WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION -- IUCN SUMMARY

418: GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK (CANADA)

Summary prepared by IUCN (April 1987) based on the original nomination submitted by Canada. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

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1. LOCATION:

Located in the Province of Newfoundland on the western shore of the Great Northern Peninsular of Newfoundland. The boundary comprises a series of Canada Lands Surveys posts and the Ordinary Low Water Mark of the Gulf of St Lawrence. 49°18'-49°59'N, 57°25'-58°10'W.

2. JURIDICAL DATA:

Established under a Federal/Provincial Agreement signed by the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador on 13 August 1973. The same authorities amended this agreement on 18 May 1983, whereby approximately 9,300ha were returned to the province. Clear title to all lands was acquired in 1984 by the provincial government and has subsequently been transferred to the federal government, under the administrative responsibility of Environment Canada, Parks.

3. IDENTIFICATION:

The park comprises three distinct physiographic components: marine, a coastal plain and an alpine plateau. The major ecological units include coastal plain, piedmont moraines, the frontal slopes and upland areas of the Long Range mountains, the southern hills, and the Klippe Complex. The marine areas included in the park comprise inlets, inter-tidal and sub-littoral zones, fjord inlets, a fast flowing tidal passage and deep sea marine areas. A number of steep sided, glacial valleys cut through the Long Range scarp face forming deep, oligotrophic fjords, with vertical cliffs up to 685m high. An upland alpine plateau with perched lakes, bare rock and valleys covers a large proportion of the eastern central park. There is also an unusually complete palaeontological sequence which has been proposed as the world stratotype for the Cambrian-Ordovician boundary.

Vegetation, frequently stunted by strong prevailing winds in more exposed areas, forms up to 36 distinct communities, with some 750 vascualar species and 321 bryophytes, representing about 60% of Newfoundland's flora. Faunal diversity resembles an oceanic rather than continental-shelf island and is markedly reduced compared to the mainland. However a number of species scarce in Canada are found, including pine marten, lynx, caribou, arctic hare and seals. The more common marine mammals that can be observed from the park, albeit with a diminishing frequency in recent years include pilot whale, minke whale and finback whale. The avifauna comprises 230 arctic, boreal and pelagic species, with strays from the mainland, the north-west Atlantic and Europe. The park is significant as a breeding site for harlequin duck, blackpoll warbler, common tern, and arctic tern.

There are a number of archaeological sites in the park and human habitation can be traced back to the maritime archaic Indians, 4,500-3,000 years ago. St Pauls Inlet in the north may have been colonised by Vikings around 1000 years ago.

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION:

The park boundary excludes eight coastal settlements with a population of about 6000; there are no residents in the park. The management plan indicates that development of park infrastructure and the private sector tourist industry will diversify and enlarge employment opportunities for local communities. A total of 192,903 people visited the park in 1980-81. In addition to 120km of metalled roads a system of hiking trails allows access to more remote areas. A number of campsites, with a total of 240 site emplacements, are located in the park, and hotels and other services are available in the adjacent communities. Although the park is not at present formally established under the National Parks Act, legal protection is given by a number of Federal and Provincial statutes including the federal Forestry Development and Research Act, the Fisheries Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the provincial Newfoundland Wildlife Act.

The park landscape and natural resources have been disturbed by previous land uses and hunting has reduced wildlife populations. Further, a number of exotic species have been introduced, to the detriment of the indigenous fauna. Nevertheless, protection since 1973 has seen populations increase, with the exception of American marten Martes americana which has been eliminated from the park.

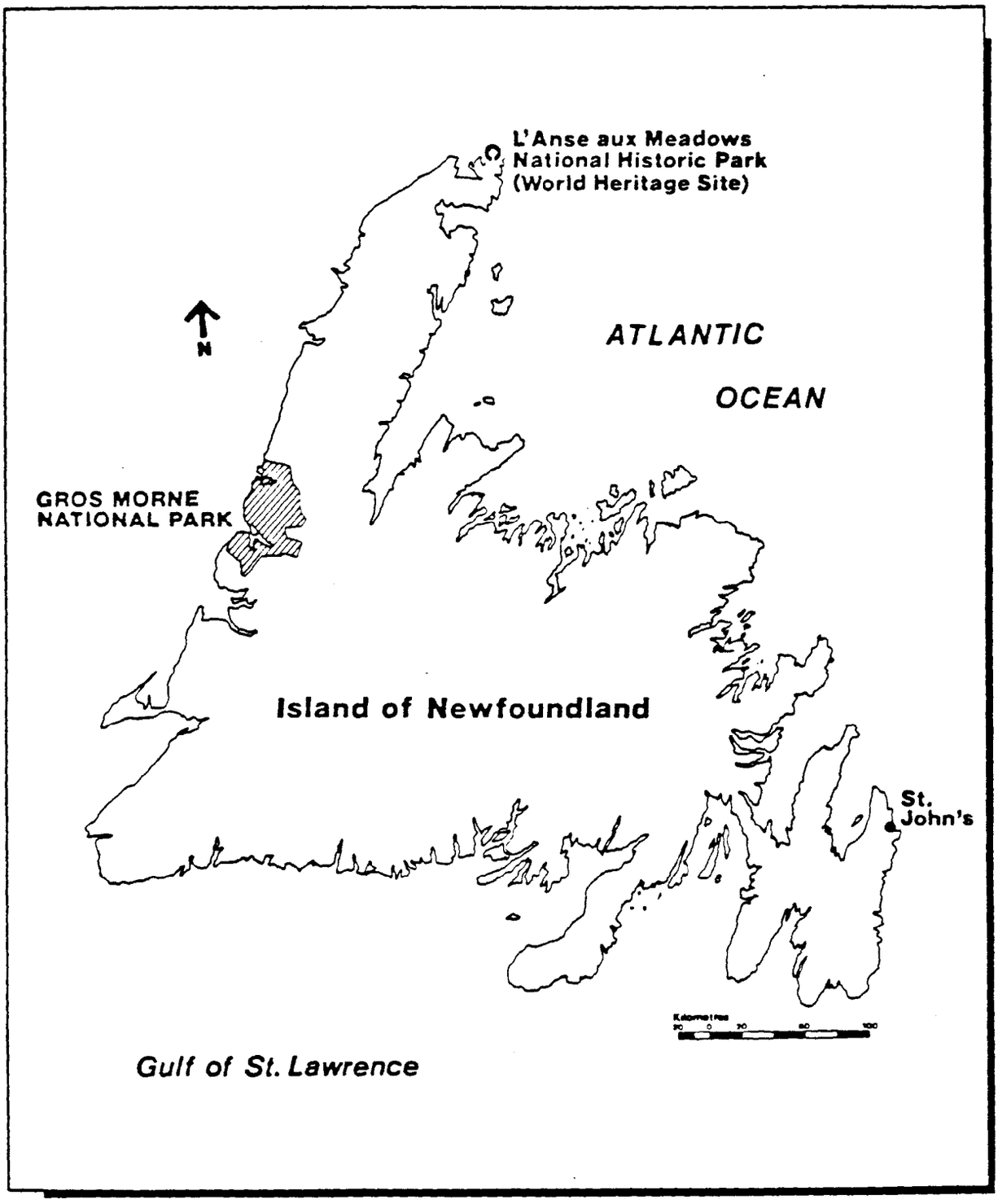
5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

The Gros Morne National Park nomination, as presented by the Government of Canada provides the following justification for designation as a World Heritage property:

a) Natural property

(i) Earth's Evolutionary History. The park is a classic locality for portrayal of the geological events that took place when the continental margin of North America was effected by tectonic plate movements.

(iii) Exceptional Natural Beauty. The fjords, waterfalls and geological structures of the park combine to produce a landscape of high scenic quality.


L'Anse aux Meadows
National Historic Park
(World Heritage Site)
N
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
GROS MORNE
NATIONAL PARK
Island of Newfoundland
St.
John's
Gulf of St. Lawrence

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION -- IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

418 GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK (Canada)

1. DOCUMENTATION:

(i) IUCN Data Sheet

(ii) Consultations: P. Dearden, A. Dufresne, A. Cloutier, A. Davidson, H. Mills, J.G. Nelson, A. Morgan, R. Scace, J. Marsh, B. May, K. Nichol, A. Boutilier, N. Williams, G. MacDonald, A. Hoole.

(iii) Literature consulted: The Dilemma of Residents and National Parks, Park News 1978, 14 (1).

(iv) Previous site visit: 1968.

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

Gros Morne is one of 41 protected areas in the Canadian Taiga Biogeographical Province. Other World Heritage sites in this Province include Nahanni and Wood Buffalo and these are physically not comparable to Gros Morne. No other park in the Nearctic has the unique geological structures as found in the nominated site. There are other occurences of ophiolites in eastern Canada but none rival the exposures found in Gros Morne. The park is quite different from Terra Nova, Newfoundland's other national park, possessing greater relief and much less vegetative cover.

The inland fjords which are a distinguishing physiographic feature of the Park are also found at Harp Lake (a geological fault lake in Labrador) and in the Torngat area of north Labrador. The latter site has been proposed as a National Park for its exceptional landscape features and its caribou herd. In any case, Gros Morne is unique in terms of its values in understanding of plate tectonics and the exposure of the "Moho discontinuity". Moreover, the relationship of the Cambro-Ordovidian boundary is also of high geological interest and may be designated as a world stratotype for the transition between the two basal periods of the Paleozoic Era.

3. INTEGRITY

Prior to its protection in 1973 the area was subject to various uses which had resulted in some depletion of wildlife populations and forest cover. Since then, however, establishment and management of the park has largely excluded resource harvesting and such use that does take place is carried out according to management strategies developed in cooperation with area residents. Efforts in nature conservation have been directed to restoration and perpetuation of species and habitats within the context of the management plan.

Over two-thirds of the park is now zoned "wilderness" or "preservation". The political impact of 6,000 people living in the area is relatively small and there are no private land holdings inside the Park. The allowances that allow wood cutting and snowshoe hare snaring for domestic use (apparently necessary to strengthen political support for the park) is strictly controlled and of minor impact on the park (15% of the area is affected). It also seems that these settlements will remain small in future, given the limited economic opportunities in the region, and that these traditional harvesting activities may be phased out. In any case, the geological features on which the nomination rests will not be adversely affected in the long term by modest shifts in populations and developments in these communities.

A proposal made to install a cable car to the plateau for tourism was approved by some conservationists and has not been implemented. It is still mentioned in the management plan as is a possible downhill ski development.

The most serious threat to Gros Morne appears to be the possible construction of a hydro-electric transmission line as part of the Lower Churchill power scheme. An environment assessment of the project determined that the selected route would have impacts on the park's caribou population and vegetation. The probability and severity of these impacts needs to be clarified.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A significant formal requirement respecting the long-term integrity of the Park's landscape and resources is the adherence of Gros Morne to the Schedule of the National Parks Act. Notwithstanding current application of various federal and provincial statutes which enable "the total protection and management of the park's lands and resources, until it is proclaimed as a national park", one reviewer has noted that inclusion of the Park in the Schedule is desirable prior to its addition to the World Heritage List. Other instances in Canada of listing prior to inclusion in the National Parks Act Schedule have occurred (e.g. Nahanni National Park). However, the appropriate sequence of events at other sites suggest that it may be desirable to uphold expectations concerning national protective legislation at World Heritage Sites.

5. EVALUATION

The Gros Morne nomination establishes a convincing case for "outstanding universal value" as this phrase relates to outstanding representation of major stages of the earth's evolutionary history (Criteria (i)). The area's geological features persist in a completely natural state and are not known to be under immediate threat of substantial human-induced modification.

The Park is a classic locality for understanding of earth's evolutionary history in terms of evolution of an ocean basin and evolution of a continental margin. Several examples are provided to emphasize the completeness of the landscape from an evolutionary perspective; those examples include materials reflecting mantle and crust sequences, the presence of xonotlite, and the best known collection of graptolites in the world.

With respect to Criterion (iii) - that of an area of exceptional natural beauty - this too, is considered to be met in respect of both the natural landscape of Gros Morne and the size and physcial and biological integrity of the area protected.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing evaluation is supportive of the inclusion of Gros Morne National Park on the World Heritage List and IUCN recommends that it be inscribed. The Bureau has sought and received (September) further information on:

1) the timing for completion of the legal process which will formally bring the Park under the protection of the National Parks Act (no date yet set but process is underway), and

2) a clarification on the possible impacts of the transmission lines from the Lower Churchill power scheme (the scheme is considered unlikely but would not have significant impacts on the park).

International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

CANADA - Newfoundland

NAME **Gros** Morne National Park

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY II (National Park)
X (World Heritage Site - Criteria: i, iii)

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE 1.04.03 (Canadian Taiga)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION Located in the province of Newfoundland and Labrad on the western shore of the Great Northern Peninsular of Newfoundland. Th park comprises part of the Long Range Mountains and faces the Gulf of St Lawrence. The mainland is some 150km to the west, and the nearest towns are Deer Lake and Corner Brook 76km south-east and 120km south by road, repectively. The boundary, detailed in Parks Canada (1986) comprises a series of Canada Lands Surveys posts and the Ordinary Low Water Mark of th Gulf of St Lawrence. 49°18′-49°59′N, 57°25′-58°10′W.

DATE AND HISTORY OF ESTABLISHMENT Established under a Federal/Provincial Agreement signed by the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrad on 13 August 1973. The same authorities amended this agreement on 18 May 1983, whereby approximately 9,300ha were returned to the province. The park is currently being formally established under the National Parks Act (Parks Canada, 1986). Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987.

AREA 180,500ha

ALTITUDE 0m-806m (**Gros** Morne Mountain)

LAND TENURE Clear title to all lands was acquired by 27 December 1984 by the Provincial government, and has subsequently been transferred to the Federal government, under the administrative responsibility of Environment Canada, Parks (Parks Canada, 1986).

PHYSICAL FEATURES The park comprises two distinct physiographic components: coastal plain and alpine plateau. The major ecological units include coastal plain, piedmont moraines, the frontal slopes and upland areas of the Long Range mountains, the southern hills, and the Klippe Complex. The marine areas included in the park comprise the inner portio of St Paul's Inlet, inter-tidal zones and estuaries (Moorhead et al., 1971). The shoreline features beaches, steep cliffs of unconsolidated deposits, and dune formations up to 30m in height which extend inland for some 1.6km in a number of places. The gently sloping coastal plain, which is bordered to the east by the Long Range fault scarp, extends inland for 4-13km and along the coast for about 55km. It is composed largely of limestone, and slopes gently seaward in a series of steps, defined by faulting in the underlying Ordovician rock (Moorhead et al., 1971). Meandering creeks, eutrophic bog lakes, dead ice moraine deposits, erratic and small patches of isostatically raised beach deposits are found on the plain (Bouchard and Hay, 1976; Moorhead et al., 1971). A number of steep sided, glacial valleys cut through the Long Range scarp face forming deep, oligotrophic fjords, with vertical cliffs up to 685m high. An upland

alpine plateau with perched lakes, bare rock and valleys covers a large proportion of the eastern central park. The serpentine hills in the south-west comprise ultra-basic volcanic rocks, which, due to a high heav metal content, inhibit most plant life. There are eight major drainage systems which, due to local topography, are all less than 34km long and tend to flow east or west. A number of waterfalls are fed in the summer snow-melt at higher altitudes. The park is geologically diverse with are of
Ordovician sedimentary rocks, pre-Cambrian granite and gneiss, Paleozoic serpentinised ultra-basic rocks, gabbros, volcanic and lower Paleozoic rocks. Exposed oceanic crust, mantle, a section of ancient Mohorovicic discontinuity, and other distinctive geological features are also found. The evolution of the North Atlantic Basin and much more recent glacial activities can be determined from these relics. There is also an unusual complete palaeontological sequence which has been proposed as the world stratotype for the Cambrian-Ordovician boundary (Parks Canada, 1986).

CLIMATE The climate is cool, wet maritime at sea level and sub-arctic at higher altitudes, and is influenced by the adjacent ocean, strong prevailing south-westerly winds from the Gulf of St Lawrence and a continual moisture excess (Bouchard and Hay, 1976). Mean annual air temperature is 3°C with a mean maximum and minimum of 15.5°C and -8.4°C i July and February, respectively; the highlands are usually some 3°C coole Mean annual precipitation levels recorded in the area are 1397mm rain and 3281mm snow, with 10-30 days of fog (Moorhead et al., 1971). Sea ice for in winter and the onset of both spring and autumn is delayed by oceanic influence.

VEGETATION Vegetation, frequently stunted by strong prevailing winds in more exposed areas, forms up to 36 distinct vegetation types and communities, with some 711 vascular species and 401 bryophytes, representing about 60% of Newfoundland's insular flora. The coast include typical shoreline communities, active dunes with white spruce Picea glauc and cliffs with prostrate spruce and balsam fir Abies balsamea. The coastal plain further inland has a number of plant communities described by Bouchard and Hay (1976) including a mosaic of sedges Carex spp. in meadows with American larch Larix laricina scrub. Black spruce P. marian dominates wet, oligotrophic sites and balsam fir is found in more protect and mesic areas. Black spruce and dwarf larch Larix sp. scrub colonises exposed moraines, giving way to an ericaceous shrub formation in the more exposed and unstable areas with alpine bearberry Vaccinium sp., alpine azalea Rhododendron canadense and diapensia. The scarp cliffs support a mixed deciduous and spruce-fir forest, becoming stunted in higher areas. Above this on the plateau a tundra vegetation has developed, varying from small areas of coniferous forest and stunted forest to bare rock. Wet meadows between rock outcrops include grasses, sedges, mosses, pitcher plant Saracenia sp., sundew Drosera sp. and purple fringed orchid Habenari psycodes. Serpenticolous plant communities have developed on the Serpentine tablelands in the south, and alpine communities are found on th Bonne Bay Highlands (Moorhead et al., 1971). Forty-three vascular plant taxa have been identified as significantly rare (Bouchard, et al., 1986). The distribution of phytogeographical groups and life-form categories of

Newfoundland and the Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's has been prominent in much of the research undertaken in the park. A bibliography of recent research is provided in the world heritage site nomination, and published material is available from the Park Superintendent, Rocky Harbour (Parks Canada, 1986).

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT Although the park is not at present formally established under the National Parks Act, legal protection is given by a number of Federal and Provincial statutes including the federal Forestry Development and Research Act, the Fisheries Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the provincial Newfoundland Wildlife Act. Under these acts, felling, rabbit snaring and aggregate extraction are permitted in controlled areas for domestic consumption by a limited number of local communities. The primary value of the park is its biotic, visual, anthropological, recreational and geological assets. Long term management objectives are to: preserve and protect natural resources, features, ecosystems and processes; protect and preserve archaelogical, historical and cultural resources and landscapes; provide interpretive and extension material and recreational facilties; ensure public safety, convenience and enjoyment; and to integrate the park with activities in its environs. Management has focussed on the development of roads, trails and basic facilites, of which five campgrounds and the Rocky Harbour visitor centre near Rock Harbour have been completed. The management plan outlines proposals for more extensive development over a 10-15 year period. The park is zoned into: zone I Special Preservation Areas (12,645ha), in which visitor use is restricted; zone II Wilderness Areas (110,105ha), in which limited extensive visitor use is allowed; zone III Natural Environment Areas (55,955ha), which are designated for domestic resource harvesting and in which visitor use is discouraged; and zone IV General Outdoor Recreation Areas and Park Roads (1,805ha), designated for intensive use. In addition a number of small Environmetally Sensitive Sites, with natural or cultural interest have beer identified (Parks Canada, not dated).

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS The park landscape and natural resources have been disturbed by previous land uses and hunting has reduced wildlife populations. Further, a number of exotic species have been introduced, to the detriment of the indigenous fauna. Nevertheless, protection since 197[illegible] has seen populations increase, with the exception of American marten Martes americana which has disappeared from the park (Parks Canada, 1986). The continued activities of the local communities will disturb specific areas for the forseeable future, and the designation of zone III areas is an attempt to reduce land-use conflicts. Whilst extensive recreation poses only a slight threat to the park, intensively used areas are likely to incur some environmental impacts. However, several management activities, such as Parks Canada's environmental assessment and review process, aim to minimise impacts (Parks Canada, not dated).

STAFF A superintendent is assisted by both full time and seasonal staff, with a total of 50 man-years available. A regional office in Halifax, Nova Scotia provides management services and assistance. It is proposed that a number of recreational facilities be operated on a commercial basis by

the vascular flora has been studied, establishing relationships between plant distributions, life-forms and vegetation types (Bouchard, et al., 1987).

FAUNA Faunal diversity resembles an oceanic rather than continental-shelf island and is markedly reduced compared to the mainland (Moorhead et al., 1971). However a number of species scarce in Canada are found, including lynx Lynx lynx ssp., caribou Rangifer tarandus ssp. and arctic hare Lepus arcticus. The more common marine mammals that can be observed from the park, albeit with a diminishing frequency in recent years (Moorhead et al., 1971) include pilot whale Globicephala melaena, minke whale Balaenoptera autorostrata, finback whale B. physalus (V) and harbour seals Phoca vitulina. The avifauna comprises 230 arctic, boreal and pelagic species, with strays from the mainland, the north-west Atlantic and Europe (Parks Canada, 1986). The park is significant: as a breeding site for harlequin duck Histrionicus histrionicus, blackpoll warbler Dendroica striata, common tern Sterna hirundo, and arctic tern S. paridisaea; for the possible presence of nesting bald eagle Haliaeetus leucocephala (E), rock ptarmigan Lagopus mutus and American tree sparrow Spizella arborea; and as a stopover for migrating shore birds. Anadramous Atlantic salmon Salmo salar and arctic char Salrelinus alpinus are found in park waters and also in permanent freshwater form in certain landlocked lakes on the Long Range Mountains (Parks Canada, 1986).

CULTURAL HERITAGE There are a number of archaeological sites in the park and human habitation can be traced back to the maritime archaic Indians, 4,500-3,000 years ago and the Dorset Eskimos, 1,800-1,200 years ago. Vikings may have temporarily resided in St Paul's Inlet in the north around 1,000 years ago. Europeans settled the area from the late 18th century on, initially supported by fishing, and then also by commercial logging from 1900. Despite developments and modernisation the coastal enclaves retain a distinctive language and cultural tradition (Moorhead et al., 1971).

LOCAL HUMAN POPULATION The park boundary excludes eight coastal settlements with a population of about 6,000; there are no residents in the park. Principal occupations are seasonal inshore fishing, subsistence agriculture, logging and hunting. In recent years the local employment base has diversified to include tourism.

VISITORS AND VISITOR FACILITIES An estimated 283,000 people visited the park in 1986 although revenue figures are not available. In addition to 120km of paved roads a system of hiking trails allows access to more remote areas. A number of campsites, with a total of 240 site emplacements, are located in the park, and hotels and other services are available in the adjacent communities. Information is available at a number of sites, including the administrative and visitor reception centre in Rocky Harbour. Facilities are also available for outdoor activities. One concession-run boat tour operates. A popular account of the park is given by Nicol and Mace (1989).

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FACILITIES Bouchard and Hay (1976) provide a historical account of floristic studies on the western coast of

private concessionaires (Parks Canada, not dated).

BUDGET Canadian $2.5 million per annum for operations and maintenance. This does not include capital development funding. The bulk of these func come from federal sources and the capital budget is likely to decline wher the cost-intensive initial development is complete (Parks Canada, 1986).

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION The Superintendent, Gros Morne National Park, PO Box 130, Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland, Canada, AOK 4NO.

REFERENCES

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Moorhead, S. et al. (1971). Gros Morne National Park study. Report No. 1. Analysis of existing factors and constraints. Strong Moorhead Sigsby Limited, Toronto, Ontario. 120 pp.

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ATE June 1987, updated May 1990
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DESIGNATION POUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL -- RESUME PREPARE PAR L'UICN

418: PARC NATIONAL DU GROS MORNE (CANADA)

Résumé préparé par l'UICN (avril 1987) d'après la désignation d'origine soumise par le Canada. L'original et tous les documents présentés à l'appui de cette désignation seront disponibles pour consultation aux réunions du bureau et du comité.

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1. SITUATION:

Situé dans la province de Terre-Neuve, sur la côte ouest de la grande péninsule du nord. Sa limite englobe plusieurs stations d'étude du territoire canadien et la marque ordinaire des basses eaux (Ordinary Low Water Mark) du golfe du Saint-Laurent. 49°18'-49°59'N, 57°25'-58°10'O.

2. DONNEES JURIDIQUES:

Etabli par un accord provincial/fédéral signé par les Gouvernements du Canada, de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, le 13 août 1973. Ces mêmes autorités, par un amendement du 13 mai 1983, ont rendu 9300 ha à la province. La propriété de toutes les terres fut acquise en 1984 par le gouvernement provincial qui la transféra par la suite au gouvernement fédéral; son administration incombe à Environnement Canada, Parcs.

3. IDENTIFICATION:

Le parc comporte trois zones géographiques distinctes: Une zone marine, une plaine côtière et un plateau alpin. Les grandes unités écologiques consistent en une plaine côtière, des moraines de piémont, les versants frontaux et les hauts-plateaux de la Longue chaîne montagneuse, les collines du sud et le complexe de Klippe. La région marine inclut des criques, des zones intertidales et sublittorales, un couloir de marée rapide et une zone de haute mer. Plusieurs vallées glaciaires aux versants abrupts formant des fjords oligotrophiques profonds, avec des falaises verticales atteignant 685 m de haut, traversent la paroi escarpée du Long Range. En altitude, un plateau alpin avec des lacs, la roche nue, et des vallées, couvre une grande partie du centre oriental du parc. Il présente une séquence paléontologique complète qui a été proposée comme stratotype mondial de la limite entre le Cambrien et l'Ordovicien.

La végétation, rabougrie dans les régions les plus exposées aux vents forts dominants, est formée de 36 communautés distinctes, avec 750 espèces vasculaires et 321 bryophytes, soit 60% de la flore de Terre-Neuve. La diversité de la faune se rapproche plutôt de celle d'une île océanique que d'une île de plate-forme continentale; elle est nettement plus réduite que sur le continent. Toutefois, on y trouve plusieurs espèces rares au Canada, comme la martre des pins, le lynx, le caribou, le lièvre de l'Arctique et des phoques. Le globicéphale, le petit rorqual et le rorqual commun sont les mammifères marins que l'on observe le plus fréquemment dans le parc, bien qu'ils soient de moins en moins nombreux. L'avifaune comprend 230 espèces arctiques, boréales et pélagiques, et quelques espèces isolées venant du continent, du nord-ouest de l'Atlantique et de l'Europe. Le parc est un important site de reproduction pour le canard harlequin, la sterne commune, la sterne de l'Arctique, ainsi que Dendroica striata.

Il y a plusieurs sites archéologiques dans le parc, mais à l'extérieur du parc, il a y huit bourgs côtiers, soit une population de 6000 habitants. Le plan de gestion prévoit un développement de l'infrastructure et du secteur touristique privé, une diversification avec création d'emplois pour la population locale. On a dénombré 192 903 visiteurs en 1980-81. Aux 120 kilomètres de routes goudronnées vient s'ajouter un réseau de sentiers permettant d'accéder aux régions les plus reculées. Le parc comporte plusieurs campings totalisant 240 places, ainsi que des hôtels et services dans les bourgs voisins. Bien que le parc ne relève pas officiellement de la loi sur les parcs nationaux (National Parks Act), il est également protégé par un certain nombre de lois fédérales ou provinciales, dont la loi fédérale sur la recherche et le développement forestiers (Forestry Development and Research Act), la loi sur les pêches (Fisheries Act), la loi sur la Convention sur les espèces migratrices, et la loi sur la faune de Terre-Neuve (Newfoundland Wildlife Act).

Le paysage et les ressources naturelles ont été perturbés par les utilisations antérieures, et la chasse a réduit les populations animales. De plus, plusieurs espèces exotiques ont été introduites au détriment de la faune indigène. Néanmoins, depuis sa protection en 1973, celle-ci est en augmentation, à l'exception de la martre américaine Martes americana qui a été éliminée du parc.

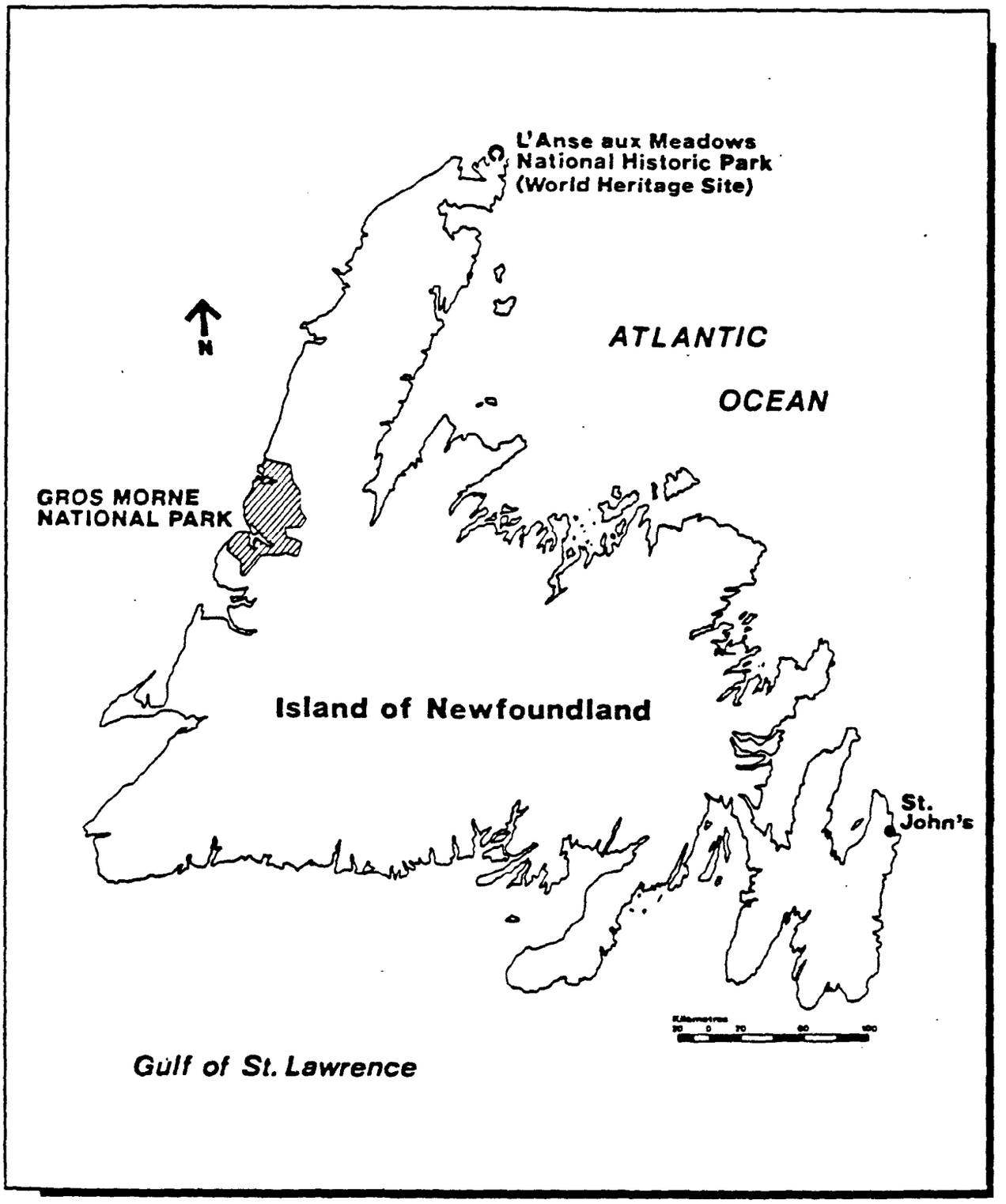
5. RAISONS JUSTIFIANT LA DESIGNATION POUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL:

Pour justifier la désignation du Parc National du Gros Morne (Canada) en tant que bien du patrimoine mondial, le Gouvernement canadien a donné les raisons suivantes:

a) Bien naturel

(i) Histoire géologique de la Terre. Le parc est un site classique pour observer le résultat d'événements géologiques qui eurent lieu lorsque le bord du continent nord-américain fut affecté par le déplacement des plaques tectoniques.

(iii) Paysages exceptionnels. Les fjords, les chutes d'eau et la structure géologique du parc s'harmonisent en un paysage d'une beauté exceptionnelle.


L'Anse aux Meadows
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(World Heritage Site)
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Island of Newfoundland
St.
John's
Gulf of St. Lawrence

418 PARC NATIONAL DU GROS MORNE (CANADA)

1. DOCUMENTATION:

(i) Fiches de données de l'UICN
(ii) Consultations: P. Dearden, A. Dufresne, A. Cloutier, A. Davidson, H. Mills, J.G. Nelson, A. Morgan, R. Scace, J. Marsh, B. May, K. Nichol, A. Boutilier, N. Williams, G. MacDonald, A. Hoole.
(iii) Littérature consultée: The Dilemna of Residents and National Parks, Park News 1978, 14 (1).
(iv) Visite du site: 1968.

2. COMPARAISON AVEC D'AUTRES AIRES:

Le Gros Morne est l'une des 41 aires protégées de la province biogéographique de la taïga canadienne. Nahanni et Wood Buffalo sont les deux autres biens du patrimoine mondial de la province, et ils ne sont pas comparables avec Gros Morne. Aucun autre parc du Néarctique n'a la même structure géologique. L'on trouve des ophiolithes dans l'est du Canada, mais de moindre intérêt. Le parc est très différent de celui de Terra Nova, l'autre parc national de Terre Neuve. Son relief est plus accidenté, et son couvert végétal moins fourni.

Les fjords, qui y sont un élément géographique distinctif, sont également présents au lac Harp (lac de faille du Labrador) et à Torngat, dans le nord du Labrador. Torngat a d'ailleurs été proposé comme parc national pour son paysage exceptionnel et son troupeau de caribous. Quoi qu'il en soit, le Gros Morne est une région unique pour l'étude des plaques tectoniques et de la "discontinuité de Moho". De plus, la limite cambro-ordovicienne présente un grand intérêt géologique, c'est le stratotype mondial de la transition entre les deux grande périodes du Paléozoïque.

3. INTEGRITE:

Avant d'être protégée en 1973, la région était diversement exploitée, ce qui avait entraîné un certain épuisement de la faune et du couvert forestier. Depuis la création du parc, la gestion en a largement éliminé le prélèvement des ressources, les utilisations qui sont autorisées obéissent à des stratégies de gestion élaborées en coopération avec la population locale. Les mesures de conservation de la nature sont orientées vers la restauration des populations animales et des habitats, dans le cadre du plan de gestion.

Plus des deux tiers du parc sont maintenant classés zone sauvage ou zone de préservation. L'impact politique des 6000 personnes vivant dans la région est relativement faible, il n'y a pas de propriété privée dans le parc. L'abattage d'arbres et la prise au collet de lièvres, autorisés pour obtenir un meilleur soutien de la population locale pour le parc, sont strictement limités à des fins domestiques, et n'ont qu'un faible impact sur le parc (15% de celui-ci est touché). Il semble également que les villages ne s'agrandiront pas à l'avenir, compte tenu du faible développement économique de la région, ces activités traditionnelles pourront être progressivement éliminées. Quoi qu'il en soit, les éléments géologiques sur lesquels reposent la candidature ne seront pas compromis à long terme par de modestes déplacements de la population, ni par son développement.

La proposition d'installer un téléphérique pour faciliter l'accès des touristes au plateau a été approuvée par certains conservationistes, mais n'a pas encore été réalisée. Elle figure encore dans le plan de gestion, de même qu'un projet de domaine skiable.

La menace la plus sérieuse qui pèse sur Gros Morne est l'éventuelle construction d'une ligne de transmission hydro-électrique dans le cadre du plan énergétique du Lower Churchill. L'évaluation environnementale du projet indique que le tracé choisi aurait des répercussions sur la population de caribous et la végétation. La probabilité et la gravité de ces répercussions restent à préciser.

4. COMMENTAIRES ADDITIONNELS:

L'adhésion du Gros Morne au Calendrier (Schedule) de la Loi sur les parcs nationaux (National Parks Act) est une formalité importante pour le respect à long terme de l'intégrité du paysage et des ressources du parc. Il a été fait remarquer que malgré l'actuelle mise en oeuvre de divers statuts fédéraux et provinciaux qui confèrent au site "une totale protection et la gestion de ses ressources jusqu'à sa proclamation comme parc national", il serait souhaitable d'inclure le parc dans le Calendrier avant de l'inscrire à la Liste du patrimoine mondial, comme ce fut le cas pour le Parc national de Nahanni, par exemple. Cependant, le calendrier des décisions concernant d'autres sites donne à penser qu'il convient de soutenir les mesures en attente concernant la législation nationale de protection des biens du patrimoine mondial.

5. EVALUATION:

La candidature du Gros Morne offre de solides arguments de "valeur universelle remarquable", avec son exemple exceptionnel des grands stades de l'évolution géologique de la Terre (Critère (i)). Ces formations géologiques sont à l'état totalement naturel, et qu'il n'existe aucune menace immédiate de modification importante qui serait due à l'homme.

Le parc est un site classique pour étudier l'évolution géologique d'un bassin océanique et d'un plateau continental. En plusieurs endroits, le paysage offre un panorama complet de l'évolution géologique, avec des matériaux reflètant les diverses séquences du manteau et de l'écorce terrestre; on y trouve des xonolithes et la meilleure collection connue de graptolithes.

En ce qui concerne le Critère (iii) -- région d'exceptionnelle beauté naturelle -- il est également rempli dans le cas du Gros Morne, tant pour la beauté naturelle que pour la taille et l'intégrité physique et biologique.

6. RECOMMANDATIONS:

La présente évaluation soutient l'inscription du Parc national du Gros Morne à la Liste du patrimoine mondial. L'UICN recommande son inscription. Le comité a demandé et obtenu des informations complémentaires sur:

-- Le calendrier de la procédure légale qui conférera officiellement au parc la protection de la Loi sur les parcs nationaux (aucune date n'a encore été fixée mais le processus est en cours);

-- les conséquences éventuelles des lignes de transmission du plan énergétique du Lower Churchill (la réalisation du plan est considérée comme improbable mais n'aurait pas de répercussions graves sur le parc).