



# Fact sheet

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## Kouchibouguac National Park

### The Creation of Kouchibouguac National Park

- Parks Canada acknowledges that the past practice of expropriation in the establishment of national parks and national historic sites greatly affected many families and individuals. Expropriated families and communities remain an important part of the history of Kouchibouguac National Park, and this region of Canada.
- On October 13, 1969, Canada and the Government of New Brunswick entered into an agreement for the creation of Kouchibouguac National Park, which involved the expropriation of the lands of 228 households by the Province of New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Court of King's Bench has since determined that this expropriation was lawful, and an appeal to the New Brunswick Court of Appeal by Mr. Jackie Vautour was rejected.
- Between 1969-1972, expropriated families were provided compensation for their homes and property by the Province of New Brunswick. Eventually, all former residents vacated the national park with the exception of Mr. Vautour and his family. After Mr. Vautour's house was removed in 1976, the family returned to live in the park. After several years of unsuccessful negotiations with Mr. Vautour,

the Province of New Brunswick was under legal obligation to transfer the lands to the Federal Government and did so in 1978.

- Mr. Vautour was compensated by the Government of New Brunswick for the expropriated land in 1987. The compensation from New Brunswick included two parcels of land (totaling 110 acres) outside of Kouchibouguac National Park and a sum of \$228,000 (which would be equivalent to approximately \$480,000 in today's dollars) – an amount significantly more than the average amount received by the other expropriates.
- Despite accepting the money and the land and signing an agreement to relinquish his claim on the land, Mr. Vautour returned to occupy lands in the park.

## **Report on the Special Inquiry on Kouchibouguac National Park (La Forest – Roy Report)**

- Compensation and rights of former residents of Kouchibouguac National Park were addressed by the Province of New Brunswick, the courts, and the recommendations of the La Forest – Roy Special Inquiry Report on Kouchibouguac National Park (1981).
- The LaForest-Roy Special Commission Report (1981) acknowledged that although the land in the national park continues to belong to the government, Mr. John (Jackie) Vautour's presence could be allowed on the land in the national park on sufferance, provided he stayed within the law in other respects and did not use the site as a base for action against the park. Parks Canada accepted and followed the recommendations of the report. This provision applied to Mr. Vautour only and not to other members of the extended Vautour family.

## Claim of Indigenous Rights

- The courts have previously rejected claims by Jackie Vautour and his son, Roy, of Indigenous harvesting rights as Métis in Kouchibouguac National Park (Provincial Court of New Brunswick (2010). An appeal was rejected by the Court of King's Bench of New Brunswick (2015) and leave to appeal was refused by the New Brunswick Court of Appeal (2017). The courts determined that there is no historic rights-bearing Métis community in existence in the area of what is now Kouchibouguac National Park. Mr. Vautour made a request to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which was denied in 2017.
- The New Brunswick Court of King's Bench (2020) dismissed a claim by Vautour on behalf of himself and 98 families for Indigenous rights in and title to the park, citing previous court decisions. An appeal to the New Brunswick Court of Appeal (2021) was dismissed.
- The Vautours did not appeal the decision. The Vautour family and the 98 families currently have no court cases known to Parks Canada concerning this illegal occupation.
- There remains a claim by Stephen Augustine purportedly on behalf of the Mi'gmaq claiming Indigenous title to lands in Kouchibouguac National Park. Parks Canada will continue to follow normal court processes. It is Parks Canada's understanding that Mr. Augustine has filed / will file an amended statement of claim with the New Brunswick Court of King's Bench. This claim is not related to the Vautour family member's illegal occupation of Kouchibouguac National Park.
- On July 28, 2021, Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn Inc. issued a statement on behalf of the Chiefs, expressing concern that certain individuals are attempting to claim Indigenous rights on their territory as "Acadian-

Métis”. The Chiefs indicated that they would not support these individuals to claim their heritage or speak on behalf of the Mi’gmaq ([link to MTI media statement](#)). On March 25, 2022, the Chiefs once again issued a statement dismissing these claims ([link to MTI media statement](#)).

- On July 29, 2021, the Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB) issued their own statement in support of the MTI Chiefs in this matter ([link to SANB statement](#)).

## **Current Management of Kouchibouguac National Park**

- Kouchibouguac National Park values its longstanding relationships with the Mi’gmaq, Acadian groups and local communities. Parks Canada will continue to collaborate with all these groups on the protection of natural and cultural resources, economic development, and public outreach, cultural awareness and education.
- In 2021, the park’s management plan was updated through thorough engagement and consultation with Mi’gmaq and Acadian groups, local communities, visitors and those interested in Kouchibouguac National Park.
- A key objective of the new plan is to have former residents of Kouchibouguac National Park and their descendants help commemorate the history of the park and former villages. To accomplish this goal, the park will establish an advisory committee made up of former residents of the national park to advise the park management on how to promote the history of former villages.
- The new management plan also sets the objective of pursuing and improving its relationships with Mi’gmaq partners in a spirit of respect, collaboration and reconciliation. Memoranda of

Understanding are in place between Parks Canada and Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn Inc. (MTI), a group representing eight Mi'gmaq communities in New Brunswick, and Elsipogtog and Lno Minigog. These agreements facilitate collaboration with Indigenous partners for the advancement of common projects, especially in regard to (i) education and promotion, (ii) opportunities for economic development, and (iii) cultural and natural resource conservation.

## **Economic Impacts of Kouchibouguac National Park**

- Kouchibouguac National Park is operated year-round and employs 90 people, complemented by an additional 35 students during the summer season. The park generates an additional 22 full-time jobs indirectly. It is undeniably an important economic driver for Kent County, New Brunswick.
- In 2017, operations, visitors and infrastructure projects generated direct and indirect sales of more than \$26.3 million for the Kent County region and \$44.4 million for the province as a whole. These sales also had an impact on the annual gross domestic product, adding up to \$12.2 million for Kent County and \$19.2 million for the province.
- A total of 226,400 visitors came to the park during the 2019 visitor season (the last pre-COVID-19 season), representing an increase of 33% since 2016. In 2021, a total of 237,260 visitors came to the park which is an increase of another 5% on pre-pandemic 2019 numbers.

## **Canada National Parks Act**

- Our protected areas are unique places and require unique rules to protect them. Breaking the law in a National Park or National Historic

Site can result in consequences including evictions or tickets, or in more serious cases, court appearances and/or large fines.

**Related links:**

- [Canada National Parks Act](#)
- [National Parks General Regulations](#)
- [Kouchibouguac National Park Visitor Guidelines](#)

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