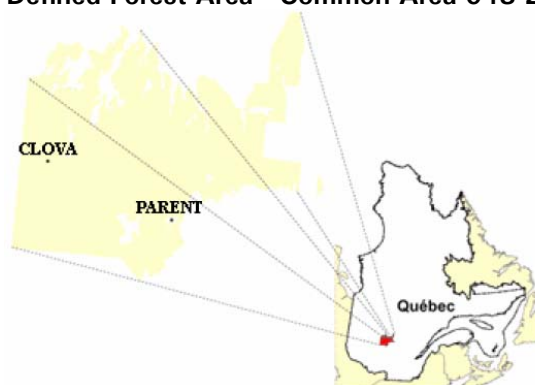


DESCRIPTION OF DEFINED FOREST AREA

Biophysical Description

Situated in the northern section of the Mauricie Administrative Region, i.e. the Upper Mauricie, the DFA is mostly located south of the Gouin Reservoir and west of the St. Maurice River. It has a total surface area of 770,637 hectares, of which 639,904 hectares are considered to be productive forest territory and subject to forest management activities. (Abstract from the General Forest Management Plan : Horizon 2000-2024 for Common Area 043-20). The 130,733 hectares considered to be unproductive in terms of forestry are composed of lakes, watercourses, wetlands, barren dry land, energy transport lines, etc.

Defined Forest Area - Common Area 043-20



In general, the DFA is a fairly flat region; 70% of the territory has a slope of less than 10%. However, some sectors concentrated in the south and the east of the DFA are very hilly.

The DFA is located in a boreal zone in the bioclimatic domain of balsam fir and white birch, sub-domain of the west (5). The latter is subdivided into ecological regions and sub-regions. The sub-regions are divided according to climatic characteristics, vegetation, altitude, relief and surface deposits.

Main Characteristics of the 2 Sub-regions Present

Ecological Sub-Region	Altitude	Relief	Deposits
Gouin Reservoir Hills (5bT)	About 425 meters	Slopes	Glacial deposits (Tills) made up of clay and loam mixed with sand, gravel or blocks. They are thin on the eroded summits and thicker on the lower hillsides and the valley floors.
Lac Lareau Hills (5cT)	Between 400 and 600 meters	Hillocks and high hills	

The Vegetation

The DFA forest landscape is dominated by stands of balsam fir and white spruce, mixed with white birch on fertile, well-drained land. On the less favorable land, black spruce, jack pine and larch are often found with white birch and trembling aspen. Yellow birch and red maple appear sporadically in the best sites in the south of the territory. Forest fires and spruce budworm epidemics are at the origin of the abundance of hardwood and mixed stands of light-demanding species (trembling aspen, white birch and jack pine).

Distribution of Main Groups of Species

Groups of Species	Proportion of productive forest territory (%)
Larch stands	0.1
Spruce stands	27.1
Jack pine stands	13.4
Fir stands	0.7
Other softwoods or undefined softwoods	3.5
Total softwood	44.7
Stands of white birch with softwood	12.3
Intolerant hardwood species with softwood	6.5
Poplar stands with softwood	1.9
Other mixes or undefined mixes	7.8
Total mixed	28.5
White birch stands	6.3
Yellow birch stands	0.04
Intolerant hardwood species	4.2
Poplar stands	0.6
Other hardwoods or undefined hardwoods	1.5
Total hardwoods	12.6
Under regeneration	14.2

Occupation of the Territory

The main populated areas inside the DFA are Clova and the town of La Tuque with the subdivision of Parent. They were founded in the first half of the 19th century for the construction and maintenance of the railroad and for forestry activities. Today there are about 50 people living in Clova and 450 in Parent. This is where many hunting and fishing enthusiasts replenish their supplies, and they represent an important stop for the Upper-Saint-Mauricie snowmobile and ATV circuits.

Aboriginal presence in the DFA goes back several thousand years. Today, occupation of the DFA by the Atikamekw is reflected by the use of familial territories for traditional activities by the Opitciwan and Wemotaci, two reservations located respectively on the northern and eastern periphery of the DFA. The Opitciwan and Wemotaci communities have exclusive trapping rights on the Abitibi Obedjiwan and Weymontachingue division beaver reserves. There are a little over 3,000 people living in these communities.

Location, Population and Area of Aboriginal Communities

Reservation	Location	Population	Area
Opitciwan	On the north shore of the Gouin Reservoir, about 170 km (as the crow flies) NW of La Tuque	1,881	9.25 km ²
Wemotaci	On the north shore of the St-Maurice, about 100 km (as the crow flies) NW of La Tuque	1,234	34.58 km ²

Source: www.cnalatuque.com, 24/06/03

The DFA can be accessed by train, road and air, as there are several landing strips and many waterways. The railroad network crosses the DFA from east to west, linking the communities of Parent and Clova. The main road network allows the DFA to be reached from the east via La Tuque, from the southwest via Mont-Laurier and from the west via Senneterre.

HISTORY OF NATURAL DISASTERS

Fire History

168,230 of the 769,742 hectares (i.e. 21% of the forest territory) that make up the total forest area of Common Area 043-20 which have been documented since 1923 show definite signs of fires. The areas of these fires vary enormously: the two largest ones (in 1923 and 1995) each devastated an area of 67,000 hectares. Looking at the frequency and the size of the fires since 1923, we can expect to see a fire of at least 5,000 hectares every 19 years due to various cyclical factors that predispose forest fires.

History of Epidemics

Early 20th-century forest management plans submitted by timber limits holders report various insect epidemics that have ravaged the territory. Consulting them we find the spruce budworm (SBW) (*Choristoneura fumiferana* Clem.) and the Swaine jack pine sawfly (*Neodiprion swainei* Midd.), two insects that have caused significant damage in recent times.

The SBW is an insect that has had a strong impact on forest stocks. Since the beginning of the 1900s, there have been three major SBW epidemics that have affected the forests in the DFA to various degrees.

The southern part of the DFA and the westernmost section were the worst hit. An important Swaine jack pine sawfly epidemic was documented at the end of the 1930s, with death in the jack pine forest becoming apparent around 1942-1943.

History of Forest Management Activities

The DFA was first harvested around 1930 to supply the pulp and paper mills in the Mauricie. After that, forest harvesting was performed in the west sector of the DFA to supply mills in the Outaouais, then in the central section of the DFA to supply the Parent sawmill.

The first reforestation work took place around 1985 and was performed by the Ministry of Forests at that time. At the end of the 2002 season, an area of 30,838 hectares had been put back into production through reforestation. Pre-commercial thinning of natural stands began in 1991, for a total of 5,957 hectares at the end of 2002. Currently, silviculture work is carried out on over 5,000 hectares every year.

Forest Companies

The Government of Quebec has awarded Forest Management Agreements (FMA) to five forest companies in the DFA.

Description of FMA Holders

Forest Companies Holding an FMA	Location of Mill	Species	Volume in DFA Awarded (m ³)	Converting Capacity (m ³)	Converted Product
Gérard Crête & Fils inc.	Saint-Roch-de-Mékinac	FSJL	1,000	350,000	Lumber
Gérard Crête & Fils inc.	Saint-Séverin-de-Proulxville	FSJL	31,000	400,000	Lumber
Gérard Crête & Fils inc.	La Tuque	FSJL	12,000	350,000	Lumber
Kruger Inc. Scierie Parent	Parent	FSJL	600,000	750,000	Lumber
Kruger Wayagamack inc.	Trois-Rivières	FSJL	76,900	750,000	Pulp and Paper
Industries Légaré Inc.	Saint-Raymond	JP	15,100	25,000	Posts
Industries John Lewis Ltd	La Tuque	WB	9,000	75,000	Wooden Items
Louisiana-Pacific Canada Ltd	Saint-Michel-des-Saints	TA WB	76,300 45,800	n/d	Panels

The annual global forest possibility of the DFA is 999 800 m³ for the following three groups of species:

Species or Group of Species	Annual Forest Possibility (m ³)
FSJL (fir, spruce, jack pine, larch)	748,100
White birch	141,000
Poplar	110,700

The softwood species supply the six mills that produce lumber, paper and posts for electricity and telephone networks. The hardwood species supply two converting mills. White birch is used in the manufacture of oriented strandboard panels and wooden sticks. Poplar is used to manufacture oriented strandboard panels.

THE VARIOUS DFA USERS

Gouin Reservoir

The Gouin Reservoir, which borders the DFA to the north, is one of DFA's major attractions. This vast stretch of water created by the Gouin Dam, allows Hydro-Québec to control the flow of the Saint-Maurice River.

The Gouin Reservoir is a community wildlife area (CWA), which means that it is a public body of water for which the communities have exclusive fishing rights leases. Management of this body of water is awarded to a non-profit organization.

The Outfitters

There are significant hunting and fishing activities in the DFA and they contribute greatly to the regional economic development. There are over thirty outfitters, seven of which have exclusive rights.

For the period from 1995 to 1997, all of the outfitters combined recorded from 33,000 to 46,000 recreation days.

For outfitters with exclusive rights 4,186 recreation-days (86%) on average were consigned to fishing activities while 684 days (14%) were for hunting.

For outfitters without exclusive rights, the proportion of fishing recreation days is more significant, i.e. 34,050 days (97%), while only 894 recreation days (3%) were for hunting.

Vacationers

This group includes all terrain vehicle (ATV), snowmobile and outdoor sports enthusiasts as well as holders of cottage land leases.

The DFA is streaked with many ATV and snowmobile trails. Each year, this network attracts many members of associations connected with these sports and many tourists. Dog-sled trails, and canoe camping trips are also offered to outdoor enthusiasts. The Bazin River is a canoe-camping route that has been recognized and mapped by the Quebec Canoe and Kayak Federation.

Close to 700 chalets dot the DFA. Hunting and fishing are among the main activities for these vacationers.