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1 800 665-6527 www.sepaq.com

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Québec invests \$2.9 M into Parc national du Mont-Mégantic

Parc national du Mont-Mégantic - Today, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Line Beauchamp, and Johanne Gonthier, Member of Parliament for Mégantic-Compton, announced investments of \$2.9 M for Parc national du Mont-Mégantic. "I am pleased to announce major investments that will support Sépaq in its conservation and education mission, but also in its equally important role as a driving economic and tourism force in the regions", affirmed Ms. Beauchamp. For example, in 2007 Parc national du Mont-Mégantic generated an estimated \$10.1 M in economic spin-offs. Located in the heart of the first International Dark Sky Reserve, Parc national du Mont-Mégantic holds a special position in the Parks Québec network. This park is in fact a unique scientific attraction in Québec (Astronomy Observatory, Popular Observatory, ASTROLab, Cosmolab, etc.) and an increasingly sought after outdoor destination all year round. Sépaq is now preparing to enhance the Ruisseau-de-la-Montagne sector with the addition of outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. These activities will also complement those available in the Observatory area.

Consequently, the Ruisseau-de-la-Montagne sector will soon have a Visitors Centre, a 1.1 km access road linking Chemin de Franceville to the park's new service area, a campground, and a network of hiking trails featuring the summits of Mont Mégantic and Pain de sucre, Crête de Franceville, plus the banks of Ruisseau de la Montagne, Étangs de castors and the former syenite quarry.

Sépaq's development of the Ruisseau-de-la-Montagne sector is part of a project that aims to diversify the economy of MRC du Haut-Saint-François by making Rivière au Saumon a tourist attraction. This area includes the Ruisseau-de-la-Montagne sector and the municipalities of Hampden and Scotstown. "These large investments prove that we can combine sustainable development and economic development, that it is possible to find the balance. I am happy that such an investment can benefit the citizens and business people of Mégantic-Compton county", emphasized MP Johanne Gonthier.

These investments come from a global budgetary envelope of \$55 M that was allocated to Sépaq in the Québec government's last budget. This money will be used mostly to develop the national parks, preserve natural environments, and update Sépaq's infrastructures. Spread out over four years, the work will create 297 jobs, 224 of which are direct jobs. "Here once again, are concrete actions the Québec government is taking to contribute to the economic growth of the 16 regions in which Sépaq is active. This is also a significant testimony to the importance the government places on enhancing Québec's natural, historical, and wildlife heritage", concluded Minister Beauchamp.