



PRESS RELEASE

Parc national Tursujuq

Umiujaq, Québec, December 14, 2012 – In the presence of residents of Umiujaq and representatives of the communities of Kuujjuarapik, Whapmagoostui and Inukjuak, the Québec Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife and Parks, Yves-François Blanchet, announced today that his government will move ahead with the creation of Parc national Tursujuq: Nunavik's third park and Québec's largest.

Covering more than 26,000 km², Tursujuq will protect the rich biodiversity and geography of the Richmond Gulf cuestas, the double-impact meteorite craters known as Clearwater Lake, the lower and upper Seal lakes and the Nastapoka River. This region, which has been occupied for thousands of years by Aboriginal peoples, is also well known for its unique cultural heritage.

“The final stages of the Tursujuq park process were focused in particular on the Nastapoka River. At public hearings held in 2008 and 2009, community residents expressed their support for the park project, but strongly urged the government to include the Nastapoka in the boundaries of the proposed park. Today, we can state proudly that, after four years of determined effort, our voices have been heard,” stated Maggie Emudluk, Chairperson of the Kativik Regional Government (KRG).

The Inuit communities of Umiujaq, Kuujjuarapik and Inukjuak, the Cree community of Whapmagoostui, the KRG, the Makivik Corporation and the Cree Regional Authority all worked together on this park project, while the support of environmental groups such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society was important in lobbying efforts regarding the Nastapoka River.

The members of the Tursujuq working group played an invaluable consultative role throughout the park creation process. In particular, the working group was responsible for recommending the inclusion of the Nastapoka River in the park study area as far back as 2006.

Under the *Agreement concerning Block Funding for the Kativik Regional Government* (Sivunirmut), the KRG has a mandate to develop and manage a network of parks in Nunavik in cooperation with the Québec government. For Tursujuq, the KRG will receive an annual budget for park operations, as well as a capital assets budget for the construction of a visitors pavilion, maintenance warehouse and access road, among other park infrastructure. A number of local jobs will be created to complete this work and a harmonization committee with varied local representation will be created to deliver advice on the park's operations.

Parc national des Pingualuit, Parc national Kuururjuaq, various other areas in Nunavik with protected status and, now, Parc national Tursujuq serve to protect the natural environment, wildlife and their habitats, and, importantly, do not interfere with the Inuit right to exercise

traditional harvesting and gathering activities throughout the region as guaranteed under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA)*.

The KRG is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the JBNQA. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel in areas such as municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use planning, civil security and economic development.

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