ANTRE DU LIÈVRE AND THE HISTORY OF THE

MISTASSINS

OVERVIEW OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND
PRESENTATION OF ZONES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST

REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE
SOCIÉTÉ DE LA FAUNE ET DES PARC DU QUÉBEC
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ALBANEL-TÉMISCAMIE-OTISH PARK PROJECT

Prepared by:
David Denton, Cree Regional Authority
and
Jean-Yves Pintal, Consulting Archaeologist

JULY 2002
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Preparation of report
INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared within the framework of an initiative taken by the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (Fapaq) to create a new provincial conservation park encompassing the Otish Mountains, the Témiscamie River and lakes Mistassini and Albanel (Figure 1). The various parties involved in the initiative believed it was necessary to focus not only on environmental considerations, which are essential to defining parks, but also on the area's rich archaeological and cultural heritage. Fapaq therefore mandated the Cree Regional Authority to prepare an overview of archaeological knowledge about the region. It was also agreed that the overview would discuss the main themes and cultural attractions likely to be presented to the public within the future park.

The present report follows from a study prepared in 1993, which provided a preliminary overview of knowledge about the region's archaeological resources. Since then, archaeological data have continued to be gathered, mainly through six archaeological research programs (1995-2000) conducted in this area as part of the Mistissini Archaeology Project. These programs targeted zones where little or no survey work had been done prior to that time. Extensive excavation of three sites culminated in the first radiocarbon dates and osteological analyses for the region. It also produced a wealth of information that made it possible to define a chronological and occupational framework for the area, particularly with respect to Late Amerindian Prehistory and the Historic period (2000 B.P. to 1900 A.D.).

Recently, researchers located collections amassed by Edward S. Rogers, a pioneer in the archaeology of this region, who surveyed the area by canoe in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These collections, housed in the R.S. Peabody Museum in Andover, Massachusetts, had thus far undergone only summary analyses, whose results had been published only in part.

Chapter 1 of this report describes the mandate entrusted to the Cree Regional Authority by Fapaq, as well as the methodology adopted to meet the objectives set for the study. Chapter 2 presents a brief history of archaeological research in the area. Chapter 3 presents the results, to date, of the Mistissini

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2 B.P. means, by convention, before present, or prior to 1950.
Figure 1: Location of study area (MRN, *Le relief du Québec*, 2001)
Archaeology Project. The presentation of these results is organised in relation to seven principal themes that have guided research and which ultimately help structure public presentation of archaeological information within the context of the proposed conservation park. Chapter 4 also presents the results of the Mistissini Archaeology Project, adopting a geographic rather than a thematic approach. This chapter presents the principal zones of archaeological and historical interest that have come out of the archaeological research, to date. These zones could also play a role in the eventual public interpretation, with respect to the various research themes proposed. These zones are also areas in which there are major concentrations of archaeological sites: the long-term protection of these sites must be considered in relation to the likely increased numbers of visitors and the construction of any camping areas or other facilities. Chapter 5 contains the conclusions of this report, especially with respect to the management of the archaeological resources and the interest of continued archaeological research.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the following documents have been presented separately in relation to the present mandate:

1. A detailed catalogue (print-out and electronic copy on Excel spreadsheet) of the Rogers collection, prepared by Jean-Yves Pintal in the course of his analysis of the collection.
2. GIS database in ArcView 3.2 format of the catalogue of the Rogers collection and all known archaeological sites within the borders of the proposed conservation park and surrounding areas.
1 MANDATE

Our mandate, as described in the research proposal submitted to Fapaq, is as follows:

The main goal of this project is to prepare an exhaustive overview of archaeological knowledge about the study area, establish a chronological framework and paint a portrait of past occupation in the region using currently available archaeological data. This overview will be based on an examination of the results of previous research as well as the results of the Mistissini Archaeology Project. [Translation]

During the project, tools for managing archaeological resources will be designed and recommendations made on the public interpretation and presentation of these resources. Recommendations will also be framed on research that might be undertaken to fill the main gaps in our current knowledge.

1.1 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the project revolves around the creation of a database for all sites in the area in order to make available all pertinent information on the sites and their location. This involves:

- compiling and presenting the data in the form of a GIS database using the ArcView software program, a task to be completed by Laura-Lee Bolger, as part of a Laval University geography class project.
- analysing the archaeological collections from the study area, including those amassed by Rogers (in the late 1940s and early 1950s), Martijn (in 1963) and the Mistissini Archaeology Project (in 1995-2000).
- using comparative analysis and other contextual information to revise the chronological framework defined by Martijn and paint a portrait of human history in the area; and taking steps to identify the limits of our knowledge and the main gaps in available data.
- focusing attention on sites or geographic zones that yield particularly interesting archaeological data and might be of considerable importance in interpreting human history within the proposed park; preparing a summary of our current knowledge about trading post sites and travel routes, as
well as routes used by early European visitors to reach the interior; and suggesting possible approaches for interpreting archaeological data within the proposed park.

- Lastly, making recommendations on a research program for filling the main gaps in our knowledge about the region's archaeological resources.
2.1 The first archaeological surveys: 1947 to 1950

Edward S. Rogers and Murray H. Rogers headed the first research efforts in the region in 1947 (Rogers and Rogers 1948). They chose the Gouin Reservoir as the point of departure for their expedition, which they conducted by canoe. They spent the better part of their days paddling and exploring the eroded shores of lakes and rivers for traces of former aboriginal occupation. They gradually made their way to lakes Obatagamau, Chibougamau and Waconichi, and eventually reached Lake Mistassini. They followed the eastern shore of the lake up to the outlet of Lake Albanel and then canoed a few dozen kilometres up the Témiscamie River. It was during this expedition that the Colline Blanche was first recognised archaeologically.

The following year, Edward and Murray Rogers embarked on a survey, following approximately the same route as before, but exploring the Tetepisca River and Lake Tournemine as well (Rogers and Rogers 1950). Lastly, in 1950, Edward S. Rogers and Roger A. Bradley organised another expedition between Senneterre and Lake Saint-Jean via the Chibougamau River (Rogers and Bradley 1953). They stopped briefly at the southern end of Lake Mistassini in an effort to locate a source of a lithic raw material other than Mistassini quartzite.

As mentioned above, Rogers' archaeological work consisted mainly in collecting artifacts exposed on beaches by erosion. He also tested some sites in order to associate, where possible, the archaeological material he had recovered near the shoreline with specific soil layers in back of the shore. However, he does not seem to have done systematic surveys or intensive excavations in wooded areas behind beaches.

Around 100 new archaeological sites were located in the course of Rogers' work (Figure 3). He not only was the first to demonstrate the archaeological interest of the region, but also put together a very large collection of artifacts. Rogers, as well as Johnson (1948), did preliminary analyses of the collection and identified a number of major tool categories. However, since knowledge of Quebec's prehistory was
still in its infancy at the time and these researchers studied only part of the collection, it eventually became apparent that this material needed to be reexamined.

Figure 2: Archaeological sites recorded by Rogers and Martijn in the Mistissini area.

The collection was studied anew in the course of the Mistassini Archaeology Project. It is quite surprising to note that the members of Rogers’ expeditions managed to collect nearly 2,000 artifacts weighing a total of roughly 85 kg even though they travelled solely by canoe. However, though the collection is impressive, it is very hard to organise according to a precise chronological framework owing to a lack of radiocarbon dates and the very limited number of stratigraphic data and diagnostic objects available. Nevertheless, the study undertaken during this project identified several assemblages
or artifacts that illustrate the area's chronological sequence. It also highlighted certain sites that should be reevaluated because of the unusual material they contain.

### 2.2 Surveys and excavations by Charles A. Martijn - 1963

In 1963, archaeologist Charles A. Martijn led one of the first multidisciplinary archaeological research projects in Quebec, along the lower Témiscamie River. One of the goals of the project was to collect enough artifacts to establish a cultural and chronological sequence for human occupation in the area. During the project, 6 sites were partially excavated, and some 50 new sites discovered through surveys. Martijn's work, like that of Rogers, underscored the importance of the Témiscamie River and the Colline Blanche in regard to the area's prehistory. It also resulted in the recovery of a large number of artifacts, whose in-depth study led to the identification of lithic assemblages specific to the region, and in turn made it possible to define the “Wenopsk” archaeological complex.³ This complex was assigned to the Shield Archaic⁴ (Martijn and Rogers 1969: 320) and, according to Martijn, could be subdivided into four phases associated with the following artifact types:

**Phase A:** lanceolate, shallow-side-notched projectile points; chopping tools; blades; endscrapers; pointed large ovoid bifaces; crooked-end knives; various other types of knives; burinated implements; single-edge sidescrapers; and ulu-like implements.

**Phase B:** “skewed-stem”, shallow-notched or deeply notched projectile points; a large variety of endscrapers; burinated tools; pointed large ovoid bifaces; and triangular knives.

**Phase C:** lanceolate, leaf-shaped and deeply side-notched projectile points; endscrapers; notched flakes; choppers; “wedge-like” cores; various types of knives; ulu-like implements; and single-edge sidescrapers.

³ An archaeological complex is defined on the basis of a group of sites spread over a limited area and containing similar artifacts.

⁴ The concept of Shield Archaic encompasses a large number of archaeological sites spread throughout the Canadian Shield and covers a very long time frame, i.e. 7000 B.P. to the Historic period (Wright 1972). Even though it recognises that technological assemblages evolve over time, it is based on the principle of cultural uniformity, which does not seem to take into account all the variability observed in the archaeological assemblages uncovered since the concept was first defined. Archaeologists now use this concept with more discretion than they did before.
Phase D: small, stemmed, lanceolate projectile points; adzes; blades; broad ovoid knives; and ulu-like implements.

These phases fit into a relative chronological framework for Quebec's Middle North (Figure 6). The studies conducted by Martijn and Rogers have had an impact far beyond the boundaries of Quebec. Their results have been cited by Canadian and American researchers attempting to reconstruct the prehistory of Canada's subarctic (Wright 1972; Fitzhugh 1972). Martijn and Rogers' work also led to the classification of the Colline Blanche as cultural property, making this steep-sided outcrop, from which Mistassini quartzite was extracted, the first prehistoric archaeological site to receive this designation in Quebec.

Even though the pioneering work of Martijn and Rogers rapidly highlighted the importance of the Lake Mistassini region, research in this area came to a virtual standstill in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, only a few surveys or projects connected with impact studies were carried out (Archéotec 1983, Loring 1976, Pintal 1994).
A new research project was set up in the region in 1995. Sponsored by the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Cree Regional Authority, the project was designed to enhance our understanding of Mistissini's rich aboriginal heritage, for the benefit of local people and visitors alike. From the outset, it was decided that survey and excavation teams would consist almost entirely of people from the community, since most had ties to the hunting grounds where the work was to be carried out.

During the first phase of the project, archaeological surveys were conducted in the study area to explore the wooded areas in back of the eroded banks and beaches examined by Rogers and Martijn (Rogers and Rogers 1948, Rogers and Rogers 1950, Rogers and Bradley 1953, Martijn and Rogers 1969). The goal of these surveys was to find *in situ* features and, if possible, traces of domestic occupation. Particular attention was paid to zones with archaeological potential, likely to yield sites dating from the Early Historic period (Denton 1997).

Prior to the implementation of the research project, most of the archaeological sites known in the region had been identified through surface finds of tools and flakes on eroded banks and beaches. These sites, as well as those that had been tested or excavated in part, pointed to the presence of numerous lithic workshops in the area, but produced very little evidence of habitation.

In 1995, the survey work concentrated on two zones: 1) the lower Témiscamie River (from the confluence with the Métaweshish River to the mouth, where it flows into Lake Albanel, and 2) the area on both sides of the *Uupiichuun* Portage between lakes Albanel and Mistassini. In 1996, the survey work was carried out on the western side of Mistassini Lake, near the discharge into the Rupert River, and in a few adjacent areas of the river downstream from the output (Denton 1997, Figure 3).
As part of the background work related to this project, a summary of our knowledge of the Colline Blanche, and of the use and distribution of quartzite from the Colline Blanche was prepared (Denton 1998). Another background paper focused on the possible archaeological significance of historical maps (Martijn 1995).

In the wake of the surveys, extensive excavations were undertaken on three sites in the region between 1997 and 1999 (Pintal 1998, 1999, 2000). Two of the sites are situated on the lower portion of the Témiscamie River, near the confluence with the Métaweshish River, known to local people as Saapaanikuu. This river system seems to have been a major travel route between the Lac-Saint-Jean area and James Bay. The third site is located on the Mistassini Lake side of the Uupiichuun Portage between lakes Mistassini and Albanel. The three sites were chosen because their contents, i.e. early

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Figure 3: Mistissini Archaeology Project, survey and excavation areas.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) lower Témiscamie River, 2) Uupiichuun Portage and surrounding area, 3) Lake Mistassini outlet.</td>
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</table>

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European material and / or structural features, such as hearths, were likely to provide evidence of complex occupations and / or occupations dating from around the contact period. A synthesis of the preliminary results of this work will be presented in an article to be published shortly (Pintal and Denton, forthcoming).

The pioneering work of Rogers and Martijn revealed the importance of the Lake Mistassini region with respect to the prehistory of the Amerindian peoples of Quebec's Middle North. With the resumption of research by the Cree Regional Authority and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, it has been possible to better define the chronological and occupational context of the Late Prehistoric period (since ca. 2000 B.P.), while shedding light on historic patterns of exploitation of the Colline Blanche. It has also been possible to explore the origin of the Mistissini Crees by striving to identify, archaeologically, the Mistassini people, or *Mistassins*, described by the French in the 17th century.

In 2000, archaeological research took place at the site of the former Hudson's Bay Company (H.B.C.) post in the Cree village of Mistissini (Roy 2001). Apart from the archaeological findings, the field report contains an excellent presentation of various sources of information (especially documentary, photographic and cartographic) concerning the establishments of the H.B.C. at Mistissini.

From the beginning, several research themes have played a role in the overall orientation of the Mistissini Archaeology Project. These themes were first enunciated in the background work on archaeology and history prepared by the Cree Regional Authority, before the onset of the project (Denton 1993). They were conceived as a possible organising tool for presenting information relating to the archaeological heritage of the area to the public, in the context of the proposed conservation park.

The themes are as follows:

1. The emergence of modern environmental conditions
2. The cultural sequence
3. The Colline Blanche and patterns of use and exchange of Mistassini quartzite
4. The evolution of the fur trade
5. The Mistassini people in the 17th and 18th centuries
In the following sections of this report, we will present our current state of knowledge with respect to each of these themes. It will be clear that for some themes, our knowledge has progressed significantly, while for others, little is still known. Even though major archaeological research work has been conducted in the Lake Mistassini area, our knowledge of the region's prehistory remains sketchy. Indeed, large segments of the chronological sequence have still not been established and we are just starting to explore exploitation patterns at the Colline Blanche.

3.1 The emergence of modern environmental conditions

Some 18,000 years ago, the province of Quebec was covered by a glacier measuring over 1 km thick. However, climatic warming on a global scale gradually caused the ice mass to melt, and by around 12,000 B.P., the shores of the Lower St. Lawrence, the Gaspé Peninsula and part of the Lower North Shore were ice-free (Fulton and Andrews 1987). The glacier subsisted a little while longer in the Québec City area, forming an ice barrier that prevented salt water from the Goldthwait Sea from mixing with fresh water from Lake Vermont, an enormous lake that linked Lake Champlain with Lake Ontario at the time.

As the glacier continued to melt, the “Strait of Quebec” was freed, leading to the drainage of Lake Vermont. As a result, fresh water and salt water merged in the Québec City area for a short period. The mass of glacial fresh water that once formed Lake Vermont, upstream from Québec City, was soon replaced by salt water. At the time, i.e. around 11,000 B.P., the glacier began to retreat from the north shore of the St. Lawrence.

The glacier rapidly receded as the climate continued to warm, and, by around 10,000 B.P., it was situated to the north of the Baskatong Reservoir and at the southern end of Lake Saint-Jean. An increasingly wide range of plant species were thus able to colonise the area. When the waters of the Champlain Sea began to retreat, mossy spruce forest invaded the newly emerged land surface.
Figure 4: Location of glaciers ca. 7900 B.P. (Fulton and Andrews 1987).
In Quebec, the last glacial episode ended roughly 6,500 years ago. However, the lakes Mistassini and Albanel area seems to have been freed from ice between 7200 and 6700 B.P. (Figure 4 and Figure 5). As the glacier retreated, the meltwater, which could not flow freely, formed sheets of water that drained in pace with continental uplift, now that the land surface was no longer weighed down by the ice mass. Initially, the southern portion of the lakes Mistassini and Albanel region was submerged by an enormous body of water, proglacial Lake Ojibway. This lake drained into the Hudson Sea between 7900 and 7700 B.P., even before the area was totally ice-free. It was replaced immediately, in the basins of lakes Waconichi, Albanel and Mistassini, by glacial Lake Mistassini. This latter body of water followed the retreating glacier to an altitude of up to 403 m, at an estimated rate of 220 to 260 m per year. Several indications, particularly the scarcity of old shorelines, suggest that this lacustrine episode was quite short. The current level of lakes Mistassini and Albanel would therefore have been reached very quickly:

At the time when the full course of the present Rupert River was deglaciated, the water level within the Mistassini basin receded probably to very near the present elevation of 375 m. This had to occur before the ice retreated into the Témiscamie area. (Bouchard 1980: 175, 177).

Old beach ridges are visible, however, in the northeastern part of Lake Mistassini, near the mouths of the Papaskwasati and Takwa rivers. Although generally not very large, these ridges form a series of three fairly flat terraces roughly 10 to 15 m wide, over 1.6 km. They are located 400, 700 and 950 m respectively from the present shoreline (Bouchard 1980: 109). After comparing the shape of these beach ridges with that of the current shoreline and examining their location around Lake Mistassini, Bouchard suggested that they had been formed during storms.
Figure 5: Lake Mistassini deglaciation phases (Bouchard 1986).
Bouchard also proposed that the rate of isostatic uplift would have been different in the northern and southern parts of Lake Mistassini. Fairly rapid in the north, it would have led to a rise in water level in the south:

In the north part of the Mistassini basin, water level receded at an exponentially decreasing rate as suggested by the beach ridge sequence at the mouth of the Papaskwasati River. Since the present day outlet of the lake is located mid-way along the length of the Mistassini basin, it is likely that as corollary to the receding water level in postglacial time in the north part of the basin, the water level must have been rising in the south part of the Mistassini basin, notably in the Baie-du-Poste area, ever since the Rupert River outlet was deglaciated. (Bouchard 1980: 178).

It can be concluded, therefore, that if people once occupied the shores of this proglacial lake, traces of their presence would be more likely to be preserved around the northern part of this body of water. An archaeological assessment of the lake's old shorelines would make it possible to document this period.

According to currently available data, the plant species now found in this area seem to have invaded the region rapidly, right after the deglaciation. However, since the climate was warmer and dryer at the time, the forest would have been denser than it is today. Based on our present knowledge, ecological conditions in the study area would have become favourable to human occupation around 7000-6000 B.P.

### 3.2 Cultural sequence

People were already frequenting a large part of the American continent when Quebec was still covered in glaciers. In many ways, however, the history of this initial period of human occupation is not very clear. To standardize their approach, archaeologists who study northeastern North America divide this chapter of Amerindian history into four main periods: Palaeoindian, Archaic, post-Archaic and Historic (Figure 6). These periods can be distinguished from one another by material culture traits, such as the presence or absence of pottery or of a particular type of tool, by technological features and by socioeconomic activities relating, for example, to settlement, subsistence and mobility patterns. Since we have still not identified the origin of the people who first inhabited the Lake Mistassini area, we must consider the possibility that they came from the west, via the Abitibi, or from the south, via the
Figure 6: Cultural chronological sequence for Quebec's Middle North.
the Lac-Saint-Jean region. The Saguenay and Saint-Maurice River basins may have served as routes to
the latter area.

Since the glacier did not retreat from the Mistassini region until around 7500-7000 B.P., human
occupation prior to that period was improbable, if not impossible.

### 3.2.1 The Archaic period (9500 to 3000 B.P.)

The concept of “Archaic” covers such a long time frame that it would be unreasonable to associate it
with just one culture. The number and variety of material assemblages related to this period testify to
multiple cultural trajectories. Therefore, archaeologists usually divide the Archaic into three parts:
Early (9500 to 8000 B.P.), Middle (8000 to 6000 B.P.) and Late (6000 to 3000 B.P.).

During the Archaic period, Amerindians adapted to constantly changing climatic conditions, as
temperatures became increasingly warmer until around 6000-5000 B.P. and then cooled slightly. The
glacier continued to melt until roughly 6000 B.P, opening up new tracts of land as it gradually
disappeared. Amerindians were thus able to colonise increasingly large territories, and, by about 3500
B.P., much of Quebec had already been explored.

A process of cultural identification seems to have occurred as Amerindians adapted to the ever-
changing climate. Over the millennia, groups came to exploit increasingly specific types of
environment, giving rise to three different traditions: the Maritime Archaic in the Gulf of St. Lawrence,
the Laurentian Archaic in the St. Lawrence Valley and the Shield Archaic in the subarctic.

#### 3.2.1.1 Middle Archaic (8000 to 6000 B.P.)

As mentioned earlier, environmental conditions made human occupation unlikely in the study area
during the Palaeoindian and Early Archaic periods, which are dated usually from 12,000 to 8000 B.P.
Nonetheless, some researchers have associated this interval — hypothetically, it is true — with two
lanceolate projectile points with square bases and sub-parallel retouch, found along the southern part of
the Témiscamie River (EgFg-24, Martijn and Rogers 1969: 318). However, these same researchers also
acknowledged that the technique used to make these points differs from that generally associated with
Late Palaeoindian projectile points. They suggested, therefore, that these artifacts represent a late manifestation of this culture (ca. 6500 B.P.). Since no other similar finds confirmed the presence of such an ancient tradition in this part of Quebec, despite intensive research in Quebec's subarctic, Martijn eventually questioned the validity of the hypothesis that Amerindians had occupied the study area at such an early date; he did not, however, reject it completely (Martijn 1985: 164).

The debate has been rekindled by recent discoveries in the Abitibi region (Côté 1998), where researchers have unearthed lanceolate projectile points with square bases and parallel or sub-parallel retouch that are similar to the points usually associated with the Late Palaeoindian period. Côté does not suggest, however, that such finds testify to the occupation of the Abitibi during the Late Palaeoindian, but believes they point to the presence of Amerindians in the area during the Middle Archaic (8000 to 7000 B.P.). However, he also believes that these assemblages may have evolved from a Late Palaeoindian source which underwent certain changes as groups adapted their lifeways to the Abitibi's environmental conditions.

Photo 1: Lanceolate blanks with square bases.
Similar objects have been found in the Mistassini area (see catalogue of Rogers collection), but given the current state of our knowledge (absence of $^{14}$C dating), it is impossible to affirm beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are the earliest manifestations of a human presence in the region (Photo 1). Nevertheless, the discovery of lanceolate points with square bases opens up new avenues of research into the probable origin of the first inhabitants of the Lake Mistassini area and the period they arrived there.

3.2.1.2 Late Archaic (6000 to 3000 B.P.)

By the beginning of the Late Archaic, the climate had warmed up enough for the glacier to melt and forests to rapidly colonise the newly emerged land surface. However, this episode was followed by a cooler, wetter period (5500 to 2200 B.P.) during which the forest cover thinned somewhat, until it eventually looked quite similar to what it does today.

Photo 2: Adze found to the west of Lake Mistassini.

By the beginning of the Late Archaic, the climate had warmed up enough for the glacier to melt and forests to rapidly colonise the newly emerged land surface. However, this episode was followed by a cooler, wetter period (5500 to 2200 B.P.) during which the forest cover thinned somewhat, until it eventually looked quite similar to what it does today.
From then on, areas bordering Lake Mistassini, such as the Abitibi and the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, were occupied by groups of Amerindians who shared a tool kit which archaeologists originally designated “Laurentian Archaic” and then “post-Laurentian Archaic”. Archaeological sites associated with this tool kit are characterised by the presence of stemmed projectile points made of polished stone, and leaf-shaped, side-notched projectile points with straight bases made of flaked stone. Occasionally, such sites also contain gouges, axes, adzes, ulu, pear-shaped objects, and pecked and polished hammerstones / grinders.

Laurentian Archaic sites seem fairly abundant in the Abitibi, but less so in the Lac-Saint-Jean area. As for the James Bay region, it does not seem to have been occupied at the time. A few artifacts found in the Lake Mistassini area testify to an Amerindian presence evocative of the Laurentian Archaic, but such objects are rare (Photo 2). It is possible that around 6000-5000 B.P. the Lake Mistassini area was merely a peripheral region for Amerindian groups well established further south and west, and that no groups visited it on a regular basis. Nevertheless, it should be noted that projectile points and tool blanks associated with the Late Archaic and made of Mistassini quartzite have been found in the area around the outlet of Lake Saint-Jean, confirming the presence of Amerindians in the study area during that period.

All questions pertaining to the initial occupation of the Mistassini region thus remain open, as do all those relating more specifically to the nature of Amerindian occupation during the Archaic.

### 3.2.2 The post-Archaic period (3500 B.P. to ca. 1650 A.D.)

Amerindian occupation intensified constantly from the post-Archaic onward. While environmental conditions may have had the most impact on the socioeconomic system of aboriginal people up to that point, sociopolitical relations henceforth played a more determining role. As of the post-Archaic, Quebec's territory was almost completely occupied or at least frequented on a regular basis, with travel and trade taking place in a network of social relations and affinities that gradually defined the territory of the present-day First Nations.
3.2.2.1 Early post-Archaic (3500 to 2000 B.P.)

Some of the objects found in the Mistassini region point to fairly close ties during the Early post-

![Projectile point](image)

**Photo 3: Projectile point**

Archaic between this part of Quebec and the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, via the Saguenay—
Lac-Saint-Jean region (Photo 3). Although these links are still not very clear, the fact that Mistassini
quartzite was circulating to a greater extent than before in this area, from Chicoutimi to Blanc-Sablon,
via Tadoussac, definitely reflects the growing importance of this type of stone in the interaction sphere
of Amerindians who frequented the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula. It was during this period that the
James Bay region first began to be occupied. From then on, Amerindians made more extensive use of
local lithic raw materials, such as quartz, while supplementing them with other types of stone mainly
from Labrador (Denton 1998). Mistassini quartzite was present, but in small quantities.
Another distinctive feature of the Early post-Archaic is the Meadowood phase. This archaeological culture is characterised by leaf-shaped, side-notched projectile points with square bases, and, on occasion, by cremations involving numerous offerings, such as multiple cache blades. It was once thought that this culture occurred only in more southerly areas, particularly the Great Lakes region, but artifacts associated with it have been found just about everywhere in Quebec, especially around the mouth of the Témiscamie River (Photo 4). The discovery of Meadowood projectile points made of Mistassini quartzite in the Québec City region (Chrétien 1995) testifies to the role the Mistassini area may have played in the development of this cultural phase in Quebec.

Although there is no doubt that the study area was occupied quite regularly during the Early post-Archaic, no archaeological sites from this period have been excavated extensively.

### 3.2.2.2 Late Amerindian Prehistory (2000 B.P. to 1650 A.D.)

Archaeological data pertaining to this period indicate that Amerindian people were visiting the study area on a regular basis at the time. The presence of small cooking hearths, primarily on sites EgFg-39 and EfFg-34, reveal that domestic camps were set up in the region. These hearths measure around 1 m long and form small mounds roughly 10 cm thick. They consist mainly of sand, scattered rocks, pieces of wood charcoal and calcined bone. The few osteological analyses done so far indicate that the occupants of these sites captured mainly beaver and porcupine.
A large amount of chipping debris was found around these hearths, and close to 99% consisted of Mistassini quartzite. It should also be noted that tool remains included a considerable number of blanks, indicating that Amerindians who frequented the region took the opportunity to make not only finished tools but also blanks that could be worked at a later date.

The Late Prehistoric period is associated with leaf-shaped knives with convex bases or with lanceolate knives with convex or straight bases. While some projectile points were made on flakes, the majority were bifacially worked. The wide range of projectile points associated with this period suggests that the Mistassini region was used by groups of divergent origins. Nevertheless, the strongest affiliations seem to have been with the James Bay area, to the north and northwest, and with the Lac-Saint-Jean region, to the south.

![Photo 5: Projectile points dating to the Late Prehistoric period](image)

According to the archaeological data from the three sites excavated in the study area, a higher proportion of finished tools (projectile points and knives) were found in the sites' upper soil layers, while a higher proportion of chipping debris and artifacts related to knapping operations (blanks, preforms, cores and hammerstones) were uncovered in the sites' lower layers. Moreover, assemblages comprising, among other things, lanceolate projectile points and knives with straight or convex bases,
and long leaf-shaped endscrapers were found beneath layers dated to between 1000 and 1650 A.D. On the basis of currently available radiocarbon dates, these assemblages can be associated with the 2000 to 1500 B.P. period. Various other types of projectile points were also uncovered at the same level as these assemblages on the three sites excavated, but they cannot be associated with a particular period on the basis of existing data. Lastly, small side- or corner-notched projectile points made on flakes were found on these sites in contexts dating to the 17th century and from 1000 to 1650 A.D. Even though these small points on flakes are more abundant in collections associated with recent occupations, they are often found in conjunction with small bifacially flaked projectile points (Photo 5 and Photo 6).

For the time being, site EfFg-29A is the most important of all known archaeological sites associated with the Late Prehistoric period. Indeed, it comprises a series of occupations dating back to at least 1000 A.D. EfFg-29A is characterised by the presence of superimposed dwellings, most of which were laid out around a long cooking hearth. Just prior to or during the very early contact period, a longhouse nearly 5 m in length was erected on this site. Based on the faunal remains uncovered on EfFg-29A, its occupants hunted most local species; identified remains include caribou, beaver, muskrat and various types of fish.
Mistassini quartzite was still used during the Late Prehistoric period for making stone tools. However, it seems that knappers preferred to roughly shape the stone at the Colline Blanche and then complete the tool production process at a later date on habitation sites. This period is associated with small projectile points made on flakes, a type of point found mainly in what is now Cree territory. Such points are therefore thought to reflect the presence of the Cree's ancestors, particularly the Mistassins, in this region.

A second longhouse was built on Effg-29A within a few years of the first one. The archaeological material associated with this structure testifies to the Mistassins' participation in the French trade network. It comprises a large number of glass beads, as well as cauldron fragments and a Jesuit ring, all of which date from the second half of the 17th century.

A third dwelling was built on the remains of the two previous ones in the 18th century. This structure was smaller than the other two, but, like the second longhouse, contained a large number of trade goods. Sites from the 18th century, like those from the 19th century, testify to the continued use of Mistassini quartzite. However, the importance of this material gradually declined, and, by the late 19th century, it was no longer employed by Amerindian people.

### 3.3 The Colline Blanche and patterns of use and exchange of Mistassini quartzite

The theme related to the use of the Colline Blanche as a source of high-quality quartzite, used by local people and widely exchanged for millennia, is one that is relatively accessible archaeologically.

In this section, we will briefly summarise the present evidence for the long-distance transport of Mistassini quartzite and the current work being undertaken, in the framework of the Mistissini Archaeology Project, to understand patterns of acquisition and transformation of this stone, within the area of the proposed park.

#### 3.3.1 Mistassini quartzite

Mistassini quartzite is a high-quality stone used for millennia by aboriginal people for the manufacture of knives, scrapers, projectile points and other tools. The term “Mistassini quartzite” is used here
because of its currency in the archaeological literature. Issues related to the nomenclature of Mistassini quartzite, and the geological context of this stone, are presented in Denton (1998: 18-19). Here, we need only emphasise that while outcrops of similar quality material from the same geological formation may eventually be found, the only known source at this time is the Colline Blanche, located on the Témiscamie River (Denton 1998: 19). Furthermore, even if other sources are eventually found, it seems very unlikely that they would rival the Colline Blanche, which is surely exceptional in offering a vast quantity of a high-quality lithic raw material, so accessible to a major river and travel route.

3.3.2 Transport outside the study area

Our current knowledge of the dispersal of Mistassini quartzite has been summarised by Denton (1998). The use of this stone on Laurentian Archaic sites at the Grande Décharge of Lake Saint-Jean suggests that people were visiting the Colline Blanche 5,000 years ago. Less definite evidence suggests the possibility of exploitation of the Colline Blanche 1,000, or even 2,000 years earlier than this (Côté 1998).

Artifacts of Mistassini quartzite have been found in many sites in the St. Lawrence Valley and northern New England in both Late Archaic and Early and Middle Woodland (post-Archaic) contexts apparently dating from about 5,000 to 1,500 years ago. In some cases, large, finely finished objects have been found in association with burials, such as at the Boucher Site in Vermont.

Denton (1998) has suggested two broad periods of long-range transport of Mistassini quartzite. During the first, from about 5000 to 1700 B.P., Mistassini quartzite appears predominantly to have been transported towards the south, often into the Lac-Saint-Jean area. The presence of numerous large preforms and bifaces of this material suggests a “directed”, long-range movement of Mistassini quartzite, possibly associated with specialised visits to the Colline Blanche. In contrast to this, in the period between 1700 B.P. and 400 B.P., Mistassini quartzite was transported in all directions, including to the north. It was the principal lithic raw material used in central Quebec, including the northern Lac-Saint-Jean area and its use appears to have declined regularly with greater distance from the Colline Blanche. This broad pattern is consistent with acquisition and use of this material by related groups of Cree and Montagnais in central Quebec within a vast trade network that branched out in multiple directions.
3.3.3 Transport and transformation inside the study area

Based on the data gathered during the Mistissini Archaeology Project, it has been suggested that people who procured Mistassini quartzite from the Colline Blanche did not stay very long in the immediate vicinity — just long enough to roughly shape the lithic raw material acquired at the site (Denton 1998: 26-27). It seems that once Amerindians had finished replenishing their supply of quartzite, they moved to spots that were better suited to hunting and fishing and where it was easier to set up camps. There, knappers took the time to transform the blocks or blanks obtained at the Colline Blanche into preforms or more finished tools. Once this task was finished, families or specialised groups could move to their usual place of residence without having to transport heavy loads of stone.

It has also been suggested that a fairly broad area surrounding the Colline Blanche, which is characterised by the presence of a very large number of sites containing an abundance of chipping debris, be called the “Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone” (Denton 1998, Figure 2). This zone covers the entire Colline Blanche area, the lower Témiscamie River and neighbouring parts of Lake Albanel. The lithic material acquired at the Colline Blanche could have been readily transported by water from one end of this zone to the other, without having to overcome any major obstacles.

In light of the data gathered from the three sites excavated in the study area, this concept of Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone is still valid. Indeed, the number of flakes and blanks / preforms found on sites in this zone is much higher that that observed on EgFg-39, which is some 30 km away and separated from this area by a very long portage. However, the data suggest that the concept applies more readily to occupations prior to 1300 A.D., given that older stratigraphic layers contain larger proportions of flakes and preforms than more recent ones do.

We must now strive to explain his trend and look for other indications of changes in Mistassini quartzite procurement and transformation patterns. One hypothesis that should be explored attributes the decline observed in relative numbers of flakes and the size of preforms over time to the emergence of closer territorial ties with the Colline Blanche. Local groups with less territorial mobility would have been able to collect smaller quantities of quartzite at a time since they were never very far from its
source. It is also important to consider the fact that bifacial flaking seems to have been falling into disuse during this period, leading to a drop in demand for lithic raw materials.

### 3.3.4 Spiritual aspect of the Colline Blanche

Another factor that should be mentioned is the spiritual aspect of the Colline Blanche. The cave now known as the Antre de Marbre, located near the top of the hill, apparently used to be called *Tchitchémanitu ouitchchouap* (or *mitchchouap*), that is, “House of the Great Spirit”, by local Amerindians. In 1730, Father Laure wrote: “…the savages think that it is a house of prayer and council, wherein the Spirits assemble. Therefore all do not take the liberty of entering it; but the jugglers who are, as it were, their Priests, go there in passing to consult their oracles” (Thwaites 1896-1901, 68: 48). The Cree name for the Antre de Marbre, *Waapushkamikw*, or “Rabbit House”, seems to refer to a giant rabbit that is mentioned in many local legends about this cave. In our opinion, it would be surprising if the Colline Blanche as a whole and its white quartzite did not have spiritual significance as well. However, this theory raises a number of important questions. Did spiritual leaders play a role in the acquisition and circulation of this material? Did the spiritual significance of the Colline Blanche...
increase as its economic importance waned with the gradual abandonment of stone working? And, was the site always venerated over the millennia the quarry was exploited?

3.4 The Mistassini people in the 17th and 18th centuries

The Mistassiniouek, Mistassirins or Mistassirinis, or simply Mistassins, as they were later called, formed a group or a number of associated groups whose territory included Lake Mistassini. The oldest references to these people date to 1642-43, when they were described as “little Nations” who engaged in commerce with the Christian Indians of Tadoussac (Thwaites 1896-1901, 24: 154).

The first well-documented meeting between the French and the Mistassins on the latter's territory dates from 1672, when three Mistassins met Father Charles Albanel on an island, while he was travelling from Lake Saint-Jean to the North Sea (James Bay). Our reading of the route followed by Father Albanel and his native guides, follows closely that proposed by Rousseau (1950). As will be presented in more detail in a later section of this report, we argue that Albanel followed the Métaweshish River to reach the lower portion of the Témiscamie River and Lake Albanel. The island where this meeting took place is thus thought to be in the area of the lower Témiscamie River, perhaps near the confluence with the Métaweshish River. In any case, the first Mistassins Father Albanel met told him that he had to stop for a while and wait for the “old man”, “the master of this country” to arrive. Albanel wrote in his journal that the Indians did not seem very eager to grant passage to strangers wishing to visit distant Nations. “The rivers are to them what fields are to the French, their sole source of subsistence,—whether in the form of fish and game, or in that of traffic” (Thwaites 1896-1901, 56: 172). The old man Sesibaourat and his group eventually arrived in 18 canoes, most of them “with painted faces, and adorned with all their costliest ornaments,—such as high head-dresses and porcelain collars, belts and bracelets” (Thwaites 1896-1901, 56: 172). After waiting on the threshold of the Mistassins' territory for six days, Father Albanel's group finally received permission from Sesibaourat to continue to James Bay via lakes Albanel and Mistassini (Thwaites 1896-1901, 56: 178).

On Albanel's return, some 200 Mistassins were waiting for him at the mouth of the Minahigouskat (“white spruce place”) River (Thwaites 1896-1901, 56: 209). The toponym Minahigouskat is of great historical significance, because it permits us to link this second meeting of a large group of Mistassins, with the lower section of the Témiscamie River. This conclusion is based on association of the lower
section of the Témiscamie River with Cree toponyms related to white spruce, both in the 19th century and currently. In particular, Clouston's map of 1825 shows clearly that the Témiscamie River was called *Minaheg* or “white spruce”. Likewise, Cree trappers currently call the very bottom section of the Témiscamie, *Kaa Pischeminihiikuskaau* (“to the side of the white spruce place”). These names reflect the presence of large white spruce along the side of the Témiscamie, both now and historically.

In passing, it should be noted that these historical and toponymic references to white spruce are of potential interest in relation to future public interpretation focused on the very large and ancient white spruce still growing in the area.

Father Albanel's relations are particularly interesting in the framework of our research. For example, they suggest that Lake Albanel, the lower Témiscamie and, to extrapolate a bit, the Colline Blanche, were part of the *Mistassins'* territory. Since these places are located in the area where our work is being carried out, we should be able to identify them archaeologically. Albanel's relations also suggest that some form of control was exerted over access to the *Mistassins'* territory, possible within the scope of trade, a conclusion that raises certain questions. Did this apparent control over access to their territory affect only those involved in trading operations or did it also target those who wished to obtain Mistassini quartzite? And, was access to the Colline Blanche controlled by the *Mistassins* or did everyone have access to it, as certain ethnographic data suggest (Ericson 1984: 3)?

The *Mistassins* had been involved in the fur trade for many years when the French first began to visit the region. They traded with the Montagnais of Tadoussac and probably acted as intermediaries in commercial dealings with neighbouring groups to the west and north. Before the network of French trading posts was consolidated in the Lac-Saint-Jean area and eventually extended to Lake Mistassini, the *Mistassins* attended the large gatherings that brought together numerous nations in the upper Lake Saint-Jean drainage basin. An increase can be noted in the use of Mistassini quartzite in the mid-17th century on sites containing European trade goods hundreds of kilometres north of Mistassini (Denton 1989), suggesting that the fur trade had spread in that direction and perhaps that the *Mistassins* were serving as intermediaries. For this reason, it has been suggested that archaeological assemblages from this period, which contain a preponderance of small unifacial points, correspond, at least in the
Mistassini region, to the material culture of the Cree-Montagnais group called the *Mistassins* by the French.

There are also some indications of cultural continuity between the populations that frequented the Mistassini area at the end of the Late Prehistoric period and those who occupied it at the time of contact with Europeans. In regard to stone tools, the most conclusive evidence of such continuity are the small arrowheads on flakes mentioned earlier. It should be noted that similar points, also made of Mistassini quartzite, have been found elsewhere in Quebec on sites containing mid-17th century European material, as well as in contexts with no trade goods (Denton 1989). These sites are located in the subarctic (Séguin 1995) and particularly in the Caniapiscau region (Denton 1989), roughly 350 km to the northeast.

In sum, we feel that the identification of the group referred to in the Jesuit Relations as the *Mistassins* is an especially interesting theme for public presentation within the framework of the proposed park. The links between the documentary evidence resulting from early contact with the French, and archaeological finds relating to the 17th century, are compelling, as are the links with modern Cree toponymy, suggesting an important degree of continuity between the *Mistassins* and the present-day people of Mistissini. As we have seen, it may prove possible to trace the *Mistassins*, and their most closely related neighbours, back in time, into the pre-contact era.

This theme overlaps significantly with that described below, relating to the fur trade in the late 17th and the first half of the 18th century, when the *Mistassins* were actively trading at posts located in the *Uupiichuun* area.

### 3.5 The evolution of the fur trade

The evolution of the fur trade is, potentially, an extremely important interpretative theme within the proposed park area, though it has only begun to be developed in the course of our research. A report on the fur trade history of the area of the proposed park was prepared for the Cree Regional Authority by Toby Morantz (1993).
3.5.1 The fur trade during the French régime

The first trading post was established on Lake Mistassini in 1679 by Louis Jolliet, somewhere in the Uupiichuun (“fast current narrows”) area, where the water flows between lakes Mistassini and Albanel. This post was operated for several years by Louis Jolliet's brother, Zacharie. The post brought Crees to trade at Mistassini, at the expense of the English competitors of the H.B.C., who maintained their post, named Charles Fort, on the coast of James Bay. For a number of years, a mission was also located in this area. Later, in the 1730s and 1740s, some 50 families of Mistissini Inuuch traded at the post operated here by Joseph Dorval. When this post was abandoned, these people travelled to Chicoutimi to trade and to visit the mission, or to the H.B.C. post at Eastmain, on James Bay.

The French fur trade in the Mistassini area in the late 17th and first half of the 18th centres on Uupiichuun, within the proposed park. The story of the extending of the Traite de Tadoussac to Mistassini in competition with the English, and of the dynamics of Cree involvement with the trade, is one that has been touched on by Morantz (1993) and Castonguay (1987), but deserves to be told in more detail. In 1995, an unsuccessful search for the Maison des Dorval and the Jolliet posts took place in the Uupiichuun area (Denton 1997) (as described in more detail in section 4.4.3, below). The archaeological identification of the fur trading posts and mission station in the Uupiichuun area would help greatly in the public interpretation, and archaeological investigation of these sites could bring to light much new information.

3.5.2 The fur trade during the English régime

The later period of the fur trade centres more on the southern part of Mistassini Lake. For a number of years beginning in 1786, the North West Company (traders based in Montréal) operated a trading post in the Baie du Poste area, south of the present village of Mistissini. In 1812, the H.B.C. established their first post in the Mistassini area, beginning a commercial presence that lasted until the 1990s. Except for the 1818-21 period, when the post was located near the outlet of Lake Mistassini into the Rupert River, the posts were located near or at the site of the present Cree village. Every summer, Mistissini men manned the “canoe brigades”, which took furs down to Rupert House on James Bay and brought back supplies to operate the post for the following winter, while women, children and older people stayed in fishing camps on the big lakes.
Concerning the archaeology of the later fur trade period, in 2000, archaeological work was carried out at the H.B.C. point in the village of Mistissini (Roy 2001). The field report presents many details concerning the development of the H.B.C. post at Mistissini during the 19th century. In 1996, survey work was carried out in the Mistissiniuukamikw (see section 4.5, below). Among other things, we were looking for the trading post established by James Clouston in 1818 near the outlet of Lake Mistassini. A site that may represent this trading post was identified (Denton 1997).

An important site for understanding the 19th-century fur trade in the area of the proposed park is the H.B.C. outpost at Lake Témiscamie, established in 1825 and operated until 1861 (Morantz 1993). This post was maintained to head off competition from the King's Domain posts in the Lac-Saint-Jean area. Its location was identified by Jimmy Gunner in the course of a project to record Cree toponymy.

### 3.6 Cree knowledge and traditions

In a previous report prepared for the Ministère de Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, it was suggested that if Mistissini Crees ultimately support and participate in the proposed development of parks in their homeland, they may wish these parks to reflect their cultural heritage and their perceptions of the natural world (Denton 1993). Cree lands and waters are culturally modelled and suffused with historical, cultural and religious meaning as a result of generations of occupation. Through Cree place-names, stories, legends, land-use information, and a presentation of Cree ways of interacting with the natural world, visitors could be afforded a glimpse of a rich cultural landscape that would otherwise remain invisible.

Cree place-names are an important part of this cultural landscape. In the course of the Mistissini Place-names, Heritage and the Land project, close to 2,000 toponyms relating to the Mistissini territories were collected, along with many stories and legends concerning specific places. Assuming the eventual involvement of the community of Mistissini in the proposed park, this material could likely play a useful role in the presentation of the area to visitors.

Increasingly, it has become clear that place-names may be very long-lived, and that older place-names can provide insight into past events, and ways of relating to the landscape. In the case of the Mistissini Archaeology Project, we have begun to link modern Cree place-names with those on 18th-century
French maps, and to names referred to in accounts from 17th-century visitors, such as Father Albanel. For example (as presented in more detail in Chapter 4), we can associate the name *Chabanonkoué* (and its variants) referred to on the maps from the early 1730s with the Mattaweshish River. And, as shown above, *Minahigouskat*, from Father Albanel's journal of 1671, relates to the Témiscamie River. This kind of continuity suggests opportunities for archaeological research that we are beginning to explore in the context of this project, and has great significance for public interpretation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

The same continuity appears to exist with respect to other elements of the Cree cultural environment. Over 300 years ago, while crossing Lake Mistassini by canoe, Father Albanel was warned by his guides not to look at an area of elevated ground visible in the distance, unless he wished to die. The same proscription, against pointing at the island known as *Mintuunikw* (which can be roughly translated as “spirit rocky island”) has been retained to this day and travellers are warned that ignoring this will cause dangerous storms to whip up the water.

### 3.7 Settlement and land-use patterns in different zones of the proposed park

As it is presently conceived, the proposed park will comprise very different ecological zones, including those associated with the Témiscamie River, the large lakes (Albanel and Mistassini), and the upland areas of the Otish Mountains. At present, most archaeological information is from the lower Témiscamie and adjacent areas of Lake Albanel, including the area of the *Uupiichuun* rapids. Initial surveys have been carried out on the west side of Lake Mistassini, near its outlet into the Rupert River. On the other hand, there has been no archaeological investigation along the entire length of the Témiscamie River, with the exception of the lower section, and nothing is known of the upland areas forming the headwaters of the Témiscamie. Because of the lack of information from these areas it is clearly impossible to address questions relating to broader-scale settlement and land-use patterns.

Does the region of lakes Albanel and Mistassini represent a zone where people traditionally congregated in the summer (as is suggested by the historical information relating to the *Mistassins*), or could this phenomenon have been related to the changes occurring in the very early years following European contact? Is it possible to identify seasonal movement between the large lakes (summer fishing) and the upland areas of the upper Témiscamie drainage basin (fall and winter caribou hunting)?
How were the islands in the large lakes used, in comparison to the areas around the margins or the lakes? These and many similar questions can only be approached by seeking comparable archaeological information from each major ecological (or geographic) zone from within the proposed park area.
Our research has highlighted the presence of numerous zones of archaeological and historical interest in the area of the proposed park. These zones illustrate important aspects of the history of the area and of the cultural heritage of the Crees, in relation to our research themes, and some could perhaps become “cultural attractions” within canoe circuits or visits to the park with Cree guides. In this chapter, we will focus on the interpretation and presentation of the archaeological and historical interest of these areas, while stressing the importance of conserving such resources. The zones that will be described contain concentrations of archaeological sites which must be managed and protected in the context of the proposed park.

4.1 The Colline Blanche

The well-known Colline Blanche is perhaps the single most significant site within the area of the proposed park. Numerous authors have written about various aspects of this site, whether natural, archaeological or spiritual (Hamelin and Dumont 1964, Martijn and Rogers 1969, Gagnon 1988, Chartrand 1992, Milne 1994, Denton 1998). As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Colline Blanche has been a source of high-quality quartzite used by native people in Quebec for at least 5,000 years. It was known to the French at least as early as the 18th century. Martijn suggests that the earliest reference to the Colline Blanche may be a particular marking on the 1684 map by Louis Jolliet (1995). The spiritual importance of the site, as described in the text by Father Laure, has been referred to, above.

In 1976, as a result of the efforts of Charles Martijn and others, the Colline Blanche became one of a handful of archaeological sites to be classified under the Quebec Cultural Property Act. Several years ago, Parks Canada suggested the Colline Blanche for possible designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board as illustrative of the history of the First Nations of Quebec. The possibility of an official request to the Board on the part of the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Cree Regional Authority is presently being studied.
Over the years, the Crees of Mistissini have devoted considerable efforts to protecting the site from uncontrolled visits and from mining development and to preserving oral traditions relating to this place they call *Waapushakamikw* (“Rabbit House”), which is the Cree name for the *Antre de Marbre*. Reports of looting of artifacts led the Cree Nation of Mistissini to hire a caretaker (the late Philip Mattawashish) to prevent unaccompanied visits during the summer months.

### 4.2 The Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone

While the significance of the Colline Blanche is widely recognised, it is less well known that a large area around this site is intimately tied to the Colline Blanche, both physically and historically. From the Colline Blanche, a plume of quartzite debris spreads across the landscape tracing the movements of the people who visited the site in search of this stone and marking the locations where they stopped, rested or camped, and prepared their tools.

The lower Témiscamie River and adjacent portions of Lake Albanel, which were explored by Edward S. Rogers from 1948 to 1950, by Martijn in 1963, and by our crews in the 1990s, are characterised by the presence of relatively large quantities of Mistassini quartzite from the Colline Blanche. Flakes, tool blanks and other stone debris from the working of Mistassini quartzite from the Colline Blanche may be found at many different locations along the shoreline, throughout this zone. Archaeological tests conducted by Rogers and Martijn in locations close to the shore at a number of sites within this zone, pointed to the presence of numerous sites where quartzite from the Colline Blanche was worked.

Most sites show evidence of primary and secondary reduction of blocks (preparation of biface preforms and tool blanks). It thus seems clear that most known sites in this region relate to the procurement and transport of quartzite from the Colline Blanche and that this fact accounts in large part for the distinctive nature of these sites compared to those of adjacent areas, further afield.

The presence of so many workshop sites suggests that groups acquiring quartzite at the Colline Blanche did not stay long at the site, but soon moved to more convenient resting or overnight camping spots or places were they could lay over for several days or more, seeking food and “gearing up” to use Binford's (1979) expression, in preparation for travel away from the lithic source. “Gearing up” in this context, refers to the manufacture of roughly shaped “preforms” and “blanks”, from which finished
tools could be made at a later date, and, to the preparation of finished tools, that would be used during the period when the group was far from the lithic source.

Figure 7: Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone
(Tentative definition). Red dots – known archaeological sites.

In 1998, the term “Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone” was proposed for the broad area, including the lower Témiscamie River and adjacent parts of Lake Albanel, from which masses of stone from the Colline Blanche were transported, and worked down into more usable, and more easily transportable forms (Denton 1998: 25). Although its limits have not been precisely defined, this zone follows the principal waterways that may be conveniently reached from the Colline Blanche by canoe, without surmounting major obstacles. We hypothesise that people who procured quartzite at the Colline Blanche would have tended to reduce the blocks to lighter, more easily transportable forms, prior to
undertaking major portages, embarking on smaller rivers with many portages, or tackling dangerous crossings of open water.\textsuperscript{5}

Hence, we would expect quantities of quartzite to have been left at stopping or camping places located near where groups would leave the main corridor of the Témiscamie River, either to ascend small rivers towards the height of land to the south or to paddle across the immense lakes, Albanel and Mistassini. Some sites where primary reduction took place may have become sources of stone in their own right. Depending on specific needs, some individuals or groups travelling through the area and not wanting to make the trip as far as the Colline Blanche, would have had ready access to quartzite either rejected or jettisoned at these locations.

It is easy to imagine the stream of sites containing concentrations of Mistassini quartzite along the lower Témiscamie River as resulting from the actions of travellers, who obtained quartzite at the Colline Blanche and then headed down river, stopping at good camping places to prepare for travel out of the area. This point will be examined, below, in more detail with respect to one concentration of sites located near the confluence of the Métaweshish and Témiscamie rivers. Similar concentrations of workshop sites are expected to follow all of the major travel routes from the area, especially in the zones before the onset of major rapids or numerous sets of rapids.

As mentioned earlier in this report, there is initial support for this construct from the three sites that have been partially excavated thus far in connection with the Mistissini Archaeology Project. EgFg-39, located on the Mistassini Lake side of the long \textit{Uupiichuun} Portage between lakes Albanel and Mistassini, can be distinguished from the two sites on the lower Témiscamie River by the much lower quantity and lower mean weight of chipping debris, suggesting that travellers heading in this direction carried out much of the early stages of reduction before undertaking the portage.

Another possible example relates to the quantities and size of Mistassini quartzite debitage on sites in the Témiscamie River / Lake Albanel area, compared to that characterising sites on the western side of Lake Mistassini, near the outlet of the lake into the Rupert River. The abundance of Mistassini quartzite

\textsuperscript{5} It is clear that we are thinking primarily of travel during the open water seasons, by canoe. However, the possibility that people may have visited the Colline Blanche in the winter to obtain quartzite should not be excluded. It would be interesting to assess the relative difficulty of procuring quartzite in the winter, from under the snow.
in the former is in dramatic contrast to the small quantities and small sizes of chipping debris in the latter, supporting the idea that for visitors to the Colline Blanche returning to the west, the most intensive stone-working activities took place prior to crossing Lake Mistassini, and (for those passing through the Uupiichuun Portage) on the upper (Lake Albanel) side of the long portage.

Although there are a great many questions still unanswered concerning procurement and transformation of Mistassini quartzite, and how these activities changed over time, one broad pattern is clear: The major concentration of archaeological sites in the zone of relatively easy canoe travel surrounding the Colline Blanche, relates to long-term patterns of procurement of Mistassini quartzite from the source and the subsequent transformation of this stone. It is proposed that this could provide an interesting element of cultural / historic interpretation within the area of the proposed park.

It is also clear that this is a zone of very large concentrations of archaeological sites, something that should be taken into account in considering any development of park infrastructure, campsites, etc. The zone cannot yet be clearly delimited, because there have not yet been sufficient detailed surveys
4.3 Confluence of the Témiscamie and Métaweshish Rivers

The confluence of the Témiscamie and Métaweshish Rivers is characterised by an even greater concentration of sites than elsewhere within the Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone. Here, a crescent-shaped body of water (which can be considered a bay, a lake or a “river-lake”), about 2.5 km in length, is connected to the lower portion of the Témiscamie River at its northern end, and to the Métaweshish River, to the south. Although this body of water has no official name, it has been referred to as Conwest Bay (e.g. Martijn and Rogers 1969) and Indian Lake (Rogers 1948). For local trappers, it

Figure 8: Location of archaeological sites and other places mentioned in the text.

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is known as part of Saapaanikuu, the Cree name for the Métaweshish River being Saapaanikuu Siipii. The upper (southerly) portion of the bay is named Kaa Wiisichiminaanskaach (“Cranberry place”) after the hill to the east.

Along some parts of the shoreline of the bay an almost continuous concentration of Mistassini quartzitedebitage was noted by Rogers and Rogers during their surveys. In general, the large number of surface sites in this relatively small bay was considered remarkable (Rogers and Rogers 1948, 1950). In surveys carried out in the course of the Mistissini Archaeology Project, the high archaeological potential of this zone was confirmed. Tests were carried out in a number of areas, well back from the shoreline, in order to detect the presence of in situ archaeological deposits, possibly representing habitation sites. Sites were found in all of the areas tested, hinting at the archaeological richness of the confluence of these two rivers. The archaeological interest of this area is confirmed by our excavations at two important sites, briefly described, below.

4.3.1 EfFg-34

Site EfFg-34 is situated on a low mound around 8 m above the Témiscamie River. Excavation work on the site uncovered nine hearth structures associated with at least six occupation periods, extending from the mid-19th century to ca. 1300 B.P. The artifact assemblage comes from two main soil layers: the organic horizon at the surface of the site and the underlying mineral horizon. The organic horizon contained traces of a mid-18th century occupation, represented by trade goods such as glass beads and lead shot. It also contained traces of an occupation dating from between 1640 and 1680, as witnessed by the discovery of beads, lead shot and flint flakes scattered around a number of hearths, one of which has been dated to between 1412 and 1682 A.D. An assemblage of tools and lithicdebitage was also associated with this occupation. As for the lower mineral horizon, it yielded the remains of two hearths, one of which has been dated to between 1248 and 1422 A.D.

As might be expected, the lithic assemblage from this site is made up almost exclusively of Mistassini quartzite (like the assemblages from the other sites studied). Preforms are the most abundant type of stone tool, accounting for roughly one third of the sample, although knives, endscrapers and other tools, including a very small number of projectile points, are also present. As will be seen below, small
projectile points on flakes with minimal retouch are characteristic of the Late Prehistoric period and the 17th century.

EfFg-34 yielded clear evidence of intensive stone working, but, contrary to expectations, fairly little evidence of domestic activities. Even though hearths were present on the site, they contained only a few porcupine and fish bones; the 17th-century hearth contained a single moose tooth.

4.3.2 Kaamichsteyuupikach (EfFg-29A)

The second site, EfFg-29A, is situated on a point at the confluence of the Témiscamie and Saapaanikuu rivers, and is part of a huge complex of occupations covering a large part of the point. The Cree name for the point is Kaamichsteyuupikach, or “Birch Point”, reflecting the presence of a number of old birch, here. Excavation work at this site focused on a presumed habitation area at the top of a narrow mound. The main feature uncovered in this area was a long hearth surrounded by a concentration of shattered rock. Like EfFg-34, EfFg-29A, contained two occupation levels.

The large hearth was associated with the organic horizon at the surface of the site, and can be divided into three stratigraphic units representing hearths of different sizes. These hearths in turn correspond to three different phases of occupation, dating respectively from the mid-18th century, the mid-17th century and the Late Prehistoric period or very early contact era.

The 17th-century occupation is clearly represented by European objects, but also associated with a quite varied lithic assemblage. Small projectile points on flakes are characteristic of this period, as they are of Late Prehistoric times. A small amount of Amerindian pottery was also found among the remains of this occupation.

Two other hearths were uncovered beneath the large one, in association with the mineral horizon beneath the surface organic layer. Like the latter layer and the large hearth, this older occupation level contained a fairly wide range of tools.
As a whole, site EfFg-29A yielded about 100,000 flakes weighing roughly 100 kg. This assemblage, while testifying to the importance of stone working at both occupation levels, differs from that of EfFg-34 in that it contains a larger quantity and variety of finished tools. Although the assemblage consists mainly of Mistassini quartzite, it also contains larger amounts of other raw materials, particularly several kinds of chert. Another difference between the two sites relates to their bone remains, with EfFg-29A containing a much greater range of species. Bone fragments from the latter site were identified as belonging to 16 species, particularly beaver, porcupine, caribou, duck, goose, grouse and several types of fish. One eagle bone was also found.

4.3.3 Chiimwaasunaanuuhch (“Berry-picking”) Portage

The Chiimwaasunaanuuhch (“Berry-picking”) Portage connects the lower Témiscamie and Métaweshish Rivers and permits travellers to avoid a rapid-filled loop in the Métaweshish River. The portage is just over 1.5 km in length and it was often used by those travelling along the Métaweshish River, going to or from the Témiscamie.

Our survey work brought to light an archaeological site located at the up-stream (southern) end of the portage. Although its area is quite large, the site is different from most of those located within what we have called the Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone, in that the Mistassini quartzite debitage is small and relatively sparse. Travellers may have been sharpening or re-working the occasional tool, here, but were clearly not engaged in large-scale lithic reduction activities.

4.3.4 Interpretations

Rogers and Rogers offered several plausible explanations for the large number of sites in the “Indian Lake” area, including a concentration of faunal resources and the location of this bay in relation to travel routes: “From here, one may travel to Lake St. John, Nichicun, or west into Mistassini over well known trails and rivers” (1948: 89). Both of these suggestions deserve further consideration. The Saapaanikuu area is known to be an excellent location for fishing and for waterfowl hunting, especially in the spring. With respect to travel routes, it is becoming clearer that Saapaanikuu was indeed on a major, ancient travel route between Lake Saint-Jean and James Bay, and that this same route was one of those used for the transport of quartzite from the Colline Blanche, south to Lake Saint-Jean.

46
Rousseau (1950) has argued convincingly that in the course of Albanel's 1671 voyage to James Bay, his guides led him across the height of land at the headwaters of the Nestoacano River and thence to Lake Albanel. Linking modern Cree place-names and those recorded on Laure’s maps from the 1730s allows us to add an important additional detail: that the route taken to Lake Albanel from the height of land was likely via the Métaweshish River, known to the Mistissini people as Sapaanikuu Siipi. In particular, Saapaanikuu would appear to relate to the term Chabanonkoué, Chabamonkué, Chabanonkoue, etc. found on the various versions of the map produced by Father Laure between 1730 and 1731 (Martijn 1995). The term Chabononkoué likely designates Lake Grenier (known to Crees as Saapaanikuu Saakihiikan) or the bay at the confluence of the Métaweshish and Témiscamie rivers. The Laure map mentions the “Portage du Père Albanel”, referred to in Albanel's account of his journey, and locates this portage near Chabanonkoué. We tentatively associate this portage with the Berry-picking.

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6Rousseau appears to confuse the “Nestowkanow” and the modern Métaweshish rivers in his account, suggesting that Albanel descended the Nestowkanow to Lake Albanel. This is impossible as the Nestaocano River flows from the height of land to the south, into the Chef and Ashuapmushuan rivers.
Portage,\(^7\) described above, lending support to our interpretation that Albanel entered the Témiscamie and Lake Albanel via the Métaweshish River.

If we are correct in asserting that the Métaweshish was the route taken by Albanel's party in 1671, this bolsters the proposition that the Métaweshish River was part of a known (and perhaps, well-used) canoe route connecting Lake Saint-Jean and Lake Albanel (and the Colline Blanche) and, ultimately, James Bay. And if this is so, then the presence of this travel route could be an important part of the interpretation of the concentration of sites in the Saapaanikuu area, near the confluence with the Témiscamie.

Other possibilities are much more speculative, but deserve further consideration in the course of future archaeological work. For example, it is possible that this bay was a place where different groups, or families that were part of the same “band” would meet at a particular time of the year. Additionally, it could have been a location where exchanges or trading (including Mistassini quartzite) took place.

To summarise this section, it should be clear that the confluence of the Métaweshish and Témiscamie rivers, and the adjacent bay or lake (part of Saapaanikuu) are of great historical and archaeological significance, and although this area is still poorly known, it could figure prominently in interpretative material relating to the future park.

Again, because of the concentration of sites, this could perhaps be considered a “sensitive” zone. Special consideration of the archaeological variable should be given when considering future activities or development within this portion of the park.

4.4 *The UUPIICHUUN area*

The *UUPIICHUUN* area (Figure 10) is extremely important from a historical and archaeological perspective and, like the other areas mentioned in this chapter, deserves special consideration with respect to public presentation and interpretation. The key factor relating to the human occupation of this

\(^7\)This is in contrast with Rousseau, who related this portage with *Pastaskow* (“at the height of land”). However, this would seem to derive from the confusion between the Nestaocano and Métaweshish rivers, referred to in the previous footnote.
zone is its location where the waters from Lake Albanel flow into Lake Mistassini via a 2-km-long, rapid-strewn, stretch of river known as *Uupiichuun* (“swift water narrows”). The drop in elevation between the two lakes is over 14 m and as this channel is, for the most part, unnavigable, there is a major portage located on the west side, which is known as the *Uupiichuun Kaapatakakan* ("Uupiichuun Portage").

![Figure 10: The Uupiichuun area](image)

The *Uupiichuun* area represents both a connection between these two immense lakes, and a major obstacle to be overcome by travellers. As one of only a few places where crossing between Lakes Albanel and Mistissini is feasible by canoe, it is easy to imagine that a great many travellers have passed through here over the millennia.
The **Uupiichuun** Portage is not the only challenge faced by canoe travellers. The bay (Crépieul Bay) that opens at the foot of the portage, on the Lake Mistassini side, is relatively sheltered, but beyond it lies an immense stretch of Lake Mistassini (over 5 km at the narrowest). It seems likely that Crépieul Bay always served (among other things) as a place where canoe travellers waited for calm waters before setting out on the big lake, or (for those heading in the opposite direction) where they rested before undertaking the long portage.

An important part of the interest for public interpretation for this zone relates to the fact that it was the hub of European trading and missionary activity in the late 17th and first half of the 18th centuries. While the presence of French traders and missionaries undoubtedly attracted native people, it seems likely that **Uupiichuun** was always a centre of activity for Mistassini people. Our preliminary archaeological investigations, consisting of some survey work and the partial excavation of one site, as well as earlier surveys conducted by Rogers, tend to support this conclusion.

Again, because of the concentration of sites in the **Uupiichuun** area (including European sites yet to be identified), this could perhaps be considered a “sensitive” zone. Special consideration of the archaeological variable should be given when considering future activities or development within this portion of the park.

### 4.4.1 The Pointe des Mistassins

All five known versions of the map produced under the supervision of Father Laure between 1731 and 1733 (Martijn 1995) contain a reference to a place named the “Pointe des Mistassins” or the “P. des Mistassins”. While no explanation is provided for the Pointe des Mistassins, and we have yet to find additional historical documentation, it can be hypothesised that this was an habitual camping place of the **Mistassins** at the time of operation of the Maison des Dorvals in the 1730-1750 period, or perhaps earlier, at the time of the Jolliet post in the late 1600s.

The Laure maps show the Pointe des Mistassins as a point extending to the northeast into Lake Albanel, not far from and on the western side of the river known as **Uupiichuun**. Two possible candidates were identified, the most likely being a small cape located just south of the head of the portage. At this location Rogers collected quartzite artifacts over a 200-yd. stretch of shore in 1947 and excavated a
small trench in 1948. At the cape close to Uupiichuun, our tests revealed a fairly large site, roughly 1,500 m². Despite the fact that no European material which could date to the 17th or 18th centuries was found in the testing, the size and location of this site make it a very likely best candidate for the Pointe des Mistassins. Further excavation will be required to bolster this interpretation.

In any case, the nature and location in the soil profile of some of the quartzite artifacts here strongly suggest that the use of the site began well before the arrival of the French. The Cree name for this point is *Kaamichsteyinastikaach* (“balsam fir point”). In modern times it has been used primarily in the fall, by people travelling by canoe from Mistissini through Lake Albanel, and who would rest for a day or so after taking the *Uupiichuun* Portage. In the spring, this place was used less because people were generally in a hurry to reach the Mistassini post.

### 4.4.2 The portage

The *Uupiichuun* Portage itself should be considered an important heritage resource. How long this portage route has been used is not known. The present portage route appears on a map by Bélanger (1929). It can be argued that the same route, to the west side of the *Uupiichuun* rapids, is illustrated in a 1733 version of the Laure map (referred to by Martijn [1995] as the Laure 1733 Prototype map). The presence of site EgFg-39 (see below), located at the lower end of the portage, suggests that this route may have been used for at least 2,000 years.

### 4.4.3 EgFg-39

Several factors other than distance may have had an impact on the amount of Mistassini quartzite found outside the “Témiscamie lithic procurement / workshop zone”: for example, the local topography and logistics. To verify this hypothesis, excavations were undertaken on site EgFg-39 at the northwest end of the *Uupiichuun* Portage between lakes Albanel and Mistassini. This long portage represents a major break in the topography. Travellers who had acquired quartzite from the Colline Blanche probably decided, before passing through the portage, to reduce the size of their preforms and thus the weight of the stone they had to transport.

EgFg-39 is situated on the Mistassini Lake side of the portage, at the bottom of a small bay. The site contains several buried humus layers, separated by aeolian sand, and can be divided into three
occupation levels. The first level has been dated to the 19th century through the presence of a glass bead. The second, which is defined by its stratigraphic context and the presence of a small point on a flake characteristic of the late pre-contact era and the 17th century, may date from between 1200 and 1600 A.D. As for the third level, which contained two hearth structures of roughly the same age, it might date, according to the overlapping of two $^{14}$C dates, from between 2000 and 1200 B.P.

### 4.4.4 Crépieul Bay

Crépieul Bay is located on the lower (Mistassini Lake) side of the *Uupiichuun* Portage. It is the site of a number of known archaeological sites. The most significant of these, described briefly below, were recorded in the course of surveys associated with the Mistissini Archaeology Project.

As already mentioned, Laure’s maps of the 1730s indicate that the *Uupiichuun* was the main focus of French attention in the Mistassini area. The maps suggest the general location of a trading establishment operating at this time and referred to as the Maison des Dorvals, and record another location as “ancien établissement”, presumed to be the trading post built by Louis Jolliet in 1679. This post is also marked on both Jolliet’s 1679 and 1684 maps. Its general location on all these maps corresponds with the Mistassini side of the *Uupiichuun* Portage.

These data suggest that the French activities in the *Uupiichuun* area centred on this bay. Although our initial efforts to find archaeological remains associated with these trading posts were not successful, the archaeological potential remains very high.

#### 4.4.4.1 The Jolliet trading post

In 1679, Louis Jolliet established the first trading post on Lake Mistassini. This post was subsequently operated by Jolliet's brother, Zacharie. It is not known for how many years the post was maintained. Following Rousseau's (1948) analysis, it was considered possible that the Maison Jolliet might have been situated at the lower end of the portage, where EgFg-39 is located. The location was visited by Rousseau and thought to correspond with the map location for the “ancien établissement” on the Laure maps.
Initial tests at the site in 1995 produced a spall-type gun flint, dating to the 18th century or earlier, lending support to this possibility. However, the excavations at EgFg-39 did not produce additional evidence in the form of European artifacts dating to the late 17th-century period.

4.4.4.2 The Maison des Dorvals

The Maison des Dorvals was a trading post operated on Lake Mistassini by Joseph Dorval as part of the Traite de Tadoussac. It operated from about 1730, apparently until around 1746. Those trading at this post in the 1730s included the “Grands Mistassins”, a group having 43 heads of families, and who hunted and fished on and around Mistassini Lake (Castonguay 1987).

According to the Laure maps, the Maison des Dorvals appears to have been located on the Lake Mistassini side of the portage, to the west of the “ancien établissement”. Martijn, based on his examination of a colour reproduction of a map which apparently served as a prototype for the Laure / Guyot map of 1733, suggests Point Saint-Nicholas as the probable location (1995: 23-C). Though preliminary testing carried out on this point in 1995 failed to unearth any evidence of historic (or pre-contact) occupation, evidence from this version of the Laure map is strong enough to warrant further, more intensive testing, at this location.

4.4.4.3 The Sainte-Famille mission

The Third Register of Tadoussac records that Father Crépieul8 had a mission built in 1702 by a certain Nicholas Bonhomme, accompanied by two Montagnais guides, Chief Charles Kicherini8 and Ignace Ra8chin. Bonhomme was sent to the apparently already existing mission station on Lake Mistassini with 10 Frenchmen and 2 Montagnais, where they are said to have rebuilt the mission (“domus”) and prepared a common cemetery (especially for the children?) (Nantais and Rousseau, n.d., cited in Martijn 1995: 21, who also quotes the original Latin from Hébert 1976: 269).

Nantais and Rousseau (n.d., cited in Martijn 1995: 21) believed that the Sainte-Famille mission was located on Point Saint-Nicholas. Again, our preliminary tests, which were focused on the tip of the

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8 Father Crépieul apparently visited the Mistassini area in 1673 and for 30 years continued to minister to the Mistassini people, both at Chicoutimi and during visits to Mistassini (Morantz 1993).
point and on one location on the southeast side, failed to bring to light any physical evidence of the mission. It is clear that more intensive testing should be carried out at this location.

4.4.4.4 Île de la Cache

Île de la Cache is a long narrow island, the southern end of which is about 500 m northwest of the outlet of the Uupiichuun River into Lake Mistassini, near the bottom of the rapids. Trappers indicated that this was an important spring camping place. In particular, John Mattawashish noted that lake trout fishing by set line is excellent here at that season.

The southern end of the island was tested, producing quartzite chipping debris over an area of about 500 m², or most of the tip of the island.

While it is clear that Île de la Cache has long been a camping site for Mistassini people, the southern end of the island is also a possible location for the Jolliet trading post.

4.4.4.5 Saint-Jean Point

Saint-Jean Point, or Uupiichuunumichsteyaua (“Uupiichuun Point”) is at the furthest western reach of the bay. This was a common stopping place used in the spring for people waiting to head back to the Mistassini post. Among other things, people would wait here for calm weather before venturing onto the open waters of Lake Mistassini. Testing revealed the presence of quartzite flakes over a distance of some 140 m along and at the tip of the point. Because most of the testing was confined to clearings representing the location of modern camps, it is not clear whether this is a continuous site or discontinuous scatters. It is very plausible that this site was also used in pre-contact times as a stopping place where people waited for calm weather.
4.5 Akuhpitin / Mistissiniiuukamikw

In contrast to the other two zones, there has been no previous archaeological exploration in zone 3. Our work here focused on several locations mentioned by elders as having historical importance for the community. While sites were found in a number of areas within this zone, we will only comment on the two main areas examined. The first is the place known as Mistissiniukaamikw, or Mistassini House. The name has several related referents: It is the name of an island, officially, Clouston Island. It is also the name of a large section of Mistassini Lake in which this island is found, a section particularly known for lake trout fishing. And the name is linked to the famous large rock, or Mista-assini, located on another island in this section of the lake, and from which the name of the lake is said to derive.

Several Mistissini elders regard Mistissiniukaamikw as the location of the first trading post in the region and an important Cree gathering location. Elders state that one or two small trading establishments

Figure 11: Archaeological sites in the Akuhpitin / Mistissiniiuukamikw area.

In contrast to the other two zones, there has been no previous archaeological exploration in zone 3. Our work here focused on several locations mentioned by elders as having historical importance for the community. While sites were found in a number of areas within this zone, we will only comment on the two main areas examined. The first is the place known as Mistissiniukaamikw, or Mistassini House. The name has several related referents: It is the name of an island, officially, Clouston Island. It is also the name of a large section of Mistassini Lake in which this island is found, a section particularly known for lake trout fishing. And the name is linked to the famous large rock, or Mista-assini, located on another island in this section of the lake, and from which the name of the lake is said to derive.

Several Mistissini elders regard Mistissiniukaamikw as the location of the first trading post in the region and an important Cree gathering location. Elders state that one or two small trading establishments
were also located here during the 20th century, and are also associated with the name. The island called *Mistissiniukaamikw* is also known as a stopping place for people travelling to and from their traplines. The one documented trading post thought to have been in this general area was a fishing and trading station established by James Clouston in 1818, which operated for just a year or two.

Testing was focused initially at the location on the island known as *Mistissiniukaamikw* where the elder with our team, Matthew Shecappio, had been told by his father that the old post was located. Testing in this area was hampered by the extreme thickness of the surface vegetation and the tenacity of the Sheeps Laurel, which grows in profusion along this section of the lake and the Rupert River. Tests ultimately revealed a single gunflint, a possible log sleeper and some lead bird shot. These finds may relate to the 1818 outpost.

Additional testing was carried out in a number of other locations thought to be associated with trading posts in the *Mistissiniukaamikw* area, but with no positive results, though several presumed pre-contact sites were found. From an archaeological perspective, many questions remain regarding the trading establishments and the historic significance of this area. Cree oral tradition suggests the possibility that there was a much older trading post here. And clearly, there were more recent ones whose general location is known, but which could not be detected archaeologically or located precisely in our survey.

The second focus of the testing was the *Mistissini kapaatakansh*, or “Mistassini little portage”, which provides direct access to the Rupert River from the *Mistissiniukaamikw* section of the lake via a very short portage. Several elders stressed the historic importance of the area around the portage. As noted by George Matoush, Sr.:

The portage named Mistissini is where people gathered before going to their hunting grounds. At this place, they usually hunted for ducks and if it was a success a feast was held which was another way of meeting other people. A piece of the game was sacrificed for thanksgiving to the lake for security and good hunting, This gathering was for only a short time and after this the people separated, each going to their hunting grounds.

The survey in this zone resulted in the recording of a number of sites on both sides of the portage. Those located at the ends of the portage itself were small; however, on the Rupert River side, one large
site was found not far to the north of the portage and another large site was recorded at a popular spring and fall camping place called Kaaweyapichuushit.

Testing in all sites produced flakes of Mistassini quartzite. Flakes of several other lithic raw materials were found along with Mistassini quartzite at Kaaweyapiichuushit. A gunflint from a site at one end of the portage represents the only historic European artifact recovered. While it is clear that the portages were intensively used during the historic period by people travelling to and from the Mistassini post at the south end of Lake Mistassini, and by the canoe brigades taking furs to Rupert House and resupplying the Mistassini post, the preliminary results of our survey suggest that the portage was likely used for a much longer period. The relatively large size of two of the sites found suggests the kind of gathering together of several families described by George Matoush, Sr.
5 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has presented an overview of current archaeological knowledge of the area of the proposed conservation park. In chapter 3, we presented the general themes that have guided recent archaeological research, and looked at the current state of knowledge in relation to these themes.

In chapter 4, we took a more geographic approach, presenting sites and areas of particular archaeological interest within the three general areas in which research has been conducted, to date. The suggestion is that these sites or zones of archaeological interest could eventually play a role with respect to public interpretation. Some could perhaps become cultural attractions for visitors to the park, perhaps within canoe circuits.

Equally important, the eventual development plan for the park must also emphasise the protection of archaeological sites in such areas that are likely to receive an increased number of visitors as a result of the establishment of the park, or where infrastructural developments are planned that could disturb archaeological sites. It is clear that certain zones (such as the Colline Blanche) are extremely sensitive, and must be off-limits, except for visits provided by trained Cree guides. Other zones, such as Uupiichuun and Saapanikuu and the confluence of the Témiscamie and Métaweshish rivers, contain relatively large numbers of sites, and this fact should be taken into account in the course of the park planning process to ensure the long-term protection of these sites.

5.1 Recommendations

5.1.1 Short-term: Activities proposed for 2002

5.1.1.1 Continued surveys in the Uupiichuun area

The importance of the Uupiichuun area has been emphasised many times in this report. Among other things, this appears to have been the principal locus of interaction between the Mistassins and the French in the late 17th and the first half of the 18th century. At least this is the picture provided by the documentary, and especially the cartographic evidence. For now, the archaeological evidence is limited to one site, which according to its size and location, could correspond to the “Pointe des Mistassins” referred to on the Laure maps. However, as yet, we have little evidence in the form of European trade
goods that this site was in fact used in the late 17th or 18th centuries. Likewise, we have yet to find any evidence of the two French trading posts and the mission site which the documentary evidence places in the *Uupiichuun* area, on the Lake Mistassini side.

It is recommended that the following work be carried out in the summer of 2002:

- Further survey work aimed at locating the French establishments in the Crépieul Bay area on the Lake Mistassini side of the *Uupiichuun* Portage.

- Additional testing of the site on the Albanel side of the *Uupiichuun* Portage that has been proposed to be the “Pointe des Mistassins”. The goal would be to further investigate the occupations at this site and, in particular, to determine whether there are significant occupations dating to the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is recommended that a joint project to carry out this work be developed with the collaboration of Fapaq, the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the Cree Regional Authority.

**5.1.1.2 Public interpretation and presentation**

The archaeological and historical information related to the various themes presented in this report should be interpreted in the context of the exhibition to be held in the hotel under construction in the community of Mistissini. The exhibition will sensitize users of the future park to the value of this heritage, and to the fact that cultural values are just as important as ecological integrity and should be preserved and presented within the context of this enormous park.

**5.1.2 Medium and long-term**

**5.1.2.1 Continued surveys in other geographic zones**

It is important to stress that our archaeological knowledge is very much limited to a couple of geographic zones and that much of the area of the proposed park remains completely unexplored and unknown. With the exception of the lower section of the river and the area around the Colline Blanche, the entire course of the Témiscamie River remains unsurveyed. Likewise, there have been no
archaeological surveys in the vast portions of the Otish Mountains that have been set aside as part of the park reserve. Both from a research perspective — understanding how the use of these geographically diverse areas fits into broad land-use and resource-use patterns, over the millennia — and from a site protection / management perspective, archaeological knowledge from all geographical regions of the proposed park are required.

It is thus proposed that a program to acquire archaeological knowledge from all geographic sectors of the proposed park be initiated, beginning in 2003, with a survey of representative sections of the middle and upper Témiscamie River, and continuing in 2004 (and perhaps 2005) with a survey in representative sections of the Otish Mountains.

It has been suggested that the area of the proposed park could be expanded to include the entire area of Lake Mistassini. In that case, it would be necessary to begin a program to systematically survey representative areas within the various ecological zones of the lake.

5.1.2.1.1 Archaeological resource management

In 1995 and 1996, we began the process of systematically testing in the wooded areas behind the shorelines where E.S. Rogers and his colleagues had collected artifacts from the surface. In most cases, this revealed significant in situ archaeological deposits. In some cases, quite large sites were identified in this manner. This same process should be carried out for all sites known only on the basis of surface finds (or a very small number of tests). This systematic assessment of the sites in the area is important for both research and management purposes.

In the course of the present contract, we have prepared a GIS database of the archaeological sites in the area of the proposed park. It will be necessary to maintain and up-date (and perhaps adapt) this database, which is seen as an important management tool for the archaeological resource.

5.1.2.1.2 Continued research in the “core” area

Following the survey work proposed for the summer of 2002, it will be necessary to examine our goals in relation to the research themes, to determine priorities for continuing research in the “core” areas of Uupiichuun and Saapanikuu and the confluence of the Témiscamie and Métaweshish rivers. Further
surveys and site assessments may be suggested by the analysis of the Rogers collection in areas that have not yet been explored by our teams, and further excavations, for example, at the “Pointe des Mistassins,” may be indicated.
REFERENCES CITED


