where there are rock climbing sites and a few trails offering scenic views.

In addition, a number of tangible and intangible cultural resources are distributed throughout the park. In areas that are not dedicated to the integral conservation of the environment, heritage buildings, artifacts, cultural landscapes, ruins and stories will be highlighted, bringing a whole new dimension to the park.

## EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ACCESS



The concept is also based on identifying means of sustainable transportation to park entry points and within its boundaries. Movement will take place more and more using means of transportation other than cars, which could be organized at the welcome areas and at the main and secondary entrances. The creation and strengthening of regional public transit services around the park will improve access to the park for all, and support the development of transit services within the park.

Access to the trail network and key park attractions will be diversified, while ensuring minimal ecological impact around recreational sites. Existing roads and trails that provide access to the activity sites will be maintained, but new roads that cause habitat fragmentation will not be permitted. Access points throughout the park's periphery already lead to the trail network without the need to drive through the park. In addition, connecting municipal and regional trails to the trail network will promote access to the park through active transportation. Appropriate infrastructure in strategic locations will also facilitate access for people with reduced mobility, so that everyone can enjoy outdoor activities in nature.

Five welcome areas will serve as information centres. These include the primary visitor centre in Chelsea, as well as those at Philippe Lake and the Relais plein air, and the one at the southern end of the Gatineau Parkway, along with a new welcome area in the western part of the park, in the Luskville area. In season, the La Pêche Lake facilities will provide more basic reception services.



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## ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

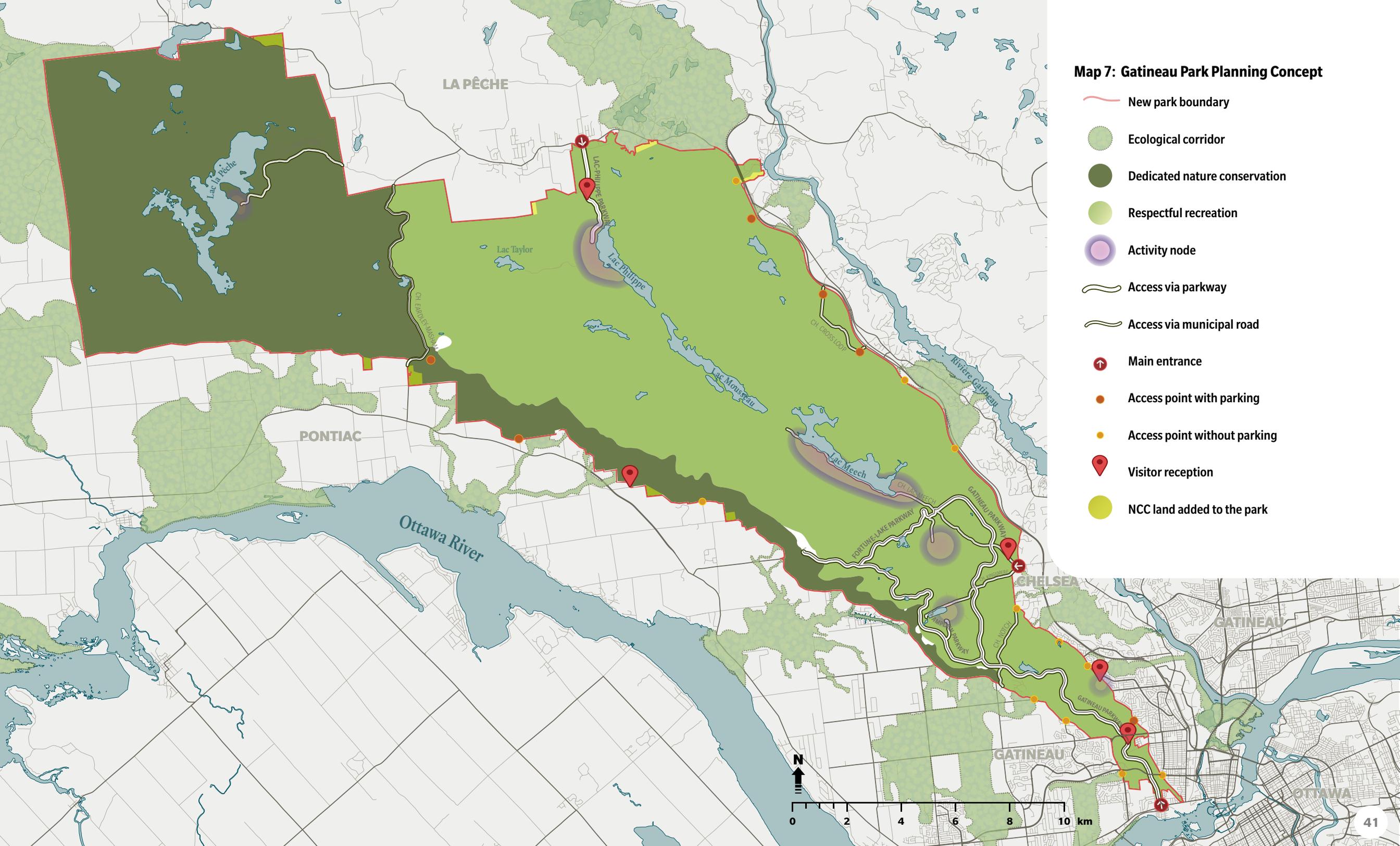


While these efforts are led by the NCC, the support and commitment of many stakeholders are needed to achieve the plan's vision and objectives, and benefit future generations of visitors to Gatineau Park.

Collaboration between organizations, as well as visitor engagement are key to achieving the objectives of the master plan. Protecting park resources is a shared responsibility, based on active land management and collaboration with all levels of government, including municipalities, non-profit organizations, business partners, community groups, the scientific community, residents and visitors. By working together, the NCC and its partners will help protect the park's intrinsic value. In doing so, they will help fulfill shared interests in nature conservation, quality of life and regional vibrancy.

Maintaining the network of trails to foster the discovery of natural areas, while limiting the impact on ecosystems, will require user collaboration and a shared management approach. The conservation of ecological corridors will require partnerships with organizations interested in maintaining the ecological integrity of the park and the region, as well as with landowners in the corridors. Innovative approaches will be necessary. Partners will also be asked to collaborate on plant and wildlife monitoring, participate in land management activities such as habitat restoration, and educate visitors on compliance with the code of conduct and existing regulations.

**Map 7: Gatineau Park Planning Concept**





## 5 General Policies

The policy statements in the Gatineau Park Master Plan guide land management and support the review of proposals and initiatives requiring federal approval. These policies generally apply to all park lands managed by the NCC, and support the implementation of the vision and strategic directions set out in the master plan.



## 5.1 Conserving Nature

Gatineau Park is the largest natural area in the National Capital Region. It is necessary to protect the entire park because all of its lands host significant habitats and ecosystems, particularly for species at risk protected by law. The master plan proposes new ways to ensure the long-term protection of the park's ecological integrity.



### 5.1.1 Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration

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Habitat and ecosystem conservation is essential to the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park. That is the main objective of a conservation park. As a steward of federal lands, the NCC has an obligation to protect habitats and ecosystems related to species protected under the law.

- A.** Manage Gatineau Park as a “category II protected area” as defined by the IUCN.
- B.** Conserve the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park through actions to protect ecosystems, including native biodiversity, habitats and natural processes throughout the park.
- C.** Protect species at risk and their habitats in compliance with all applicable federal legislation.
- D.** Establish and implement environmental protection measures to mitigate negative impacts when planning projects.
- E.** Reduce habitat fragmentation, and restore degraded areas.
- F.** Protect the quality and quantity of water resources by applying best management practices for rainwater and surface water.
- G.** Reduce the presence and proliferation of invasive species, and restore ecosystems and habitats affected by their presence.
- H.** Use native and diverse species, in planting programs to increase the resilience of the natural systems.
- I.** Continue to collect scientific data, and monitor Gatineau Park health status indicators, including the size of target plant and wildlife populations, water and shoreline quality, infrastructure density calculation, and habitat fragmentation.

### 5.1.2 Managing the Ecological Impact of Recreational Infrastructure

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Gatineau Park will continue to offer outdoor recreational experiences through its facilities and network of official trails. To prevent habitat loss, the overall ecological impact of infrastructure and recreational sites cannot be increased in the future, and habitat fragmentation created by trails will be reduced.

- A.** Improve ecological connectivity within and between habitats inside the park by closing unofficial trails and limiting the total number of kilometres of trails to the amount specified in the Responsible Trail Management project, as set out in Chapter 7, and illustrated in Map 8 – *Land Use Designations*, in Chapter 6.
- B.** Do not increase the overall ecological impact of the park’s infrastructure unless the development occurs in welcome areas, as part of a sustainable transportation strategy improving access to the park or for the purpose of improving the overall quality of the environment in the park.
- C.** Allow for the expansion of existing buildings and the addition of complementary infrastructure for permitted recreational activities (shelters, washrooms, picnic shelters, tables, benches) if this infrastructure enhances visitor experience and if this loss or fragmentation can be compensated.
- D.** Allow trails to be relocated to reduce environmental impact.
- E.** Ensure the proper maintenance of infrastructure to reduce the environmental impact of human activities.



### 5.1.3 Managing the Ecological Impact of Non-Recreational Infrastructure

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Gatineau Park is a place for nature conservation and outdoor recreation. It is therefore necessary to reduce as much as possible the prejudicial, adverse or negative impacts of infrastructure, buildings, installations and non-recreational facilities within and in proximity of Park boundaries and in the vicinity. In particular, there may be areas within a conservation park that are not covered by telecommunications networks, as is currently the case.

- A.** Concentrate infrastructure within a restricted number of corridors, giving priority to those that already exist (communication and power lines, rainwater management, regional transportation corridors), to limit the dividing of territory and habitat fragmentation.
- B.** Close or convert old municipal roads into trails if they are no longer being used by the municipality.
- C.** Manage the presence of telecommunications towers:
  - ▶ Avoid adding telecommunications towers inside the park to avoid increasing their impact on landscapes and the footprint associated with their installation or that of associated facilities (electrical and Internet connections, access roads for maintenance).
  - ▶ Implement an adequate communication network to fulfill only operational and security requirements and which can achieve the following:
    - Meet the needs of the conservation officers responsible for providing assistance when required.
    - Meet the technical requirements for infrastructure to collect user fees.
    - Concentrate equipment in locations that already have telecommunications towers (Camp Fortune, fire tower).
    - Take advantage of the existing towers outside the park.
    - Minimize the impact on the natural environment as much as possible.
    - Reduce the visual impact inside and outside the park, and conserve the quality of the landscapes.

### 5.1.4 Nighttime Periods

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A nighttime break in activity, between late evening and dawn, is essential to the tranquility of natural environments and to allow wildlife to maintain their daily cycles. During this period, any known adverse effects of artificial lighting and noise shall be managed. The dark early evening also offers a different outdoor experience. Reducing upward light spill also contributes to the quality of stargazing.

- A.** Limit the disturbance of species by monitoring the nighttime use of Gatineau Park.
- B.** Do not permit organized nighttime activities that may be noisy or require lighting.
- C.** Allow outdoor activities in the evening and the use of personal lamps that respect the code of conduct on authorized trails and sites.
- D.** Close Gatineau Park's parkways to motor vehicle traffic at night.
- E.** Work with Camp Fortune to reduce the lighting of sites at night, taking operational and safety needs into account.
- F.** When lighting is required, apply night sky protection best practices based on the principles developed by the International Dark-Sky Association.

### 5.1.5 Ecological Corridors

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The natural connections between the region's large natural areas are essential to conserving Gatineau Park's ecological integrity. In collaboration with people from local communities and various partners, it is important to implement innovative ways to protect these corridors.

- A.** Continue to promote to the public and partners the contribution of the 12 ecological corridors identified around Gatineau Park, their importance to ecosystem health and regional biodiversity, and the need to conserve them.
- B.** Work with the public and stakeholders to identify approaches that strike a balance between the ecological functionality of the corridors and local objectives.
- C.** Support the development of natural and sustainable trails within ecological corridors to educate users on the environmental value of these lands.
- D.** Make improvements to the ecological corridors to promote the free movement of species, including maintaining the greatest possible proportion of ground and forest cover, the absence of fences, laying out lots in clusters, increasing riparian buffer strips near waterways, and situating recreational trails so as to maximize the width of the unoccupied natural buffer.

### 5.1.6 Scientific Research and Monitoring

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Gatineau Park is a rich and unique natural environment for scientific research.

- A.** Enable scientific research related to ecosystems throughout the park in order to enhance knowledge and provide a scientific basis for management decisions.
- B.** Allow for scientific research that does little or no harm to the species being studied and their ecosystem.
- C.** Encourage and oversee third-party scientific research, including citizen science initiatives.
- D.** Share scientific knowledge, and educate visitors and the public on the value of the park's natural resources.
- E.** Continue monitoring and reporting on ecosystem health indicators to support decision making.



### 5.1.7 Sustainable Design

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The offer of outdoor recreation activities in Gatineau Park is supported by buildings, structures and infrastructure that are designed and operated with the lowest possible ecological impact.

- A.** Apply a planning and design approach to buildings that respects and integrates with the natural environment and that maintains or improves the environmental conditions of the site.
- B.** Contribute to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy which calls for new federal buildings to be carbon neutral.
- C.** As often as possible, incorporate energy-efficiency solutions into new construction and buildings being renovated. As much as possible, make use of ecological and sustainable design, including the orientation of buildings to ensure proper ventilation and the penetration of natural light, the installation of low-water-consumption and energy-efficient systems, permeable roadway materials, green roofs, alternative energy production, and the use of local or recycled materials.
- D.** Ensure that the proposed design solutions are reliable over the long term and economically sustainable.

### 5.1.8 Legal Protection

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The protection and management of Gatineau Park are carried out under the authority conferred by the *National Capital Act* and regulations adopted thereunder. Additional legal tools may assist in the park's management.

- A.** Renew the NCC's legal framework in order to provide it with more modern powers that are better suited to the park's conservation objectives, and which specifies the following:
  - ▶ the park's boundaries;
  - ▶ a clear statement of the park's conservation mission and the NCC's responsibility to protect this conservation park;
  - ▶ the ability to modernize the pricing framework for activities;
  - ▶ the ability to enforce authorized activities and uses;
  - ▶ the authority conferred to conservation officers and park administrators.

## 5.2 Nature and Cultural Experiences

Gatineau Park is a popular outdoor recreational area. It contributes to the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors. The master plan encourages people to discover it and engage in environmentally friendly outdoor activities, while maintaining the park's ecological integrity and promoting its long-term conservation. The park's territory also has a rich history and culture that must be protected and shared, while ensuring the conservation of natural areas.





## 5.2.1 Environmentally Friendly Activities

Gatineau Park offers an enchanting setting to enjoy contact with nature through environmentally friendly outdoor activities. Management of the park's recreational offer will be done in a way that will maintain its ecological integrity.

- A.** Allow for trail activities that provide access to lakes or activities taking place in officially designated areas.
- B.** Create programs that encourage visitors to experience the park and learn about its conservation role.
- C.** Make outdoor activities possible that are compatible with and respectful of the natural environment.
- D.** Allow sports competitions, primarily at Camp Fortune, when compatible with the nature of the venue. Sports competitions may be acceptable elsewhere in the park if they meet the requirements of the park's activity and event acceptability matrix.

## 5.2.2 Managing Quality of Experience

Several factors have an impact on the quality of the visitor experience in Gatineau Park, including the quality of the facilities, ease of wayfinding, traffic volume, and interactions between people practising various types of activities. Management of activity areas must provide the best conditions for a pleasant visit.

- A.** Manage the flow of visitors to areas, or during periods, where there are large numbers of visitors, or where the environment is particularly sensitive.
- B.** Aim for a concentration of visitors that takes into account the size of the welcome area and recreational infrastructure, the sustainability of the area, and visitor perception of a quality experience.
- C.** Promote the park in a way that avoids overloading recreational areas, manages high traffic areas, and suggests other places to visit.
- D.** Provide a consistent, efficient and easily understood directional signage system on the pathway network that contributes to user safety. Update the signage system for trail numbering and degree of difficulty to reflect the evolution of the trail network.
- E.** Support the coexistence of various activities on common trails by establishing and promoting a code of conduct.
- F.** Among other things, ensure that the code of conduct includes the importance for all users to do the following:
  - ▶ maintain mutual respect between users;
  - ▶ adopt safe practices, and ensure a sense of safety for all, regardless of the activity, personal skill level or that of others, and whether they are alone, in a group, or accompanied by a pet;
  - ▶ comply with NCC regulations, and limit themselves to the practice of authorized uses on different trails or recreational sites;
  - ▶ maintain a quiet atmosphere for those seeking contact with nature;
  - ▶ be aware of and minimize the environmental impact of their activity.
- G.** Promote safe driving, and require all users to behave in a manner that promotes their safety and complies with the Quebec *Highway Safety Code* on the parkway network.
- H.** Redirect the development of recreational facilities associated with neighbourhood parks outside the park (e.g. playground structures, developed sports facilities).
- I.** Continue to collect data, and track indicators regarding experience quality and park sustainability, based on visitor traffic.

### 5.2.3 Heritage, Cultural Landscapes and Archaeology

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The known and potential cultural heritage and archaeological resources of Gatineau Park help to better understand the region's history. It is important to protect and manage them to prevent irreversible losses and contribute to the interpretation of sites.

- A.** Support research that contributes to the understanding of tangible and intangible cultural resources and the planning for their conservation.
- B.** Prepare heritage value statements for buildings, landscapes and significant sites, and determine the federal heritage status of buildings according to the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office.
- C.** Look for uses that are compatible with heritage buildings, which will allow them to be occupied and facilitate their conservation.
- D.** Protect the defining characteristics of cultural landscapes as identified in the Gatineau Park Cultural Heritage Plan.
- E.** As part of the knowledge being shared, include information about geomorphology, landscape changes and factors that led to settlement in the National Capital Region.
- F.** Continue to document and gather information about tangible and intangible cultural property in the park's inventory.
- G.** Work with municipalities to protect park landscapes that are visible from outside park boundaries.
- H.** Ensure that archaeological, historical and pre-contact resources are protected by developing increasing knowledge of the park's archaeological potential.
- I.** Where possible, prevent lakeshore and riverbank erosion from contributing to the loss of archaeological artifacts.
- J.** Manage known archaeological sites in collaboration with Indigenous communities, complying with the Protocol for the Co-Management of Archaeological Resources (2017) and building on the provisions of Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy.
- K.** Where possible, showcase archaeological resources on-site to enhance interpretation.
- L.** Allow archaeological searches via a permitting process to ensure that projects are valid and that environmental impacts are mitigated.

### 5.2.4 Cultural Heritage Interpretation and Environmental Awareness

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In addition to offering visitors varied experiences, educational and interpretive activities related to Gatineau Park's many natural, scenic, heritage and archaeological assets, foster their attachment to the park. People are more likely to want to protect a place they love.

- A.** Promote environmental educational activities and cultural heritage interpretation through a variety of means and venues to reach diverse target audiences including school groups, campers, new Canadians, local residents and out-of-town visitors.
- B.** Establish partnerships, and create educational programs to raise public awareness of the environment and showcase the park's heritage and cultural resources.
- C.** Among the sites listed in the Gatineau Park Cultural Heritage Plan, first highlight those that are outside the Intensive Nature Conservation Area and that are along trails or located at activity sites. Use virtual means and off-site activities to interpret cultural property located within the Intensive Nature Conservation Area.
- D.** Maintain, renew and create signage for static interpretation along trails, in exhibition rooms or at strategic park locations, in addition to the dissemination of information through other means.
- E.** Name areas in a manner that contributes to their interpretation, following the NCC's place-naming policy.
- F.** Ensure that the natural environment and heritage buildings are protected during the installation of facilities, materials and equipment required for the protection and interpretation of buildings, heritage sites and cultural landscapes.



## 5.2.5 Design and Signage Quality

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Although there are few new structures or buildings planned in Gatineau Park, the quality of their construction will enhance the visitor experience. Their design must therefore be consistent with the natural environment. The signage must also add to the quality of the sites.

- A.** Apply Gatineau Park’s architectural guidelines when constructing or renovating buildings.
- B.** Strive for design excellence in site design and building construction, taking into account visitor comfort and experience, visual quality, landscape, integration with the natural environment, best practices in terms of performance and environmental sustainability, and accessibility.
- C.** Take into account the meaning of sites and the protection of heritage value in any intervention that would result in a change.
- D.** Design features that ensure visitor safety and prevent vandalism.
- E.** Ensure that signage which enhances the visitor’s nature experience has the least impact possible on the visual quality of the activity area and the natural and cultural landscapes, whether this signage pertains to safety, rules, wayfinding, education or promotion.
- F.** Ensure that the signage and furnishings are in line with the park’s identity, while being consistent with the signage system and the Capital’s brand image.
- G.** Ensure that third-party signage is authorized by the NCC, and that permanent commercial signage is limited to directional information and meets the requirements for visual quality and integration with a natural environment.
- H.** Ensure that the signage is relevant, clear, concise and appropriate for the audience and location.
- I.** Limit the use of permanent, dynamic, lit signage at park entrances, on the municipal road network or for public safety reasons.

## 5.2.6 Boating

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Some of Gatineau Park’s large lakes are navigable and accessible to the public, and offer a variety of natural vistas.

- A.** Encourage and promote non-motorized watercraft (e.g. canoes, kayaks, paddleboards) and uses that have the least possible impact on shorelines and wildlife.
- B.** Implement measures, including monitoring, to reduce the risk of spreading invasive alien species, such as boat inspections and the raising of boater awareness regarding the risk of spreading these species.
- C.** In collaboration with municipalities and Transport Canada, implement measures to limit shoreline erosion.

## 5.2.7 Motorized Activities

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The use of motor vehicles related to certain activities must be monitored in order to minimize use conflicts and environmental impacts.

- A.** As a general rule, do not permit motorized recreational activities within the park. Prohibit vehicles such as ATVs (4x4s), motocross bikes and other motor vehicles, unless they are used for park operations or are specifically authorized in the master plan.
- B.** Do not allow remotely controlled motorized devices unless they are used for park operations and management (e.g. drones, aircraft and carts).
- C.** Allow the movement of motor vehicles authorized under the *Quebec Highway Safety Code* on parkways, when open.
- D.** Allow electric mountain bikes (*as defined in the glossary*) on nature trails where mountain biking is permitted.

## 5.2.8 Accommodations

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Park accommodations allow for a way of connecting with nature that is different from the experience during the day. However, measures are needed to regulate this activity and protect the environment.

- A.** Maintain, as a primary form of accommodation, the various forms of camping, including serviced and non-serviced sites and ready-to-camp facilities that maintain contact with nature (yurts, four-season tents, cabins).
- B.** Allow for the operation of accommodations such as hotels, lodges or tourist residences of more than one unit, primarily for the purpose of using and maintaining a heritage building that could be integrated into the cultural offering.
- C.** Avoid offering short-term accommodations on NCC property in buildings consisting of only one accommodation unit.

## 5.2.9 Other Visitor Services

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Offering services that complement outdoor activities enhances the visitor experience. These services could be provided by the NCC or by partners, following an agreement.

- A.** Enable visitor services in Gatineau Park that
  - ▶ enhance the outdoor experience and are compatible with park objectives and authorized uses in the targeted areas;
  - ▶ remain complementary to the park's recreational activities;
- ▶ do not compete with a potential commercial offering in the vicinity of the park, unless they better meet the needs of visitors because they are located in the park or permit occupancy of a building of heritage or historic interest.
- B.** Encourage tourist services around the park that facilitate the proper use of the park's recreational opportunities, use its infrastructure accordingly and support the nature experiences provided within the park.



## 5.2.10 New Activities and Events

New trends in recreation may emerge in the future and there may be new demands for holding events in Gatineau Park. In order to review any request for new land use, management tools are needed to validate the compatibility of proposals with park objectives and to support the federal approval process.

- A.** Develop an acceptability matrix that assesses the relevance of new activities, including with regard to the following:
  - ▶ compatibility with the park's conservation mission and brand image;
  - ▶ connection to the outdoors and the discovery of the park;
  - ▶ the strategic direction of each land use area as stated in the master plan;
  - ▶ the cumulative impact of the recreational infrastructure footprint and habitat fragmentation;
  - ▶ the objective of connecting with nature through outdoor activities;
  - ▶ the scientifically determined impact on environmental resources;
  - ▶ the protection of existing cultural resources (heritage, landscapes and so on.);
  - ▶ coexistence with other established activities;
  - ▶ desired experience;
  - ▶ the remaining capacity of recreational and welcome area infrastructure;
  - ▶ the ability to manage transportation.
- B.** In addition, assess new events also in terms of the following:
  - ▶ the event's connection to outdoor sports and cultural activities;
  - ▶ the audience reached by the event (participant diversity, performance variety);
  - ▶ the legacy potential for the park in support of regular programming;
  - ▶ event reach (local, regional, national, international);
  - ▶ the potential for multi-year recurrence;
  - ▶ the number of events per year and the impact on public access to the park;
  - ▶ the economic contribution to the region.

### 5.3 Equitable and Sustainable Access

The popularity of the park is reflected in the ever-increasing number of visits. In order to maintain access to the park while gradually reducing the impact of transportation on the environment and visitor experience, it is necessary to implement a transportation strategy that combines public transit services, active travel modes and proper use of parking. Equitable access to the park and activity areas is essential to provide a quality experience for everyone.





### 5.3.1 General Approach

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- A.** Ensure that all visitors have a good experience by making transportation efficient, enjoyable and safe.
- B.** Broadly speaking, improve access to park activity sites without increasing the environmental impact of transportation (footprint, wildlife collisions, noise and animal disturbances, habitat fragmentation, greenhouse gas emissions).
- C.** Implement response methods adapted to the flow of visitors at different time periods and commensurate with the scale of access, safety and environmental protection needs.
- D.** Provide access to park facilities based on park sustainability, environmental impact and the quality of the visitor experience.
- E.** Promote the use of alternative methods of transportation in order to progressively reduce vehicle traffic within the park, thus improving user experience and safety, traffic flow, and the quality of the environment.

### 5.3.2 Experience Quality and Safety

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Landscape quality and safe transportation are among the factors that influence how the park will be perceived by visitors. Health and safety are essential considerations in the design, management and use of the park.

- A.** Maintain the identification of road entrances and access points to the park by developing a clear delineation—physical, symbolic and identity-based—around the park to reinforce the visitor experience and represent the transition from urban space to conservation park.
- B.** Mark the park boundaries on roadways going through the park (Notch Road, Eardley-Masham Road, Lac-des-Loups Road, Saint-Louis Street and Boulevard des Allumettières).
- C.** To promote the safety of all visitors in transit, implement design measures that can prevent accidents and reduce conflicts between users on parkways, municipal roads and park trails.
- D.** Ensure the enforcement of the *Highway Safety Code*.
- E.** Take advantage of road improvement work on the parkways, to integrate improvements to increase user safety and road sharing by cyclists and drivers.
- F.** Prohibit vehicle access to parkways during the night, and conduct internal traffic management in the park during periods of overcrowding, or for public safety purposes.

### 5.3.3 Other Ways of Accessing the Park

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Reducing the impact of transportation on the environment and visitor experience is largely achieved by reducing vehicle traffic in the park. In order for there to be a change in transportation habits, options must be put in place beforehand.

- A.** Support improved linkages between regional trail systems and the park network, and coordinate planned developments with municipalities.
- B.** Maintain existing official access ways by road and trails, and allow trail access as proposed by the Responsible Trail Management project to connect to the park trail system.
- C.** Where appropriate and feasible, promote and support other transportation systems such as buses, shuttles and, preferably, non-motorized modes of access.
- D.** Encourage cycling to the park by adding bike racks at key destination points and in welcome areas.
- E.** Provide other modes of transportation, such as public transit, that meet the need in a financially sustainable manner.
- F.** Work with municipalities, regional public carriers and private partners to provide users with new or enhanced regular public transit services or specialized shuttles to the park's main entry points and to areas that will have future shuttle service within the park.
- G.** Promote existing public transit services near park access points.
- H.** Strive to promote public transit over cars at the Chelsea and south entrances when necessary to improve access and traffic conditions.
- I.** Support the electrification of transportation by making electric vehicle charging stations available at strategic locations in the park.
- J.** Promote incentives for high-occupancy vehicles to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and reduce the number of vehicles in the park.



### 5.3.4 Parking Management

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The number and location of parking spaces is part of an overall sustainable visitor experience and travel management approach to reduce the impact of vehicle traffic in the park, while ensuring access to venues and providing a quality experience. However, the growth in visitation cannot be supported by an increase in parking spaces in the central areas of the park. It will have to be based on a sustainable transportation strategy that includes public transit and parking at the edge of the park.

- A.** Do not expand parking lots in the area surrounding the Gatineau, Champlain and Fortune Lake parkways.
- B.** Direct parking needs, where warranted, along and immediately within the perimeter of the park, as well as in welcome areas from which public transit services may be established.
- C.** Seek to implement alternative transportation options before adding parking.
- D.** Assess the appropriateness of adding, where permitted, parking spaces by considering, among other things, the infrastructure density index, environmental impacts, cumulative effects on traffic, visitor experience, and sufficiently high traffic to warrant the deployment of transit services.
- E.** Prohibit parking along the edges of parkways and outside designated parking areas.

### 5.3.5 Access for All

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Gatineau Park is a place to connect easily with nature. It will continue to offer outdoor activity areas where the topography and the natural setting of the sites will not be a barrier for most people.

- A.** Maintain a variety of outdoor sites developed using practices enabling access for people of all levels of ability. These include welcome areas, the Mackenzie King Estate, picnic areas, lookouts, Sugarbush Trail, Pioneers Trail and Mulvihill Lake.
- B.** Limit alterations to recreational sites to those that do not significantly affect the natural environment and do not modify a site's natural character.
- C.** In the summer, ensure a balance between periods when parkways are open only for cycling and non-motorized activities and those when they are open to motor vehicles to facilitate access to other activity sites for a larger diversity of visitors, and to allow others to enjoy the parkway landscapes.

## 5.4 Engagement and Collaboration

Gatineau Park contributes to a better quality of life for the community. The protection of this natural place is essential, both because of the ecological and economic benefits it brings to the Capital Region and because it is a high-quality outdoor, social and cultural place. Conserving the park for future generations will require a concerted collective effort.





## 5.4.1 Indigenous Culture and Presence

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Indigenous communities have an ancient connection to the land that is now Gatineau Park. It is important for their members to reclaim a place and a role in this part of their territory, while working together to explore various ways of contributing to reconciliation between peoples.

- A.** Work with Indigenous communities to better understand and protect the tangible and intangible character of the park. Ensure that First Nations culture, language, history and traditions are an integral part of Gatineau Park and that the Anishinabe participate meaningfully in sharing them.
- B.** Look into the possibility of renaming certain places to reflect the significance of these places to Indigenous communities and contribute to the interpretation of sites from this perspective.
- C.** Provide a physical gathering place for Indigenous communities.
- D.** Explore possibilities for involving Indigenous communities in park management activities, such as the Indigenous Guardians program.
- E.** Encourage partnerships with organizations to contribute to the identification and safeguarding of cultural landscapes and archaeological resources.
- F.** In accordance with the memorandum of understanding, involve Indigenous communities in conducting archaeological research and showcasing artifacts and history.
- G.** Foster collaborations that can economically benefit Indigenous communities.

## 5.4.2 Regional Relations

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Collaboration between organizations is key to achieving the objectives of this master plan. We should count on their participation and on an openness to shared management approaches to coordinate regional efforts. The development of other outdoor sites outside the park contributes to regional vitality and contributes to the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park.

- A.** Collaborate and maintain open communication with community, municipal and provincial partners to achieve shared goals for nature and heritage conservation, park access, regional prosperity, and quality of life.
- B.** Use proactive planning and collaborative management to conserve the park's ecological integrity and cultural heritage.
- C.** Work in partnership with municipalities, the regional county municipality (RCM) and nature protection organizations to facilitate the conservation of ecological corridors.
- D.** Provide expertise to regional organizations and municipalities, and encourage them to develop complementary outdoor recreational facilities outside the park to expand the offer of outdoor activities and protect the park's ecological integrity and regional biodiversity.

### 5.4.3 Communication and Public Engagement

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Maintaining the park's ecological integrity and providing a quality experience in nature is a shared responsibility. The general public and, in particular, those engaged in outdoor activities in the park are encouraged to take action to conserve it for the benefit of future generations.

- A.** Promote the primary purpose of the Capital's conservation park and the ecological services it provides so that it is recognized and protected by visitors, organizations and the public.
- B.** Communicate steps taken to achieve the park's goals.
- C.** Maintain open and transparent communication with users through committees and round tables (advisory committee, user dialogue sessions, agreements with groups, annual joint action plan).
- D.** Continue to work with the Friends of Gatineau Park to provide education, awareness and interpretation programs.
- E.** Develop volunteer programs to allow users to help implement various park programs.
- F.** Work with members of the public, and make users accountable in the following ways:
  - ▶ involve them in the development of a code of conduct to limit environmental impacts and promote the shared and friendly use of trails, parkways and other activity areas;
  - ▶ involve them as code of conduct ambassadors;
  - ▶ involve them in park stewardship, including the monitoring and maintaining of trails and activity areas;
  - ▶ encourage and support citizen science initiatives for monitoring and research on natural and cultural features.

### 5.4.4 Pricing Framework and Financial Support for Park Operations

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Funding park operations remains a challenge and must be renewed. In addition to government support, a fairer access fee structure for the park regardless of the activity practised is one way for users to collectively contribute to maintaining the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities and services, and help protect the natural areas where the activities are undertaken.

- A.** Adopt a pricing framework that
  - ▶ reaches all visitors and applies fairly, taking into account the situation of low-income people;
  - ▶ includes park access, method of transportation used and activity enjoyed;
  - ▶ makes it possible to promote ways of accessing the park that help reduce traffic congestion and parking lot overcrowding in the park;
  - ▶ fosters a positive effect on the park environment.
- B.** Accept initiatives that support the continuation of activities and maintenance of infrastructure within the park (sponsorships, plaques on furnishings, adopt-a-trail program, philanthropy, volunteer work).
- C.** Seek partnerships with companies whose objectives are consistent with NCC values and objectives for the park, and control the type of sponsorship advertising based on NCC policies.



## 5.5 Real Property Management

The NCC is responsible for planning and managing the public lands that make up Gatineau Park. The management of these lands must focus on the long-term conservation of ecological integrity and the maintenance of environmentally friendly outdoor recreation.



### 5.5.1 NCC Properties

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The NCC owns 361 km<sup>2</sup> of land in Gatineau Park, and some land outside the park boundaries, which are in a natural state and can play an important role as a buffer zone between the park and surrounding areas.

- A.** Retain all federal lands in Gatineau Park.
- B.** Retain all federal lands outside Gatineau Park that contribute to its conservation mission and that are necessary for outdoor recreational offerings.
- C.** Conserve heritage buildings, and identify a function that allows them to be occupied, ensures the best chance of protecting them, and is appropriate to the objectives set out in this plan for the area in which they are located.

### 5.5.2 Private Property in the Park

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The park was created through the gradual acquisition of properties within its boundaries. A number of lands are still privately owned and under municipal jurisdiction. The NCC's long-term goal remains to acquire these properties when opportunities arise. Meanwhile, it is essential to work with the RCMs, municipalities and property owners to ensure that the development of these properties respects the natural environment in which they are located.

- A.** Continue the private property acquisition program within the park as a means of protecting the ecosystems and naturalizing the land.
- B.** Acquire lands by mutual agreement when they come up for sale, when opportunities present themselves, and taking priorities into account.
- C.** Employ other forms of protection agreed upon with the owners when acquisition is not feasible.
- D.** Use expropriation as a last resort, to prevent a major irreversible environmental impact (e.g. subdivisions).
- E.** Encourage and support private landowners to adopt environmental best practices for the development and use of their land, such as maintaining forest cover and preventing erosion, choosing appropriate locations to erect buildings and other structures, and maintaining corridors for wildlife.
- F.** For private properties, encourage the municipalities to implement development guidelines adapted to the riparian environment and natural habitats (i.e. forests).
- G.** Encourage municipalities to adapt their bylaws to limit the subdivision of large private properties in the park.

### Jurisdiction in Gatineau Park

- ▶ Land management within Gatineau Park is carried out by different jurisdictions with differing mandates. There is still private land within the park. This land was private property even before the park was created, and was formed by a succession of land acquisitions. Legally, the NCC has authority only over federal lands and lands for which an agreement is in place.
- ▶ The use and development of private lands within the park are not subject to NCC regulations or policies, and remain under the control of municipalities and the province.



### 5.5.3 Residential Leases

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The acquisition of private property in the park increases the amount of public land and reduces the pressure on the park’s ecosystems. Life cycle management of residences acquired by the NCC will provide guidance on how to dispose of buildings in the short, medium or long term.

- A.** Over the long term, eliminate residential use of NCC properties.
- B.** Permit the leasing of NCC-owned buildings for residential purposes when the homes are still in good condition (not at the end of their useful lives), while complying with budgetary realities and environmental management principles for resources used in their construction.
- C.** Unless the buildings are protected for heritage value, demolish and naturalize the land when the leased residential buildings have reached the end of their useful life.
- D.** Assess the best possible use for the conservation of heritage buildings.

### 5.5.4 Commercial Leases

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Some activities and visitor services are delivered by short- and long-term lease partners of the NCC.

- A.** Authorize commercial leases if the activities or services rendered are consistent with the objectives of the park and the authorized uses in the area where they are located.
- B.** Authorize a commercial lease after ensuring that the development required by the function respects the ecological integrity of the park and protects heritage buildings, as well as cultural property and landscapes.
- C.** Authorize a temporary commercial lease compatible with park objectives, in order to make it financially viable to acquire a property with the long-term goal of converting the area to the park’s primary mission: to conserve natural environments and allow the discovery of these environments through nature-friendly outdoor activities.
- D.** Upon expiry of the terms of existing leases, any new lease or renewal must be consistent with the directions and objectives of the master plan.

### 5.5.5 Private Properties of Interest Located Outside the Park

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Some lands outside the park form ecological corridors and have significant environmental value. They are required to maintain the ecological integrity of the park. Others are of strategic importance because they provide access to outdoor recreation sites.

- A.** Work with RCMs, municipalities and the landowners located in an ecological corridor to adopt best practices for land use that is compatible with maintaining ecological connectivity.
- B.** Promote the implementation of conservation measures for owners to maintain the natural features of their property.
- C.** Explore effective methods, other than the acquisition of private property, for protecting ecological corridors (i.e. from donations, private wildlife sanctuaries, easements or agreements).
- D.** Take steps to protect the value of lands of importance located outside the park that provide access to existing recreational areas.



## 6 Land Use Designations

This chapter presents the permitted land use designations and land use intensity based by area in Gatineau Park. Land use designations are the authorized activities or uses in a given area. They support the implementation of the park's vision and goals. They also ensure that interventions and activities are spatially and functionally consistent.

Some uses are permitted throughout the park, such as scientific research, the conservation and restoration of ecosystems and habitats, along with interventions to protect species at risk and to monitor the health of ecosystems. These uses are even supported and encouraged.

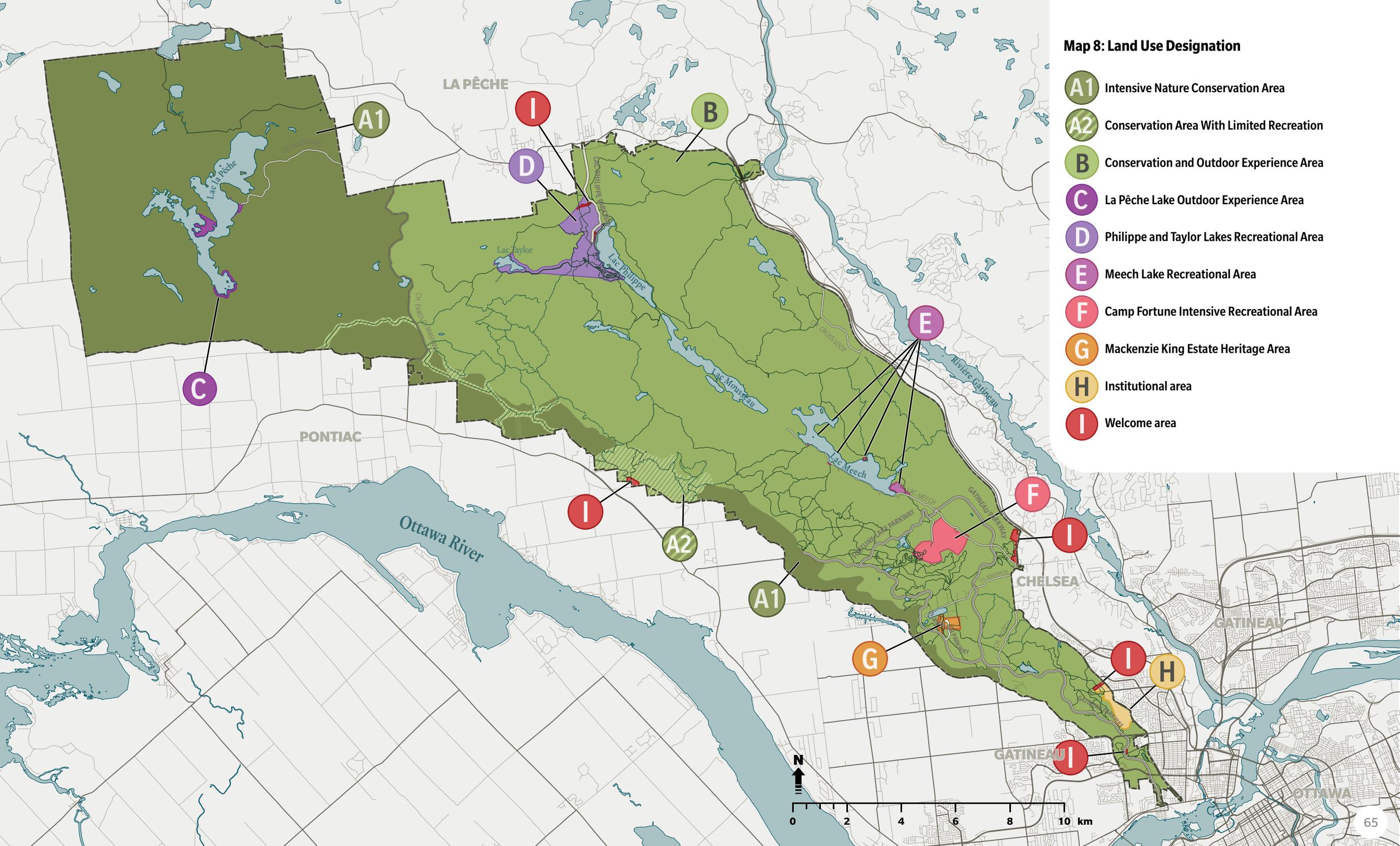
At the same time, some activities are specifically prohibited throughout the park to reduce environmental impacts. Paragliding and hang gliding, as well as the holding of night events and motorized races, are not permitted. Camping, other than at designated accommodation areas, and aquatic and swimming activities, other than at designated locations, are also prohibited.

In addition, visitors are not allowed to travel off-trail or off-road, except for activities offered through an NCC educational program. Exceptions to this prohibition include limited authorized orienteering and map and compass activities (with a permit issued by the NCC), which may take place at designated locations, as indicated for Zone B "Conservation and Outdoor Experience Area."

Finally, resource development (mineral exploitation, forestry), as well as hunting and gathering are prohibited, as are any other activities prohibited under existing NCC regulations.

**Map 8: Land Use Designation**

- A1** Intensive Nature Conservation Area
- A2** Conservation Area With Limited Recreation
- B** Conservation and Outdoor Experience Area
- C** La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area
- D** Philippe and Taylor Lakes Recreational Area
- E** Meech Lake Recreational Area
- F** Camp Fortune Intensive Recreational Area
- G** Mackenzie King Estate Heritage Area
- H** Institutional area
- I** Welcome area



	Proportion of surface area relative to total park (%)	Scientific research and monitoring	Ecosystem and habitat conservation and restoration	Interpretation, education	Trailhead to network	Hiking	Mountain biking	Road cycling, roller skiing	Swimming, beach	Boating	Fishing	Launching facility	Boat rental	Sale of items associated with permitted activities and rental of recreational equipment	Horseback riding	Rock climbing	Orienteering	Speleology	Winter walking	Snowshoeing	Cross-country skiing	Downhill skiing	Biathlon	Snow biking	Winter camping
A1. Intensive Nature Conservation	37.6	X	X																						
A2. Conservation Area With Limited Recreation	1.2	X	X	X	X	X									X	X				X	X				
B. Conservation and Outdoor Experience	57.0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								-	-	-	X	X	X			X	
C. La Pêche Lake	0.2	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X											
D. Philippe and Taylor Lakes	1.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X			X	X
E. Meech Lake	0.1	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X													
F. Camp Fortune	0.5	X	X	X	X	X	X							X					X	X	X	X	X	X	
G. Mackenzie King Estate	0.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X					X	X	X			X	
H. Institutional	0.2	X	X	X	X									X											
I. Welcome Areas	0.1	X	X	X	X									X											

x: authorized use

-: authorized use in accordance with the conditions described in the plan

Welcome area, information	Day shelters	Picnic area	Snack bar	Tenting	Ready-to-camp	Washrooms and showers, laundry and picnic shelter	Accommodations (hotel, inn)	Restaurant	Parking	Meeting or reception room	Outdoor activities with infrastructure (e.g. aerial park, zipline, alpine luge)	Exhibit hall, interpretive centre	Sports facility	Institutional facility (cultural education, etc.)	Public health care and social services establishment (hospital)	Office	Storage of park maintenance equipment and machinery	Official residence	
																			A1. Intensive Nature Conservation
																			A2. Conservation Area with Limited Recreation
	X	X					X	-	X								-	X	B. Conservation and Outdoor Experience
X		X		X					X										C. La Pêche Lake
X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X					-		D. Philippe and Taylor Lakes
		X					X	X	X	X									E. Meech Lake
X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X					X	X		F. Camp Fortune
X		X	X					X	X			X				X		X	G. Mackenzie King Estate
									X				X	X	-	X	X		H. Institutional
X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X				X	X		I. Welcome Areas

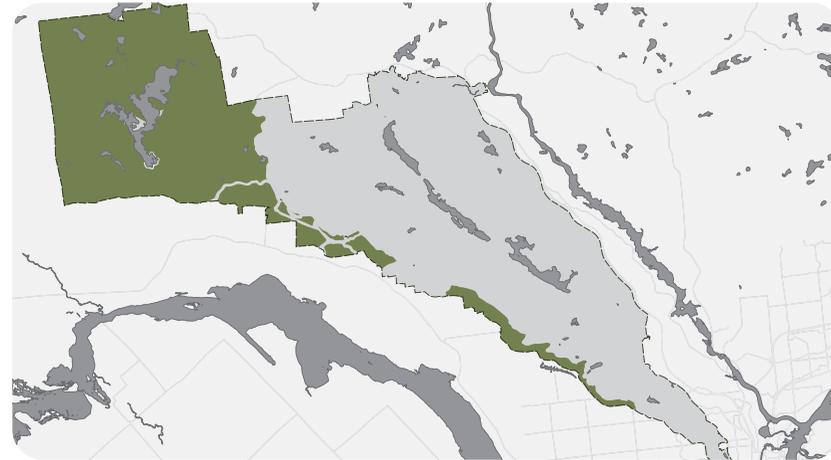
x: authorized use

-: authorized use in accordance with the conditions described in the plan



A1

## Intensive Nature Conservation Area



### DESCRIPTION

The Intensive Nature Conservation Area designation covers the area of Gatineau Park around La Pêche Lake (except the beach and canoe-camping sites) and Eardley Escarpment. It is partially bounded to the east by Eardley-Masham Road.

Because of the high ecological integrity of this area, the park's conservation mission takes on special significance in this sector. The distance from housing areas, the surrounding rural environment and reduced accessibility have contributed to the effective conservation of ecosystems and native biodiversity. The

challenges consist of maintaining the integrity of the park's natural ecosystems and conserving ecological connectivity in this area.

Nestled amid Pontiac's patchwork of farms and woodlands, this conservation area connects the park's La Pêche Lake and Eardley Escarpment ecosystems with the Ottawa River, to the south, and with major forest ecosystems on its north boundaries.

Connected to the natural environments outside the park, the plant and wildlife habitats are larger, and contribute to biodiversity conservation at the regional level.

The ecological integrity of these ecosystems is high. It therefore requires better protection. It is particularly noteworthy due to the microclimate of the Eardley Escarpment, which is home to rare habitats and species, the high concentration of species at risk, the connectivity with other natural areas, the fragile habitats, especially those of the Escarpment, and low habitat fragmentation from trails or roads.

With its many surrounding shoals and swamps, numerous secondary water bodies, topographical variety and large forest tracts, and long history of land use, the area around La Pêche Lake provides natural habitat for numerous species.

The environmental value of this area includes the presence of coniferous forests, many wetlands, and diverse and continuous habitats that benefit sensitive species, as well as several wildlife species requiring extensive habitat.

The Eardley Escarpment is the richest and most fragile ecosystem in Gatineau Park. It consists of a cliff facing south-southwest, rising about 300 metres, and enjoys a warm, dry microclimate that is unique to the region. However, this microclimate and the steep slopes of the escarpment make it fragile and highly susceptible to erosion. Several plant species found there are growing at the northern edge of their geographic range. Indeed, the Eardley Escarpment is characterized by a high degree of plant diversity, including species at risk. It marks the point where the Canadian Shield meets the St. Lawrence Lowlands, and is a culturally significant place that boasts magnificent views.

### SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Protect rich and highly fragile ecosystems.
- ▶ Maintain the sector's ecological integrity.
- ▶ Eliminate fragmentation and restore ecosystems.
- ▶ Create a natural area where the only human activities are scientific research, ecological monitoring and habitat restoration.
- ▶ Ensure connectivity to natural environments outside the park.
- ▶ Ensure landscape conservation.

### PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants and wildlife, as well as habitats

**A1** Intensive Nature Conservation Area

 Access via parkway

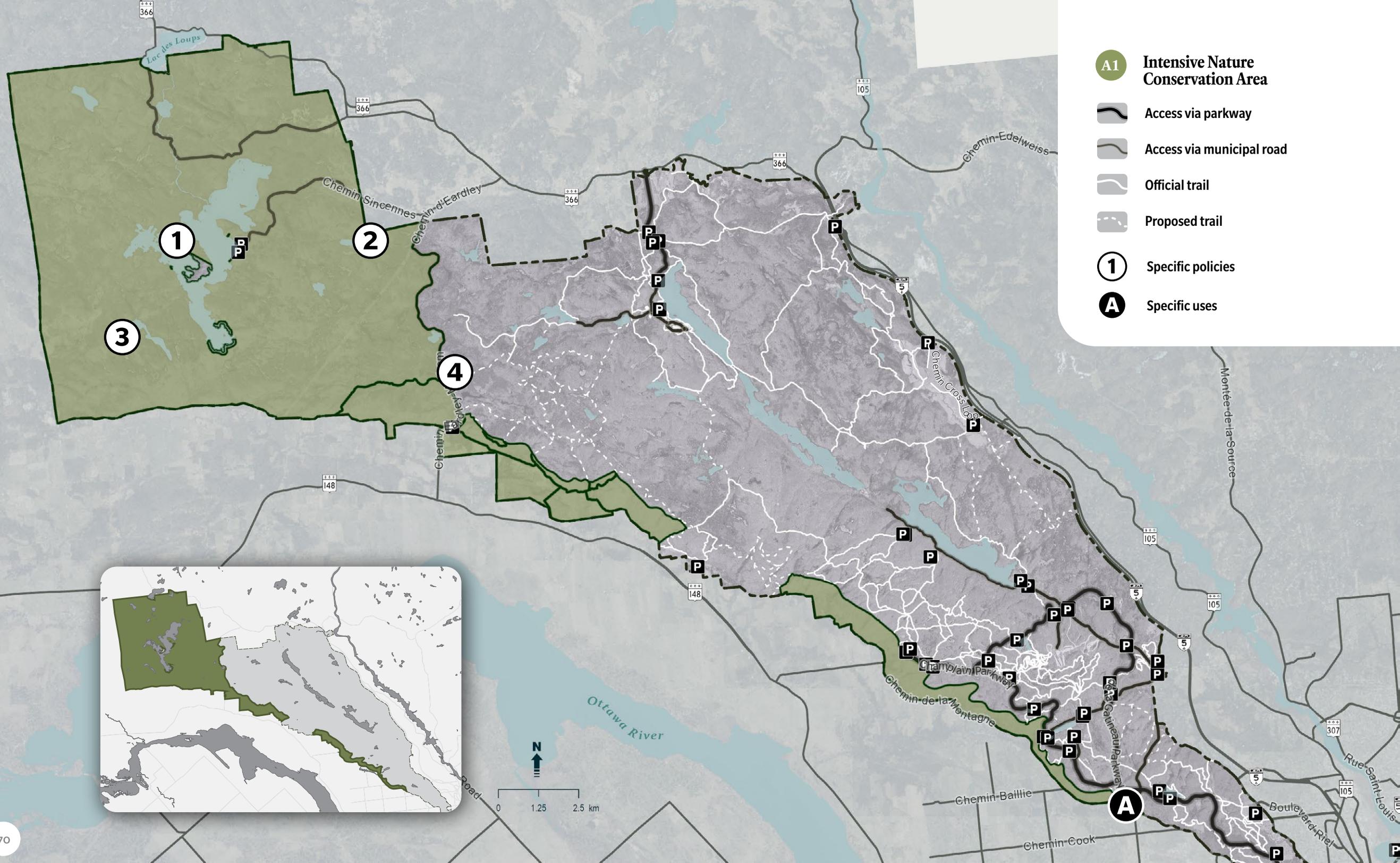
 Access via municipal road

 Official trail

 Proposed trail

**1** Specific policies

**A** Specific uses



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Communicate to the public about the unique ecosystems of the sector, its rich biodiversity and the specific species found there.
- ▶ Enhance management tools on the boundary of this sector to increase park users' awareness of the area's environmental sensitivity, and to deter access.
- ▶ Prohibit any recreational activities.
- ▶ Close unofficial trails and restore natural habitats.
- ▶ Reduce the ecological infrastructure footprint at every opportunity.
- ▶ Do not grant leases for land that will be acquired and that are to be naturalized over the short term.
- ▶ Close old municipal roads.
- ① Demolish the Haven and naturalize the site.
- ② Close and demolish Camp Gatineau and naturalize the site.
- ③ Close the existing snowmobile trail in the Curley Lake sector.
- ④ Relocate the snowmobile trail along Eardley-Masham Road (east side) if the community supports the project and private landowners to the north and south grant long-term consent for snowmobiles to pass through their properties.



### ▲ Targeted Uses and Additional Policies

#### Ⓐ STRUTT HOUSE

Give the Strutt House, a recognized federal heritage building on the Eardley Escarpment, a purpose that would help protect the building.

- ▶ Examples of possible uses: accommodations for an artist or scientist-in-residence, venue for architectural or design workshops, etc.

- ▶ Limit the number of visitors to the site.
- ▶ Close the access road behind the property.
- ▶ Allow occasional public access (e.g. during Culture Days and so on).



A2

## Conservation Area With Limited Recreation



### DESCRIPTION

This area is made up primarily of small areas near the Pontiac Welcome Area, which provides access to the Luskville Falls Trail and official climbing sites, which are activity sites in Gattineau Park. The Eardley Escarpment has had rock climbing activities for many years. It is still a place of great ecological value that must be preserved. For example, over the past 10 years, the use of the walls of this escarpment had to be limited in order to greatly reduce the impact of this activity on the ecosystem and the sensitive habitats it supports. It was necessary to strike a balance that would protect this ecosystem in the long term. Working with user groups has allowed this recreational practice to be regulated rather than eliminated. The climbing sites have thus been

designed to keep walls open in a reduced area, and provide a sustainable recreational activity that limits overall impacts.

The sites also connect sections of the trail system in the Conservation and Outdoor Experience Area (area B) to the base of the escarpment and to the plateau above it, as envisioned by the Responsible Trail Management project. The trails to the plateau offer some of the most beautiful views in the region. This area also includes the equestrian trail along the bottom of the escarpment.

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## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

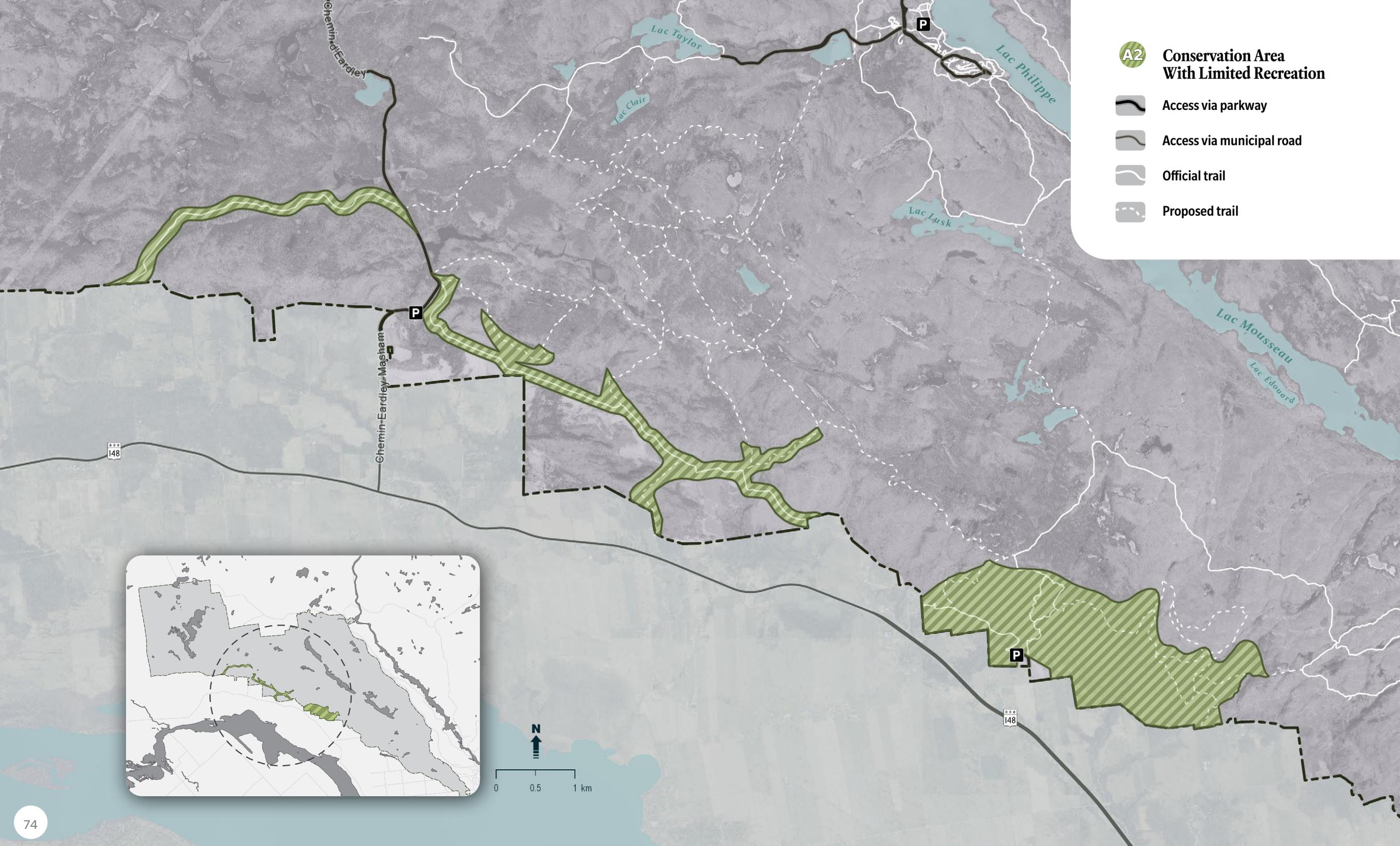
- ▶ Protect the escarpment's biodiversity and habitat integrity.
- ▶ Reduce habitat fragmentation caused by unofficial trails.
- ▶ Maintain an isolated atmosphere.
- ▶ Effectively manage outdoor activities on the escarpment to minimize their ecological impact.
- ▶ Showcase landscapes characteristic of where the Canadian Shield meets the St. Lawrence Lowlands.
- ▶ Permit recreational experiences for lone visitors or very small groups.

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## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife and habitats
- ▶ Horseback riding on existing trail
- ▶ Rock climbing with access trail (three locations)
- ▶ Rock climbing in summer and ice climbing in winter
- ▶ Trail activities
- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Additional facilities for recreation (bulletin board, washroom, shelter, table, bench), only at entry points to trails leading to activity sites





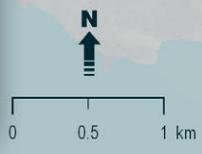
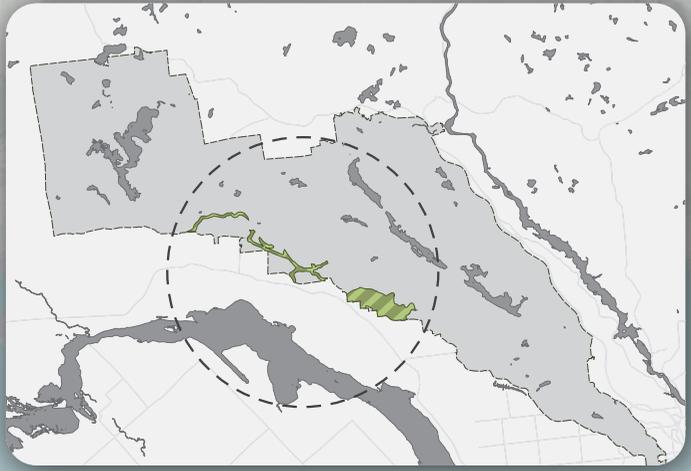
**A2** Conservation Area With Limited Recreation

 Access via parkway

 Access via municipal road

 Official trail

 Proposed trail



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

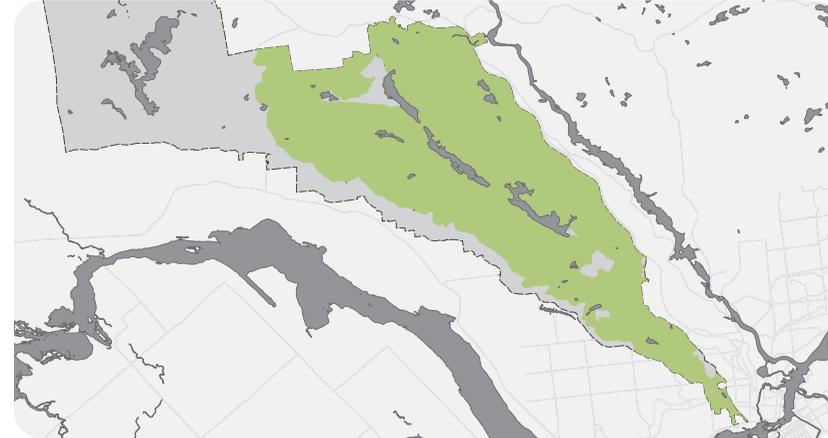
- ▶ Restore natural habitat by closing most unofficial trails.
- ▶ Develop official trails, as per the Responsible Trail Management project, in accordance with existing NCC standards for the area.
- ▶ Prohibit cycling on the trails.
- ▶ Work with clubs and interest groups through agreements to manage access and use of horseback riding and rock-climbing venues.
- ▶ Ensure that facilities and recreation sites operate according to their agreed design at all times, and that the natural environment is not further impacted by the use of the sites.
- ▶ Ensure successful regeneration of the natural environment in restored locations.
- ▶ Develop trail access on NCC lands or on private lands subject to landowner agreements.





## B

# Conservation and Outdoor Experience Area



### DESCRIPTION

This area covers most of the park's territory, with its southernmost portion bordering residential neighbourhoods of Gatineau and rural areas in the municipalities of Chelsea, La Pêche and Pontiac. Its southern end is a narrow natural strip that enters the Capital's urban area and directly links the park with the Ottawa River and Gatineau River through ecological corridors.

The park gives residents an outdoor space close to their homes. Alexandre-Taché Boulevard, Boulevard des Allumettières and Chemin du Lac-Meech are the main entry points to activities. They connect with the park's network of parkways and trails.

Though it contains many activity sites, this area is comprised of a great diversity of ecosystems and habitats. They are home to diverse plants and wildlife, many of which reflect the richness of the biodiversity of Eastern Canada. Since the area is heavily used, measures to protect its ecological integrity are especially important.

The varying density of recreational sites reflects the planning concept where use is more concentrated in the south of the park and increasingly spread out as it moves northward. There is a network of various routes made up of small loops, in the south, whereas, in the north, there are trails that require at least a few hours of walking. The trail network offers a beautiful outdoor experience near the urban area and longer excursions in the northern part of the park.

The area has a wide range of outdoor activities (excursions on the parkways, hiking, road and trail cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snow biking, and so on). Major attractions and noted cultural landscapes (Pink Lake, the Mackenzie King Estate, lookouts, parkways and so on) add to the park's diverse recreational experiences, but sometimes leads to heavy use, especially along the parkways and at certain recreational sites.

Several cultural properties, such as the Carbide Willson ruins, are an important part of the park's heritage that must be conserved and enhanced. Gatineau Park is also home to official federal government residences used by individuals occupying key positions in Parliament. Though not open to the public, these buildings are part of our cultural heritage and a reminder of the park's history as a resort destination.

Meech Creek Valley has cultural landscapes and regional historical interest, quality farm soil, and natural ecosystems typical of rural Eastern Canada. The area has two secondary entrances: one at Wakefield and one in Meech Creek Valley via Pine Road and Cross Loop Road.

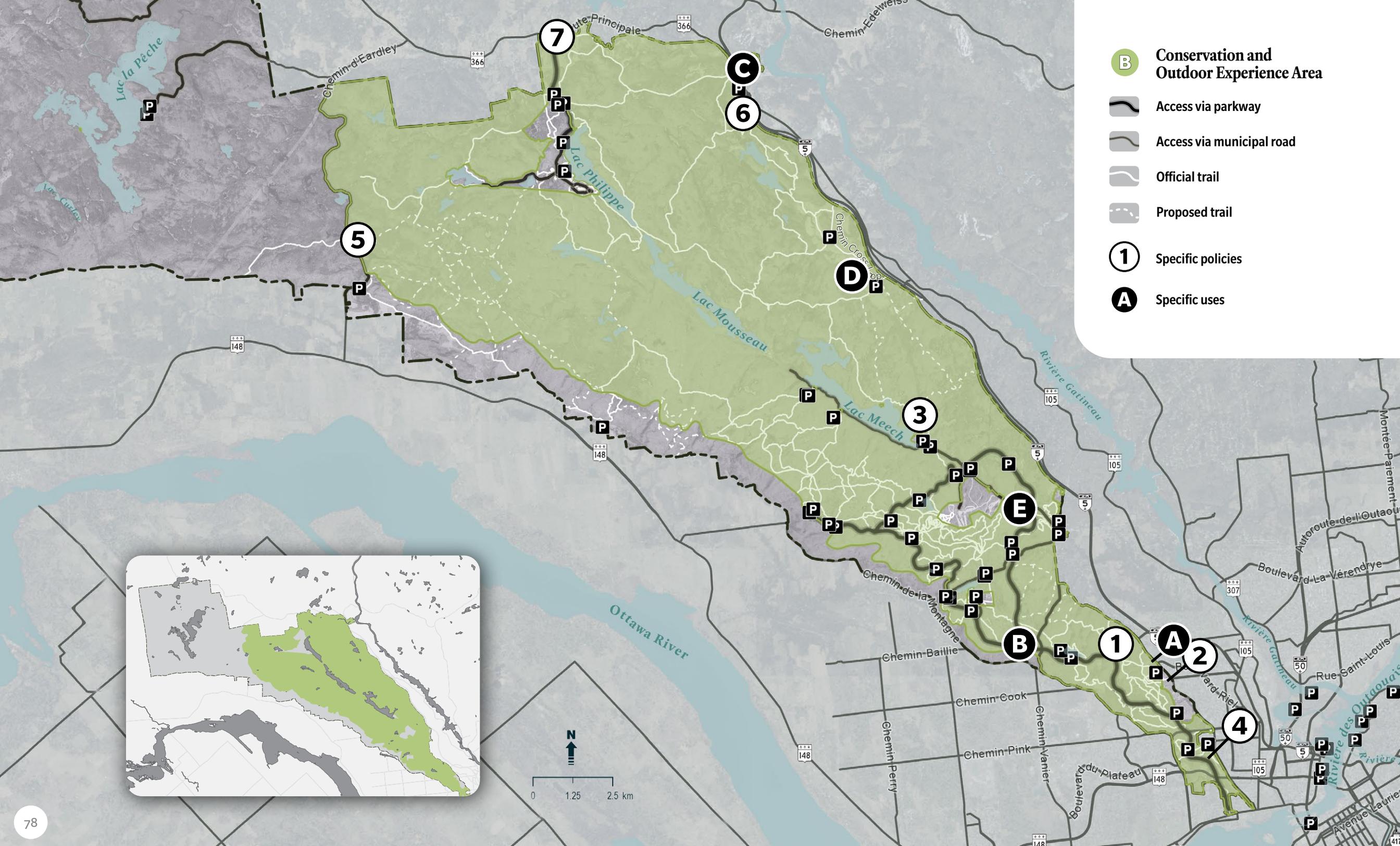
The Village of Wakefield has access to the park from the Wakefield Mill Hotel and Spa. The region's industrial history and entrepreneurial families (e.g. the Maclarens) are among the main subjects of potential interest for further interpretation.

## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Protect ecological integrity.
- ▶ Maintain a trail network where visitors can explore and discover nature and designated recreational areas.
- ▶ Allow visitors to discover the park's cultural heritage.
- ▶ Reduce habitat fragmentation through a redesigned trail network.
- ▶ Provide recreational experiences for lone visitors or groups.
- ▶ Preserve cultural landscapes.

## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife, habitats and ecosystems
- ▶ On-trail and parkway-based activities only
- ▶ Shelter
- ▶ Picnic area
- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Speleology (Lusk Cave)
- ▶ Events that meet the criteria of the event acceptability matrix
- ▶ Overnight accommodation as per master plan policies
- ▶ Bouldering, at specific locations and in the manner specified in this plan
- ▶ Orienteering, in specific locations and according to the terms and conditions specified in this plan
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Official residences



**B** Conservation and Outdoor Experience Area

Access via parkway

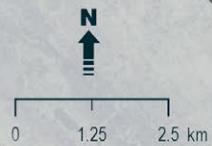
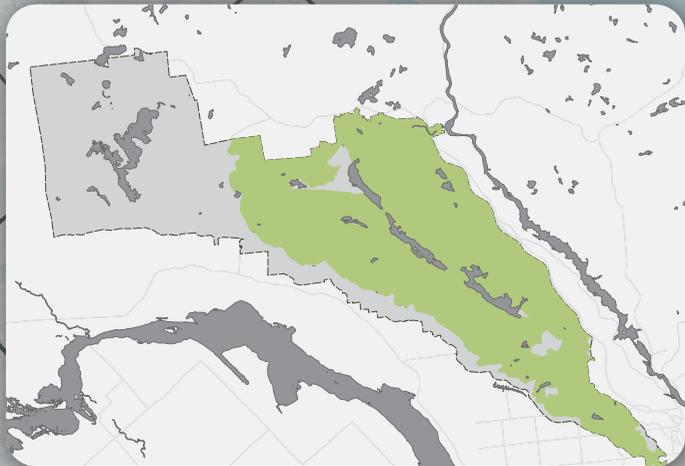
Access via municipal road

Official trail

Proposed trail

**1** Specific policies

**A** Specific uses



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Restore natural habitat by closing most unofficial trails and making some trails official as per the Responsible Trail Management project.
  - ▶ Allow for the development of the trail system while respecting the maximum allowable footprint as per the Responsible Trail Management project.
  - ▶ Protect adjacent sensitive ecosystems, ensuring that trail density is lower in the north of the park than in the south.
  - ▶ Prohibit the use of lakes and waterways other than those where swimming is permitted (Meech, Philippe, La Pêche lakes), except for authorized management or scientific research purposes.
  - ▶ Allow tourist accommodations only in existing heritage buildings.
  - ▶ Limit the number of night shelters to the current number.
  - ▶ Allow day shelters to be added without exceeding the maximum allowable footprint in accordance with the infrastructure density indicator.
  - ▶ Enhance and interpret cultural landscapes identified in the Cultural Heritage Plan.
  - ▶ Provide options for an Indigenous gathering place.
  - ▶ Close (or convert to trails) old municipal roads that no longer serve private property.
- ① Monitor the practice of orienteering involving walking off the trail, as organized by groups, through a one-time permit issued by the NCC.
- Limit this activity to the tip of the park, south of the power lines that run through the park between Cook Road and Marie-Burger Street.
- ② Control the bouldering practice organized by groups, through a permit issued by the NCC that will determine the sites and the terms and conditions of their use. Concentrate this activity near the trails in the CEGEP area.
  - ③ Restore and protect the Carbide Willson ruins and develop interpretive tools about the history and heritage significance of the site.
  - ④ Continue efforts to restore habitat at Lac-des-Fées, and progressively phase out municipal infrastructure and uses near Lac-des-Fées.
  - ⑤ Work with regional partners to establish a recreational tourism corridor along Eardley-Masham Road, which can be used by snowmobilers. Allow some of the infrastructure to encroach on lands adjacent to the corridor right-of-way. This is to reduce habitat fragmentation within the Intensive Nature Conservation Area by eliminating the axis previously used by snowmobilers.
  - ⑥ Allow for the redevelopment of parking lot P17 to return it to the size it was prior to the construction of Highway 5.
  - ⑦ Work with the municipality of La Pêche to improve the landscaping and signage near the park entrance to Philippe Lake.



### ▶ Targeted Uses and Additional Policies

#### Ⓐ 581 CITÉ-DES-JEUNES

- ▶ Conserve the buildings that make up this site and are of local heritage interest.
- ▶ Protect the rural and agricultural landscape surrounding the building.
- ▶ Permit uses that allow occupancy of existing buildings and do not result in a footprint increase and that do not have an impact on the park, or on the neighbourhood near the buildings' location (e.g. residences, offices).
- ▶ Ensure that the uses are distinct from the services provided at the Relais plein air.



## ▲ Targeted Uses and Additional Policies

### **B** PARKWAY NETWORK

- ▶ Maintain the dual role of the parkways:
  - Provide access to activity sites through scenic routes (lookouts, picnic areas, trails, unique sites like Pink Lake and the Mackenzie King Estate and so on).
  - Represent a source of recreation in their own right (road cycling, cross-country skiing in winter and so on).
- ▶ In any intervention, consider the cultural landscape of the parkways.
- ▶ Maintain the parkway features as originally designed, with a winding road offering a balanced field of vision and crossing a natural and verdant space. Make sure that the number of built elements other than the paved road is minimized.
- ▶ When the parkways are open, allow all vehicles authorized under Quebec's *Highway Safety Code* (including power-assisted bicycles or e-bikes).
- ▶ Enforce Quebec's *Highway Safety Code* with regard to the way various users use and share the roadway.
- ▶ Close the parkways to vehicles in winter to enable cross-country skiing.
- ▶ In summer, provide equitable access to remote activity sites and trails.
- ▶ Discourage through traffic on the parkways.
- ▶ Ensure public safety and minimize conflict between the various activities on the parkways by
  - drafting and disseminating a code of conduct;
  - developing a communication program to raise awareness;
  - having car-free periods in certain sections;
- ▶ Explore localized design measures to improve road safety and the sharing of the road by the various modes of transportation.
- ▶ Close the parkways to motorized traffic at night to ensure public safety and reduce the risk of collisions with wildlife, or at other times to manage traffic within the park.



▲  
**C AREA SURROUNDING THE WAKEFIELD MILL HOTEL AND SPA**

- ▶ Maintain an access point to Gatineau Park in this area through the trail network.
- ▶ Conserve the heritage value of buildings and landscapes in this area, and develop a heritage conservation plan for the site. Maintain hotel use in accordance with the approved long-term accommodation plan for the premises.
  - Hotel accommodations with additional services such as food services, welcome area, outdoor kitchen, pool and spa
  - Greenhouse cultivation (soil-less cultivation)
  - Landscaping, runoff retention pond
  - Parking, access lane



▲  
**D MEECH CREEK VALLEY**

- ▶ Maintain a cultural experience based on the agricultural and rural landscape.
- ▶ Document the heritage features of the site and protect the country landscape.
- ▶ Develop interpretation for heritage components.
- ▶ Authorize hay cutting to diversify natural habitat and enhance the cultural landscape through active and authentic farming practices.
- ▶ Transform a section of Cross Loop Road that no longer provides access to private property for recreational uses (skiing, cycling, walking).



▲  
**E PATROL AND MAINTENANCE STATION**

- ▶ Near the parkway network, west of parking lot P8, maintain the following functions:
  - trail patrol station;
  - storage of equipment related to park operations;
  - maintenance and storage of vehicles used for trail network maintenance.
- ▶ Enable the reconstruction of buildings required for maintenance and patrol operations.
- ▶ Expand the footprint of new buildings to accommodate space requirements for machinery.
- ▶ Locate new buildings to minimize the environmental impact.



# C

## La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area



### DESCRIPTION

La Pêche Lake is a large lake where one can experience nature in the Capital Region. Its size and landscape foster the sense of escape from urban life, despite its proximity to the Capital core area.

At La Pêche Lake, recreational activities are concentrated in summer. The sites are then used for swimming, non-motorized boating and canoe-camping. Access is through Sincennes

Road, a municipal road which takes visitors from Eardley-Masham Road to the beach and recreation facilities on the lake's eastern shore.

Due to the sensitivity of vegetation on the rocky shoreline of the lake and the presence of species at risk, use of the lake is limited to only a portion of its shoreline. This is to better limit the pressure caused by visitors on this natural environment.

---

## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Contemplate nature.
- ▶ Permit isolated recreational experiences for lone visitors or very small groups.
- ▶ Provide public access to natural bodies of water in the Capital Region.
- ▶ Maintain water quality and biodiversity conservation.

---

## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife and habitats
- ▶ Swimming, beach
- ▶ Picnic area
- ▶ Accommodations – rustic canoe-camping site
- ▶ Non-motorized boating
- ▶ Rental of non-motorized watercraft
- ▶ Sale and rental of recreational equipment
- ▶ Launching of non-motorized watercraft
- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Additional recreation facilities (washroom, shelter, table, bench), in previously disturbed areas



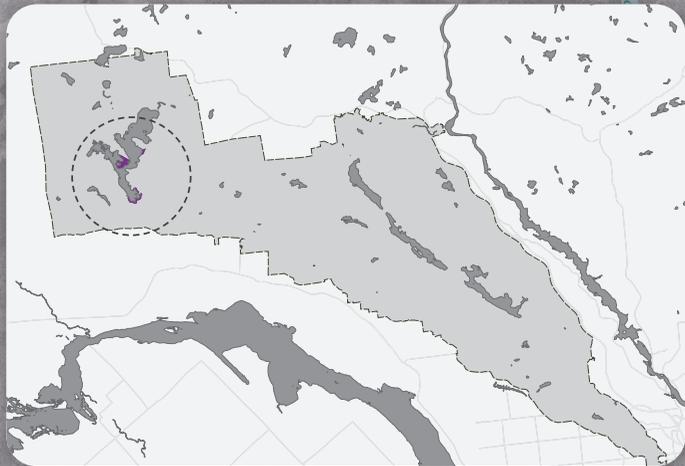
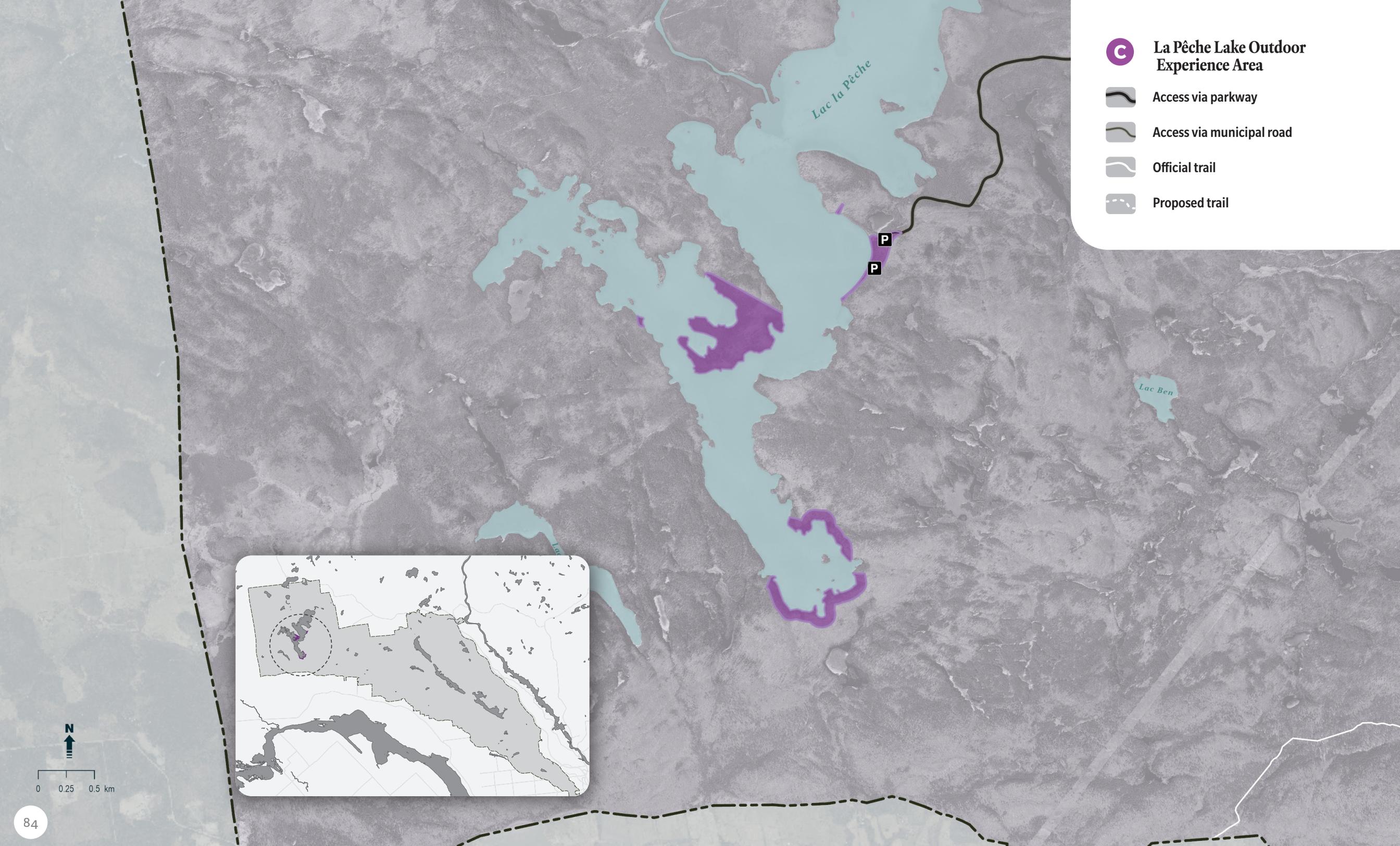
 **La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area**

 Access via parkway

 Access via municipal road

 Official trail

 Proposed trail



N

0 0.25 0.5 km

## SPECIFIC POLICIES

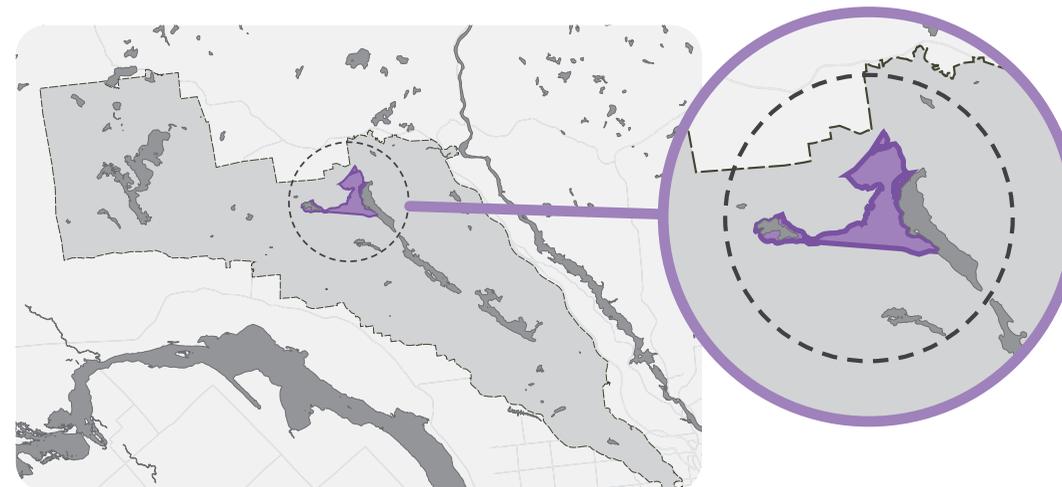
- ▶ Allow for use in spring, summer and fall.
- ▶ Maintain existing types of recreational facilities.
- ▶ Manage shorelines to help restore natural environments.
- ▶ Conserve the riparian vegetation strip, and restore it where it has degraded or disappeared.
- ▶ Encourage the use of non-motorized boats.
- ▶ Prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plant species by educating boaters and requiring people to wash their boats.
- ▶ Reduce ecological impact and improve the visitor experience by relocating existing campsites without increasing their number.





## D

# Philippe and Taylor Lakes Recreational Area



### DESCRIPTION

This sector includes the Philippe Lake and Taylor Lake recreational campgrounds (which comprise more than 250 sites) and the beaches around Philippe Lake. Visitors to these sites can get close to nature in a whole different way, experiencing the forest's unique ambiance at dusk, night and dawn. The campground offers amenities that remain rudimentary at this time, limited to picnic sites, washrooms, nature interpretation sites, and boat rental services, as well as hiking and cycling trails. The national trend for camping services has led the NCC to renew its amenities and facilities. New facilities will need to be developed in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner.

Philippe Lake's beaches and non-motorized boat rental services offer something for everyone to enjoy on this body of water that is typical of many lakes across Canada.

The area offers individual and group campsites for a rustic experience. Shelters, yurts and four-season tents are available year-round to offer campers a variety of accommodations.

A host of cultural interpretation and environmental awareness opportunities can be easily combined with other activities in this sector.

The main access point is the Philippe Lake Parkway near the Sainte-Cécile-de-Masham sector in the municipality of La Pêche, where a number of services have been established for park visitors. The Philippe Lake/Taylor Lake sector provides easy access to the Lusk Cave, which is open to the public in summer. The sector also connects with the park's southern section through a network of trails. Due to the popularity of recreational and tourist sites, the intensity of land use in the area is high in the summer and winter months, during which visitor infrastructure is insufficient to meet demand. However, in the fall, this area could absorb some of the traffic from the parkway area.

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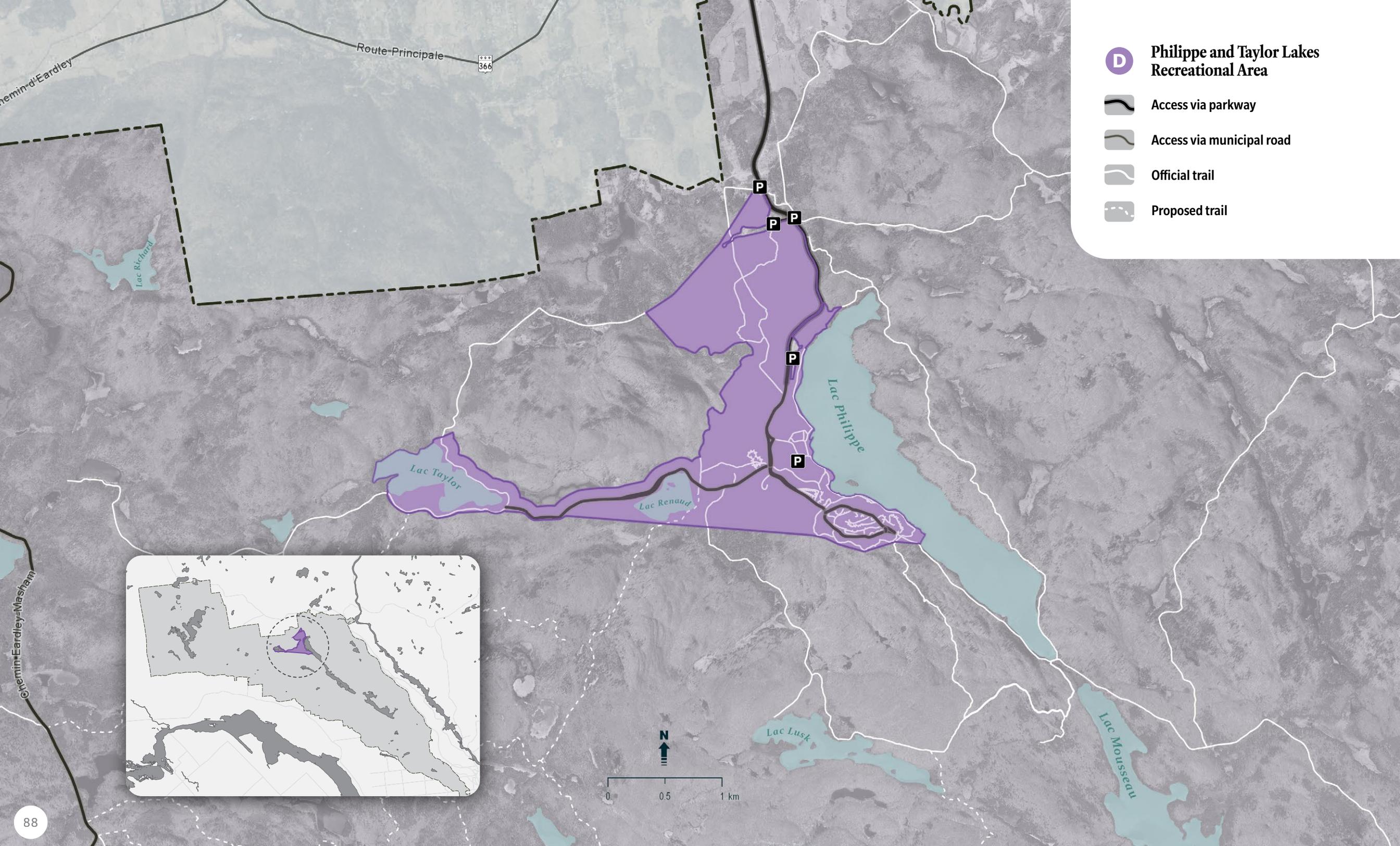
### SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Offer overnight stays allowing for special contact with nature.
- ▶ Offer environmental education opportunities associated with a conservation park.
- ▶ Provide public access to natural bodies of water in the Capital Region.
- ▶ Maintain water quality and native biodiversity conservation.

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### PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife and habitats
- ▶ Visitor centre, information
- ▶ Nature observation and cultural attractions
- ▶ Tent accommodations
- ▶ Ready-to-camp accommodations (yurts, four-season tents, trailers)
- ▶ Communal camping facilities at the Philippe Lake campground (picnic area, sheltered kitchen, sheltered common area, food services, washrooms and showers, laundry facilities)
- ▶ Winter camping
- ▶ Philippe Lake store (camping goods and services)
- ▶ Trail activities
- ▶ Hiking, winter walking
- ▶ Cross-country skiing
- ▶ Snowshoeing
- ▶ Snow biking
- ▶ Mountain biking
- ▶ Day shelters
- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Beach and swimming in designated areas
- ▶ Non-motorized boating
- ▶ Bicycle and non-motorized boat rentals
- ▶ Launching of non-motorized boats
- ▶ Picnic area
- ▶ Snack bar
- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Access for motor vehicles
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Summer event at Parent Beach and Breton Beach, if it meets the criteria for the acceptability of activities and events and is authorized by a permit issued by the NCC



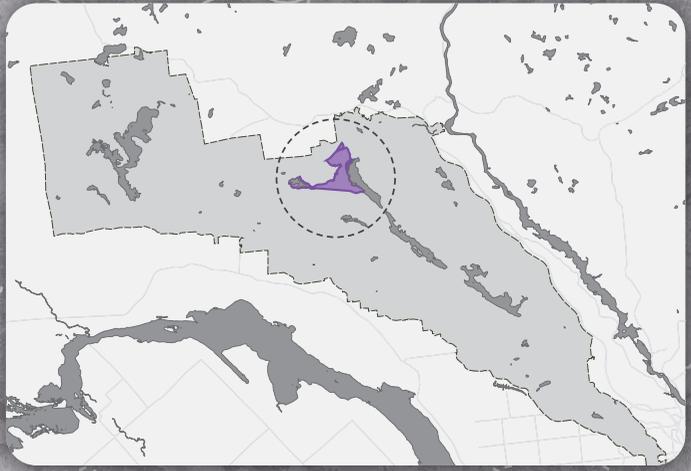
**D** Philippe and Taylor Lakes Recreational Area

 Access via parkway

 Access via municipal road

 Official trail

 Proposed trail



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Manage shorelines to help restore natural environments.
- ▶ Conserve the riparian vegetation strip, and restore it where it has degraded or disappeared.
- ▶ Use non-motorized boats.
- ▶ Modernize campsites without increasing the existing footprint.
- ▶ Prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plant species by educating boaters and requiring people to wash their boats.
- ▶ Prevent the spread of disease and insect pests by improving control over firewood coming from outside the park.





# E

## Meech Lake Recreational Area



### DESCRIPTION

This area covers recreational sites around Meech Lake, namely the O'Brien and Blanchet public beaches and the McCloskey launch area. All these sites provide access to the lake for boating and water sports in the heart of the park's natural landscape. Outside of supervised swimming areas, canoe or kayak tours offer a variety of views.

The beaches and nearby parking lots are very busy in the summer. As a result, maximum visitor capacity is often reached in good weather.

The sector is also a starting point for trails leading to escarpment lookouts and the Eardley Plateau. Its parking areas are also very busy on beautiful spring days, in winter and during Fall Rhapsody.

The presence of a launch ramp has led boaters to ask for another location where they can dock and enjoy the scenery. Various north shore locations are currently used unofficially and without oversight, contributing to shoreline erosion.

The area's recreational sites border a number of private homes on the south shore along Chemin du Lac-Meech. The road's lakefront location near homes and recreational sites puts added pressure on the shoreline, as do private facilities that give residents waterfront access (docks, boathouses and so on). Action is being taken at the community level to upgrade shoreline conditions, to prevent erosion and improve water quality in the lake.

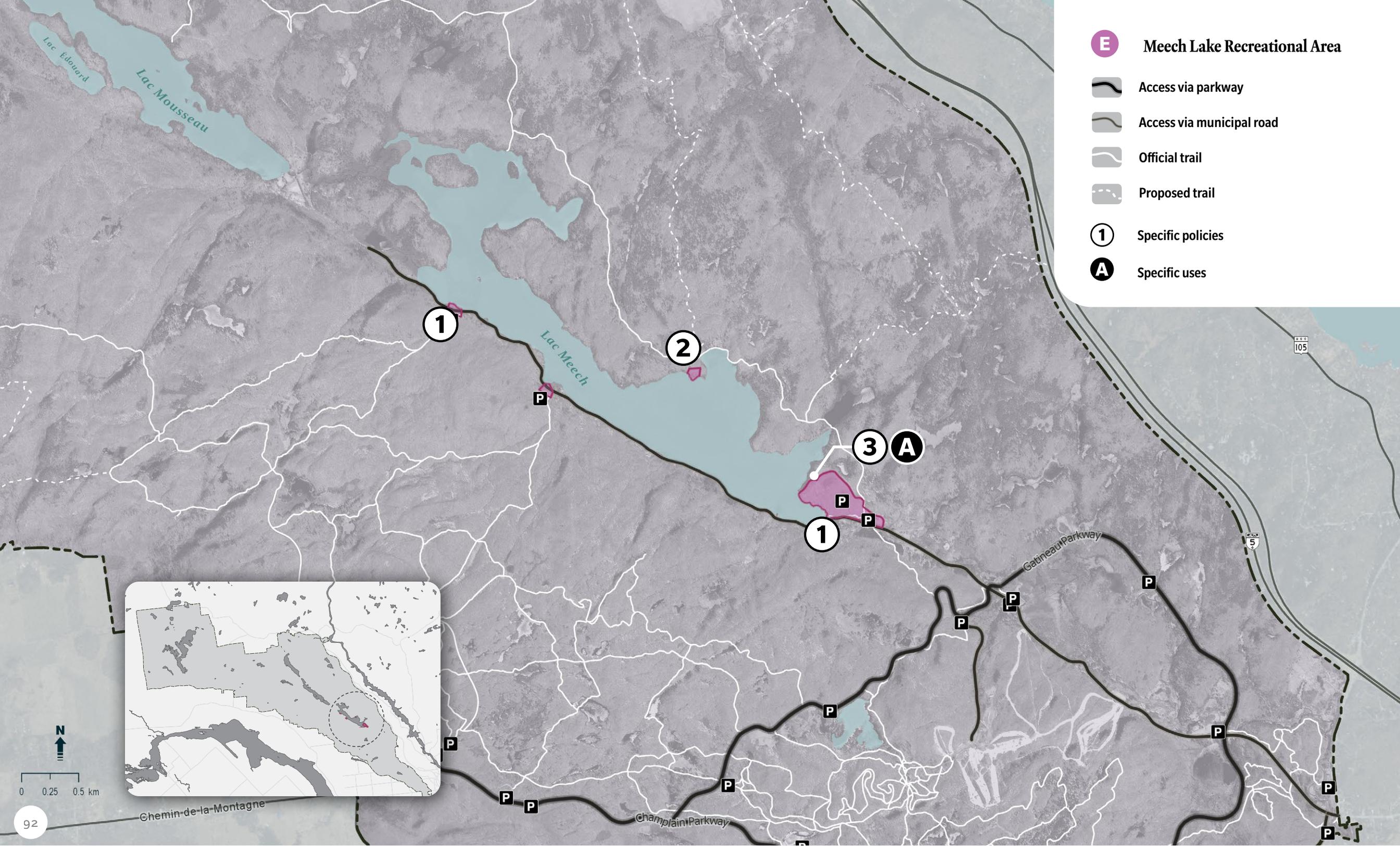
The O'Brien House, Willson House, Hope House and the Capuchin Chapel are also important to the area's heritage, and need to be preserved and showcased.

### SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Contemplate nature.
- ▶ Provide recreational experiences, for lone visitors or small groups, close to the urban sector.
- ▶ Discovery of cultural landscapes, political heritage and historical events.
- ▶ Provide public access to natural bodies of water in the Capital Region.
- ▶ Maintain water quality and conserve biodiversity.

### PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife, habitats and ecosystems
- ▶ Swimming, beach (O'Brien and Blanchet beaches)
- ▶ Launching of non-motorized boats at parking lot P12
- ▶ Trailheads
- ▶ Non-motorized boating
- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Docking areas for rests while boating
- ▶ Interpretation, education



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Manage shorelines to help restore natural environments.
  - ▶ Conserve the riparian vegetation strip, and restore it where it has degraded or disappeared.
  - ▶ Prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plant species by educating boaters and requiring people to wash their boats.
  - ▶ Encourage the use of non-motorized boats.
  - ▶ Ensure the sustainable use of beaches by limiting their use to current levels; for example, by controlling access based on parking capacity.
- ① Respect the beach areas. Limit the use of the shoreline to the areas that are designated for those uses.
  - ② Oversee the use of the lake's north shore by designating a site as an official docking facility for non-motorized boats, and naturalize the other areas being used unofficially.
  - ③ Protect and showcase the cultural and heritage aspects of the O'Brien House and Willson House.



### ▲ Targeted Uses and Additional Policies

#### A O'BRIEN HOUSE AND WILLSON HOUSE

- ▶ Limit the occupancy of sites associated with the O'Brien House and Willson House to the existing cleared areas, including the parking area.
- ▶ Promote uses open to the public that ensure the protection of buildings, and that can highlight the history and prestige of the sites. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following uses:
  - accommodations (hotel, lodge);
  - food and beverage services;
  - venue for conferences;
  - room rentals for one-time events (receptions, weddings, celebrations).



F

## Camp Fortune Intensive Recreational Area



### DESCRIPTION

The Camp Fortune Intensive Recreational Area has been a sports and recreational area for over 100 years, with area residents coming to the area for downhill skiing. The Ottawa Ski Club had a long involvement in developing the ski area until the NCC took ownership of the site in the 1990s. The facilities were then conserved, and the site, which contributes to the local economy, is now operated by a private lessee who has invested the funds needed to maintain a downhill ski area to benefit visitors.

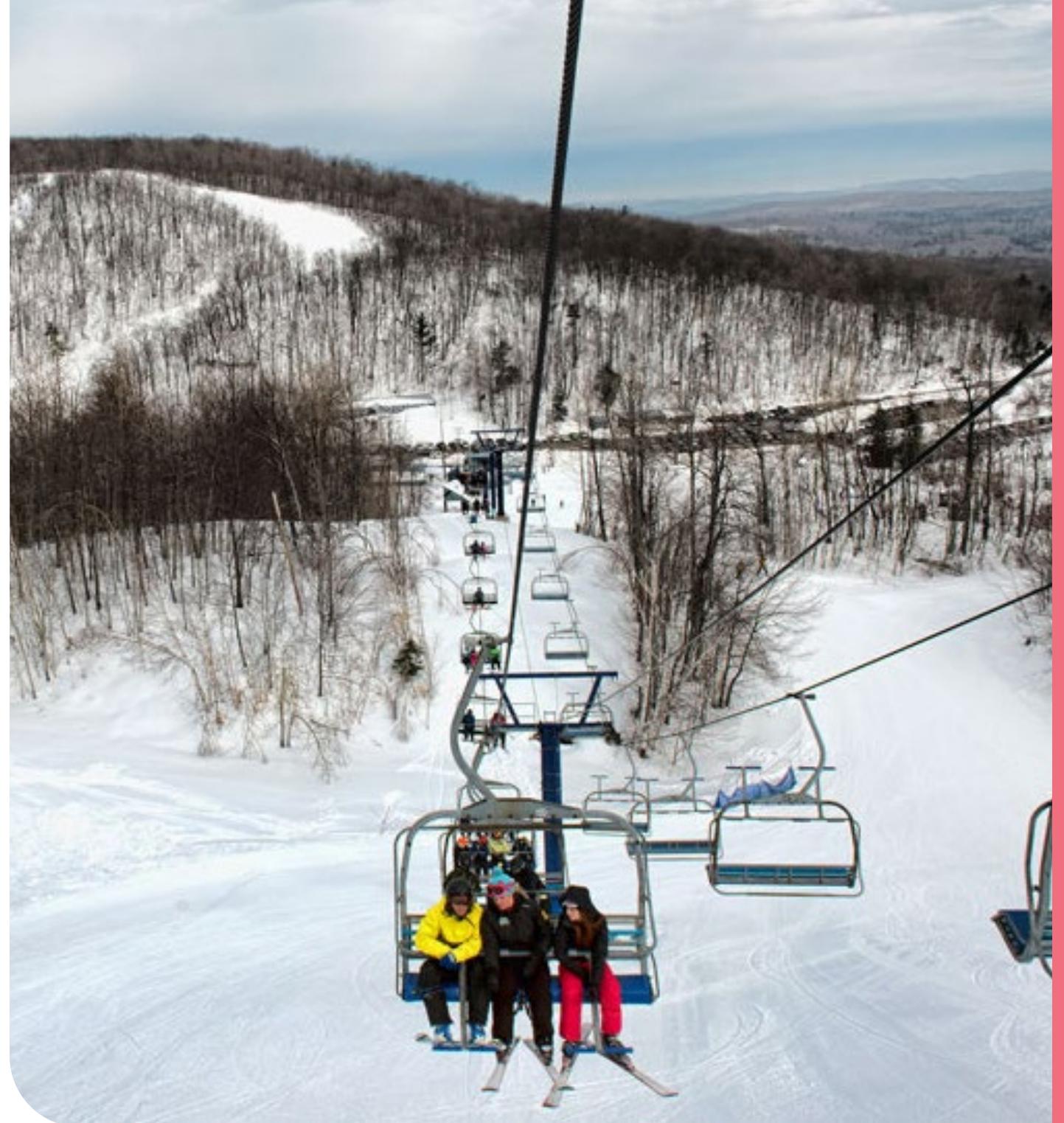
The area is still used for specialized recreation and sports. There is a high concentration of users, and the recreational facilities can have more of an impact on the environment, which requires mitigation. Competitive activities are primarily directed to this location. It is used specifically for non-motorized and authorized outdoor sports (downhill skiing, mountain biking, biathlon and cross-country skiing).

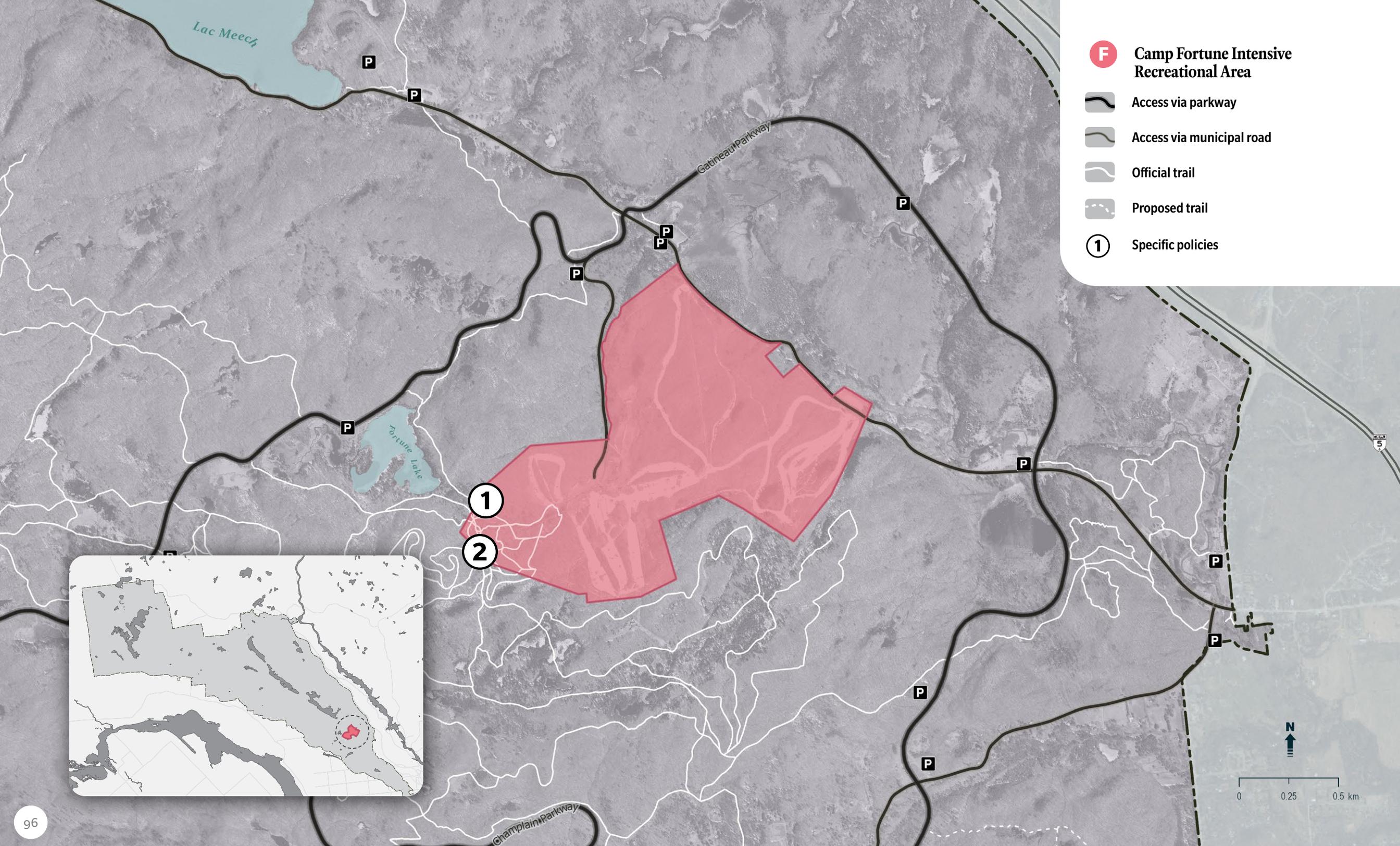
## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Showcase Camp Fortune’s historical contribution to the park’s use as an outdoor recreation venue.
- ▶ Maintain a downhill ski area contributing to a diversified tourism offering close to the heart of the Capital until the end of usage.
- ▶ Concentrate on and manage outdoor recreational uses that require major infrastructure and leave a big footprint.
- ▶ Integrate the trail network and Camp Fortune service offering with the recreational network of the rest of the park.

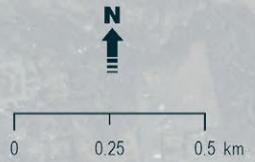
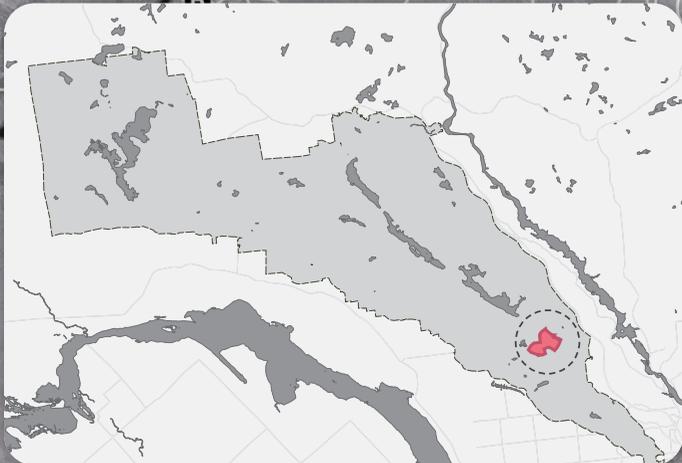
## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Authorized scientific research and monitoring of ecosystem health indicators
- ▶ Activities related to the protection and restoration of plants, wildlife, habitats and ecosystems
- ▶ Downhill ski centre (day and evening)
- ▶ Ski lodge with food and beverage services
- ▶ Day shelters
- ▶ Room and space rentals
- ▶ Biathlon training, with firing range
- ▶ Sports competitions (summer and winter)
- ▶ Summer and winter trail activities (mountain biking, snow biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing)
- ▶ Outdoor play requiring recreation facilities (alpine luge, aerial park, zipline)
- ▶ Interpretation, education





- F** Camp Fortune Intensive Recreational Area
- Access via parkway
- Access via municipal road
- Official trail
- Proposed trail
- ① Specific policies



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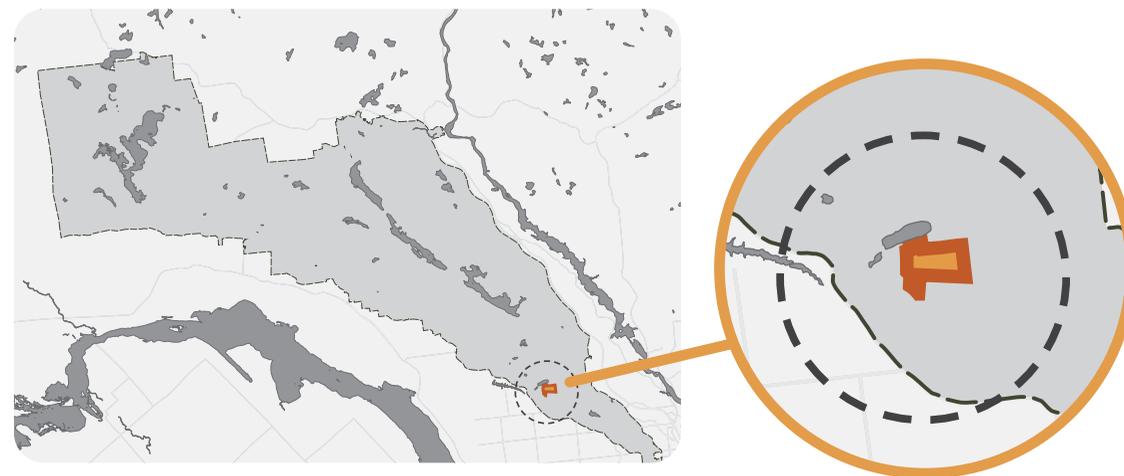
## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Manage development and interventions at Camp Fortune to avoid cumulative effects on the natural environment of the area and beyond the boundaries.
  - ▶ Require the preparation of a medium-term development plan for this site to better anticipate expansion of the proposed activities and cumulative effects of the development.
  - ▶ Limit the expansion of authorized activities and required infrastructure to the existing footprint corresponding to the site's currently cleared area.
  - ▶ Allow for activities included in the medium-term development plan in wooded areas located within the perimeter of areas currently used by activities, and if these wooded areas are compensated based on NCC compensation policies.
  - ▶ Prepare a strategy to manage transportation demand, reflecting existing infrastructure capacity, to reduce adverse environmental effects, as well as those from overloaded parking lots and access road congestion.
  - ▶ Consider the cumulative effects that business expansion projects could have on traffic, and integrate these projects into the transportation management strategy.
- ▶ Connect Camp Fortune trails, especially cross-country ski and mountain bike trails, and trails from the rest of the park.
  - ▶ Create a stop for trail network users using existing services and infrastructure at the Camp Fortune site, and formalize a site from which the network can be accessed.
  - ▶ Turn off trail lighting at night, outside of operating and maintenance periods, and gradually change lighting type to reduce light effects on wildlife, as well as energy consumption.
  - ▶ Showcase the site's recreational history as the place where the park's ski network began.
  - ▶ Prohibit any form of accommodation.
  - ① Limit the biathlon firing range to its existing surface area.
  - ② Explore the possibility of converting the Chalet des Érables to a day shelter.



# G

## Mackenzie King Estate Heritage Area



### DESCRIPTION

This area's heritage designation includes lands whose key purpose is to conserve and showcase heritage aspects with high added value (i.e. the Mackenzie King Estate). The estate includes the land on which the Kingswood and Moorside cottages are built, which are open to the public. The Farm, an official residence for the speaker of the House of Commons and not open to the public, is also part of this complex. The objectives are to conserve, restore and enhance built heritage, cultural landscapes and natural features, as well as develop them for tourism and educational purposes.

The intensity of land use is high, and development must respect the configuration and historical value of the cultural landscape of the sites. This area allows for the consolidation of museum and interpretive activities highlighting political and social life, cultural landscapes, and natural environments and offering a range of hospitality and visitor information services, and food services. The purpose of the site is to provide a heritage-based tourism experience. Natural environments can also be conserved and restored to maintain landscape characteristics. There are also a few trails linking the trail network to the estate.

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## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Conserve the heritage characteristics, landscapes and buildings of the estate.
- ▶ Educate visitors about the history, characters and events of the place.
- ▶ Maintain one of the park's main cultural interpretation sites.

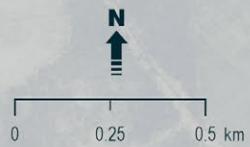
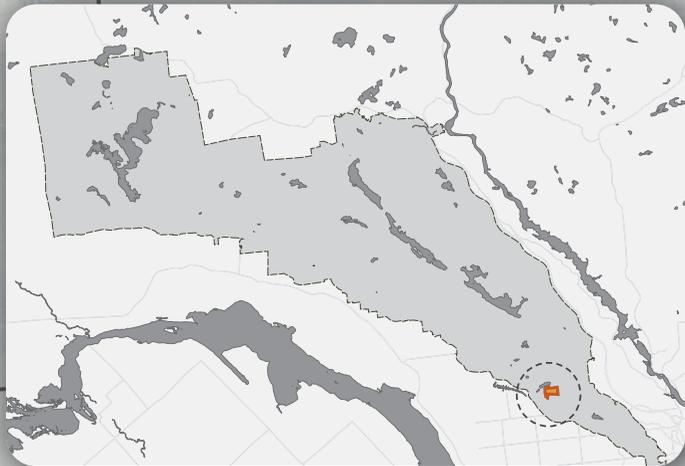
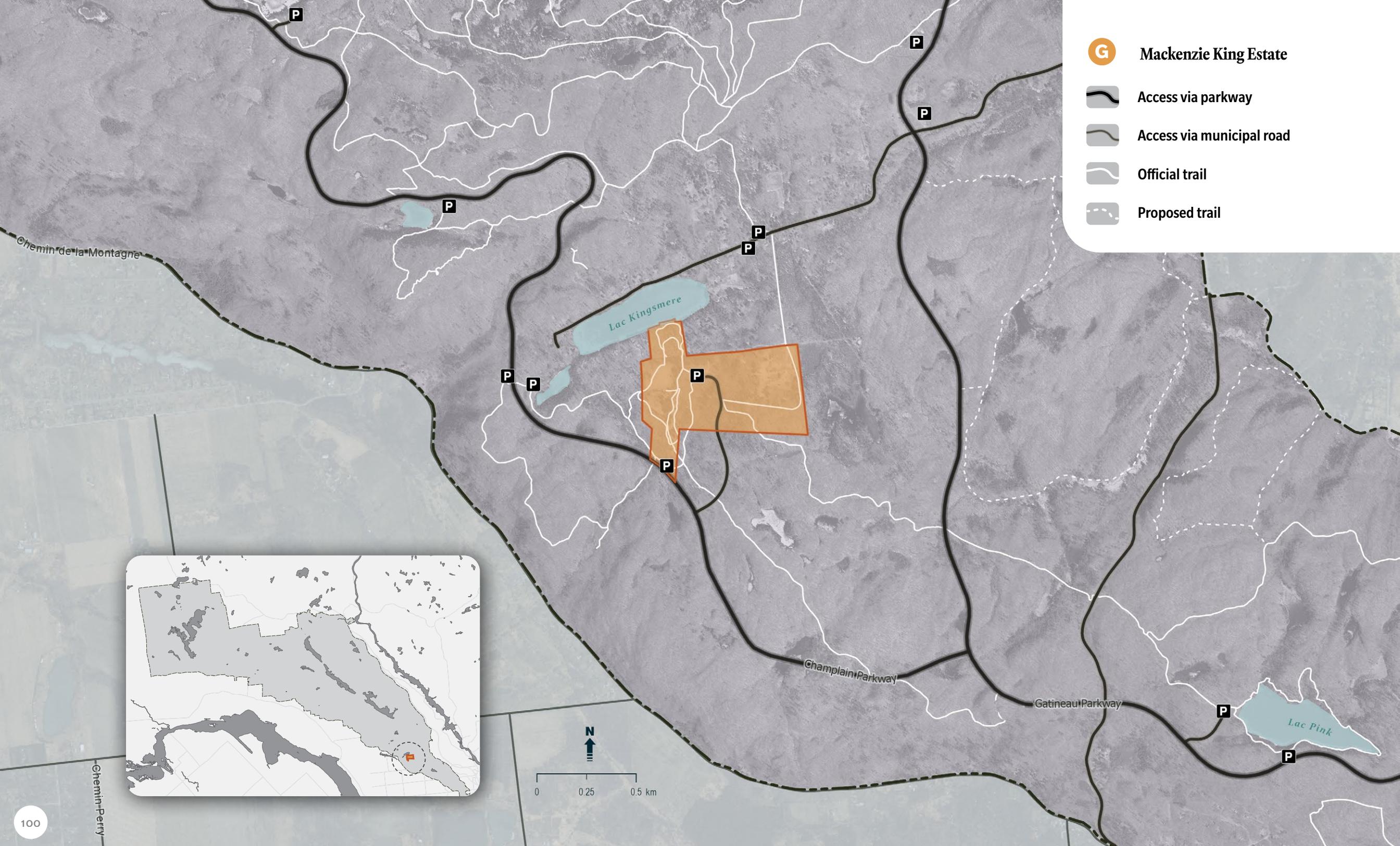
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## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Programming, shows
- ▶ Rental of outdoor locations (receptions, weddings)
- ▶ Museum, artifact exhibits
- ▶ Food and beverage services
- ▶ Souvenir shop
- ▶ Hiking, mountain biking
- ▶ Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snow biking
- ▶ Observation of natural environments and cultural landscapes
- ▶ Conservation and showcasing of buildings
- ▶ Official residences
- ▶ Parking



- Mackenzie King Estate
- Access via parkway
- Access via municipal road
- Official trail
- Proposed trail



## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Continue to implement the Mackenzie King Area Development Plan and Guidelines.
- ▶ Protect the cultural landscape of the site.
- ▶ Ensure that the land use plan is updated, and that the guidelines are relevant.
- ▶ Develop a conservation plan for the estate's heritage buildings.





## H Institutional Area



### DESCRIPTION

The institutional area designation encompasses the lands located along Boulevard de la Cité-des-Jeunes, in Gatineau. These lands are occupied by the Asticou Centre, Heritage College, Collège de l'Outaouais, and Mont-Bleu High School and the Mont-Bleu sports facility, next to the high school. Some of these lands are part of the 1973 agreement with the Government of Quebec. This agreement provides for the transfer of management and control over certain lands from the NCC to the Government of Quebec to enable the construction and development of educational institutions. This was in exchange for NCC management and control over other lands in the La Pêche Lake area. The area's key purpose is still to provide educational, cultural and recreational activities. Though the lands in this area are not

central to the park's overall mission, they remain within park boundaries, since the area around the buildings helps to conserve landscapes and maintain a buffer zone for natural habitats. They are also a starting point for the park's trail network, and provide access to parking on the outskirts of the park. Aside from educational and cultural uses, the sector permits some recreational uses associated with sports facilities and non-motorized recreation, along with the offer and provision of public health care facilities and ancillary services. These functions necessarily involve high-intensity use and major changes to the sites for development and construction. Efforts are also needed to conserve aspects of the site's ecosystem components and natural landscapes.

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### SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

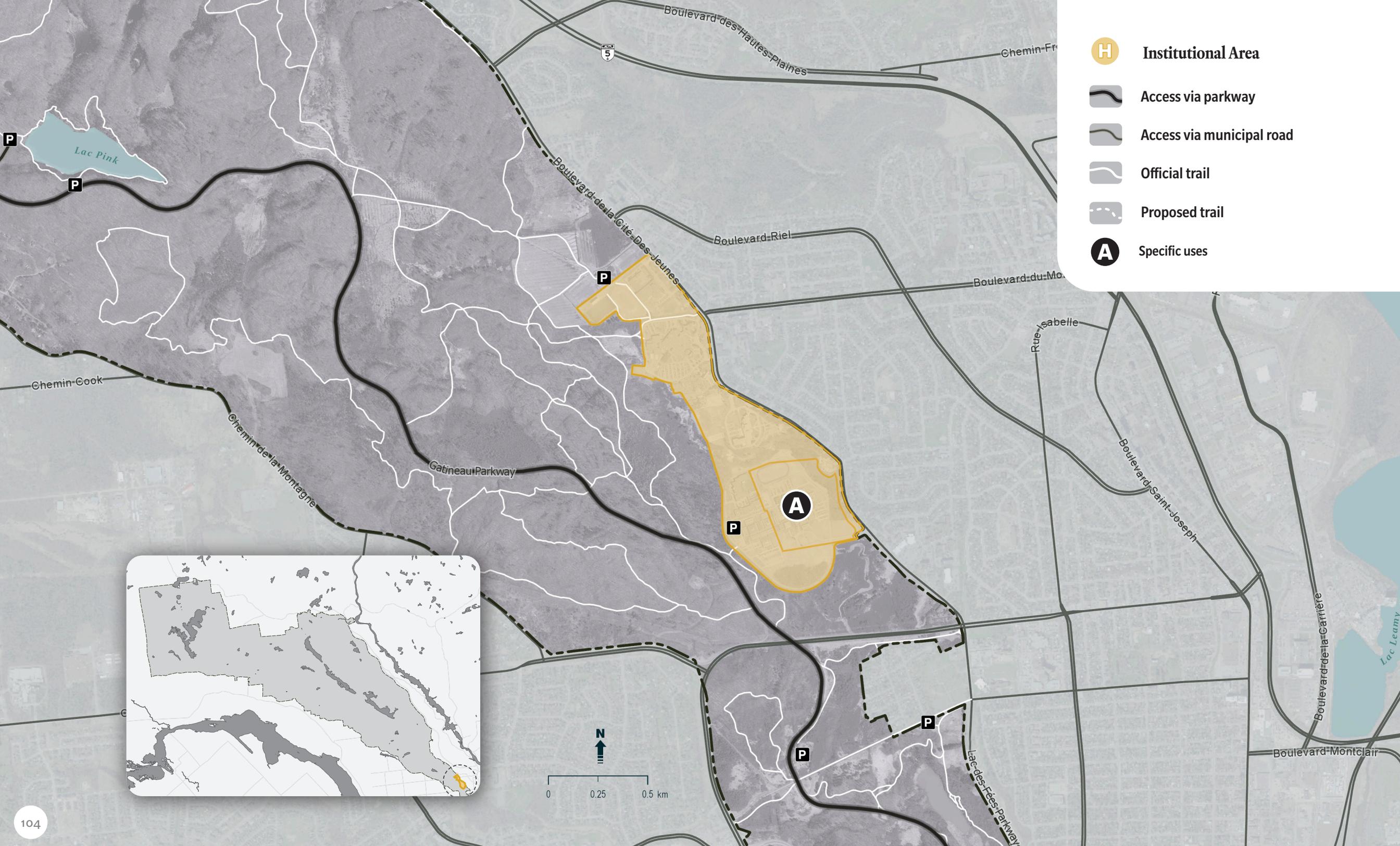
- ▶ Offer a regional learning and institutional centre.
- ▶ Provide an interface and a buffer between the park's wooded sector and the urban environment.

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### PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Educational and cultural institution
- ▶ Sports field and facility
- ▶ Federal job and training centre
- ▶ Interpretation, education
- ▶ Trail activities
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Transit terminal station





**H** Institutional Area

Access via parkway

Access via municipal road

Official trail

Proposed trail

**A** Specific uses

## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Adhere to the 1973 agreement between the NCC and the Government of Quebec.
- ▶ Allow for the expansion of authorized buildings and facilities, while maintaining a natural or landscaped buffer zone adjacent to the outdoor recreational site.
- ▶ Encourage the adoption of environmental best practices in landscape management that promote forest cover, vegetation, surface permeability, the avoidance of bird–window collisions.
- ▶ Encourage the maintenance of a minimum 30-metre vegetation buffer zone between forested or wetland areas and built sites.
- ▶ If the land is put up for sale, consider the acquisition of the land to protect natural landscapes and environmental features that are beneficial to the park.



### ▲ Targeted Uses and Supplemental Policies

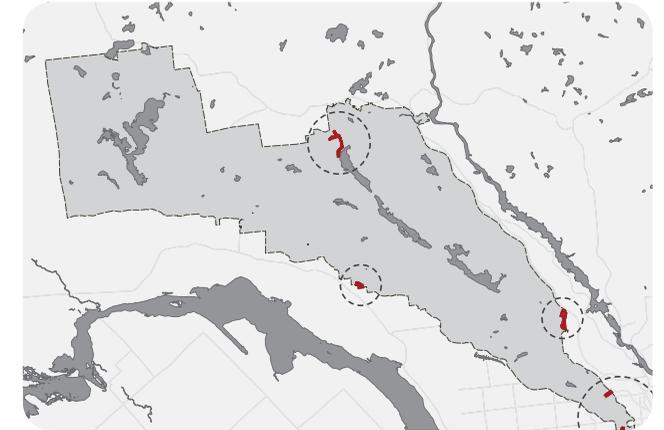
#### **A** – ASTICOU CENTRE (ASTICOU CAMPUS)

- ▶ The development of any public health care and social services establishment, and any related uses, activities, infrastructures, equipment, and works, must be contained within the land alienated for this specific purpose by the Canadian government to the province of Quebec.
- ▶ The construction of roadways and other land-based linkages outside the boundaries of public health care and social services establishment grounds, whether from a public or private road, will not be permitted, in order to preserve the integrity and contiguity of all areas of the park.



# I

## Welcome Areas



### DESCRIPTION

The visitor experience for new and infrequent visitors depends in large part on how they are received and the information they have at their disposal to prepare for their visit. Welcome areas are essential in this regard. They also allow for the concentration of various services that enrich the visitor experience.

Welcome areas are spread out on the periphery of the park. They are located in key areas near sectors of the park where recreation facilities are concentrated. They formalize certain entrances into the park, and provide an initial point of contact with the natural environment through their landscapes. Aside from information and advice to make a visit more pleasant, they remind visitors of the need to protect and conserve the environment and the park's cultural heritage.

A variety of services, amenities and activities consistent with park objectives are available there. Tiered welcome areas help guide visitors to the wide range of services available. The main welcome area in Gatineau Park is located at the Visitor Centre in Chelsea. Secondary welcome areas at Philippe Lake, the Relais plein air and Pontiac provide a welcome for recreational activities specific to their particular area. Other points serve as important seasonal gateways, such as the Gatineau Parkway, from Boulevard des Allumettières or Alexandre-Taché Boulevard, and Sincennes Road, which provides access to La Pêche Lake, where information and limited services are provided.

Welcome areas can also help facilitate strategies to sustainably and collectively transport visitors to and within the park.

## SPECIFIC PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Welcome and guide visitors.
- ▶ Disseminate information on activities, interpretation and park rules.
- ▶ Provide access to recreational sites.
- ▶ Communicate and promote the brand image of the Capital's conservation park.
- ▶ Play a role in the exchange and promotion of the park's cultural dimension.

## PERMITTED USES

- ▶ Trailheads
- ▶ Activities and events consistent with park objectives and policies
- ▶ Pavilion to welcome visitors, where the following main uses are permitted:
  - dissemination of park information
  - exhibits
  - interpretation, education
  - introductory sessions for outdoor activities
  - rental of outdoor equipment
  - user services (ski waxing room, lockers)
  - Indigenous cultural space
- ▶ Complementary visitor services
  - sale of goods and services related to outdoor recreational activities
  - food and beverage services
  - rental of rooms and outdoor spaces (meetings, receptions, events)
  - offices for park activity groups or associations
- ▶ Park administration, logistics and maintenance
  - park administration office
  - indoor storage
  - parking
  - repair shops for maintenance equipment and machinery related to recreation sites
  - storage of materials, equipment and vehicles related to recreation sites and their maintenance
  - sustainable transportation infrastructure

**I** Welcome Areas

Access via parkway

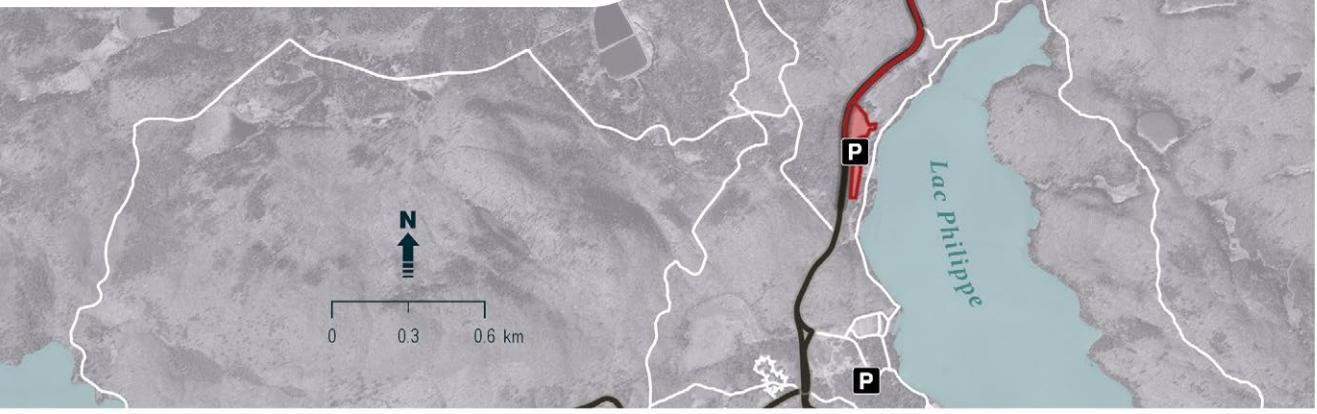
Access via municipal road

Official trail

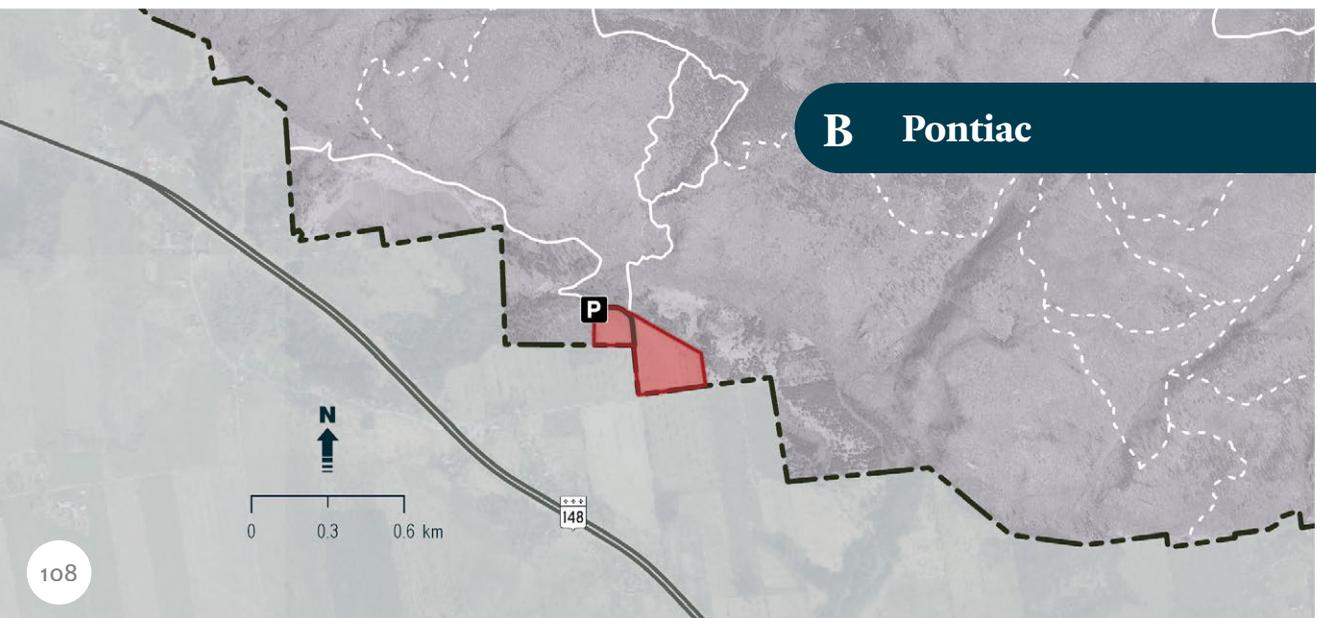
Proposed trail

① Specific policies

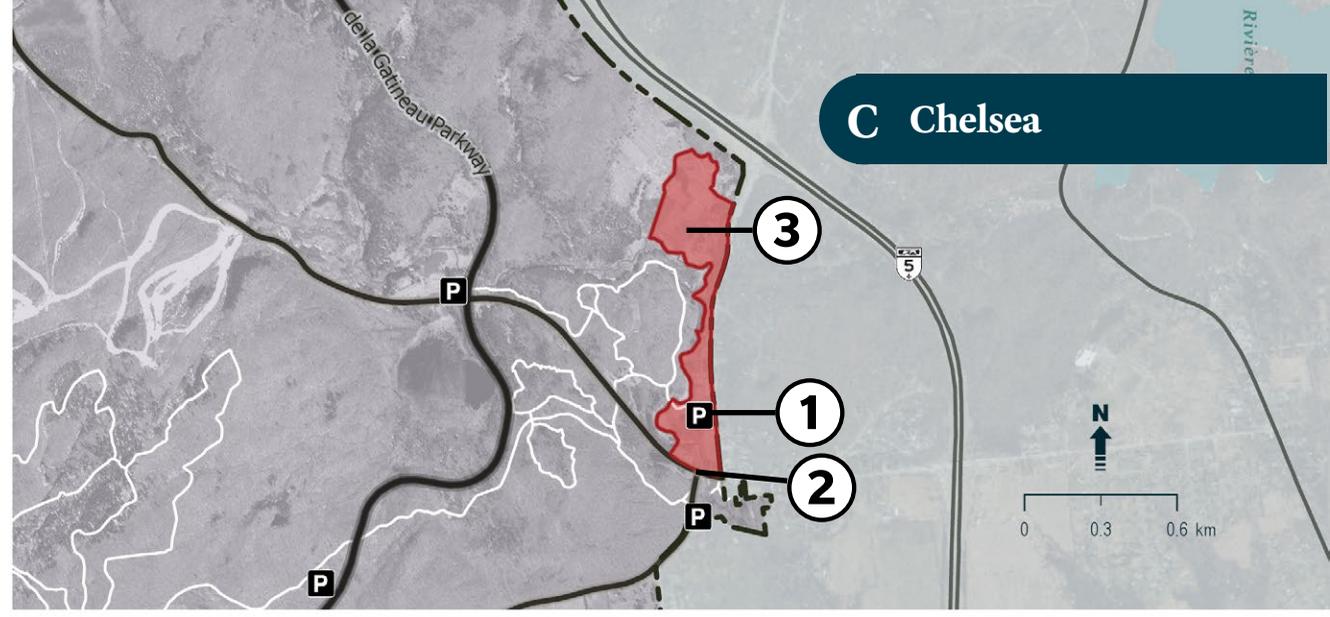
**A Philippe Lake**



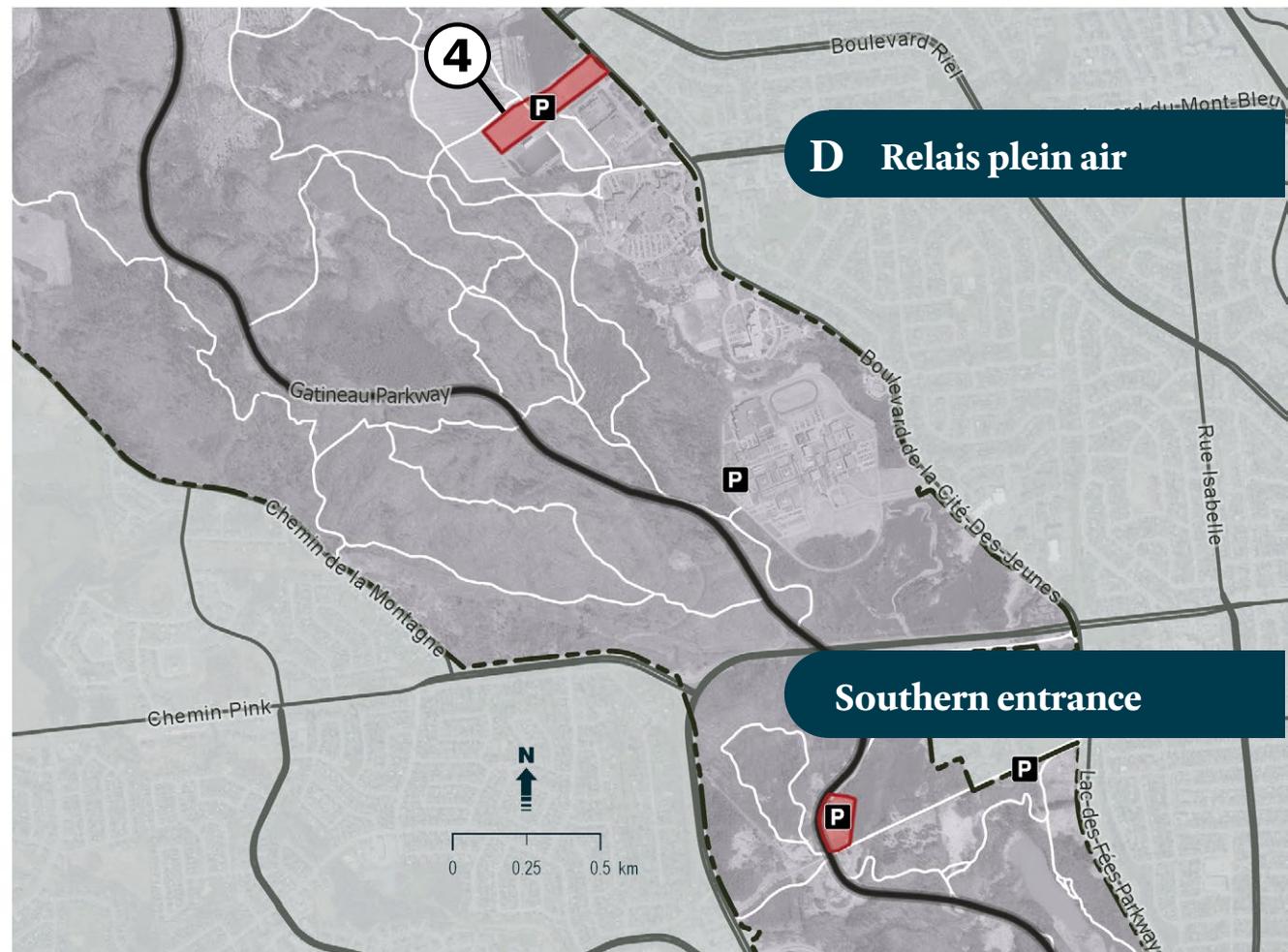
**B Pontiac**



**C Chelsea**

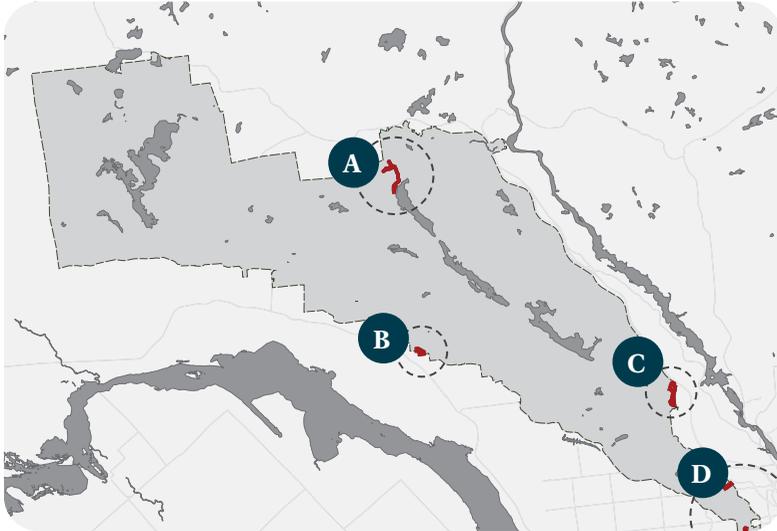


**D Relais plein air**



**Southern entrance**





## SPECIFIC POLICIES

- ▶ Allocate and organize visitor services to reflect the tiered nature of welcome areas
  - Main welcome area in Chelsea (Gatineau Park Visitor Centre):  
Information, interpretation/education, visitor services (equipment rentals, ski waxing room, catering, sales of goods, daily storage), payment of access fees, exhibits, Indigenous cultural space, meeting and gathering places, park administrative office (work, storage and maintenance spaces)
  - Secondary welcome areas at Philippe Lake, Relais plein air and Pontiac (Luskville):  
Information, interpretation, education, visitor services (equipment rentals, ski waxing room, catering, sales of goods, lockers and so on), offices for park activity groups or associations, payment of access fees
- ▶ Increase the footprint to help improve the visitor centre infrastructure, equipment storage and facilities for authorized activities, and take steps to promote sustainable transportation for park visitors.
- ▶ Manage land use to contribute to the quality of natural landscapes as perceived from outside the park.
- ▶ Encourage improved transit service to welcome areas.

- ① Construct a new main visitor centre building in Chelsea.
- ② Manage visitor traffic at the park's entrance, in Chelsea.
- ③ Work with the municipality to remove, in a timely manner, municipal storage and operations at the corner of Scott Road and Highway 5, to use the site for welcome area functions.
- ④ Maintain park visitor functions at the Relais plein air beyond the end of the planned lease (2030), fostering partnerships where possible.

Also allow the following at the Relais plein air secondary welcome area:

- ▶ room rentals, organizing of large events and outdoor competitions;
- ▶ the creation of a ski park for training skiers, including mounds made exclusively of snow.



## 7 Strategic Projects

### 7.1 Habitat Defragmentation and Responsible Trail Management Project

Gatineau Park offers an official trail network of approximately 200 kilometres. Over time, park users have created over 300 kilometres of unofficial trails, which cause ecosystem fragmentation and affect the park's ecological integrity. To address this issue, the NCC has implemented the Responsible Trail Management project. This project aims to reduce the fragmentation of habitats caused by the creation and use of unofficial trails, and establish a new network of official trails offering varied and safe visitor experiences. Among other things, it proposes to integrate 100 kilometres of the 300 kilometres of unofficial trails into the official network and, in collaboration with user groups and volunteers, make them consistent with the park's conservation objectives. This will result in a network of 300 kilometres of official trails. This project thus proposes to naturalize the remaining 200 kilometres of unofficial trails, which will reduce overall habitat fragmentation and help enhance the park's ecological integrity.

## 7.2 Protection of the Ecological Corridors

The conservation of ecological integrity is at the heart of the management of Gatineau Park. The park is home to a rich array of plants and wildlife, and provides irreplaceable ecological services in the National Capital Region. Ecological connectivity through better protected corridors is a fundamental component of the proposed changes in the new master plan. To ensure the sustainability of these vital corridors for maintaining the park's biodiversity and health, the NCC plans to work with conservation organizations, various stakeholders and private landowners. The Ecological Corridors Protection Project will focus on 12 corridors outside the park identified in a 2009–2012 study, in collaboration with experts, local partners and conservation organizations.



## 7.3 Visitor Experience And Visitor Data

The NCC needs better data on Gatineau Park visitors and their use of the park. This will make it possible to better manage visitor impacts and thus enhance their park experiences over the short, medium and long term, as well as ensure that the measures and programs implemented are consistent with the directions of the master plan and various policies. Once obtained, these data will need to be updated regularly.

## 7.4 Development of an Activity and Event Acceptability Matrix

Based on the results of the public consultations for the master plan, the Gatineau Park management team will prepare an activity and event acceptability matrix. This matrix will be used to review proposed new activities and determine whether or not they are consistent with the park's primary mandate, namely, protecting ecological integrity, as well as other management objectives. This matrix will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders and will ensure transparency of decisions taken. The results that emerge from the application of this tool will become a critical input to the federal land use and design approval process required to authorize new proposals.





## 7.5 Construction of a New Visitor Centre

In the late 1990s, the NCC relocated the Gatineau Park Visitor Centre and administrative functions to 33 Scott Road, in Chelsea, a large administrative building that also served as a garage. These buildings have been adapted for new use, but the changing operational and administrative needs now require new buildings. Therefore, the NCC plans to build new administrative and visitor welcoming infrastructure that will include exceptional environmental sustainability, Indigenous space creation, design excellence and optimal functionality.

## 7.6 Modernization of the Philippe Lake Campground

The Philippe Lake Campground in Gatineau Park dates back to the late 1950s and, as a result, reflects the standards and needs of that time period. While the NCC's facility modernization program has been successful in rehabilitating some washroom facilities, the aging facilities at the site are increasingly failing to meet camper expectations and quality standards. Modernization work is therefore required to improve recreational offerings, the quality and functionality of infrastructure, and visitor services. This work will improve the quality of the experience, and reduce the overall environmental impact.



## 7.7 Protection and Development of the Carbide Willson Ruins

The Carbide Willson ruins complex is an important heritage site in Gatineau Park. Due to weather and erosion, repairs and certain conservation measures are required. This complex is a popular destination for the public, and is widely used in all seasons. Its restoration provides important opportunities for interpretation and communication of its heritage value as a key component of the park's history.

## 7.8 Land Acquisition Strategy

The NCC Land Acquisition Strategy is intended to continue the acquisition of private property within Gatineau Park—within the allocated budget and as much as possible on a mutually acceptable basis. The NCC will give priority to lands whose ecological and strategic importance supports the park’s conservation purpose.

## 7.9 Continued Implementation of the Sustainable Transportation Strategy

The Sustainable Transportation Strategy includes many recommendations and solutions to improve transportation to and within the park. Some initiatives stemming from this strategy have been implemented, such as the closure of parkways to motor vehicles at night and a shuttle service during Fall Rhapsody, but more needs to be done. At the top of the list is the need for improvement in the sharing of the parkway network by users, and the development of alternative modes of transportation to provide access to recreational sites, notably through public transit and a permanent shuttle service.

## 7.10 Review of the Pricing Framework

In Gatineau Park, the NCC currently collects fees for some of the services provided. General access is free, but the fee structure is inconsistent from one activity to another. This imbalance could therefore be perceived as inequitable. The goal of the Pricing Framework Review Project is to find a system or combination of systems to apply a fairer fee structure for all users throughout the park, to direct visitors to appropriate areas and to reduce environmental impact.

## 7.11 Creation of a Volunteer Program

The creation of a volunteer program will facilitate the participation of visitors who wish to contribute to the park’s ecological integrity and to improving the quality of outdoor experiences. Volunteering is a great opportunity to learn more about the park and develop a sense of connection to the park. The program will build on the work of the few specialized volunteer groups that are well established in the park, and will help increase the number of people who want to volunteer their time and share their experience with others.





## 8

# Master Plan Administration and Monitoring

This chapter describes how the major directions and proposals of the Gatineau Park Master Plan will be implemented over time, in a manner consistent with the provisions of the *National Capital Act*. Instruments and processes for this purpose include the following:

- ▶ approval of the master plan;
- ▶ implementation of the master plan;
- ▶ federal approvals for land use, design and real estate transactions applicable to federal lands and projects;
- ▶ recommendations for the National Interest Land Mass;
- ▶ changes and revisions to the master plan, if applicable;
- ▶ establishment of the terms and conditions of existing and future agreements.

## 8.1 Impact of the Implementation of the Master Plan on Previously Approved Plans

The master plan comes into effect upon approval by the NCC Board of Directors.

By approving the current Gatineau Park Master Plan, the NCC cancels the 2005 master plan.

Certain more focused specific plans also apply to federal lands in the park, and are considered to be complementary to the master plan. The directions and management policies of some of these plans continue to apply. In the event of a discrepancy between a particular plan and the master plan, the latter shall prevail.

The following specific plans remain in effect. These plans will be updated as required:

- ▶ Gatineau Park Ecosystem Conservation Plan
- ▶ Gatineau Park Outdoor Activity Plan
- ▶ Gatineau Park Sustainable Transportation Plan
- ▶ Gatineau Park Cultural Heritage Plan
- ▶ Gatineau Park Interpretation Strategy.

The following plans are repealed, and the master plan takes precedence:

- ▶ Parkway Sector Plan (2000)
- ▶ Meech Creek Valley Land Use Concept (1998).

## 8.2 Implementation of the Master Plan

Implementation of the approved master plan will be primarily the responsibility of the Capital Stewardship Branch, with support from the Capital Planning Branch. The NCC will develop an implementation plan which will cover the whole life of the master plan, including a more specific medium-term implementation plan, for the five to six coming years.

This implementation plan sets priorities for the delivery of initiatives and projects. It also tracks the achievement of strategic objectives identified in the master plan.

The implementation plan is accompanied by a biannual action plan indicating the sequence for project delivery, the budgets and time frames needed to implement them, and the stakeholders to be engaged. Several factors influence the establishment of implementation priorities, including the following:

- ▶ project consistency with ncc goals and organizational priorities
- ▶ the immediate environmental and economic benefits of the project
- ▶ the potential for partnerships
- ▶ the best opportunity for project funding
- ▶ coordination with current or future projects
- ▶ the time required to complete technical and scientific studies or obtain prior authorizations
- ▶ the availability of technical and human resources.

In addition, some of the recommended initiatives will be straightforward to implement, while others will require in-depth studies and detailed plans. Any implementation is also necessarily subject to relevant federal legislation.

## 8.3 Monitoring

The health of the park will be monitored through a set of environmental indicators. Data are collected on a cyclical basis to assess the status and trend of different indicators. These analyses then determine the adjustments needed for outdoor recreation and ecosystem conservation measures.

## 8.4 Adjustments to Park Boundaries

The NCC is responsible for the management and control of most of the lands that make up Gatineau Park, with the exception of private properties under municipal jurisdiction. The master plan recommends adjusting the park boundary to include adjacent lands owned by the NCC, identified as additions on Map 6: Important Lands Outside Gatineau Park (*Chapter 4*).

## 8.5 Recommendations for the National Interest Land Mass

The lands included in the National Interest Land Mass (NILM) are essential to the future of Canada's Capital to ensure that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance. The NILM is an important implementation tool for the Capital's long-range plans, such as this master plan. The NILM provides long-term support for the symbolism, functions, physical organization, and quality of habitats and natural and cultural landscapes in Canada's Capital. The inclusion of land in the NILM is an official expression of the federal government's interest in the sustainable use of this land in support of Canada's Capital.

- ▶ Federal lands owned by the NCC, as well as private lands within the new park boundaries, are part of the NILM. The NCC's long-term intention is to acquire the major NILM lands that are not publicly owned.
- ▶ Map 6: Important Lands Outside Gatineau Park (*Chapter 4*) shows some private lands outside of the park that provide access to recreational sites. They are identified as "Private Lands – Access to Recreational Space." These lands of importance to the NCC will need to be added to the NILM in order to begin the process of creating links between the road network and the park.

The NCC will acquire these lands within its acquisition budget and in compliance with Treasury Board requirements. This will be achieved through mutually agreed-upon transactions.

## 8.6 Other Important Lands

Essential to the park's ecological integrity, the ecological corridors, shown on Map 5: Ecological Connectivity, are also important lands. The lands that make up these corridors constitute an ecological land mass that must be designated. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the natural characteristics and features of these lands are protected as well as possible over the long term. To do so, it is recommended that processes to ensure protection other than acquisition be put in place, such as agreements with landowners, conservation easements, land management partnerships, natural reserve on private lands, and ecological gifts.

## 8.7 Legal Status

The legal framework for Gatineau Park must be studied with a view to improving it, in particular by specifying the park's protected status and its boundaries under legislation. In particular, the technical description of the park boundaries needs to be updated, along with its legal recognition. In addition, improving the legal framework will make it possible to clarify the management role entrusted to the NCC, enabling it to fulfill its mandate and achieve the objectives of the master plan.

It is proposed to work with Public Services and Procurement Canada and the Department of Justice Canada to assess opportunities to strengthen the legislation to better protect the park's ecosystems and provide the NCC with more effective means to manage park operations.

## 8.8 Approval of Land Use and Design Projects

Master plan proposals must be implemented in accordance with the federal approval process managed by the NCC under sections 12 and 12.1 of the *National Capital Act*. Approval for federal land use, design and real estate transaction must be obtained for any new land use, new work or real property transactions involving federal lands.

The federal approval process ensures that proposals are compliant with the following:

- ▶ federal policies and guidelines, including those of the NCC;
- ▶ the *Impact Assessment Act*;
- ▶ the NCC’s Sustainable Development Strategy and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy;
- ▶ the Plan for Canada’s Capital;
- ▶ the Gatineau Park Master Plan;
- ▶ applicable specific plans;
- ▶ NCC policies respecting specific planning-related matters or requirements, including the natural environment, heritage and archaeology, as well as economic and social factors;
- ▶ any other requirements stipulated in the regulations, related approvals, leases, easements, other land interest instruments, restrictive covenants, special agreements or other relevant documents.

## 8.9 Amendments and Revisions to the Plan

The master plan establishes the roles, goals, directions and policy statements required to fulfill the park’s vision and ensure its ecological integrity. However, while requests to amend the master plan should be the exception and not the rule, some of its provisions may need to be changed or amended for the following reasons:

- ▶ a new study warrants a master plan adjustment;
- ▶ updates to the plan for Canada’s Capital that require amendments to the master plan in order to ensure conformity;
- ▶ a more detailed plan is produced for a specific area of the park;
- ▶ an application for land use submitted by a third party or by the NCC that is supported by the NCC board of directors is not in accordance with the policies and directions of the master plan.

If, in order to approve a special project, any amendments to the master plan are required, the review of the plan is the responsibility of NCC staff, under the authority of the vice-president of Capital Planning. The project proponent will be required to demonstrate the acceptability of the application, based on the following criteria:

- ▶ the relevance of the project to the strategic goals and directions of the master plan, and the positive and negative effects it may have;
- ▶ compliance of the project with the master plan’s planning concept;
- ▶ compatibility of the project with the intentions supported by the master plan policies and strategies;

- ▶ compatibility of the project with existing and proposed land uses and designations on adjacent lands, including the impacts on them;
- ▶ the impact of creating precedent in the park for its management if the application is approved;
- ▶ the financial repercussions on the NCC and the Capital;
- ▶ any other relevant factor.

If an amendment to the plan is considered necessary, it must be approved by the NCC's board of directors. The amendment review and approval process provides for public consultation proportional to the scope of the proposed amendment. Any recommendations in this regard are the responsibility of the vice-president of Capital Planning. A minor editorial change to clarify a sentence does not require a change to the master plan, only a simple correction to the version posted on the NCC website.

The boundaries for the park's land designations are based on the NCC's geographic information system (GIS) data. Over the life of the master plan, minor adjustments to the boundaries of some of these designations may be required to better reflect the objectives and provisions of the plan. A minor adjustment, such as a map correction, should not require a master plan amendment. Decisions in this regard are made by the office of the vice-president of Capital Planning.

Approximately five years after the master plan's approval, the vice-president of Capital Planning, in collaboration with the vice-president of Capital Stewardship, will assess whether or not there is a need for a full review. The master plan must be updated or completely reviewed 10 to 15 years after it is approved. This is also the responsibility of the vice-president of Capital Planning.

## 8.10 Existing Agreements

There are a number of pre-master plan agreements for the use of certain NCC properties in Gatineau Park. These formal agreements have been signed with various partners, such as municipalities, organizations, developers and tenants. These are essentially leases and service contracts.

The NCC is gradually aligning all leases, service contracts and other agreements with the master plan's directions, objectives and policies. Thus, when one of these instruments becomes eligible for renewal or renegotiation, its content is reviewed and adjusted accordingly. If a change in land use is proposed, the federal approval process must be followed.





## 9 Conclusion

With this new master plan, Gatineau Park is taking another step in its evolution. Over the next decade, the NCC will prioritize the conservation of the park’s ecological integrity. It will also encourage park visitors to take action in support of its conservation. In addition, it will initiate a process of reconciliation with local Indigenous communities.

The vision outlined in the master plan promotes exceptional and inclusive visitor experiences—experiences where everyone feels welcome to connect with the nature and culture of this great park in our capital. The common thread of this plan is to create quality outdoor recreation opportunities, while at the same time defragmenting ecosystems. In this regard, a process calling on the help of the public is one of the ways to eliminate and re-naturalize a large number of unofficial trails.

Protecting the entire park is necessary, because its entire territory is home to important ecosystems and habitats that support rich native biodiversity. The master plan also recommends working with regional stakeholders and landowners to ensure the park’s ecological connectivity with other major natural environments in the region. By reducing the fragmentation of habitats, promoting sustainable activities, working with private landowners and rethinking access to the park, the plan proposes to better protect important ecosystems and habitats and their biodiversity—including ecological corridors, given that protecting the internal and external ecological connectivity is at the heart of the plan.

“Building the Capital’s green web, as a model of promoting and protecting ecological health and biodiversity in an urban setting, is a key commitment envisioned by this plan. Protecting our shared natural heritage will be crucial to the vitality, attractiveness and resilience of the Capital Region over the next 50 years. Natural habitats and ecosystems play an important role in the Capital, and influence everyday life in the regional community.”

*The Plan for Canada’s Capital, 2017–2067*

It is a huge task, but the reward will be the long-term conservation of the park's ecological integrity. Its prioritization will ensure that Gatineau Park remains the Capital's designated conservation park for current and future generations. This will provide unique experiences for Canadians and international visitors, who will also have the opportunity to discover Canada's natural environment, Canadian heritage sites and an exceptional place where sustainable outdoor recreation is practised with the utmost respect for ecosystems.

Gatineau Park is an intrinsic part of Canada's Capital. That is why the NCC intends to pursue its conservation and protection mission. It is committed to continuing to exercise its planning and management activities with the utmost care, and to taking the necessary actions to ensure the park's ecological integrity. Its role as a Canadian leader in environmental protection will be highlighted through its innovative ways of managing a conservation park where environmentally friendly recreation remains an important component.

To achieve the goals in the master plan, collaboration between organizations and user engagement are essential.

This plan begins a process of reconciliation with Indigenous communities regarding their traditional use of this part of Algonquin territory and their ongoing physical, cultural and spiritual connection to the Gatineau Park territory. A new collaborative relationship will be forged so that Indigenous people can share in the stewardship of this important place and represent their history, culture and traditions in meaningful ways. Economic development opportunities will also be explored.

The master plan will guide park planning and management for the next decade. A greater effort is now being made to showcase the intrinsic qualities of the park, by increasing the degree of protection of natural resources while allowing visitors to enjoy themselves in targeted areas. It is only with the help of all concerned—groups, associations, partners, residents and visitors—that this will be possible. In this way, future generations will be able to continue to enjoy this Capital treasure.

It is hoped that the community's commitment to the NCC will continue to grow over time. Strong collaboration with Indigenous communities and various stakeholders will help strengthen the relationship that will strengthen the NCC's ability to conserve, protect and present the park, for everyone and for a long time to come.

As stated in the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067, the health of our green spaces, including Gatineau Park, is "a collective and shared responsibility."

# 10 Appendices

## GLOSSARY

### activity

Current use that is managed, made possible or authorized by the NCC. [*activité*]

### assisted mountain bike

A bicycle that assists the power generated by the cyclist: does not have a throttle, produces less than 550 watts, and the assistance is limited to a speed of 32 km/h. [*vélo de montagne assisté*]

### bed and breakfast

Tourist accommodation establishment with a maximum of five rooms that offers, for a flat fee, sleeping accommodations plus breakfast.<sup>1</sup> [*gîte*]

### biodiversity

Full range of plants, animals and other living organisms, including the places on the planet where they grow or live. [*biodiversité*]

### conservation

Implementation of measures for rational use, maintenance or preservation of natural or cultural resources.<sup>2</sup> [*conservation*]

### cultural landscape

The product of interaction between the individual and his/her environment.<sup>3</sup> Any geographic expanse altered or influenced by human activity and to which special significance is attached is considered cultural landscape.<sup>4</sup> With reference to the above, a cultural landscape for the NCC is a set of ideas and practices inherent to a location. Those “ideas and practices” make up the concept’s “cultural” aspect, while the “location” is all the aspects that make it a landscape. [*paysage culturel*]

1 Corporation de l’industrie touristique du Québec

2 Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks

3 UNESCO

4 Parks Canada

**cumulative effect**

Impact on the environment resulting from the combined action of various human activities that may cause fundamental functional and structural changes in ecosystems. [*effet cumulatif*]

**ecological connectivity**

Basic principle in nature conservation focused on ecological corridors — natural passageways that species move through from one habitat to another.<sup>5</sup> [*connectivité écologique*]

**ecological corridor**

Portion of land that functionally interconnects various critical habitats for a species or groups of species (e.g. sites for breeding, feeding, resting and migration). These corridors connect or interconnect multiple populations. They enable the migration of individuals and the flow of genes from one population to another.<sup>6</sup> [*corridor écologique*]

**ecological impact**

A set of changes to ecological functions caused by an action, infrastructure or project, including preparation of the site. [*impact écologique*]

**ecological integrity**

A condition of an ecosystem that is considered characteristic of the natural region that it is part of, specifically through the composition and abundance of the native species and biological communities and through the rates of change and ecological processes. An ecosystem has integrity when its native components (plants, animals and other organisms) and their processes (such as growth and reproduction) are intact.<sup>7</sup> [*intégrité écologique*]

**ecosystem**

A dynamic complex formed by communities of plants, animals, microorganisms and their non-living environment that, through their interactions, form a functional unit.<sup>8</sup> [*écosystème*]

**ecosystem health indicator**

An environmental parameters measurement taken periodically in order to determine trends and draw broader conclusions about the overall health of Gatineau Park's ecosystems. [*indicateur de l'état de santé des écosystèmes*]

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5 Nature Conservancy Canada

6 Beier P. and R.F. Noss. 1998. "Do habitat corridors provide connectivity?", *Conservation Biology*, 12: 1241-1252.

7 Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks

8 [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/wildlife-habitat/publications/protected-areas-report-2012-2015/glossary.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/wildlife-habitat/publications/protected-areas-report-2012-2015/glossary.html)

**environmentally friendly outdoor activity**

Outdoor recreational use in keeping with the rules for protecting the integrity of the natural environment. [*activité de plein air respectueuse de l'environnement*]

**event**

One-time use, open to the public or limited to members of a public or private organization, that is held on NCC land and authorized by the NCC. [*événement*]

**fragmentation**

Process of transforming a landscape, ecosystem or large-scale habitat into smaller parcels of land that are isolated from each other, resulting mainly from intensification of human activity, such as urbanization and the creation of roads and trails. [*fragmentation*]

**habitat**

Geographical environment characteristically occupied by a species. [*habitat*]

**habitat fragmentation indicator**

A measure of the fragmentation, or dissection, caused by linear developments (roads, trails, power lines), the new baseline for which is calculated by including all trails included in the Responsible Trail Management project. This indicator is tracked as part of Ecosystem Health Indicators Monitoring for Gatineau Park. [*indice de fragmentation des habitats*]

**heritage**

A concept that applies to landscape, historical structures, natural or built sites, biodiversity, collections, traditional or current cultural practices, knowledge, and experimentation.<sup>9</sup> The concept of "heritage integrity" refers to restoring heritage resources to their original condition. Heritage landscapes refer to all the natural or other landscapes whose importance in the history of the country and the Capital is recognized. [*patrimoine*]

**hotel accommodation**

A tourist accommodation establishment with more than five rooms, with or without a kitchenette, that offers sleeping accommodations, daily reception and housekeeping services, plus other accommodation-related services.<sup>10</sup> [*hôtel*]

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9 International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

10 Corporation de l'industrie touristique du Québec

**indicator**

A quantitative or qualitative variable that can be measured or described and is used for observing a trend, if it is verified periodically.<sup>11</sup> [*indicateur*]

**infrastructure density indicator**

A measure of the proportion of park land occupied by infrastructure and recreational areas. This indicator is tracked as part of Ecosystem Health Indicators Monitoring for Gatineau Park. [*indicateur de densité de l'infrastructure*]

**intensive recreational activity**

Recreational use that requires major development that alters the natural environment, on a property intended for that purpose (e.g. a downhill skiing area). [*activité récréative intensive*]

**interpretation**

An educational activity whose objective is to reveal, to the public, meanings and relationships through the use of specimens, artifacts, illustrative media and first-hand experiences rather than by a rigorous didactic form or simply communicating factual information.<sup>12</sup> [*interprétation*]

**International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

The world's oldest environmental organization (1948). It holds official observer status at the United Nations General Assembly. The program builds upon IUCN's niche as the world's authority on biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions and related environmental governance.<sup>13</sup> [*Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature ou UICN*]

**land designation**

Proposed usage category for a given area within a territory, specifying the type of development and potential uses of it, and the specific policies associated with it. [*affectation du sol*]

**land stewardship**

Responsible planning and administration of a piece of land for achieving an outcome consistent with the policy statements. [*gestion du territoire*]

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11 Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles du Québec

12 Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks

13 www.iucn.org

**land use concept**

Graphic representation of the long-term vision for Gatineau Park ("where we want to go"). The land use concept shows the big ideas that will guide the park's planning and management over the next 50 years. It comprehensively and coherently establishes the distribution of the actions and strategies arising from the vision. [*concept d'aménagement*]

**natural heritage**

Heritage that consists of all communities of predominantly native species, interacting with each other, governed by spontaneous and dynamically balanced ecological processes under the influence of climate, abiotic components of the environment, and sometimes human activity.<sup>14</sup> [*patrimoine naturel*]

**natural process**

A vital ecological mechanism, such as solar energy capturing, climate processes, geological and geomorphological processes, hydrological cycles, fire cycles, and wildlife population dynamics. [*processus naturel*]

**policy**

A general statement or statement of principles to clearly set out an organization's course of action for its management and planning, in a particular area or about a particular matter. [*politique*]

**ready-to-camp**

A category of camping accommodations that includes shelters, yurts and four-season tents. [*prêt-à-camper*]

**resident**

Refers to a person living in the Capital Region. [*résidant*]

**restoration**

The process of returning a site, natural resource or ecosystem altered by humans to its original condition, through natural means (natural processes) or artificial means (human intervention).<sup>15</sup> [*restauration*]

**shelter**

A rustic cottage-style building that serves as a rest area for visitors during the day only. A shelter is equipped with essential amenities for taking a break in the warmth: a wood stove and items required for starting a fire (winter only), picnic table, clothing and equipment racks, and outhouses. [*relais*]

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14 Office québécois de la langue française

15 Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks

**species at risk**

All species identified on Gatineau Park land that are endangered, threatened, of special concern, vulnerable or liable to be so designated, and that appear on Quebec's or Canada's lists.

[*espèces en péril*]

**stakeholder**

An individual or group with a vested interest in an organization's decisions or activities. The group can be of any size and composition, whether organized or not. A stakeholder is interested in an issue or system that closely affects it. There are global, national, regional, municipal or local stakeholders.

[*partie prenante*]

**sustainable mobility**

All movements and modes of transportation that enable an individual to meet his/her main access needs in an effective, safe, sustainable, equitable way that is integrated with the environment and compatible with human health and the ecosystems, using as little space and as few resources as possible. [*mobilité durable*]

**tourism home**

An establishment that offers accommodations in a furnished apartment, home or cottage, with a kitchenette and at least one bedroom. [*résidence de tourisme*]

**trail**

A marked and safe trail incorporated into the NCC's official network, which coordinates the maintenance of it. [*sentier*]

**user**

Refers to any person present in Gatineau Park, either a person living in the National Capital Region or a person from outside the region. [*usager*]

**visitor**

Refers to either a person living in the National Capital Region or a person from outside the region.

[*visiteur*]

## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Capital Commission (NCC) conducts strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) for all its long-term plans, to ensure full consideration of environmental factors at all stages of plan development. This SEA assessed the Gatineau Park Master Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “the plan”). The purpose of this SEA is threefold:

1. To report on how the plan contributes to the goals of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS).
2. To determine the scope and nature of potential ecological, social and cultural effects caused by the implementation of the plan, and to identify measures to mitigate negative environmental effects.
3. To consider the potential risks of climate change on the implementation of the plan in order that adaptation or resiliency measures can be established to reduce these risks.

NCC Sustainable Development Strategy staff contributed to the development of the Gatineau Park Master Plan. A detailed analysis of the draft plan was completed. The goals and strategic directions of the plan were compared against the goals of the FSDS to determine how the plan contributes to the FSDS goals (Appendix 1 of the SEA). An environmental effects analysis was conducted to determine impacts on biophysical, social and cultural elements. A matrix was used to evaluate each section of the plan for potential significant impacts — positive or negative — on 14 environmental, social and cultural criteria (Appendix 2 of the SEA). The potential impacts of six climate change criteria on the plan were also identified (Appendix 3 of the SEA). The final plan was reviewed to ensure that no new impacts and mitigation measures needed to be considered.

Since the overarching vision of the plan is to protect the nature of Gatineau Park for future generations, and the first of the four key goals of the plan is “conserving nature,” the impacts of the plan on environmental, social and cultural elements are overwhelmingly positive, and the scope of these positive impacts will be long-term and far-reaching. Many of the potentially negative environmental effects of the plan that were identified through the SEA were taken into account during the planning process, and mitigation measures were built into the plan. For other effects, mitigation measures will need to be considered and/or acted upon during the implementation of the plan. These environmental effects include the following:

- ▶ Universal accessibility will be limited due to the need to balance accessibility with the preservation of biophysical elements, but specific areas have been identified where universal accessibility can be increased and where limited alterations can improve access without impacting the natural environment.
- ▶ A fee structure could decrease equitable access to the Park. The fee structure will consider equitable access for people with low incomes, but should also consider educational and social service groups.
- ▶ Because haying in Meech Creek Valley could negatively impact nesting birds and some protected species, plans are in place to ensure that haying is done outside of the nesting or active season.
- ▶ Projects to reintroduce riparian vegetation may disturb archaeological resources, but the current mitigation measures already require archaeological assessments to be included in all projects.
- ▶ The construction of a new visitor centre and campground facilities could contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions. These new facilities should be built to a net-zero carbon standard.
- ▶ Existing agreements within the Park may limit the NCC’s ability to ensure environmental sustainability. Although new and renewed agreements will be updated to align with the master plan objectives, these agreements should also include the NCC’s commitments under the FSDS.

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The following are some of the risks to the plan that could result from climate change, and which will need to be considered during plan implementation.

- ▶ More intense precipitation events may lead to increased flooding and erosion, and may result in greater maintenance costs for some infrastructure. The NCC's flood risk assessment project, ongoing in 2020–2021, may be used to prepare for potential increases in maintenance costs and may identify mitigation measures.
- ▶ The seasonal shifting of freeze-thaw cycles, storms and extreme heat and cold will put additional strain on Park infrastructure, and may result in increased maintenance costs. Climate-resilient designs and materials should be used wherever infrastructure is to be upgraded. The NCC's climate risk assessment process, to be developed in 2021–2022, can help identify and prepare for these potential costs.
- ▶ More freeze-thaw cycles and freezing rain may result in an increase in hazardous road conditions and the need to salt roads within the Park. If salt is required, the feasibility of using a beet juice mixture should be assessed, as it has a lower salt content than rock salt or conventional ice melters.
- ▶ A greater number of days with extreme heat and/or extreme cold will put increased heating and cooling demand on buildings. New buildings and renovations should place priority on reducing the intensity of thermal energy demand.
- ▶ Shifts in seasonal temperatures will likely lead to an increase in the prevalence of new or existing invasive alien species and a change in species at risk habitat and distribution. Increased protection measures may be necessary for species at risk, and additional measures may be necessary to monitor and control invasive alien species.
- ▶ More days with extreme heat and cold will pose increased risks to user safety. Although new infrastructure must be limited, existing infrastructure already provides some respite from extreme heat and cold.
- ▶ Shorter winters and a decrease in annual snowfall could negatively impact winter recreational offerings in the Park. Recreational patterns may change, and adaptation will be necessary.
- ▶ Warming may create favourable conditions for storms, tornadoes and wildfires in the Park. Emergency preparedness plans should be reviewed on a regular basis, and staff should be trained to ensure that plans can be executed quickly in the event of climate-related life-threatening emergencies.

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## AMENDMENTS

Provisions of the Gatineau Park Master Plan modified or repealed by decisions of the Board of Directors of the National Capital Commission (NCC).

N° de modification	Nom/titre de la demande	But / Objectif	Modification cartographique	Modification textuelle	Approbation du CA de la CCN	Statut / État actuel
<b>Modification No.1</b>	New canoe-camping site at La Pêche Lake	To close and renaturalize canoe-camping site number 11 on La Pêche Lake and create a new site on the lake	<p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land use Map 8: land use [Modification of the respective perimeters of the La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area (C) and the Intensive Nature Conservation Area (A1)].</p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land Use   [Modification of the perimeter of the La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area in all maps under Section C - La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area].</p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land use [Modification of the perimeter of the La Pêche Lake Outdoor Experience Area in all maps under Section A1 - Intensive Nature Conservation Area].</p>	None	CP2299-24878, 2022-11-10	In effect
<b>Modification No.2</b>	New Gatineau Hospital	To permit a "Public health care and social services establishment (hospital)" and its associated uses within a designated perimeter	<b>Chapter 6</b> - Land use [Addition of a "Specific Uses" area on Map H – Institutional Area].	<p><b>Sub-chapter 5.1.3</b> - Managing the Ecological Impact of Non-Recreational Infrastructure [Consolidation of wording].</p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land Use Designations [Addition of the new conditional use "Public health care and social services establishment (hospital)" to the compatibility table].</p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land Use Designations [Addition of contextual information under the Description section].</p> <p><b>Chapter 6</b> - Land Use Designations [Addition of a section entitled "Targeted Uses and Additional Policies" in Section H – Institutional Area].</p>	2024-P297, 2024-06-19	In effect

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