



**Press Release**

***For immediate release***

## **Creation of Parc national Ulittaniujalik**

**Kuujuuaq, Québec, October 17, 2016** – The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) Chairperson, Mrs. Jennifer Munick, was accompanied by the Quebec Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, minister responsible for Nord-du-Québec and for Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions, Mr. Luc Blanchette, the Ungava MNA, Mr. Jean Boucher and the mayor of Kangiqsualujjuaq, Mrs. Hilda Snowball, to proceed to the inauguration of the Ulittaniujalik park on October 14, 2016. A traditional ceremony was held in the morning at the Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitter and an official announcement was made at Qarmaapik Family House in Kangiqsualujjuaq. Ulittaniujalik becomes the fourth national park to be created in Nunavik and Québec's second largest.

“For more than a decade, the KRG has been working with communities and the Québec government to establishing a network of parks in the region. Ulittaniujalik is the latest step in this process,” explained Mrs. Munick. “Wildlife is an essential part of the Inuit way of life. Parks and protected areas ensure protection for wildlife and their habitats from development.”

Covering 5,293 km<sup>2</sup> of the George River Plateau, south of Kangiqsualujjuaq, the territory of the new park serves as an important caribou calving area for the George River herd which has experienced a significant decline in recent years. The George River, for its part, nurtures populations of Atlantic salmon and Arctic char. Occupied for thousands of years by Aboriginal peoples, the park territory is also recognized for its rich cultural heritage. Ulittaniujalik translates from Inuktitut as ‘the place where there are shorelines’. The former shorelines of an ancient glacial lake are visibly etched along the slopes of the mountains in the area.

“Ulittaniujalik has a very long history of Inuit and Naskapi occupation,” noted Markusi Qisiq, Director of the KRG Renewable Resources, Environment, Lands and Parks Department. “While preserving the natural environment, the park will also serve to create some employment and business opportunities for these communities in the local tourism sector.”

The new national park was achieved through six years of close cooperation between the Inuit communities of Kuujuuaq and Kangiqsualujjuaq, the Naskapi community of Kawawachikamach, the KRG, the Makivik Corporation, and the *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (forests, wildlife and parks). Public hearings concerning the creation of the park were conducted jointly by the Québec government and the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission in the three nearby communities in November 2011. The entire park development project has been carried out pursuant to the *Agreement concerning Block Funding for the Kativik Regional Government* (Sivunirmut Agreement) that was signed in 2004 to consolidate the Québec-government responsibilities delivered by the KRG.

Under the Sivunirmut Agreement, the KRG also has mandates to operate the national parks in Nunavik in cooperation with the Québec government. For Ulittaniujalik, the KRG will receive an annual budget to operate the new park and a capital assets budget for infrastructure in and around the park. A harmonization committee with varied local representation will be created to deliver advice on the park's operations.

In Nunavik's national parks, Inuit, Naskapi and Cree maintain their right to practise subsistence harvesting activities. In fact, the practice of traditional activities form part of the region's unique park experience. The region's other parks are Pingualuit (created in 2004), Kuururjuaq (created in 2009) and Tursujuq (created in 2013). With the concerned communities, work is currently progressing on the Baie-aux-Feuilles and Cap Wolstenholme park projects.

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*The Kativik Regional Government is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. 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.*