

## 4.5 Parks and Nature Reserves

Numerous parks line the waters of the Ottawa River, with the goals of conservation, education and recreation. Parks and nature reserves represent managed areas in which recreation is promoted sustainably. In Quebec, 3 provincial parks (Quebec National Parks) exist along the Ottawa River, as well as one major nature reserve and several ZECs (zone d'exploitation contrôlée, or fishing, hunting and recreation reserve). Ontario runs 7 provincial parks and has 3 non-operating provincial parks along the Ottawa River. Some of Ontario and Quebec's most important parks in terms of recreational use are located along the river, including La Réserve Faunique la Vérendrye and Algonquin Provincial Park. For a more complete list and description of each park and reserve, including their conservation roles, please refer to Chapter 3.8: Conservation Along the Ottawa River.

### 4.5.1 Provincial Parks

Parc national d'Oka features interpretation services, cross-country ski trails, a skating rink, a 7 kilometre white sand beach, a riding stable, and camping facilities (Tourisme Québec: "Outaouais"). Oka's 60-nest heron colony and wood duck nesting grounds make it a popular destination for bird watchers. Four Romanesque oratories and three chapels built around 1740 are located within the park (SÉPAQ: "Oka"). Parc National de Plaisance offers various opportunities for recreation, including numerous walking and biking trails, canoeing and kayaking, a boat ramp and campgrounds. Fishing and berry picking are popular within the park (SÉPAQ: "Plaisance"). Parc national d'Aigüebelle features unique geological formations, including ancient lava flows, traces of the passage of glaciers, faultlines and kettles. Within the park, visitors will find a 64 metre high suspended bridge, hundreds of beaver dams, many lakes for canoeing and sea kayaking, biking, hiking and ski trails. Snowshoeing and fishing are also possible in the park (SÉPAQ: "Aigüebelle").

Voyageur Provincial Park, located on the Ontario shore, has extensive campground facilities. Fitzroy Provincial Park contains towering, 100-year old White Pine, serving as a reminder of what originally drew the lumbermen into the Ottawa Valley (Ontario Parks: "Fitzroy"). Bonnechere Provincial Park offers canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, swimming, cross-country skiing and interpretive programs (Friends of Bonnechere Parks: "Bonnechere Provincial Park").

Ontario's oldest and best-known park is contained mostly within the Ottawa River basin. Algonquin Provincial Park's 7,725 square kilometres of forests, lakes and rivers offer unparalleled recreational opportunities for backcountry camping, canoeing, hiking and cross-country skiing, as well as less remote day trips. The park's rich human history centres around the timber and lumber era, when the Algonquin highlands served as a source of wood to be floated down to the Ottawa River. The park was established in 1893 as a wildlife sanctuary by members of the lumber industry who realized that unmanaged logging and the spread of agriculture threatened the sustainability of the forest. Tom Thomson and The Group of Seven "discovered" the park's landscapes through their paintings, and were followed by thousands of recreationalists in search of a wilderness experience (Friends of Algonquin Park).

The Ottawa River Provincial Park is a non-operating Ontario waterway park featuring untouched stretches of shoreline as well as spectacular white water. There are no visitor facilities. Wilderness canoeing, kayaking, trekking and whitewater rafting are the primary recreational activities in the Park (Ontario Parks: "Ottawa River"). Westmeath Provincial Park is another Ontario natural park without

visitor facilities in the park, but offering opportunities for hiking, boating, swimming and nature appreciation (Ontario Parks: “Westmeath”).

Driftwood Provincial Park offers camping with spectacular views of the Ottawa River and Laurentian Hills. Swimming, hiking and canoeing as well as fishing for Walleye, Northern Pike and Smallmouth Bass are available in the Ottawa River. The Dumoine River enters the Ottawa directly across from the park and is known for its excellent fishing (Ontario Parks: “Driftwood”). Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park covers natural environment along the eastern part of the Mattawa River, a Canadian Heritage River. The park features a replica birchbark freighter in the heritage centre. Shooting rapids, hiking, camping and interpretive trails are some of the recreational activities available in the park (Ontario Parks: “Samuel de Champlain”). Kap-Kig-Iwan Provincial Park is a day-use only Ontario park located northwest of Lake Temiskaming near Englehart. The park includes 325 hectares of land and features the Englehart River Valley, an excellent opportunity for observing flora, fauna and geological features. Scenic waterfalls and rapids make hiking a popular activity in the park, as are birdwatching and spring fishing (Town of Englehart: “Kap Kig Iwan”).

#### 4.5.2 Nature and Recreation Reserves

The 13 615 square kilometres protected by the La Vérendrye Faunic Reserve are managed by the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SEPAQ). Located at the large reservoirs found on the Upper Ottawa River (including Dozois and Cabonga), the reserve offers an extensive lake and river system making it particularly popular for fishing and canoe camping. There is easy highway access to this reserve (SEPAQ: “La Vérendrye”, Québec Vacances).

The Gatineau Park, located in Gatineau, Quebec, is a nature reserve managed by the National Capital Commission (NCC). Some 237 bird species including the Pileated Woodpecker and Common Loon draw birdwatchers to the park (NCC: “Gatineau Park”). The Gatineau Park overlooks the Ottawa River, and contains hundreds of kilometres of trails renowned for cross-country and back-country skiing as well as hiking and cycling. Swimming, camping, snowshoeing and downhill skiing are also available.

Figure 4.13 Pink Lake, Gatineau Park



Source: NCC

ZEC Capitachouane offers hunting, fishing and gathering, as well as boat ramps and nearby services (Hydro Québec: Bassin supérieur 5-2). ZEC Kipawa also offers hunting, fishing and gathering, as well as 5 canoe-camping loops and 2 hiking trails. A waterfall, traces of the log drive, two Aboriginal sites and exceptional geological formations are present within this ZEC, which also has nearby services, outfitters and campsites (Hydro Québec: Bassin supérieur 5-2). ZEC Festubert offers hunting, fishing and gathering, with 3 boat ramps and basic services for visitors (Hydro Québec: Bassin supérieur 5-2). The ZECs bordering the Ottawa River between Petawawa and Mattawa have no services but offer almost limitless opportunities for fishing, hunting and wilderness recreation.

### 4.5.3 Other Examples of Parks and Recreation Areas

- Oméga Park: This 607 hectare animal park features animals in their natural habitat. Located near Montebello, Quebec.
- PPJ Cycloparc: This regional park and cycling corridor is located along converted railtracks between Waltham and Quyon, and around Allumette Island. It is used for snowmobiling in winter.
- Parc régional du Long-Sault: Located at Saint-André-Est (Grenville), this park features interpretation of the Long-Sault canal and the logging industry.
- Gillies Grove: Located in Arnprior, Ontario, bordering the Ottawa River, this stand of old-growth forest has public trails and nature appreciation opportunities.
- Enchanted Gardens: Located east of Beachburg, these privately-owned thematic gardens are open to the public.
- Petawawa Terrace Park and Nature Reserve covers an area of 217 hectares. The Park contains an extensive trail system through the forest, with interpretation highlighting various species at risk and common species present in the area. The trails are used for cross-country skiing in the winter.