

Shedding Light on the Cree Vision of Assinica National Park

Gabrielle Côté

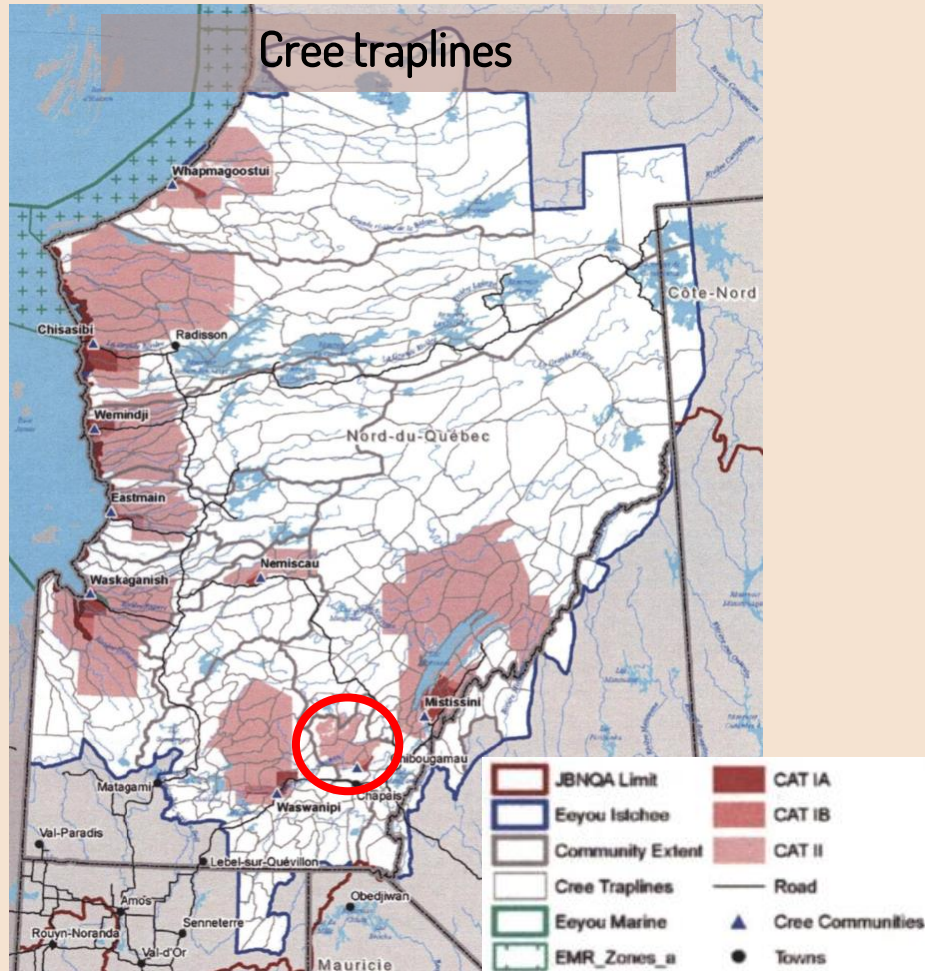
15 novembre 2023



Cercle des partenaires
Chaire de leadership en enseignement (cle)
en foresterie autochtone



Ouje-Bougoumou and Eeyou Istchee



The distinctive legal framework of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee

1975

James-Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)

New land regime in three categories (I, II et III)

Exclusive rights to hunt, fish, trap for the Crees by category – constitutional protection

Recognition of the trap territory system

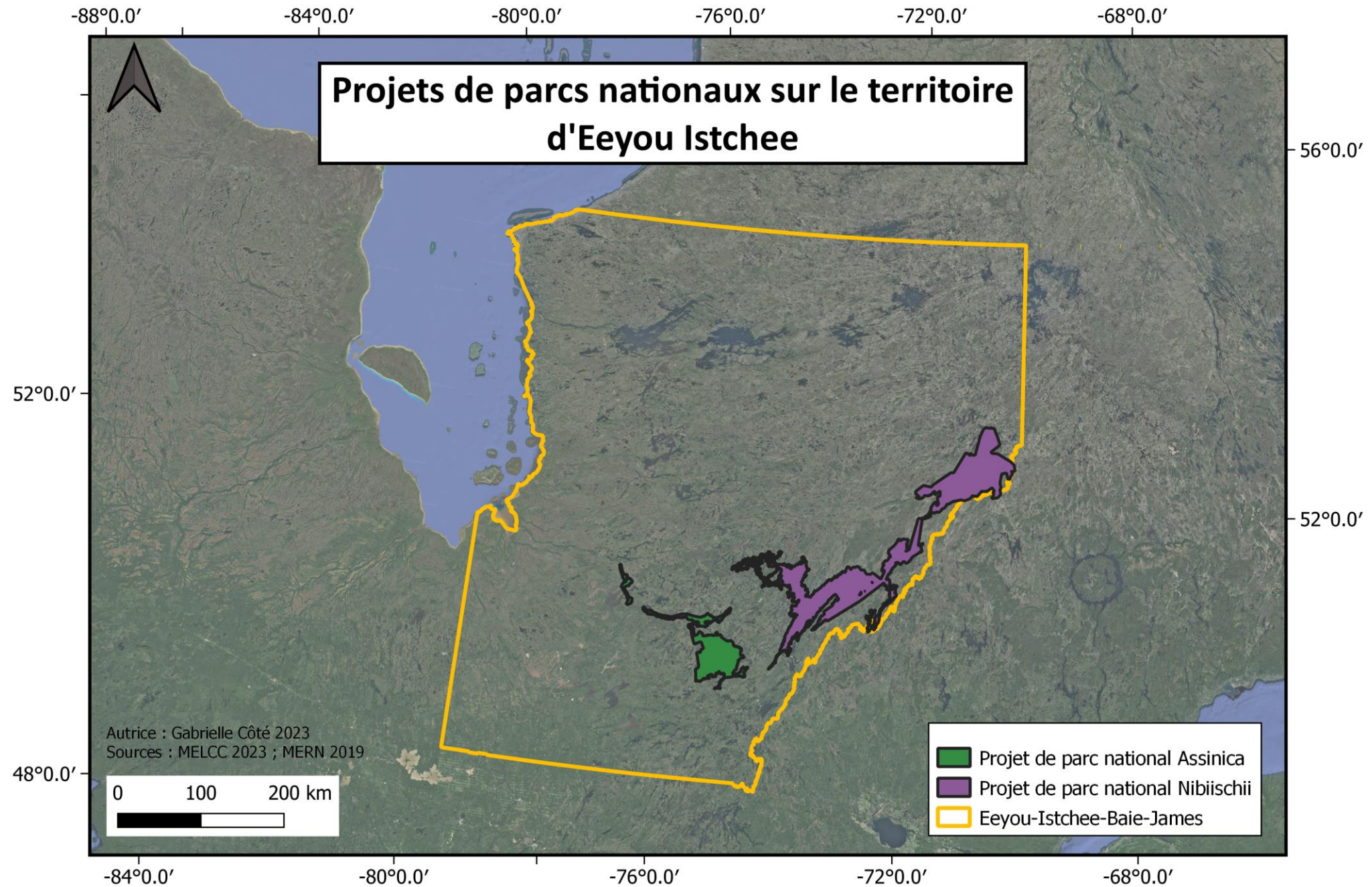
2002

Paix des Braves

Greater influence of tallymen in development decisions

The distinctive legal framework of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee

- Greater power over land-use planning and development decisions
- Establishment of several protected areas in Eeyou Istchee (23% of Eeyou Istchee vs. 16.7% for the whole province of Québec)
- Two Cree national park projects



National Parks in Quebec and in Canada

Dual mission of **conservation** and **valorization** of natural and cultural heritage

Quebec national parks act:

- 1) **Conserve** natural, cultural and landscape heritage
- 2) **Make these territories accessible** to the public for educational and recreational purposes





Research project objectives

Understand how to implement the **Cree vision** of a protected area in the context of the creation of the **Assinica National Park**

1

Context

2

Vision

3

Governance issues

Data collection summer 2022



8 week stay in Oujé-Bougoumou, working at the Department of Natural Resources



Collecting and reading historical and political documents



7 group interviews

The groups consisted of a tallyman and member(s) of his family

Results



Context of creation of the Assinica National Park project



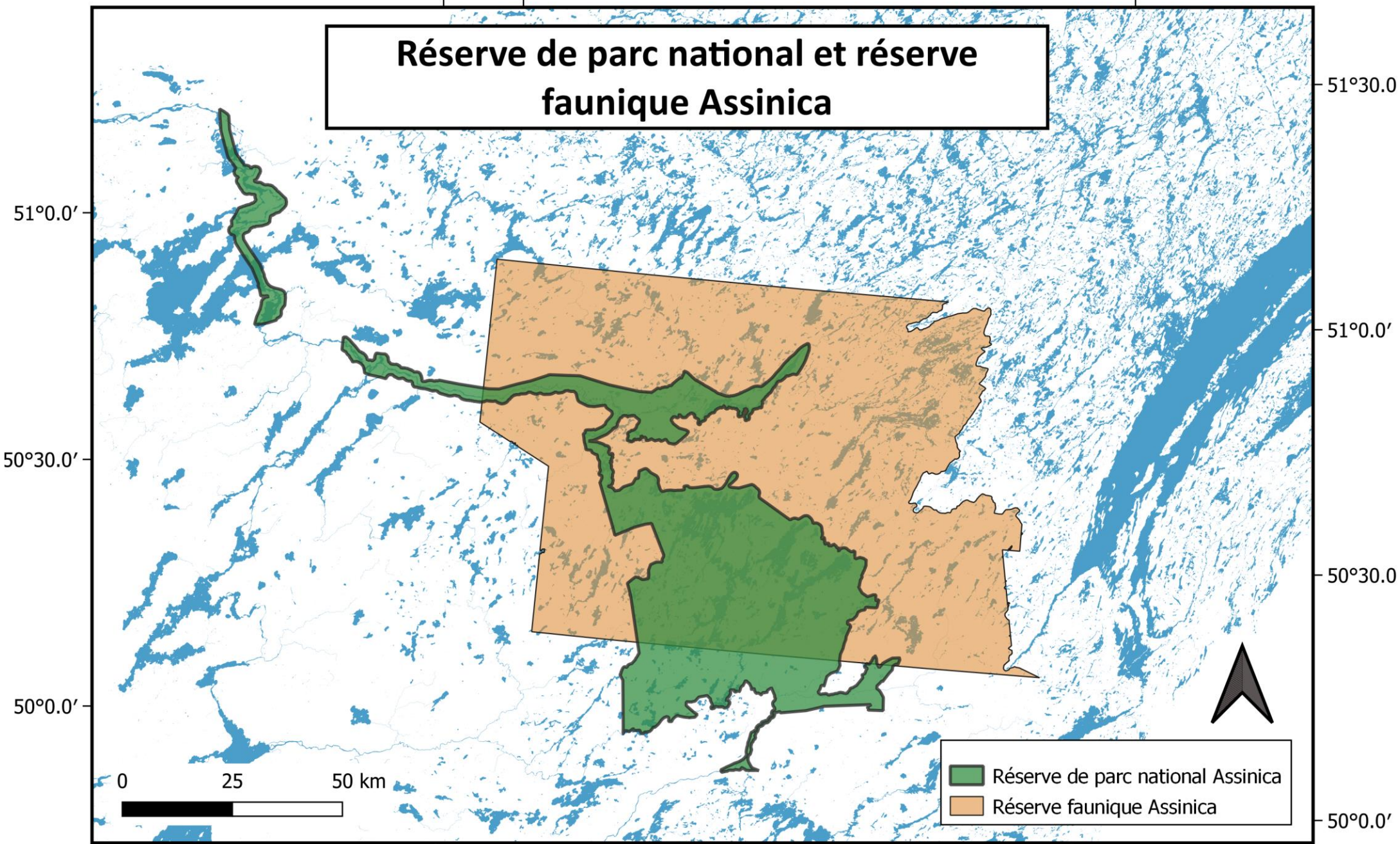
2002

Chief negociator
Abel Bosum works
to include the
creation of a **Cree
Heritage Park** in the
Paix des Braves

Wildlife
reserve

National
Park

Réserve de parc national et réserve faunique Assinica



Context of creation of the Assinica National Park project



2002

Chief negociator Abel Bosum works to include the creation of a **Cree Heritage Park** in the Paix des Braves

Réserve faunique

Parc national

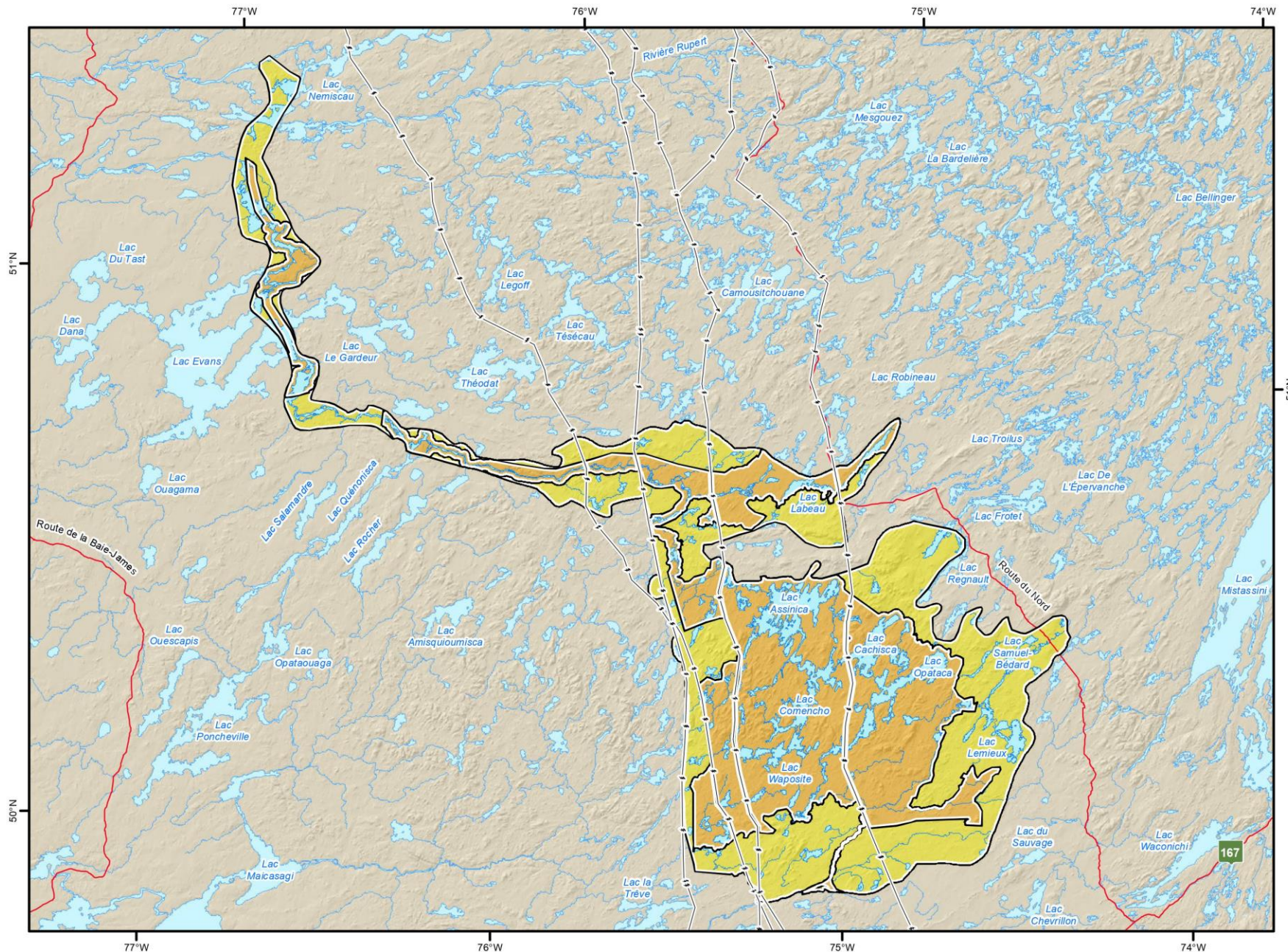
2011

Final Settlement Agreement—**immediate protection of 3193 km²** of land as Assinica Park Reserve

Delegation of management

Study area 6198 km²

(Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation, 2004; Éditeur officiel du Québec, 2002; Brunet et al., 2015)



Projet de parc national Assinica

- Réserve de parc national (3 193 km²)
- Territoire à l'étude (6 198 km²)

Métadonnées

Système de référence géodésique : Amérique du Nord 1983 (NAD 83)

Projection cartographique : Conique de Lambert



1/1 000 000

Source

BDTA Ressources naturelles Canada 2002
(1/1 000 000)

Réalisation

Production: Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs
Direction des parcs nationaux

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Context of creation of the Assinica National Park project



2002

Chief negociator
Abel Bosum works
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Paix des Braves

Réserve
faunique

Parc
national

2011

Entente finale de
règlement –
**Protection
immédiate de 3193
km²** de territoire en
tant que réserve de
parc national

Delegation of
management

Study
area 6198
km²

2023

Steps to begin
impact study



Vision – Importance of protecting the land

- Protecting the land and its resources
Forestry, mining – Park expansion
- Important species and their habitat
Hunting, trapping, fishing, Goose Break, Moose Break
- More surveillance and monitoring of activities



Vision - Strengthen Cree control of the land

- A way for the community to take charge of its own destiny
- Importance of tallyman's role
Power and recognition: auxiliary badge
- Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers Program



Vision For collaboration

- Cree knowledge to be understood and considered
- Involving communities in all decisions on an ongoing basis
- Information available for the community
- Focus on group meetings instead of individual

« He would like for everybody to work together to make it a success. Because the people making these plans they're not on the land, they don't see it. We see it. » O5



Gouvernance - Enjeux liés au processus de création du parc

- Very long process – since 2002
- Administrative gray area: several overlapping land-use statuses
Poor surveillance, uncontrolled use of the land
- A need for more information and consultation
- Desire for a Cree framework of protected areas to be put in place

Discussion elements



Actual governance structure




MELCCFP and the Quebec Parks Act

Harmonization committee
Ouje-Bougoumou, Assinica park director and regional stakeholders

Director of Assinica Park and tallymen
Park management and administration, activities and services

A new governance structure





Revising the Parks Act to bring it into line with the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Co-management mechanism to be included in the Quebec National Parks Policy
- Parks Canada has incorporated certain mechanisms into its legislation
 - Torngat Mountains Co-Management Committee
 - Consultation mechanisms and inclusion of indigenous peoples perspectives in management plans

What comes out of this research

- Project resulting from the use of an agreement as leverage
- Community appropriation of the the national park concept
- A context of creation that can serve as a reference for other indigenous communities in Quebec and Canada for their respective projects
- Highlights the need to review conservation policies with indigenous communities

Project team

Jean-Michel Beaudoin – Research Project Director

Louis Bélanger – Research Project Co-director

Benny Blacksmith – Assinica Park Manager

Arthur Bosum – OBCN Director of Natural Resources

Meegwetch to all partners



Cercle des partenaires

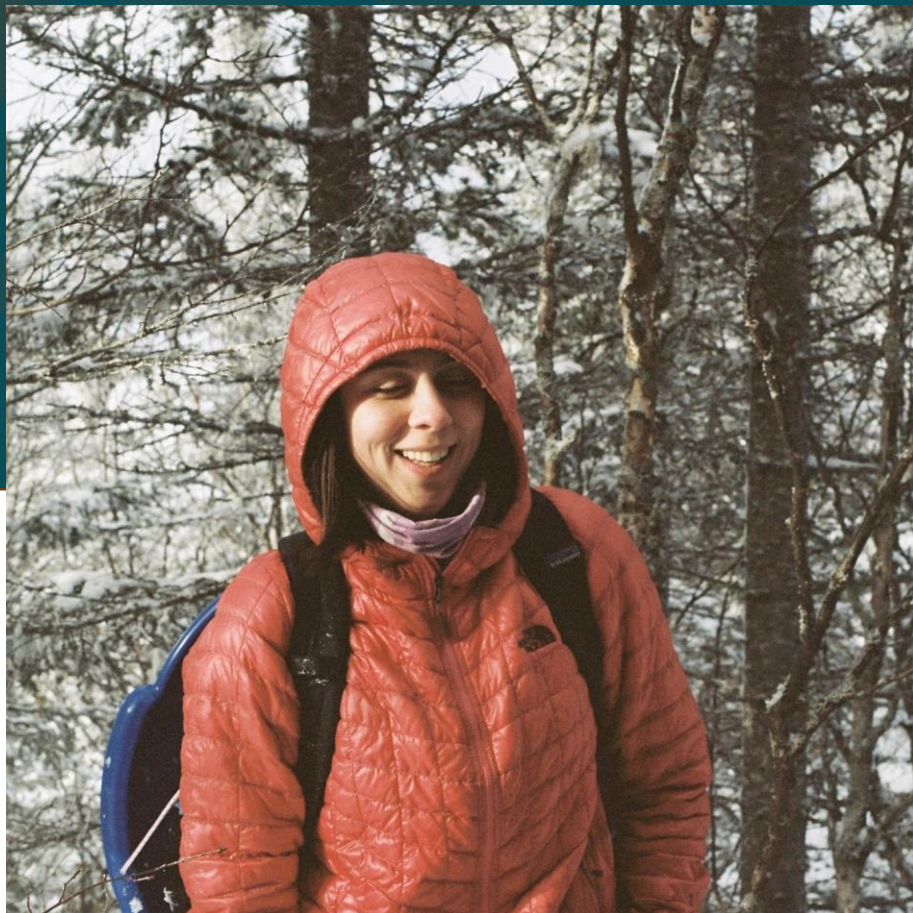
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**Thank you!
Meegwetch!**

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