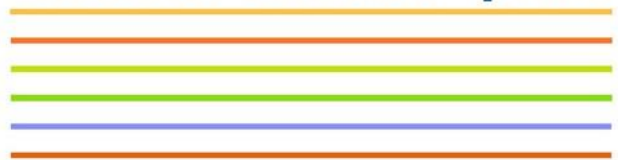




Proposed Ruisseau- Clinchamp ecological reserve

Conservation plan



October 2003

1. Plan and description

1.1. Geographic location, boundaries and dimensions

The plans of the boundaries of the proposed Ruisseau-Clinchamp ecological reserve and its location are shown on the maps in the schedules.

The proposed Ruisseau-Clinchamp ecological reserve is located within the territory of Ville de Rouyn-Noranda (outside the RCM). The proposed ecological reserve covers an area of 2,430 hectares. Its boundaries coincide with numerous watercourses and lakes, including Dasserat and Lusko lakes to the east and Faily, Marron and Monarque lakes to the west.

1.2. Ecological overview

The proposed ecological reserve lies in the Lake Témiscamingue Lowlands natural region at the heart of the Abitibi and James Bay Lowlands natural province.

1.2.1. Representative elements

Climate: The proposed ecological reserve belongs to the bioclimatic field of balsam fir-white birch stands. It straddles two climate zones. One portion of the proposed ecological reserve is characterized by a subpolar, subhumid climate with a medium growing season (167 days), another by a mild subpolar, subhumid climate with a long growing season (180 days). Annual precipitation is essentially the same in the two climate zones, being in the range of 980 millimetres.

Geology: The bedrock is formed mainly of basalt and metabasalt (mafic rocks). The southern part of the proposed ecological reserve is dominated by wacke (from clay), conglomerate, tillite (consolidated till) and argillite.

Vegetation: The landscape of the proposed ecological reserve is largely dominated by white birch (*Betula papyrifera*). The forest communities in which white birch predominates include white birch-balsam fir stands, white birch stands with balsam fir and Eastern white cedar, and white birch-white spruce stands. Black spruce stands, black spruce-white birch stands, cedar stands with Eastern white cedar and white birch and Eastern white cedar-balsam fir stands are also present.

1.2.2. Outstanding elements

Several forest communities at the heart of the proposed ecological reserve are exceptional because of the age of their forest species and, in certain cases, because of their scattered distribution. A number of these forest communities are likely to be designated exceptional forest ecosystems (EFE).

Sugar maple-white birch stands have been inventoried in the proposed ecological reserve. These sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*) are found more than 75 km to the north of the northern limit of the sugar maple-yellow birch domain, making them a rare occurrence at this latitude. These exceptional sugar maple stands cover an area of approximately 3 hectares and include a number of specimens close to 200 years old.

Also found in the proposed ecological reserve are white birch-balsam fir stands which cover some 191 hectares and contain a number of specimens over 300 years old. These stands, situated to the west and south of Clinchamp stream, are rare in this region today.

Eastern white cedar-balsam fir swamps, classified as rare, old-growth stands, are also found in the territory. Some of the Eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) in these stands which colonize sites on the periphery of Labyrinthe lake are 400 years old. Old-growth forests of balsam fir-white birch and Eastern white cedar stands to the south-east of Labyrinthe lake are also present.

1.3. Land occupation and uses

The entire territory of the proposed ecological reserve is public property. Various rights have been granted within the territory, including mining rights and a number of leases for rough shelters.

2. Protection status

The proposed ecological reserve will protect old-growth virgin forests, some of which contain forest species with a scattered distribution, not typically found at latitudes so far north.

3. Activities within the reserve

The activities carried on within the proposed Ruisseau-Clinchamp 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 proposed ecological reserves by the Act; it authorizes, subject to certain conditions, the carrying on of mining exploration.

3.1. Prohibited activities

– General prohibitions under the Act

For reference purposes, it is important to note that under the Natural Heritage Conservation Act, the main activities prohibited in an area designated as a proposed ecological reserve are:

- f* mining, and gas or petroleum development;
- f* forest management within the meaning of section 3 of the Forest Act (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1);

- f* the development of hydraulic resources and any production of energy on a commercial or industrial basis;
- f* mining, gas or petroleum exploration, brine and underground reservoir exploration;
- f* any new allocation of a right to occupy land for vacation resort purposes; and
- f* earthwork or construction work.

3.2. Authorized mining exploration

Mining exploration, including prospecting, digging and boring, where those activities necessitate stripping, the digging of trenches, excavation or deforestation, may be carried on within the territory of the Ruisseau-Clinchamp ecological reserve provided that:

- (1) the activities are carried on by or on behalf of a person who is expressly authorized in writing by the Minister of the Environment to carry on mining exploration within the territory of the proposed ecological reserve;
- (2) the activities are carried on by or on behalf of a person who is entitled to carry on mining exploration, prospecting, digging or boring within the territory of the proposed ecological reserve, in accordance with the measures set forth in the Mining Act (R.S.Q., c. M-13.1);
- (3) the activities, where they necessitate deforestation, are carried on by or on behalf of a person who is entitled to carry on such activities, in accordance with the measures set forth in sections 20 and 21 of the Forest Act (R.S.Q., c. F-4.1);
- (4) the activities are carried on in conformity with the applicable legislative and regulatory standards; and
- (5) the activities are carried on in conformity with the authorization issued by the Minister.

3.3. Activities governed by other statutes

All activities likely to be carried on within the boundaries of the proposed Ruisseau-Clinchamp ecological reserve remain governed by the other applicable legislative and regulatory provisions, including those that require the issue of a permit or authorization or the payment of fees. The carrying on of certain activities may also be prohibited or limited by other Acts or regulations applicable within the boundaries of the proposed ecological reserve.

In particular, in addition to the legal framework under the Mining Act and the Forest Act as described in paragraph 3.2, the carrying on of certain activities may be subject to the provisions of the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife (R.S.Q., c. C-61.1), the Cultural Property Act (R.S.Q., c. B-4) regarding archaeological research, and the Environment Quality Act (R.S.Q., c. Q-2).

3.4. Supervision of activities

The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the application of the Natural Heritage Conservation Act, and is therefore responsible for proposed ecological reserves under that Act. The Minister will supervise and monitor the measures contained in the Act with regard to permitted activities in protected areas.

The Minister has authority over these lands which form part of the domain of the State.

4. Permanent protection status

The permanent protection status envisaged for the reserve is "ecological reserve" status under the Natural Heritage Conservation Act (R.S.Q., c. C-61.01).

A.2. Map showing the location of the proposed Ruisseau-Clinchamp ecological reserve

