

# THE MARINE PARK, a model of participatory management

6

Photo: Denis Dufour, Parks Canada



Petit-Saguenay Discovery Site



Saguenay-St. Lawrence  
MARINE PARK



Saguenay fjord  
Photo: Frédéric Deland, Parks Canada

## A complex and dynamic form of management that promotes citizen participation

The marine park is co-administered by the Quebec and Canadian governments, with the participation of residents of communities along the Saguenay and St. Lawrence rivers. The co-ordinating committee includes citizen representatives and acts as a consultant to the governments. Supported by six advisory committees, it recommends actions to meet the objectives set out in the management plan. Since the land adjacent to the marine park is inhabited and used, the key to success is engaging the community and seeking consensus. Federal and provincial legislation and regulations of general application contribute to exercising control over the majority of activities that take place in the marine park.

Marine park authorities bring the interested parties together and are seen as the catalyst for actions. The Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park represents a laboratory whose experiences have contributed to developing a network of protected marine areas.

## Regional involvement

Regional involvement is a reality at the marine park. For example, municipalities and community groups work together to protect coastal and river landscapes, since the marine park is not responsible for managing the land bordering the park. These landscapes are an intrinsic part of the park, thus the importance of protecting them.



Parks  
Canada

Parcs  
Canada



•Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs  
•Société des établissements de plein air du Québec

The fact that some of the land, such as the Parc national du Saguenay, has protected status contributes to meeting that objective. Indeed, 85% of visitors state that the beauty of the landscapes is their main reason for coming to the marine park and surrounding region.

The marine park's natural and cultural resources and land sites in the co-ordination zone are a major attraction for visitors and residents. This has led to major socio-economic impacts for the populations of the four regions in the co-ordination zone, where there is a growing tourist industry. In 2005:

- attendance at the marine park was 1,047,984 person-visits, of which 449,896 were water-based and 760,853 were land-based;
- tourist spending in the co-ordination zone was 204 million dollars;
- jobs maintained or created that depend on tourist spending were 2,316 equivalent-to-full-time jobs or 4,000 seasonal jobs.

## Co-management and citizen participation related issues

### 1. Cooperation between government departments and other regional planning authorities

Government departments and agencies that act within the boundaries of the marine park and in the co-ordination zone must emphasize the cooperation aspect and more effectively coordinate their interventions.

### 2. Funding and generating revenue

To meet the marine park's future needs, new funding methods must be developed for protecting ecosystems and presenting the park. Various possibilities will be examined: admission fees, business partnerships, concessions, leases, etc. This additional funding will partially meet park needs and will enable the park to reinvest in projects developed through the participation of regional groups.

### 3. Technical adjustments to the boundaries of the co-ordination zone

Since the adoption of a management plan in 1998, municipal mergers have led to changes in the boundaries of certain municipalities, mainly Saguenay and La Malbaie. The marine park's co-ordination zone will have to include the territory covered by these new municipalities.

### 4. Permanence, representation and autonomy of the co-ordinating committee

The co-ordinating committee has been in existence since 1996 and is at the heart of participatory manage-

ment. It would like to see greater involvement, autonomy in managing its activities and greater representation of citizens and groups in the co-ordination zone. In addition, it would like to acquire means of ensuring that it will continue operating and the possibility of participating in national and international events in order to forge relationships with networks of marine areas.

### 5. Relations with the First Nations in the co-ordination zone

The Innu community of Essipit is an active participant in the marine park's co-ordinating committee and the various advisory committees. The Malisiet of Viger are also present in the marine park's co-ordination zone. The marine park would like to see First Nations continue to support and be involved in meeting park objectives, which at the same time would respect their ancestral rights. Understanding the contributions of First Nations to the marine park and their demands in an upcoming treaty are important considerations for the future.

## Proposed actions

### Priorities:

- Create ways of cooperating and coordinating with federal and provincial departments by signing formal agreements that define common objectives and intervention strategies.
- Develop and implement a strategy for generating revenue and creating business partnerships with community groups.
- Promote representation of six areas to the co-ordinating committee (marine tours, ecotourism, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, the environmental community and the citizens) and, if possible, increase financial, professional and technical aid to the committee.
- Draft an annual action plan to follow up on implementation of the management plan.
- Maintain the active involvement of the First Nations.

### Other actions:

- Get involved in the various regional planning authorities (ex : RCM).
- Make regional authorities aware of the importance of protecting the landscape and land along the rivers.
- Develop communication tools to raise awareness of the co-ordinating committee, its mandate and its projects, and to facilitate its dissemination of information.