

# DISCOVERY EXPERIENCES at the Marine Park

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Photo: Denis Duroir, Parks Canada



Visitors at anse de Tabatière viewpoint



Saguenay-St. Lawrence  
MARINE PARK



Anse-de-Roche Marina  
Photo : Marc Pagé, Parks Canada



The marine park offers visitors and park users a range of discovery experiences that encourage them to develop a personal connection to the environment and a culture of conservation. A visitor experience includes preparation, a tour of the park, impressions and unforgettable memories that remain after the trip is over.

Memorable experiences can be had throughout the year at the marine park, but more services are available between the months of May and October. The visitor experience can be in the form of a discovery tour on land or at sea. Marine mammal observation tours are the main marine tourist product offered at the park, but a wealth of activities involving the region's cultural and natural heritage are also available. The marine park's service offer includes a series of discovery sites. Owned by Parks Canada, Parcs Québec (SÉPAQ) and private and municipal organizations, these sites present themes associated with the marine environment.

## **A well-developed and inviting network of discovery sites!**

At discovery sites visitors can take advantage of site resources by taking part in educational and recreational activities and coming into contact with the marine environment. Most of the sites have facilities and services designed for the enjoyment of visitors and residents in the surrounding area.

The fact that the regional partners and governments work closely together has enabled the marine park to harmonize many interventions, thus contributing to fulfilling its conservation and presentation mandate. This has enabled the park to



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

provide the facilities and services needed for land and sea discovery tours.

In spite of all these opportunities for discovering the park, local signage is lacking and the population residing in the co-ordination zone could play a more active role in that aspect. It is imperative that residents in the co-ordination zone gain a greater understanding of the marine park's mission and objectives and become actively involved.

People who cannot actually make it to the marine park have the opportunity of discovering it through educational and awareness programs, for example at schools through academic programs or at home via the internet. Our objective is to promote community support and long-term involvement in the protection and presentation of the park's marine heritage.

## The challenges

### 1. Completion of the network of discovery sites

Several sites focusing on new themes have been added to the network of discovery sites, bringing the number of sites to 25. About 60% of the network's sites are in full operation. The remaining sites need to be completed by setting up partnerships with site officials. Completion of the network will also require that agreements be reached outlining common objectives and reciprocal commitments.

### 2. Improvements to the experiences offered to visitors and park users

The marine park would like to enhance the experiences available to visitors and residents of the co-ordination zone. It would like to diversify the activities and offer high quality services at all discovery sites. Furthermore, knowing more about the expectations and needs of visitors and park users will make it easier to improve the service offer.

### 3. Communication, market positioning and reputation of the marine park

Over time the marine park is becoming more well known. Additional communication and promotional efforts must be made to increase the visibility of the park and its objectives. The expectations of residents must also be known and understood so that they can be taken into account when actions are taken by the marine park.

### 4. Education and awareness

Another major challenge for the marine park is to promote it among outreach clientele. The implementation of educational and awareness programs will lead to the emergence of networks that will support the park and its conservation objectives, both in Quebec, across Canada and even internationally.

### 5. Protection of cultural resources and landscapes

Because of its rich past, the region around the marine park is home to an abundance of cultural resources. The challenge is to continue protecting them while letting visitors and local residents discover and understand them. Marine landscapes are also a challenge that will require the involvement of various groups. For example, islands and lighthouses are important elements that add to the visual quality of marine landscapes.

## Proposed actions

### Priorities:

- Draft and implement an interpretation and education plan.
- Proceed with the signing of agreements aimed at accreditation of partners of the marine park.
- Promote experiences at sea that are respectful of the environment's resources and regulations.
- Carry out the land and sea signage plan.
- Continue emphasizing school programs and other educational programs.
- Promote training among people who work in the region: captains, naturalists, etc.

### Other actions:

- Update and implement the marketing plan and communication plan.
- Find ways to showcase the marine park in urban areas.
- Improve the existing water access network by working together with regional groups.
- Develop the theme that highlights the culture and contribution of Aboriginal communities.
- Continue conducting socio-economic studies to learn more about the perceptions, needs and expectations of visitors and park users.



Photo : Marie-Josée Normandin, Parks Canada

Presentation at cap de Bon-Désir