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## MOUNT GOSFORD'S INHABITED FOREST

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ISSUE: Focus on the natural rural resource

### ITINERARY 7C

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Location: Lac-Mégantic Golf Club

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## PROMOTER

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### Presentation of the issue:

There are several rights holders of our public lands. How can we develop with the public interest in mind, while respecting the interests of each rights holder?

### Project description:

1. Acquisition of a harvesting right for wood substance for the City of Woburn's public territory (inhabited forest status);
2. Creation of a collaborative body: Mount Gosford Management;
3. Development of a multi-resource development plan;
4. Forest planning (10 years, 5 years, 1 year);
5. Infrastructure development (e.g. roads) toward forest harvesting;
6. Development of touristic infrastructures (rustic cabins, hiking trails, etc.);
7. Multi-resource development renewal strategy.

For about three decades, the territory has comprised a Z.E.C. (controlled harvesting zone). One of our biggest challenges has been, and remains, to bring the existing land users to elaborate a comprehensive development vision that integrates all multi-resource activities.

This is a major challenge, because, pursuant to the law, the Z.E.C. owns the rights to multi-resource development, but it is the municipality that wants to develop the multi-resource aspect (and who has developed it, for that matter). The other partners from the Mont Gosford Management (GMG) can only influence the decisions.

**The key elements to remember according to the promoter:**

We notice that the situation is gradually improving. Time is on our side. There have been many interactions between the stakeholders, and this has improved each party's knowledge of each other. The other players part of GMG are more involved and bring a deep knowledge of their field to the discussions (e.g. tourism and recreation, forestry), which helps form a common vision of development.

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**RESEARCHER**

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**Summary of the researcher's presentation:**

Recently, a new forest system and Act were issued, and the concept of local inhabited forest is included. However, the development of this idea has been postponed to a later date by the government.

The inhabited forest concept was already present in 1940, but not in those terms. In 1971, the inhabited forest concept is revisited with the Green Paper.

The characteristics of the inhabited forest are:

- area managed for multiple purposes;
- decision-making process led by the communities;
- tangible socio-economic benefits to the community;
- its development requires openness and support from the government.

There are currently a few model forests in Quebec.

The goals of the Departments and those of the local players are different, which makes interventions in these forests more difficult. The Sustainable Forest Development Act was assented last April. Several participatory forest management tools are included.

**The key elements to remember according to the researcher:**

- we need help from the State to create these forests;
- the stakeholders require money to manage it;
- an inhabited forest policy is necessary;
- therefore, both political and economic support is needed to develop this forest model.

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## QUESTION PERIOD

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### Questions for the sponsor:

Q.: Can you quantify the financial benefits for the region in connection with the management of this forest?

A.: This is pretty vague; we can assess the impact from wood substances. However, it is harder to do so in regard to recreation and tourism areas, hotel stays, etc. It is also difficult to have a stable yearly budget.

### Questions for the researcher:

Q.: What do you think are the actual intentions of the PQ with the recent policies, considering the latest version of the Act is so watered down?

A.: The latest version of the Act is watered down due to the constant pressure from forest industry lobbies.

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## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

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**NOTE: All linked documents (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) are only available in their original French version.**

PowerPoint from Nathalie Lewis, UQAR

Web site for the Mount Gosford inhabited forest : [www.montgosford.com](http://www.montgosford.com)