

Gouvernement du Québec

O.C. 133-2007, 14 February 2007

Natural Heritage Conservation Act
(R.S.Q., c. C-61.01)

Establishment of the Réserve écologique de la
Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay

WHEREAS, under section 43 of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01), the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks may recommend to the Government that permanent ecological reserve status be assigned to all or part of land set aside as an ecological reserve and that the applicable conservation plan be approved;

WHEREAS, in accordance with sections 29 and 38 of the Act, with a view to consulting the public after the setting aside of the Finlay islands as a proposed ecological reserve, a notice was published in the Journal du Pontiac and in Part 2 of the *Gazette officielle du Québec* of 22 September 2004 stating that the area could be assigned permanent protection status as an ecological reserve on the expiry of 60 days following that publication;

WHEREAS comments were received following that publication by the municipal authorities concerned at the regional and local levels and those authorities expressed their support for the establishment of an ecological reserve on the proposed land;

WHEREAS the proposed land forms part of the domain of the State and is not part of a reserved area or an agricultural zone established under the Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities (R.S.Q., c. P-41.1);

WHEREAS Municipalité régionale de comté de Pontiac has certified that the proposed ecological reserve is consistent with the objectives of its land use planning and development plan;

WHEREAS the Commission de toponymie has approved the use of the name “Réserve écologique de la Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay”;

WHEREAS the proposed establishment of the Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay ecological reserve is entered in the 2002-2007 five-year ecological reserve establishment program approved by the Government of Québec in December 2002;

WHEREAS, to ensure a rare forest community is preserved along with several threatened or vulnerable species or species in the area likely to be designated as such, it is desirable to assign permanent ecological reserve status to the land whose plan and technical description are attached to this Order in Council, under the name “Réserve écologique de la Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay”, and to approve the proposed conservation plan for the reserve;

WHEREAS section 45 of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act provides that permanent protection status for land and the applicable conservation plan take effect on the date of publication of the order in the *Gazette officielle du Québec* or on any later date specified in the order;

IT IS ORDERED, therefore, on the recommendation of the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks:

THAT permanent ecological reserve status be assigned to the land whose plan and technical description are attached to this Order in Council, under the name “Réserve écologique de la Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay”;

THAT the proposed conservation plan for the area, the text of which is attached to this Order in Council, be approved;

THAT the ecological reserve status and the conservation plan for the reserve take effect on the date on which the notice referred to in section 44 of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act is published in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*.

GÉRARD BIBEAU,
Clerk of the Conseil exécutif

QUÉBEC
OUTAOUAIS ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
REGISTRATION DIVISION OF PONTIAC

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

CHÊNAIE-DES-ÎLES-FINLAY ECOLOGICAL
RESERVE

A territory located in the territory of Municipalité de Waltham, Municipalité régionale de comté de Pontiac, in the Outaouais administrative region, and consisting of the parts of the Finlay islands in the Outaouais river, with an elevation higher than 106.68 metres (350 feet, English measure). The territory is designated as parts of islands 52 and 54 in reference to the cadastre of Canton de Waltham, registration division of Pontiac. In reference to the original survey, the territory forms part of the Outaouais river islands fronting Canton de Waltham.

The land covers an area of approximately 94 hectares.

The territory is shown on a plan to a scale of 1:20 000 drawn up on an extract of the cadastral map and the topographical map produced by the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec, folio 31F15-200-0201. Prepared by the undersigned, the plan bears the same minute number as this accompanying technical description.

NOTES:

— The 106.68 metre mark is in reference to mean sea level (NMM 1929).

— Measures expressed in the International System of Units (SI).

— In the official book of reference of the cadastre of Canton de Waltham, islands 52 and 54 contain respectively 200 acres (80.94 hectares) and 128 acres (51.80 hectares) in area. In the original survey, the islands have been specified as containing respectively 42.78 acres (17.31 hectares) and 19 acres (7.69 hectares) in area.

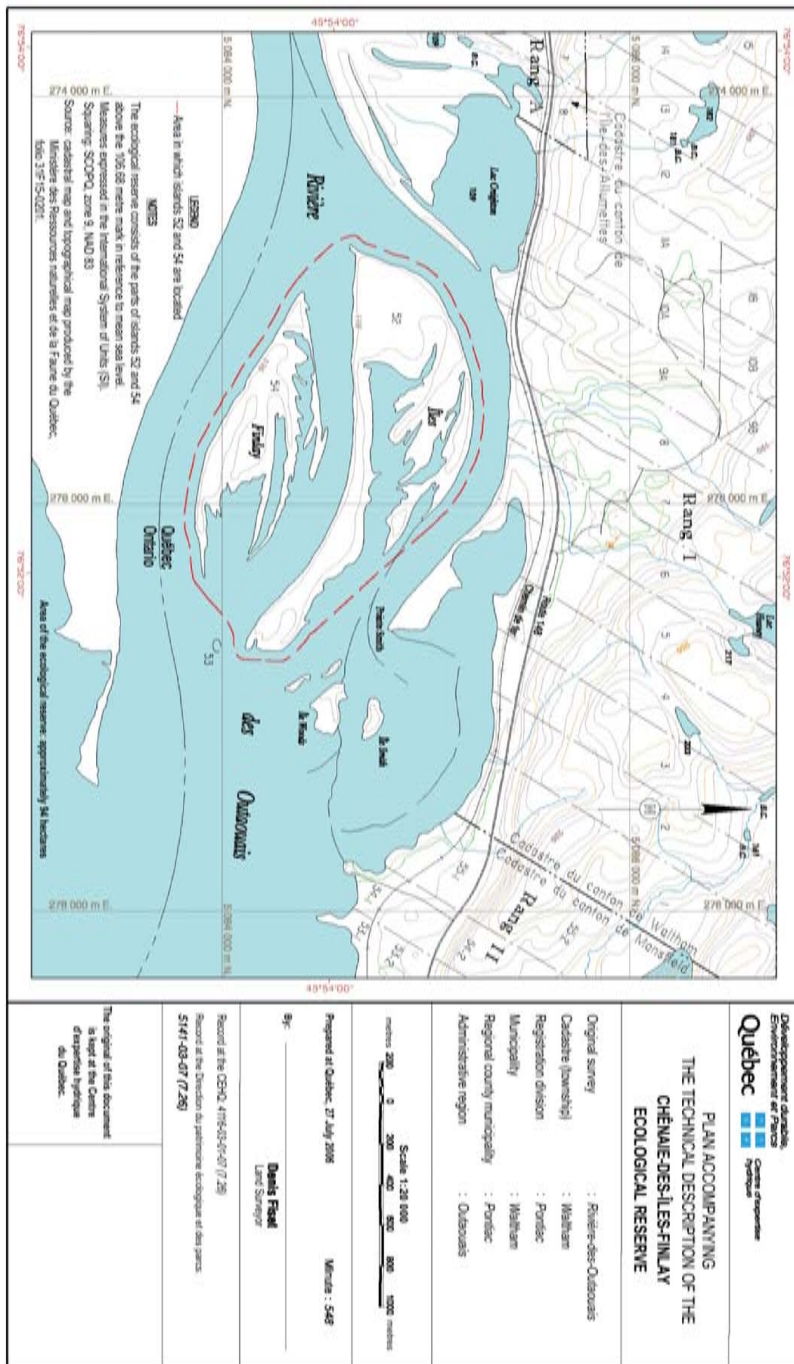
— The area of the ecological reserve will be defined by survey.

Prepared at Québec, on 27 July 2006, under number 548 of my minutes.

By: _____
DENIS FISET,
Land Surveyor

Ministère du Développement durable, de
l'Environnement et des Parcs du Québec
Direction du patrimoine écologique et des parcs
Record No.: 5141-03-07 (7.26)

Centre d'expertise hydrique du Québec
Direction de la gestion du domaine hydrique de l'État
Record No.: 4116-03-01-07 (7.26)



Développement durable,
 Environnement et Parcs
Québec Gouvernement du Québec
**PLAN ACCOMPAGNANT
 THE TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE
 CHEMINE-DES-ILES-FINLAY
 ECOLOGICAL RESERVE**

Original survey : Rivière-des-Outaouais
 Cadastre (lawship) : Waltham
 Registration division : Pontiac
 Municipality : Waltham
 Regional county municipality : Pontiac
 Administrative region : Outaouais

Scale 1:20 000
 metres 200 0 200 400 600 800 1000 metres

Prepared in Québec, 27 July 2006 Minutes : 548
 By : **Denis Froid**
 Land Surveyor

Record at the OCHQ: 4195-05-04/07 (7/26)
 Record at the Bureau du patrimoine écologique et des parcs:
 5141-03-07 (7/26)

The original of this document
 is kept at the Centre
 d'expertise géométrique
 du Québec.

(LSDN)
 (MSS)
 The ecological reserve consists of the parts of islands S2 and S4
 above the 105.66 metre mark in reference to mean sea level.
 Measures expressed in the International System of Units (SI).
 Squaring: SCOPQ, zone 9 (NAD 83)
 Source: cadastral map and topographical map produced by the
 Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec,
 1996 1:57 15-0271.

Area in which islands S2 and S4 are located
 Area of the ecological reserve: approximately 34 hectares

QUÉBEC STRATEGY FOR PROTECTED AREAS



**Proposed
Chênaie-des-Îles-
Finlay ecological
reserve**

Conservation plan

February 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Official toponym
2. Plan and description
 - 2.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions
 - 2.2. Ecological overview
 - 2.2.1. Representative elements
 - 2.2.2. Outstanding elements
 - 2.3. Occupation and land uses
3. Protection status
4. Activities framework
 - 4.1. Prohibited activities
 - 4.2. Activities governed by other statutes
 - 4.3. Supervision of activities

Bibliography

Introduction

The ecological reserve status assigned to the Finlay islands permanently ensures the protection of the biological diversity of land composed of well-preserved marshes and swamps, thick forest stands and dry beaches forming rare wildlife habitats. There are six species on the islands likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable species, a number of indications of the presence of species of turtles and several species of amphibians and birds.

1. Official toponym

The official toponym of the Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay ecological reserve “Réserve écologique de la Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay” refers to the presence on the islands of a stand of bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), a forest community extremely rare in Québec.

2. Plan and description

2.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

The Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay ecological reserve is located in the territory of Municipalité de Waltham, Municipalité régionale de comté de Pontiac, in the Outaouais administrative region, and consists of the parts of the Finlay islands in the Outaouais river at an elevation higher than 106.68 metres. The territory is designated as parts of islands 52 and 54 in reference to the

cadastre of Canton de Waltham, registration division of Pontiac. In reference to the original survey, the territory forms part of the Outaouais river islands fronting Canton de Waltham.

The land in the reserve covers an area of approximately 94 hectares. It is located on the plan prepared on 27 July 2006 by land surveyor Denis Fiset which appears as Schedule 1.

2.2. Ecological overview

The ecological reserve forms part of the Ottawa Plain (provisional name) natural region which lies within the natural province of the St. Lawrence Lowlands.

2.2.1. Representative elements

Climate:

The land of the ecological reserve lies within the sugar maple–bitternut hickory bioclimatic domain. It is characterized by a moderate, subhumid climate with a long growing season. The average annual temperature is 4.5°C, average annual precipitation is 1,065 millimetres and the average growing season is approximately 201 days.

Geology:

The basement rocks of the Finlay islands are formed of Ordovician rocks including limestone, dolomite, mudrock and sandstone. The basement rocks have no influence on the soils or vegetation because they are covered by Quaternary fluvial deposits of sand, gravel and clay. On the southern island (island 54), the wind is believed to have caused the deposits to shift to form an eolian deposit which then became colonized by vegetation.

Archaeology:

There has been no archaeological work on the Finlay islands to date. The islands have enormous archaeological potential, however, because the Outaouais river is a major waterway which provided an east-west transportation link for generations of Amerindians. Archaeological research carried out in recent years has shown the potential of the Aux Allumettes island area slightly west of the Finlay islands. The archaeological sites that may be discovered in the area will be extremely fragile because they are generally close to the surface and as a result any disturbance of the soil could partially or completely destroy them. The ecological reserve will ensure their preservation.

Vegetation:

Silver maple predominates on the fringe of the marshy areas of the Finlay islands where the soils are subject to seasonal flooding. Red ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and American elm (*Ulmus americana*) are frequently found in these forest communities while the herbaceous layer is formed exclusively of sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*).

The silver maple stands give way to red oak stands slightly upslope on the sites which are not affected by annual flooding. The latter forest community is largely dominant, covering over three quarters of the Finlay islands.

The stand of bur oak grows at the higher elevations on the Finlay islands. The main companion species in the oak stand are silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), butternut (*Juglans cineréa*) and basswood (*Tilia americana*).

Pine stands are found in the better-drained areas, including the eolian deposit. These stands are on the southern island (island 54). White pine (*Pinus strobus*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) and jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) are the dominant species in these softwood forest communities along with a range of other pioneering species.

Fauna:

Various species of amphibians, birds and mammals have been inventoried on the Finlay islands.

Amphibians: The inventories have confirmed the reproduction of the spring peeper, leopard frog and green frog. The presence of bull frogs, blue-spotted salamanders, American toads and gray treefrogs has also been observed.

Birds: A total of 44 species of birds were observed on the Finlay islands while the inventories were being conducted: great blue heron, Canada goose, wood duck, American black duck, broad-winged hawk, red-tailed hawk, spotted sandpiper, great horned owl, ruby-throated hummingbird, belted kingfisher, yellow-bellied sapsucker, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, northern flicker, eastern woodpecker, least flycatcher, great crested flycatcher, eastern kingbird, yellow-throated vireo, warbling vireo, red-eyed vireo, blue jay, American crow, black-capped chickadee, red-breasted nuthatch, white-breasted nuthatch, veery, American robin, cedar waxwing, yellow warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, blackburnian warbler, pine

warbler, black-and-white warbler, American redstart, northern waterthrush, chipping sparrow, song sparrow, rose-breasted grosbeak, red-winged blackbird, common grackle, brown-headed cowbird, Baltimore oriole and American goldfinch.

Reptiles: During field trips, no turtles or snakes were observed despite the presence of much ground material where snakes would normally be found. Turtle egg laying has been confirmed through the observation of five predated nests found on the dune on the southern island.

Mammals: During inventories, red squirrel, beaver, muskrat and white-tailed deer were noted. Traces of white-tailed deer, muskrat, raccoon and black bear and feces of black bear, raccoon and white-tailed deer have also been noted, confirming the presence of at least six species of mammals, without counting the four species of small mammals observed: the short-tailed shrew, masked shrew, meadow jumping mouse and white-footed mouse.

2.2.2. Outstanding elements

At least five threatened or vulnerable plant species likely to be so designated have been inventoried on the Finlay islands to date. They are the white oak (*Quercus alba*), woolly hudsonia (*Hudsonia tomentosa*), *Cyperus lupulinus subsp. macilentus*, *Sporobolus cryptandrus* and *Polygonella articulata*. These plants have all been observed on the eolian dune deposit found on the southern island. The habitat of a sixth plant species that is part of the group of threatened or vulnerable species, *Gratiola aurea*, has also been reported on the dry beaches of both the Finlay islands.

The Finlay islands have considerable wildlife potential because of two species of turtle, namely the spiny softshell (*Apalone spinifera*), designated as threatened, and the map turtle (*Graptemys geographica*) which is found on the list of wildlife species likely to be threatened or vulnerable. The presence of the map turtle on the islands was reported in the 1990s.

2.3. Occupation and land uses

The land is public property and no rights have been granted within the boundaries of the ecological reserve.

3. Protection status

Ecological reserve status will allow a representative sample of the large sand-covered islands characteristic of the Outaouais river to be integrally preserved on a permanent basis.

4. Activities framework

The activities carried on within the boundaries of the Chênaie-des-Îles-Finlay ecological reserve are governed by the Natural Heritage Conservation Act (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01). This conservation plan does not specify any prohibited activity other than those prohibited in the ecological reserves under the Act; nor does it authorize any other activities, or set any additional constraints on the activities permitted by the Act.

4.1. Prohibited activities

— General prohibitions under the Act

As provided in the Natural Heritage Conservation Act, the main activities prohibited in an area to which ecological reserve status has been assigned are

- forest management within the meaning of section 3 of the Forest Act (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1);
- mining, and gas or petroleum development;
- mining, gas and petroleum exploration, brine and underground reservoir exploration, prospecting, and digging or boring;
- the development of hydraulic resources and any production of energy on a commercial or industrial basis;
- hunting, trapping, fishing, earthwork and construction activities, agricultural, industrial or commercial activities and, generally, any activity likely to alter the state or nature of ecosystems.

No person may be in an ecological reserve, except for an inspection or for the carrying on of an activity authorized under the Act.

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks may, however, give written authorization on the conditions the Minister determines for any activity consistent with the purposes of an ecological reserve or with its management.

4.2. Activities governed by other statutes

As stated above, certain activities consistent with the purposes of an ecological reserve, such as educational and scientific research or management activities may be conducted with the prior authorization of the Minister. That authorization from the Minister does not imply an exemption from the permit or authorization requirements of other statutes or regulations that apply to the ecological reserve.

4.3. Supervision of activities

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks is responsible for the application of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act, and is therefore responsible for management of the ecological reserves established under that Act. The Minister supervises and monitors the measures in the Act as they relate to activities permitted in protected areas. In addition, the Minister has authority over the land which forms part of the domain of the State.

Bibliography

BONIN, J. 1990, Rapport d'inventaire des tortues dans les projets de réserves écologiques Îles-Finlay et Grand-Marais en juillet 1990. Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement, Direction de la conservation et du patrimoine écologique. 21 pages.

DAIGLE, C. 1992. Distribution et abondance de la tortue géographique sur le tronçon Aylmer-Fort William de la Rivière des Outaouais. Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, Direction de gestion des espèces et des habitats. 24 pages.

DAIGLE, C., DESROSIERS, A. and J. BONIN. 1994. Distribution and abundance of common map turtles, *Graptemys geographica*, in the Ottawa River, Quebec. *Can. Field-Nat.* 108:84-86.

FRENETTE, J. 1988. Le pays des ANICENABE. La revendication territoriale globale de la nation algonquine. Conseil de bande de la réserve algonquine de Maniwaki. 338 pages.

GAGNON, D., NANTEL, P. and N. LAVOIE, 1994. Étude écologique pour valider le projet de réserve écologique des Îles-Finlay de la Rivière des Outaouais. Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement, Direction du patrimoine écologique et du développement durable. 52 pages.

GÉRARDIN, V. and D. MCKENNEY. 2001. Une classification climatique du Québec à partir de modèles de distribution spatiale de données climatiques mensuelles: vers une définition des bioclimats du Québec. Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement, Direction du patrimoine écologique et du développement durable. Contribution du service de la cartographie écologique n° 60. 40 pages.

ST-HILAIRE, D.1 and A. GIROUX2, 2005. Inventaires fauniques à la réserve projetée des Îles Finlay, MRC de Pontiac, canton de Waltham, en 2005. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, Direction de l'aménagement de la faune de l'Outaouais, Gatineau. 28 pages.

