



Workbook

FORUM SAINT-LAURENT



www.planstlaurent.qc.ca

Canada 

Québec 

Written by:

Marie-Claude Ouellet, Writer

Andrée-Anne Labrecque, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs

Evelyn Dufault, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Photo credits:

Graphic design and computer graphics: Marie-Andrée Garceau, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs

For information:

Environment Canada

St. Lawrence Action Plan Coordination Office

801–1550 D'Estimauville Avenue

Québec, QC G1J 0C3

Telephone: 418-648-3444

Fax: 418-649-6213

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs

Équipe Ententes, règlements et programmes

675 René-Lévesque Blvd. East

Québec, QC G1R 5V7

Telephone: 418-521-3885

Fax: 418-643-0252

<http://planstlaurent.qc.ca/en/home.html>

psl@ec.gc.ca

psl@mddefp.gouv.qc.ca

Published by authority of the Minister of the Environment

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2014

Published by authority of Quebec's Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife and Parks

© Government of Quebec, 2014

ISBN: En154-69/2014F-PDF

Cat. No.: 978-0-660-21752-9

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre :

Cahier du Participant Forum Saint-Laurent

Table of Contents

Program.....	5
A Workbook to Stimulate ReFlection.....	5
Background.....	7
Integrated water resource management in Quebec.....	7
What is the Forum Saint-Laurent?	8
Access to the St.Lawrence.....	9
Definition.....	9
Means of access to the St. Lawrence.....	10
Background	10
Land-use planning.....	12
Background	12
Principal planning tools	12
Urban plan and land-use and development plan.....	12
Urban plan	13
Harmonization of the preservation and creation of access to the St. Lawrence with the preservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance.....	14
Background	14
Principal legislative and regulatory tools.....	14
Stakeholders in the integrated management of the St. Lawrence River.....	16
Government of Canada.....	16
Environment Canada	16
Fisheries and Oceans Canada.....	16
Transport Canada	16
Parks Canada	17
Government of Quebec.....	17
Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs	17
Ministère des Ressources naturelles	17
Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire	18
Ministère des Transports	18
Ministère de la Sécurité publique	18
Ministère du Tourisme.....	18
La Société des établissements de plein air du Québec.....	18
La Société des traversiers du Québec.....	18

Municipal areas	18
First Nations.....	19
Education and research	19
Non-profit organizations.....	20
Private sector	20
ReFeRences and links.....	21
Access to the St. Lawrence	21
Means of access to the St. Lawrence	21
Land-use planning	21
Harmonization of access to and conservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance	21
Appendix A – Directory of Public Access Points to the St. Lawrence.....	22
Information source	23
Area under study	23
Content overview	24
Available maps	24

Program

Tuesday, October 29, 2013				
9 a.m.-10 a.m.	Welcome			
10 a.m.-10.10 a.m.	Welcoming remarks by the co-chairs of the St. Lawrence Action Plan			
10.10 a.m.-10.25 a.m.	Speech(es)			
10.25 a.m.-10.35 a.m.	Objectives and expectations for the 2013 edition of the Forum Saint-Laurent Hélène Raymond, Moderator			
10.35 a.m.-11.35 a.m.	Lecture No. 1 <i>Portrait des responsabilités des différents acteurs en lien avec le thème de l'accès au Saint-Laurent</i> [Overview of the Various Stakeholders' Responsibilities in Relation to the Topic of Access to the St. Lawrence] Jean-François Girard, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Quebec Environmental Law Centre			
11.35 a.m.-12.10 a.m.	Lecture No. 2 <i>Relation ville-port : le cas de Trois-Rivières [City/Port Relationship: the case of Trois-Rivières]</i> Jacques Paquin, Vice-president, Marketing and Business Development at the Port of Trois-Rivières			
12.10 a.m.-12.15 a.m.	Instructions for the afternoon: workshop procedures Hélène Raymond, Moderator			
12.15 a.m.-13.30 a.m.	Lunch break			
13.30 a.m.-15.00 a.m.	Workshop No. 1: <i>Enjeux de l'accès au Saint-Laurent [Issues concerning Access to the St. Lawrence]</i> ¹			
	Group 1 Harmonization of access and environmental protection	Group 2 Conditions/means of access	Group 3 Land-use planning	Group 4 Harmonization of access and environmental protection
15.00 a.m.-15.30 a.m.	Break			
15.30 a.m.-17.00 a.m.	Group 1 (cont'd)	Group 2 (cont'd)	Group 3 (cont'd)	Group 4 (cont'd)
17.00 a.m.-19.00 a.m.	Cocktail hour and poster session			

Wednesday, October 30, 2013				
8.00 a.m.-8.30 a.m.	Welcome			
8.30 a.m.-8.45 a.m.	Recap of Day 1 Hélène Raymond, Moderator			
8.45 a.m.-9.30 a.m.	Lecture No. 3 <i>Mieux connaître le Saint-Laurent pour mieux le protéger [Understanding the St. Lawrence in order to Better Protect It]</i> Simon Paquin, Founder and Executive Director of EcoMaris			
9.30 a.m.-10.15 a.m.	Workshop No. 2: Solutions et orientations communes [Common Solutions and Guidelines] ¹			
	Group 1 Harmonization of access and environmental protection	Group 2 Means of access	Group 3 Land-use planning	Group 4 Harmonization of access and environmental protection
10.15 a.m.-10.45 a.m.	Break			
10.45 a.m.-12.00 a.m.	Group 1 (cont'd)	Group 2 (cont'd)	Group 3 (cont'd)	Group 4 (cont'd)
12.00 a.m.-13.30 a.m.	Lunch			
13.30 a.m.-15.30 a.m.	Plenary session Hélène Raymond, Moderator			
15.30 a.m.-16.00 a.m.	Closing remarks by the co-chairs of the St. Lawrence Action Plan			

¹ Organized in collaboration with Stratégies Saint-Laurent.

A Workbook to Stimulate Reflection

The purpose of this workbook is to briefly introduce the context, topic and sub-topics of this edition of the Forum Saint-Laurent. It is intended to provide participants with questions to help them prepare for their participation in concertation activities offered during the event.

Following the lectures, participants will meet in breakout subgroups and work together to identify the challenges related to access to the St. Lawrence. They will then focus on developing shared guidelines that all the organizations represented can use as a driving force for action concerning the St. Lawrence. Only one sub-topic will be explored per group during the Forum.

Participants will be offered two workshops. The first, to be held on Tuesday, October 29, will be an opportunity for participants to share their knowledge and expertise. Based on the portrait of the problem (particularly via the morning lectures), participants will be asked to identify and prioritize the key issues related to the problem of access to the St. Lawrence, as well as identify the obstacles and winning conditions associated with the sub-topics of the workshops in which they participate. Both the aspects related to the importance of access to the St. Lawrence (population health, quality of life, cultural life, heritage value of the shore, tourism development, sustainable uses, etc.) and the implementation opportunities and challenges (nature of property rights, current development policy, harmonization of knowledge concerning the health of the St. Lawrence, support of stakeholder organizations, availability of sufficient funds, participation of economic players, etc.) will be considered during this workshop.

The second workshop will be held on Wednesday, October 30 and will be aimed at developing shared guidelines in a concerted manner to improve harmonization of the measures for increasing access to the St. Lawrence in the context of the identified sub-topics. These guidelines, one or two per sub-topic, will be presented and discussed in plenary with all Forum participants; they will constitute the key findings of the Forum Saint-Laurent.

To prepare for these activities, we strongly recommend reading this workbook in advance. It provides an overview of the sub-topics that will be addressed during the Forum and the responsibilities of each stakeholder or stakeholder group who will attend. It also includes questions to consider that will be at the heart of the discussions.



Background

Integrated water resource management in Quebec

The issues related to water and aquatic and riparian ecosystems change over time in terms of their relative importance (public opinion, priority for action, etc.) and status (stability, deterioration or improvement) or simply due to the emergence of new problems. In this context, implementation of more integrated and participatory approaches is required for tackling these issues.

New water resource governance was established in Quebec with the adoption of the Québec Water Policy in 2002 and confirmed by the adoption of the *Act to Affirm the Collective Nature of Water Resources and Provide for Increased Water Resource Protection* in 2009. Through implementation of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence (IMSL), the integrated water resource management (IWRM) approach can be extended to all of southern Quebec while complementing the area already covered by watershed-based integrated water resources management. As part of the new Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026, the IMSL is taking shape through the gradual implementation of 12 regional round tables (RRTs), each associated with a pre-established IMSL area, and through the annual Forum Saint-Laurent.

Integrated management of the St. Lawrence

Integrated management of the St. Lawrence is a permanent process based on the cooperation of all decision makers, users and civil society for the planning and more effective harmonization of measures governing the protection and use of the resources of this important ecosystem from a sustainable development perspective.



Concertation: combining efforts

Concertation is defined as an induced or autonomous process involving the collective construction of questions, visions, objectives or common actions by means of a horizontal dialogue between the participants, who voluntarily commit themselves and recognize each other's right to take part (Beuret 2006).

Concertation is therefore a process and not a procedure. At an early stage of concertation, a «world of cooperation» is built, that is, a common language and acknowledgement of legitimate rights. Decision-making is not the primary objective of concertation; its value lies first and foremost in working together to develop shared objectives, which will then guide the implementation of complementary and synergistic actions by all the stakeholders (based on: French Water Academy 2008).

What is the Forum Saint-Laurent?

The Forum Saint-Laurent is an annual event that promotes concerted action by bringing together the various stakeholders involved in managing the St. Lawrence's resources and uses. Its purpose is to develop shared guidelines in order to address cross cutting issues affecting the St. Lawrence and to engage stakeholders in providing coherent management of the issues addressed.

More specifically, the Forum is intended to:

- produce an overview of the issues related to the selected topic and the stakeholders involved;
- identify specific and common issues;
- prioritize these issues;
- develop one or more shared guidelines that each participating organization can make its own and help implement.

The stakeholders participating in the Forum Saint-Laurent are invited on the basis of their expertise and their involvement in managing the St. Lawrence's resources and uses, depending on the field addressed and while respecting the principle of representativeness² for the various sectors concerned. Where applicable, priority is given to network leaders and groups in order to reach as many of the organizations involved in managing the St. Lawrence's resources and uses as possible.

The purpose of the 2013 edition of the Forum Saint-Laurent is to:

Support stakeholder concertation in order to develop shared guidelines to promote conservation and create access to the St. Lawrence.



Stratégies Saint-Laurent, JE Turcotte

CCNQ, Jonathan Robert

Stratégies Saint-Laurent, JE Turcotte

² In accordance with the principle of representativeness, the various stakeholder groups present during the discussions and decision making have equal influence. Respect for this principle makes it possible, among other things, to foster increased concertation in the community and greater stakeholder participation in the St. Lawrence integrated management process.

Access to the St. Lawrence

Question For general reflection

What would be the potential solutions to help maintain and create access to the St. Lawrence while ensuring the sustainability of this unique ecosystem?

Definition

It is important to distinguish between access ³ to the St. Lawrence and the concept of the St. Lawrence's uses. Access to the St. Lawrence is one aspect of the St. Lawrence's uses, which include economic uses (shipping, recreational tourism, supply of fisheries resources, etc.) and social and cultural uses (living environments, source of artistic inspiration, water supply, etc.).

Accordingly, in the context of the upcoming Forum Saint-Laurent, the concept of access is defined as follows:

Access to the St. Lawrence (including its waters and banks) refers to the ability to reach or approach the St. Lawrence directly (boat launching, swimming, fishing, etc.) or, at the very least, indirectly (hiking trails and bike paths, nature observation, rituals, etc.). It also refers to the means of, or infrastructure for, accessing the St. Lawrence in the context of an individual's or an organization's recreational uses of it (recreational tourism)⁴.

For example, the following sites or infrastructure constitute access to the St. Lawrence: wharf, beach, boat launch ramp, marina, boater safe haven, riverside park, lookout, picnic area, port, seaplane base, protected area, historic site, etc.

During the Forum, participants will have the opportunity to participate in workshops on access to the St. Lawrence, which will deal more specifically with the following sub-topics:

- means of access;
- land-use planning;
- harmonization of access and conservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance.

«Providing access to a site requires some infrastructure, which must be carefully planned, built and then managed.»

Excerpt From the discussions held at the Forum Saint Laurent in November 2012

3 Le Petit Robert (1993) defines the concept of access as the opportunity to go into (a location), penetrate, enter, gain admittance or reach while accessibility is defined as the opportunity to gain admittance or arrive at: [translation]» the accessibility of a location.» These two expressions will therefore be used in the same way and interchangeably in the context of this workbook.

4 This definition is consistent with that proposed by Jean-François Bibeault in the article «L'accessibilité au fleuve Saint-Laurent : enjeux et perspectives pour une approche intégrée» in *VertigO – la revue électronique en sciences de l'environnement*. [Online] Volume 6, Issue 1, May 2005. Consulted on May 1, 2013.

Means of access to the St. Lawrence

Question For reflection

How can we ensure that the means of access meet the needs of the various users?

Background

Accessibility may be examined from a physical, legal, symbolic (cultural or heritage) or economic perspective. Physical accessibility means having safe, adequate infrastructure (access). From a legal standpoint, accessibility refers to constraints in terms of usage, passage, removal and the extent to which access is privatized. Symbolic (cultural or heritage) accessibility concerns access to a unique, visually appealing landscape of historic or cultural value. Lastly, economic accessibility refers to the access limited by pricing (Bibeault 2005).

In the context of the 2013 edition of the Forum Saint-Laurent, the concept of means of access refers to, but is not limited to, the following:

- the private or public nature of the access;
- the direct or indirect costs associated with the access;
- the points of access to the St. Lawrence or promotion of this access;
- the coexistence between the various recreational or recreational tourism uses of the St. Lawrence.



Stratégies Saint-Laurent, JE Turcotte

Example: boat launch infrastructure

In terms of infrastructure for accessing the St. Lawrence, boat launch ramps are usually owned by municipalities or private boating centres. Fees vary greatly depending on location; some boat launch ramps are available free of charge while others levy a \$200 fee. Many municipalities do not charge for launches but instead derive revenue from parking. These fees are often lower for locals than for non-residents. For some municipalities, fees are a means of limiting traffic on the St. Lawrence and its shores, while other municipalities view them as a source of revenue. Given the shortage of places to dock, many recreational boaters store boats on their property and use a trailer to launch them off a ramp. Some shoreline landowners, particularly in the fluvial section, offer users the opportunity to launch their boats from their property at a lower cost than what would be charged for using the applicable infrastructure.

Private marinas also offer access to the St. Lawrence via their infrastructure. Many of them charge user fees (new membership, dock rental, electricity, maintenance, storage, account set-up, cleaning, etc.) totalling several hundred dollars annually, and they sometimes reserve access for members only. In some marinas, non-residents are charged an entry fee of more than \$1,000.

«It is important to allow at least some access and even some uses (in the context of creating protected areas), but this access does not always have to be free.

Access fees not only encourage visitors to respect the premises but also ensure proper management of the site.»

Excerpt from discussions held at the Forum Saint-Laurent in November 2012

Land-use planning

Question For reflection

Under what conditions would land-use planning enable harmonious development of access to the St. Lawrence?

Background

Land-use planning involves planning technical and political interventions in a concerted manner to ensure orderly and harmonious development of the population's living environments in a given area.

In the context of the 2013 edition of the Forum Saint-Laurent, the land-use planning sub-topic is described by concepts including these:

- private and public land ownership;
- legislative and regulatory framework;
- conservation status;
- land-use planning and development tools.

In Quebec, *An Act respecting land use planning and development* identifies the planning instruments (metropolitan plan, land use and development plan, planning program) and regulatory tools (zoning, subdivision, construction) needed to develop living environments. This Act also sets out the responsibilities of the political players in the area.

PRINCIPAL PLANNING TOOLS

Urban plan and land-use and development plan

The Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement (PMAD) [urban and land-use plan] and the Schéma d'aménagement et de développement (SAD) [land use and development plan] are the most important official planning documents for urban communities and regional county municipalities (RCM), respectively. Among other things, they allow for:

- the integration into land-use planning of perspectives related to socioeconomic development and environmental balance;
- the development of a set of land-use planning guidelines that will respect local municipalities (SAD) and regional county municipalities (PMAD) by adopting the established urban planning regulations;
- the establishment of quality control for the natural environment, especially by integrating the provisions of the Protection Policy for lakeshores, riverbanks, littoral zones and floodplains (Government of Quebec, 2005);
- the taking of measures to preserve wildlife habitats and wetlands, as well as to improve structures and landscapes that are significant for the entire region (heritage elements, views of the Saint Lawrence, private woodlands, agricultural landscapes, etc.).



Please note that the urban communities and regional county municipalities could integrate requirements concerning access to the St. Lawrence River or to watercourses on the land in their SAD or PMAD. In addition, although this aspect could be the subject of a Government of Quebec recommendation when its notice of conformity is delivered, it is not a government requirement.

URBAN PLAN

The urban plan is a planning document that establishes guidelines for a municipality's spatial and physical organization and presents a unified vision of its land use. It helps complete, through its clarification, the plan for the use of land included in the regional land use and development plan. It is the city's most important official document with respect to planning how its land is used. It includes the urban policies adopted by the municipal council that will guide its future decision-making.

As a result, the urban plan is a management tool that specifically enables the municipal council to:

- ensure coherence between the choices for intervention in the sectors' files (e.g., housing, commerce, transportation, protection of the environment, recreation, municipal facilities) while taking into account the possibilities and constraints related to the planning of the natural and built environment as well as the concerns and expectations that citizens and organizations expressed during the public consultation;
- define intervention policies concerning the installation of facilities or infrastructures while taking into account the municipality's needs and financial situation (e.g., parks and green spaces, cultural and recreational facilities, road infrastructures, bicycle networks, parking spaces, water supply).

To find out more on the planning tools, consult the guide «Prise de décision en urbanisme» [«Decision-making process in urban planning»] (regulatory section) on the Web site of the ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (available in French only).

Harmonization of the preservation and creation of access to the St. Lawrence with the preservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance

Food For thought

What are the conditions necessary for reconciling the imperatives associated with the conservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance with the creation or preservation of access to the St. Lawrence that is adapted to users' needs?

This kind of work could have a significant impact on natural environments. In addition to destroying habitats, concrete surfaces can warm the water and amplify shoreline erosion. Certain types of construction requiring frequent maintenance increase the risk of disturbing the natural environment. Shoreline hardening also increases the runoff of deleterious substances into the St. Lawrence River's water, such as phosphorus and different pollutants that contribute to water quality deterioration and to certain chemical phenomena that are harmful to the health of the river's ecosystems. Finally, the creation of illegal access points can cause shoreline degradation, which has a great impact on the fauna and flora of sensitive natural environments and increases the phenomenon of erosion.

PRINCIPAL LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY TOOLS

Conserving ecologically significant areas

Projects for planning access to the St. Lawrence such as the construction of marinas, wharves and boat launch ramps, the dredging of marinas or navigation channels, the development of beaches, the stabilization of shorelines as well as the construction of infrastructures (trails, bicycle paths, roads, etc.) for accessing the St. Lawrence and completed developments must comply with the regulations in force in order to reduce to a minimum the degradation or loss of wildlife or floristic habitats.

For example, the Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Fisheries Protection Program gives guidelines for carrying out projects near aquatic areas so that the sustainability and ongoing productivity of fishing are ensured. This is done by reducing to a minimum the potential impact of operating structures or businesses or of practicing activities that could seriously damage fisheries. Through operational statements and guides, such as the *Shore Primer*, DFO provides a great deal of advice about the best way to develop access points to the St. Lawrence while respecting natural environments. In certain

Background

The completion of projects for improving access to the St. Lawrence, as well as the practice of activities that such access allows, may lead to the degradation or destruction of areas of ecological significance, such as wetlands. «The shore and the littoral zone are particularly vulnerable to alterations brought about by various types of construction, such as launching ramps and docks, stabilizing structures such as retaining walls or riprap, parking areas, landscaping, access paths and certain types of buildings.» (*The Shore Primer*, DFO).



«Conservation on the landscape level could help improve public access to the St. Lawrence or enhance sites that are difficult to access or to use.»

Excerpt From discussions held at the Forum Saint-Laurent in November 2012

cases, however, an authorization under the *Fisheries Act* may be required. It is important to note here that the *Fisheries Act* applies to both public and private land, and in both freshwater and salt water.

In addition, other laws and regulations intending to protect wildlife (including threatened species), flora and water quality provide guidelines for creating and maintaining access points to the St. Lawrence. Environment Canada, in particular, applies environmental laws aiming to reduce the discharge of toxic substances, such as the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, 1999 and the *Fisheries Act* (section 36). It also administers the laws protecting biodiversity, such as the *Species at Risk Act* and the Migratory Birds Convention Act under which authorizations may be required.

When new access points are being developed, or during the maintenance or repair of existing access points, authorizations under the *Environment Quality Act*, implemented by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs (MDDEFP), may be required. Large-scale work also requires the procurement of an MDDEFP authorization under the *Watercourses Act* and the Regulation respecting the water property in the domain of the State as well as under *An Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife*. Moreover, under the Protection Policy for lakeshores, riverbanks, littoral zones and floodplains, all structures, constructions and works that are likely to destroy or alter the riverbanks' vegetation cover, to expose the soil or affect its stability, or that impinge on the shoreline require a municipal permit.

In addition to regulatory tools, the creation of protected areas and regional conservation plans can help harmonize the accessibility and conservation of ecologically significant areas. However, the harmonization of access authorizations with the needs for conserving sensitive habitats and species (notably those at risk) is an increasingly important issue in managing protected areas along the St. Lawrence. For example, certain national wildlife areas administered by Environment Canada to which access is prohibited in order to limit the impact of disruptions due to human activity during breeding (e.g., colony of marine birds) face the problem of use, despite postings in newspapers and on the applicable regulation's Website. Other sites with conservation status probably suffer similar impact.

Such an issue can also be seen in areas accessible to the public because some of their habitats, zones or sectors are sensitive to disturbances (trampling of at-risk vegetation, disturbance of species, etc.). The principal actions proposed are: the precise determination of the most vulnerable sectors and dates in the plans for managing reserves, better on-site signage and posting of prohibitions and, finally, the application of the laws in effect.

Conservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance

We also note that different initiatives have been undertaken in Quebec to ensure the protection of natural and cultural heritage elements, particularly the *Cultural Heritage Act* as well as *An Act respecting natural heritage* conservation and the Québec Landscape Management Guide. Thus, the creation or the repair of access to the St. Lawrence should also strive for harmonization with heritage components and local cultural practices (Aboriginal, in particular) as well as with specific significant landscapes.

Stakeholders in the integrated management of the St. Lawrence River

This section is not intended as an exhaustive description of those participating in the integrated management of the St. Lawrence. Instead, it presents the main categories of those involved. Special attention was paid, when appropriate, to each of the presented sectors' mandates or interventions that involve access to the St. Lawrence.

Government of Canada

ENVIRONMENT CANADA

Environment Canada (EC) is mandated to preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment; conserve Canada's renewable resources; conserve and protect Canada's water resources; forecast daily weather conditions and warnings, and provide detailed meteorological information to all of Canada; enforce rules relating to boundary waters, the discharge of harmful substances and the protection of biodiversity, particularly through the application of environmental laws like the [Canadian Environmental Protection Act](#), the [Fisheries Act](#) and the [Species at Risk Act](#); and to coordinate environmental policies and programs in the name of the federal government. Environment Canada is also responsible for managing eight national wildlife areas and 28 migratory bird sanctuaries.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), including the Canadian Coast Guard, has the lead federal role in managing Canada's fisheries and safeguarding its waters. DFO works toward achieving the following main objectives: ensuring the prosperity and sustainability of commercial, aboriginal, and recreational fisheries, aquaculture operations and other ocean-related industries, contributing to the sustainability of Canada's aquatic ecosystems, and maintaining and improving maritime safety and security in Canada. The Department's efforts are governed by the *Oceans Act*, *Fisheries Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, [Coastal Fisheries Protection Act](#) and the [Canada Shipping Act](#), 2001 (administered by [Transport Canada](#)).

DFO also offers several services to those who use Canada's waterbodies. For example, the [Canadian Hydrographic Service](#) provides mariners and other users with mapping products and data on tides, currents and water levels. In addition, the [Canadian Coast Guard](#) works on ensuring the safe and environmentally responsible use of Canada's waters. It offers boaters search and rescue services, marine communications services and the aids to navigation system.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has 95 small craft harbours in Quebec. Under a 1995 ministerial order, all small craft harbours and harbours deemed noncritical to the commercial fishery are no longer part of DFO's core mandate. Consequently, the Department no longer maintains and operates these harbours, and they are to be divested. To date, the Quebec region has divested itself of 266 (87%) of the 306 DFO ports declared surplus. About 40 (13%) more complex recreational or non-core fishing harbour divestiture processes remain to be completed. The [Divestiture Program](#) strives to transfer ownership of these harbours to a third party (federal or provincial departments, municipalities, non-profit organizations or First Nations). Regional organizations have generally shown the most interest in assuming responsibility for harbour facilities since they are often in the best position to make decisions on which services to maintain.

Divestiture of a harbour occurs pursuant to consultation with affected communities and with the agreement of the Government of Quebec, which must ensure that the future buyer will not assume a financial burden beyond its means, and that the site is not contaminated beyond acceptable limits. Harbour facilities are only demolished if there is no local interest. Once the Department, the acquirer and the Government of Quebec have agreed to the necessary repairs and the environmental cleanup to be performed, there are two implementation options: the Department can either perform the work before divesting itself of the harbour or grant an equivalent subsidy to the acquirer who then performs the work on its own. When ownership is transferred, the acquirer pays a nominal sum and agrees to maintain public access to the harbour and its services for a minimum of five years.

TRANSPORT CANADA

[Transport Canada](#) (TC) is responsible for the safety of the marine transportation system (e.g.: pleasure craft, fishing vessels, tankers and cruise ships) under the [Canada Shipping Act](#), [Navigable Waters Protection Act](#), [Marine Transportation Security Act](#) and the [Canada Marine Act](#).

Transport Canada has 32 harbours that fall into three categories: 5 Canada Port Authorities (Montréal, Trois-Rivières, Québec, Sept-Îles and Saguenay), 17 regional ports (e.g.: Baie-Comeau, Gaspé, Matane, Gros Cacouna) and 10 remote ports (9 along the Lower North Shore and Cap-aux-Meules). The Department charges fees for using these ports. Under its Ports Program, Transport Canada also wishes to divest itself of some of its port infrastructure. The Government of Quebec has the same responsibilities regarding the acquirer's financial means and the site's environmental status. In this regard, site decontamination costs, if any, are borne by Transport Canada prior to divestiture of the wharf. Adequate financial compensation is also paid to the acquirer by Transport Canada to cover the costs of upgrading the infrastructure and any costs related to its operation for a certain period. When ownership is transferred, the acquirer pays a nominal sum and agrees to maintain certain harbour activities for a specified period. Since 1995, Transport Canada has transferred 21 facilities to Quebec organizations, including 7 to the Société des traversiers du Québec (STQ), a provincial government agency.

PARKS CANADA

[Parks Canada](#) (PC) protects and presents nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and fosters public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations. Parks Canada manages six Canadian national parks in Quebec. Under specific legislation, and, in conjunction with the Government of Quebec, Parks Canada enforces regulations designed to protect marine mammals in the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park.

Government of Quebec

MINISTÈRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE, DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT, DE LA FAUNE ET DES PARCS

[The ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs](#) (MDDEFP) is responsible for protecting the environment and conserving biodiversity. It protects natural environments through various legislation, including the [Environment Quality Act](#), the [Sustainable Development Act](#), the [Act to Affirm the Collective Nature of Water Resources and Provide for Increased Water Resource Protection](#), the [Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife](#), the [Act Respecting Threatened or Vulnerable Species](#), the [Parks Act](#) and the [Act Respecting Compensation Measures for the Carrying Out of Projects Affecting Wetlands or Bodies of Water](#) and related regulations. It also implements various environmental policies, including the [Québec Water Policy](#) and the [Protection Policy for Lakeshores, Riverbanks, Littoral Zones and Floodplains](#). Under specific legislation, MDDEFP, in conjunction with the Government of Canada, enforces regulations that govern the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park. MDDEFP is also responsible for freshwater sport fishing and [controlling industrial and municipal waste water discharges](#).

The Centre d'expertise hydrique du Québec (CEHQ) is an MDDEFP administrative unit. CEHQ's mission is to manage the Quebec water regime with a focus on safety, fairness and sustainable development. This involves regulating the water regime by operating public dams, managing government water assets and maintaining their integrity, and ensuring dam safety. CEHQ also provides support to municipalities in determining flood zones and advises the ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP) [Quebec department of public safety], at its request, in emergency situations involving Quebec rivers. More generally, it acquires the hydrological and hydraulic knowledge that MDDEFP requires to ensure water management and assess the impact of climate change on the water regime.

MINISTÈRE DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES

The [ministère des Ressources naturelles](#) (MRN) ensures that the territorial integrity of Quebec is maintained and respected. As manager of public lands, which represent 92% of Quebec's territory, it is responsible for harmonizing various land uses and ensuring optimal land development. MRN also oversees the management, allocation and registration of [property rights on government lands](#). It is also mandated to manage all matters relating to [sustainable development of public forests](#). Finally, because MRN is responsible for [natural resource management](#), it oversees the exploration, promotion and development of mineral resources. It also allocates user licences or rights, and manages fees and royalties on mining, oil and gas, and water resources.

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES, DES RÉGIONS ET DE L'OCCUPATION DU TERRITOIRE

The [ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire](#) (MAMROT) is responsible for municipal organization and regional development. As such, its mission is to support the administration and development of municipalities and regions by promoting a sustainable and integrated approach for the benefit of citizens. In this context, and in conjunction with other departments, it is developing a global vision of [government strategies and guidelines](#) on land use and development. In addition, it participates in determining expectations for the [protection of natural environments](#) over which municipalities, regional county municipalities and metropolitan communities have certain powers. MAMROT is responsible, among other things, for the [Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development](#).

MINISTÈRE DES TRANSPORTS

The [ministère des Transports du Québec's](#) (MTQ) mission is to ensure the movement of people and goods across the province through safe, effective transportation systems that contribute to the development of Quebec.

MINISTÈRE DE LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Through its role in government operations, the [ministère de la Sécurité publique](#) (MSP) is responsible for protecting Quebecers, in particular through crime prevention and preparedness for disasters such as floods.

MINISTÈRE DU TOURISME

[Tourisme Québec](#) promotes the development of the tourism industry in consultation and partnership with public and private stakeholders, with a focus on economic prosperity and sustainable development

LA SOCIÉTÉ DES ÉTABLISSEMENTS DE PLEIN AIR DU QUÉBEC

The [Société des établissements de plein air du Québec](#) is mandated to administer and develop public lands and tourist facilities entrusted under its Act of incorporation. Its mission is to ensure access to public facilities and promote and protect them for the benefit of its clients, Quebec regions and future generations. In particular, it manages six Quebec national parks near or on the St. Lawrence Islands.

LA SOCIÉTÉ DES TRAVERSISERS DU QUÉBEC

The [Société des traversiers du Québec](#) (STQ) is responsible for 11 ferry services in Quebec and service contracts for the Lower North Shore and Magdalen Islands, which enable supplies to be delivered to these remote, isolated areas. STQ, which carries out more than 100 000 crossings per year, owns 15 ferry docks and a fleet of 15 ships. Under the Regulation respecting exemption from payment for certain ferry transport services, three crossings are completely free and some passengers are entitled to other free ferry services.

Municipal areas

Under the [Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development](#), regional county municipalities (RCM) and metropolitan communities are required to identify zones subject to restrictions for reasons of environmental protection and public safety such as riverbanks and lakeshores, littoral zones and floodplains. RCMs must identify areas of ecological interest in their land use and development plan and may introduce measures to conserve these environments, while metropolitan communities achieve similar results by developing a metropolitan land use and development plan.

Municipal land use and development plans include land use policies provided in land development plans and, if applicable, in metropolitan development plans. Municipalities have a wide range of powers and tools (regulations, land acquisition, creation of parks or beaches, etc.), which may contribute to the development of public access to water. Municipal control consists of regulating or prohibiting land use, buildings, structures and subdivisions taking into account the proximity of a stream or lake or any other factor specific to the nature of a place which may be taken into consideration for reasons of environmental protection regarding riverbanks and lakeshores, littoral zones or floodplains. In the case of floodplains, public safety reasons may be considered. Buildings, facilities and works such as dock construction, culvert installation or shoreline stabilization in these areas require a municipal permit.

First Nations

The Mohawk, Abenaki, Huron-Wendat, Maliseet, Micmacs and Innu form the St. Lawrence First Nations. There are 18 Aboriginal communities belonging to these nations located along the St. Lawrence. Having inhabited and used the St. Lawrence shorelines and resources for centuries, they have acquired unique knowledge of the area. For these communities, the St. Lawrence, its resources and the uses they make of them, are an integral part of their traditional way of life, which underpins their identity and culture. Today, the St. Lawrence still occupies a privileged place in the activities and development of these communities.

Education and research

This sector, which includes school boards, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, helps enhance knowledge and culture through research and development in various social, economic, environmental or other areas. It integrates these advances in education and within the community and disseminates them locally, nationally, and internationally. Similarly, research and education stakeholders serve communities by sharing their expertise with partners from different communities, which spurs intellectual, scientific, cultural, technological and social innovation.

Non-profit organizations

Non-profit organizations such as the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#), [Nature Québec](#) and [Ducks Unlimited](#), work primarily to conserve natural environments. Other recreation and tourism organizations, such as the [Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs](#), the [Fédération québécoise du canot et du kayak](#) and the [Association maritime du Québec](#), focus on conducting activities on the St. Lawrence.

Concertation organizations and structures

The ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs is partnering with various organizations to implement integrated water resources management (IWRM) in Quebec. The organizations' mission, in the area for which they are responsible, is to promote cooperation among stakeholders involved in water resource management and use, and help them coordinate their actions. [Watershed organizations](#) (WOs) share the area covering the St. Lawrence tributaries, which is divided into 40 [integrated watershed management](#) areas. [Integrated Management of the St. Lawrence](#) (IMSL) is implemented through 12 [regional round tables](#) (RRTs) that share the 12 IMSL areas covering the entire St. Lawrence.

The WOs and RRTs contribute to the development, adoption, implementation and monitoring of a water master plan or an integrated regional management plan (IRMP) representing the community's interests and action priorities.

Note that [committees on areas of prime concern](#) (ZIP)—regional coordination and action mechanisms—are also present in the area. Their mandate is to bring together the main users of the St. Lawrence in their respective areas and help them work together to resolve local and regional issues affecting St. Lawrence ecosystems and their uses. In the context of Integrated Management of the St. Lawrence, because of their expertise, ZIP committees will be important partners in implementing RRTs and will be involved in their work.

Private sector

Operators or industries that use the St. Lawrence are stakeholders that work in areas such as shipping, commercial fishing, aquaculture, energy, tourism, agriculture and forestry. They use the St. Lawrence and its resources to generate economic activity.

As a result of their industrial or commercial activities, companies (factories, ports, shipping companies, marinas, commercial fishers and the cruise industry) can significantly impact access to the St. Lawrence. Because they own many properties along the St. Lawrence, for historical and technical reasons, companies have a strong influence on planning, developing and managing public access in certain areas.

As well, private companies provide some ferry services on the St. Lawrence, especially between Trois-Pistoles and Les Escoumins and between Rimouski and Forestville. Also, many private companies offer this type of service on the Ottawa River. These companies own their infrastructure.

References and links

This section presents the main references and links used to write this report. It is not a review of the literature on the subject but rather a starting point for those wishing to conduct further research on access to the St. Lawrence.

Previous sections also include some links, primarily the section describing stakeholders.

Access to the St. Lawrence

- [L'accès public au fleuve](#) (Stratégies Saint-Laurent) [French only]
- Jean-François Bibeault, « [L'accessibilité au fleuve Saint-Laurent : enjeux et perspectives pour une approche intégrée](#) », Vertigo, vol. 6, no 1.
- [Guide écologique du nautisme sur le Saint-Laurent](#) (Stratégies Saint-Laurent) [French only]
- [Trousse « Ma propre plage »](#) (Comités ZIP Ville-Marie et du Sud-de-l'Estuaire) [French only]
- [Mon fleuve et moi : le Saint-Laurent](#) (Fondation Monique-Fitz-Back pour le développement durable) [French only]
- [Québec Water Policy](#) (MDDEFP)
- [Public access map \(2011\) – St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011–2016](#)
- [Actes du Forum des collectivités actives tournées vers le Saint-Laurent](#) (Stratégies Saint-Laurent) [French only]
- [Public access directory \(2011\) – St. Lawrence Global Observatory](#)

Means of access to the St. Lawrence

- [Fishing Harbours](#) (DFO)
- [Public Port Fees](#) (TC)
- [Divestiture Program](#) (DFO)
- [Carte interactive « Allons pêcher »](#) (Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs) [French only]
- [Tides, Currents, and Water Levels](#) (Canadian Hydrographic Service)
- [Marine Weather](#) (EC)
- [St. Lawrence Water Trail](#)

Land-use planning

- [Schéma d'aménagement et de développement](#) (MAMROT) [French only]
- [Guide de la prise de décision en urbanisme](#) (MAMROT) [French only]
- [Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement](#) (Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal) [French only]

Harmonization of access to and conservation of areas of ecological, cultural or other significance

- [Reference tools for implementing St. Lawrence access projects \(Operational Statements\)](#) (DFO)
- [The Shore Primer](#) (DFO)
- [The Dock Primer](#) (DFO)
- [Guide d'élaboration d'un plan de conservation des milieux humides](#) (MDDEFP) [French only]
- [Guide écoresponsable des activités en plein air dans les zones importantes pour la conservation des oiseaux](#) (Nature Québec) [French only]
- [Leave No Trace Canada – Outdoor Ethics](#)
- Guide [La prise de décision en urbanisme – Outils de protection de l'environnement](#) (MAMROT) [French only]

Appendix A – Directory of Public Access Points to the St. Lawrence

Information source

The 2011 *Directory of Public Access Points to the St. Lawrence* contains information on 2,650 public access sites to the river from 46 sources previously published between 1989 and 2009, which were provided and confirmed by the 30 partners of the Shoreline Access Coordination Committee⁵. These access sites are located on the riverbank or within 500 m of the riverbank in the cities of Montréal, Québec and Trois-Rivières and 1 km from the riverbank in all other cases. The Directory data were verified by the ZIP committees and Stratégies Saint-Laurent in 2010 and 2011.

Warning

This directory does not describe all of the available public access sites to the St. Lawrence, only those kindly provided by the organizations that participated in the directory project..

Area under study

The *Directory* covers the entire St. Lawrence, from Cornwall to Blanc Sablon, including the Magdalen Islands and Anticosti Island, as well as the 11 priority tributaries of the 2005–2010 St. Lawrence Plan: the L'Assomption, Batiscan, Bonaventure, Chaudière, Jacques-Cartier, Outaouais, Richelieu, Saguenay, Saint-François, Saint-Maurice and Yamaska rivers. Public access sites were listed in the following Quebec administrative regions:

Tableau A1 – Nombre de sites d'accès publics par région administrative

Region	Number of sites	% of acces sites listed
North Shore	626	24
Gaspé – Magdalen Islands	544	20
Montréal	309	12
Montréal	243	9
Lower St. Lawrence	217	8
Chaudière-Appalaches	173	7
National Capital	173	7
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	73	3
Laurentides	61	2
Mauricie	58	2
Central Quebec	50	2
Lanaudière	49	2
Outaouais	39	1
Laval	27	1
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	8	1
Estrie ⁶	n/a	n/a
Northern Quebec ⁶	n/a	n/a
Total	2 650	100

⁵ List of 30 partners: Parks Canada Agency, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Port of Québec, Transport Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec, ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, ministère des Ressources naturelles du Québec, Transports Québec, Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal, Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs, Fédération québécoise du canot et du kayak, Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park, City of Montréal, Stratégies Saint-Laurent and the 14 ZIP committees (Alma-Jonquière, Baie des Chaleurs, Côte-Nord du Golfe, Des Seigneuries, Haut-Saint-Laurent, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Jacques-Cartier, Lac Saint-Pierre, Les Deux-Rives, Québec and Chaudière-Appalaches, Rive nord de l'estuaire, Saguenay, Sud-de-l'Estuaire and Ville-Marie).

Content overview

The public access sites that have been listed may sometimes provide several types of access to one site. For example, a shoreline park may provide access to swimming, a picnic area and water activities. In these cases, three public access sites are considered for this location. The *2011 Directory of Public Access Points to the St. Lawrence* contains a description of all uses and access points available at each site. This is why we identified 3,393 public access points and 4,003 uses at 2,650 public access sites. The types of access and uses listed are summarized in the following tables. It is evident in Table 2 that about 60% of the access types listed are boat launching and docking facilities and 30% are riverbanks or beaches where swimming may or may not be allowed. Table 3 indicates that 50% of the types of uses listed include lodging facilities or shelters for visitors and swimming accounts for only 9% of the uses listed in the various access sites.

Table A2 – Type of access site listed	Number of access sites	%
Dock, boat launch, marina (public, recreational / small craft harbour) safe harbour / emergency stop, port, seaplane base: Facilities located along the shore for berthing ships or boats.	1 537	58
Dock, boat launch, marina (public, recreational / small craft harbour) safe harbour / emergency stop, port, seaplane base: Facilities located along the shore for berthing ships or boats.	769	29
Fishing spot: Access sites designated as recreational fishing spots, such as shoreline fishing sites, shellfish beds and salmon rivers.	636	24
Shoreline park: Park located along or near a body of water or a watercourse.	318	12
Rest area: Vehicle pullout area located near a road providing access to the shore of a body of water or a watercourse.	80	3
Viewpoint: An elevated structure affording an unobstructed view of the landscape.	53	2
Total	3 393	

Table A3 – Type of use listed	Number of uses	%
Accommodation: Accommodations such as shelters, rest areas, campgrounds, outdoor recreation centres, tourist and recreational facilities.	1 325	50
Boating: Activity that includes pleasure boating, canoeing and kayaking.	1 246	47
Cycling and hiking: Access sites designated as bike paths, footpaths and shoreline walks.	636	24
Nature observation: Access sites designated for observing nature, marine mammals, birds, etc.	504	19
Swimming: Activity that includes being in water, going into the water for fun or to swim.	239	9
Swimming: Activity that includes being in water, going into the water for fun or to swim.	53	2
Total	4 003	

Available maps

The 2,650 public access sites and their 4,003 uses have been grouped and illustrated on 121 maps. The maps were produced using one of the following three scales, depending on the density of the access sites: 1 : 125 000, 1 : 63 000 or 1 : 20 000. Five index maps at a scale of 1 : 1 750 000 allow users to locate them. The sites are shown schematically in the main categories described above (access site or uses).

Maps of the *2011 Directory of Public Access Points to the St. Lawrence* will soon be available in PDF format on the 2011–2026 St. Lawrence Action Plan website. The *Directory* data will also be available for viewing on the St. Lawrence Global Observatory website.

6 The Estrie and Northern Quebec administrative regions are not part of the area under study, i.e. the area covered by the *St. Lawrence Plan – Phase IV*; (N/A means not applicable).