

The New Brunswick Protected Natural Areas Coalition

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Victory for N.B. Protected Areas!

To quote the Hon. Jeannot Volpé, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, “This is an historic day for the Province of New Brunswick and its people. Today, we are officially declaring almost 150 thousand hectares of land to be protected ... forever.”

With this statement read today, M. Volpé made official what many of us have been working on and dreaming of for years, the permanent protection of 10 wilderness areas in our province and the beginning of a process and structure which will result in a stable network of protected areas for our province.

The areas to be protected (and their sizes) are as follows:

- 1) Black River, adjacent to Kouchibouguac National Park - 3,946 ha.
- 2) Caledonia Gorge - 2,856 ha
- 3) Canaan Bog - 20,726 ha
- 4) Canoose Flowage - 3,990 ha
- 5) Grand Lake Meadows - 11,617 ha
- 6) Jacquet River Gorge - 26,026 ha
- 7) Kennedy Lakes - 20,665 ha
- 8) Loch Alva - 21,925 ha
- 9) Mount Carleton Extension - 11,863 ha
- 10) Spednic Lake - 25,887 ha

Also announced were the proposed creation of Local Advisory Committees, which would provide input on each protected area, a Provincial Natural Areas Steering Committee, which would receive the advice from local committees and continue further work on developing and implementing the full strategy, and a Scientific Advisory Committee. These committees are to be struck by the end of this year. Legislation amendments supporting these committees, as well as other issues surrounding the protected areas, is expected to be tabled in the Legislature in 2001-2002.

At present, the only activities prohibited in these protected areas are forestry, mining, aggregate extraction (i.e., sand, peat), and the development of new utility corridors and infrastructure. Further, no new crown leases will be offered for these areas.

Activities of a recreational nature will continue as they are currently, under law. Existing roads designated as public, fire access or private access routes, will be maintained, and motorized access will continue to be allowed on designated routes. Hunting, fishing and

trapping will continue as well, under the current guidelines already in place province-wide for these activities.

The New Brunswick Protected Natural Areas Coalition is exceedingly pleased with today's announcement, and we hope everyone who reads this will join us in thanking Hon. M. Jeannot Volpé, Premier Bernard Lord, and the Provincial government in taking this huge step towards protecting the natural heritage of our beautiful province. Please take the time to write or call them, or send letters to editors of your local newspapers, and express your support, and to encourage them to continue the work towards a completed protected areas network.

Further details will be made available through the Department of Natural Resources offices and on their website at www.gnb.ca/0078/