

A healthy coexistence with First Nations

The National Assembly officially recognized 11 Indigenous nations in Québec. Section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982, provides that “The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed”. These rights may relate to the practice of traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering.

Different nations and practices coexist on public lands. To foster good coexistence and a harmonious relationship, the MRNF encourages good communication between all land users. The MRNF reiterates that public lands must remain accessible to all.

Information on Indigenous communities in Québec is available on the website of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit and on Québec.ca.

Requirement to report archaeological finds

The banks of bodies of water may contain traces of past human presence. Under section 74 of the Cultural Heritage Act, any discovery of archaeological property must be reported to the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. For more information, refer to Québec.ca/Déclarer une découverte archéologique (in French only).



To report a threat to persons or property, call 911. If the territory is not served by this service, contact the Sûreté du Québec at 310-4141. To report acts against wildlife or habitat, contact SOS Braconnage at 1-800-463-2191.

To obtain approval to build a construction in a water environment, contact the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs, your RCM or the municipality, depending on the nature and area of the construction.



Vacationing on *public land*: what you need to know

Leased lot

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MRNF) or one of the delegated regional county municipalities (RCM)¹ has granted you a private vacation lot lease.

This vacation lot lease confers a leasing right on public land for:

- > building a dwelling (cottage) and its outbuildings, such as a garage, shed, etc.;
- > building an access road to the dwelling on the leased lot. The right-of-way of this road may not exceed 6 m in width;
- > erecting a gate on the access road to the dwelling on the leased lot. For a leased lot adjacent to a public road, erect the gate at least 5 m from the road;
- > developing on the leased lot a trail or stairway not exceeding 1 m wide to allow access to the shore and a waterway not exceeding 5 m wide to allow the launching of a boat, constructed in a manner to prevent erosion.

The lessee must comply with the following conditions:

- > maintain a strip of land 20 m deep in front of the body or stream of water and 10 m deep from the lateral lines and rear line of the leased lot in its natural state. The front strip will be 10 m deep for land not adjacent to the body or stream of water. Trees and shrubs can be pruned to provide visual entry into the body or stream of water;

- > respect the boundaries of the leased lot and not extend outside (deforestation, storage of materials, vehicles, boats, etc.);
- > obtain all required permits and authorizations from the appropriate authorities before any work on or off the lot;
- > meet development standards for the leased lot;
- > comply with municipal, provincial and federal laws and regulations;
- > pay the lot's annual rent and any other applicable fees or taxes.

Outside the boundaries of the leased lot, no person shall:

- > permanently develop or occupy public land without holding an occupation right;
- > develop permanent infrastructure ancillary to hunting (blind, camp, signage);
- > block or restrict access to or traffic on public lands, including access roads and water access;
- > harvest firewood for domestic or commercial purposes without a permit.

¹ The term “RCM” also refers to cities and agglomerations with certain RCM competencies.

Public lands are meant for sharing

Public lands are a collective heritage that belongs to all Quebecers. The Gouvernement du Québec manages the development of public lands and natural resources by granting citizens and businesses the rights to carry out various projects, including those related to public forest management and mining development.

Public lands are also frequented by the population for recreational activities, such as vacationing, hunting, and fishing, as well as by First Nations and Inuit for traditional activities.

It is possible that forestry, mining or other activities could be carried out in the vicinity of the leased lot. The MRNF wishes to inform you of the importance of maintaining harmonious coexistence and ethical behaviour towards all public land users.

The MRNF and delegated RCMs encourage people to use public lands in a respectful manner by:

- > remaining courteous to other users and avoiding appropriating land beyond the limits of their lease;
- > ensuring compliance with the rights, permits and authorizations granted under applicable legislation;
- > demonstrating environmentally responsible behaviour in the management of waste materials by disposing of them in an authorized place designated for that purpose.

The vacation lot lease does not provide exclusivity for activities in the territory outside of the leased lot. No person shall claim ownership of hunting, fishing, trapping or gathering territories.

Users are responsible for managing waste and wastewater, ensuring the drinking water supply, and developing and maintaining multi-purpose roads and access to public land. They are not the responsibility of the local municipality, the RCM or the MRNF.

Lessees are encouraged to update their contact information with their delegated RCM on a regular basis. This data is important, particularly for events that require emergency measures (e.g., forest fires).

For information on your lease and the use of public lands, visit Quebec.ca or contact your delegated RCM.

Transfer of a lease for private vacationing purposes

In order to transfer a lease for private vacationing purposes, the lessee must meet the conditions set out in the Regulation respecting the sale, lease and granting of immovable rights on lands in the domain of the State.

Any transfer may be refused if the lessee fails to fulfill the purposes and obligations set out in the lease. He or she will have to remedy the situation before making the transfer.

The new lease is issued under the terms and conditions in effect at the time of its granting, resulting in a revised rent charge. When the lease is renewed annually, rent increases are limited to changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Multi-purpose roads

The MRNF invites lessees to come together to agree on road development and maintenance in order to share costs and avoid duplication.

Multi-purpose roads are accessible to all at all times, in accordance with the applicable traffic conditions.

Some multi-purpose roads may be subject to an authorization by a federated user club to operate an off-road vehicle trail. Where applicable, federated user clubs are permitted to collect payment for off-road vehicle access rights.

In controlled harvesting areas (ZEC), access, fishing and hunting fees are charged. It is important to consult with the relevant management organizations for regulations governing access to land and recreational activities, such as camping, hunting, and fishing.

To report an illegal occupation, illegal dump or contaminated site on public lands, visit Quebec.ca or contact your delegated RCM.

To obtain the required permits for construction on your leased lot regarding the dwelling, outbuildings, sanitary facilities and water intakes, contact your delegated RCM or municipality, depending on where you pay your tax notice.

To obtain a forest management permit or information on road construction, deforestation and firewood harvesting, contact the MRNF management unit in your area.

