

CREATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATORY FOR THE BAY OF SEPT-ÎLES

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Sept-Îles, August 26, 2013 – Cégep de Sept-Îles, the City of Sept-Îles, Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles, Développement économique Sept-Îles, and the Port of Sept-Îles this morning announced the creation of an environmental observatory for the Bay of Sept-Îles that will be headed by Institut nordique de recherche en environnement et en santé au travail (INREST).

“I’m pleased with the creation of this observatory, which testifies to the determination of the partners involved to work together on environmental and sustainable development issues. This initiative will give the community a comprehensive overview of the bay,” said Sept-Îles mayor Serge Lévesque.

In addition to providing an environmental overview, this project seeks to:

- Update and consolidate data and metrics on the bay’s environment;
- Produce an annual monitoring report drawing on data processed by INREST;
- Predict the bay’s capacity to accommodate acceptable projects that are safe for people and the environment;
- Help existing businesses improve their environmental performance, as warranted;
- Measure the results of conservation and environmental improvement efforts in the Bay of Sept-Îles.

“To our knowledge, this integrated and ongoing research approach for an ecosystem of this kind is a first in Quebec, and possibly in Canada as a whole. It helps position us as a pioneer in the environment and sustainable development matters,” asserted Donald Bherer, executive director of Cégep de Sept-Îles.

After several months of preparation, the stakeholders agreed on a process whose startup phase will be as follows:

1. Inventory and analysis of existing data (literature review)
2. Water quality and sediment sampling
3. Production and dissemination of a final report

“The current data is insufficient for developing a long-term, overall monitoring strategy, so this startup phase will enable INREST and its partners to better structure subsequent phases planned for 2014 and 2015,” said Dr. Julie Carrière, Eng., researcher and director of the new research institute.

This important project will enhance understanding of current and future environmental impacts thanks to the acquisition of credible and updated baseline data. In addition, it will support stakeholders in their decision making and environmental management while responding to public expectations and concerns.

“The new observatory integrates the objectives pursued by Green Marine. It will help protect our valuable marine ecosystems and ensure responsible planning based on sustainable development values. This innovative initiative reflects the environmental leadership of the Port and its partners,” said Pierre D. Gagnon, president and CEO of the Port of Sept-Îles.

It will cost close to \$384,250 to get the first phase off the ground. Développement économique Sept-Îles will contribute \$50,000, the Port of Sept-Îles \$209,600, and Corporation de protection de l’environnement \$124,650. “I would like to thank the City of Sept-Îles for providing the financial support we need to carry out this project, which has been several years in the making. It’s an environmental initiative that is key to the development of our community,” said Corporation executive director Stéphanie Prévost.

Work will begin soon, and the final report for the first phase is slated for fall 2014. Phase 2 of the project, planned for next year, is expected to include research on the benthic community, eelgrass, fish, phytoplankton, macroalgae, and physical and climate data, among other aspects.

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