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Comité consultatif de l'environnement Kativik
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

KEAC Position Paper
concerning the Monts-Pyramides Park Project

November 18, 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Québec government has proposed the creation of a new park in Nunavik, to be named Monts-Pyramides (Ulittaniujalik) National Park. The future park, covering an area of 5,272 km², is situated near the Northern Village of Kangiqsulujjuaq, and will protect a representative sample of the natural region of the George River plateau. It also includes the Lac Tasirlaq, the Lac Qamanialuk, the lower Rivière Ford and the Rivière George valley.

The creation of this park is provided for in the *Partnership Agreement on Economic and Community Development in Nunavik* (Sanarrutik Agreement) signed on April 9, 2002, by the Québec government, the Makivik Corporation and the KRG, as well as in an agreement signed by the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (wildlife and parks) and the KRG in June 2002 concerning park creation studies and research. Under this latter agreement, the KRG undertook to complete fieldwork for the Monts-Pyramides (Ulittaniujalik) park project as well as to produce a related status report (September 2011) and environmental and social impact study (September 2011).

The KEAC would like to present the following observations and recommendations for the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks regarding the creation of Monts-Pyramides (Ulittaniujalik) National Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

- 1- Given that Inuit and Naskapi have exclusive hunting, fishing and trapping rights on the category II lands within the future park, it will be important to protect these rights. The KEAC recommends that the harmonization committee be formed upon the creation of the park in order for the Inuit and Naskapi to play a role and to participate in decisions concerning the promotion, development and coordination of traditional and visitor activities.
- 2- Given that wood cutting for the purposes of supporting the camp's activities can be authorized under article 6 of the Parks Act, the KEAC recommends the Pyramid Mountain Camp outfitters be allowed to continue to cut wood for camp purposes. Furthermore, it is important to maintain the conditions set out in section 6.3.1 of the JBNQA which indentifies the exclusive timber rights of the community of Kangiqsualujjuaq on a specific tract of land which overlaps with the park boundaries.
- 3- The KEAC supports the recommendation made by the Parc national des Monts-Pyramides working group to include the Rivière Ford, Lac Tasirlaq, Lac Qamanialuk and Helen Falls sectors within the park boundaries, since they contain distinct natural elements that are not represented elsewhere in the park. These include rare plants and birds, as well as scenic views and sites of geological

interest such as an active parabolic dune. Consequently, the KEAC supports the boundaries proposed by the MDDEP as presented in the provisional master plan.

- 4- Given that mineral exploration and especially mining activities next to the proposed boundaries of the park project and along the George River south of the future park boundaries could impact on the natural environment of the George River, the KEAC recommends that mineral claims granted in these areas not be renewed once they expire. Furthermore, in case of active mining in these sectors, the KEAC recommends that a monitoring committee be created to focus the attention of mining companies, governments and community representatives on the risks posed by these kinds of activities and on precautionary measures to ensure the integrity of the park and the protection of present wildlife species.

In conclusion, the KEAC feels that a future Monts-Pyramides (Ulittaniujalik) National Park will be a major and unique addition to the Québec network of parks and protected areas. The management framework proposed in the provisional master plan is flexible enough to protect Inuit and Naskapi hunting, fishing and trapping rights and to enable visitors to take full advantage of available eco-tourism activities. The contribution of the harmonization committee will be essential in this respect. Furthermore, a KRG advisory and monitoring committee could serve to minimize the risks posed to the natural integrity of the future park by nearby mineral exploration activities.