

The Director of Public Health for the Laurentians supports Sépaq's measures to reopen Oka provincial park

Saint-Jérôme, May 26, 2020 – In light of concerns voiced by the Kanasetake community and an analysis of epidemiological data, the Director of Public Health for the Laurentians supports the measures put forward by the Sépaq to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. These measures apply equally to vacationers who visit Oka provincial park and to the residents of surrounding communities.

“Working together with our partners on this issue, we are assisting the Kanasetake community in implementing protection measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These are transitional measures designed to evolve in line with different needs that may be expressed or epidemiological changes that may arise within the community,” said Dr. Éric Goyer, Director of Public Health for the Laurentians.

The Public Health leadership for the Laurentians is convinced that the temporary measures put forward by Sépaq will meet the needs of the Kanasetake community and of visitors who wish to enjoy nature:

- Sépaq will close the west entrance to the park (from route 344). Access to the du Calvaire sector will also be closed to visitors.
- Visitors will enter and exit by the east entrance (from highway 640) exclusively. It will not be possible for visitors (other than local residents) to access the park from the 344.
- The western access to the bicycle path toward Oka village will be restricted. Sépaq will install physical barriers at this entrance along with temporary signage. The Sûreté du Québec provincial police will monitor this entrance more closely during peak visitor periods.
- Sépaq will enable visitors to access toilets, which will be subject to stringent sanitary measures.
- Sépaq will distribute visitor information regarding transitional measures and restricted access to the park.
- A committee will be formed, working with the public health authorities, to follow up and re-evaluate these transitional measures as the epidemiological data evolves.

“We are confident that the progressive approach to reopening Oka provincial park, agreed upon with the Public Health authorities, meets the needs expressed by our visitors and by the Kanasetake community. Under present conditions, Sépaq’s priority remains at all times to protect the health and safety of the public, of the visitors and of our employees. We are modifying all our activities in accordance with Public Health directives and are sparing no effort to succeed,” said Ms. Catherine Grenier, Vice-President of Operations, Sépaq Provincial Parks.

It is important to stress that, in addition to the measures mentioned above, beach capacity at Oka provincial park will be reduced by 50% to ensure social distancing for the entire summer season.

