



## **Position paper of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre**

**Concerning the gravel pit project of Construction Norascon Inc.  
near the Kinawit cultural site**

Submitted to

**Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts  
Regional County Municipality (RCM) of La Vallée-de-l'Or  
Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et  
des Parcs  
City of Val-d'Or**

and the representatives of

**Construction Norascon Inc.**

**Val-d'Or, November 21, 2022**

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### Table of contents

Preamble .....	1
Anicinabe Aki.....	4
Actions taken by the Friendship Centre .....	9
Lack of viable alternative .....	13
Conclusion: a firm opposition.....	13
Bibliography .....	14
Laws and regulations.....	14
Case Law .....	14
APPENDIX 1 – Joint press release, September 19, 2022.....	16
APPENDIX 2 – Form for comments (French version) .....	16
APPENDIX 3 – Form for comments (English version) .....	16

# Position paper of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre

## Concerning the gravel pit project of Construction Norascon Inc. near the Kinawit cultural site

### Preamble

This brief states the clear and firm opposition of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre (hereinafter the "Friendship Centre") to the Construction Norascon Inc.'s project (hereinafter "Norascon") to exploit a large gravel pit near the Friendship Centre's Kinawit cultural site<sup>1</sup>. Our comments are submitted in the context of the public consultation provided for in section 140.1 of the *Mining Act*<sup>2</sup> and clauses 39.1 and 39.2 of the *Regulation respecting mineral substances other than petroleum, natural gas and brine*<sup>3</sup>.

The reasons for this opposition are numerous, well-founded and part of a general movement of opposition expressed by various stakeholders and interest group representatives. This generalized opposition was notably expressed during the consultation session organized at the initiative of Norascon, on September 21, 2022, at the Forestel Hotel in Val-d'Or. Although the concerns raised at the time were of various kinds and in some cases very specific, we can say that the opposition of the citizens and groups present was clear and unanimous. There were no interventions in favour of the project during the session, a rare occurrence in such circumstances.

We endeavour here to describe the particular interests of the Val-d'Or Indigenous community members, the Friendship Centre and its partners and allies who have often participated in or contributed to activities that have taken place in Kinawit over the past years. These interests relate in large part to the preservation of the tranquility of the area, the air quality and the visual beauty of the surroundings, the preservation of the trees and the continuity of the ecosystem in the heart of the recreational forest, the preservation of the pure drinking water under the moraine, the preservation of the Val-d'Or caribou's critical habitat and, of course, the peaceful continuation of the cultural, healing, consciousness-raising and reconciliation activities that take place at Kinawit.

### Presentation of the project by the promoter

Norascon's interests appear to be strictly economic and private in nature. The proponent alleges that the part of the glacial moraine targeted by the project is composed of a gravel whose granulometry is ideal for the composition of asphalt according to the prevailing standards. It is not disputed that this part of the moraine is located very close to the industrial developer's plant. From this point of view, the costs associated with transportation between the gravel pit and the plant would be lower than those incurred

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<sup>1</sup> Construction Norascon Inc., « Document de consultation publique : Exploitation d'une gravière sur le territoire de la Ville de Val-d'Or, septembre 2022 », en ligne sur le site de *Mining Watch Canada* : <[https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/exploitation\\_dune\\_graviere\\_sur\\_le\\_territoire\\_de\\_la\\_ville\\_de\\_val-dor\\_-\\_document\\_de\\_consultation\\_publique.pdf](https://miningwatch.ca/sites/default/files/exploitation_dune_graviere_sur_le_territoire_de_la_ville_de_val-dor_-_document_de_consultation_publique.pdf)> (consulté le 16 novembre 2022).

<sup>2</sup> *Mining Act*, CQLR, c. 13.1, art. 140.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Regulation respecting mineral substances other than petroleum, natural gas and brine*, CQLR, c. 13.1, r. 2, art. 39.1 and 39.2.

by the extraction of deposits of equivalent quality elsewhere in the Vallée-de-l'Or Regional County Municipality (hereinafter "the RCM").

Furthermore, although Norascon and its representatives tried to reassure the public at the information session on September 21, 2022, that the minimum environmental standards that apply would be respected, the social, cultural, recreational, tourist and quality of life aspects were only mentioned in an incidental manner, as if they were elements that were essentially external to the social and geographical context in which the site is located.

### **The Kinawit cultural site and its mission**

The Friendship Centre acquired the Kinawit site in 2012, i. e. 10 years ago. At the beginning, the Friendship Centre's strategy was largely focused on setting up rustic accommodation services rooted in the Anicinabe territory, organizing large-scale events and developing tourism and recreational products based on Indigenous cultural elements. This aspect of Kinawit's vocation has seen notable successes and, at the same time, quite significant fluctuations in terms of patronage and income.



### **A knowledge transmission activity with the cultural carriers Alexis Weizineau and Branden Ratt.**

Now, over the years, it has become increasingly clear that Kinawit's primary vocation is to provide the Val-d'Or urban indigenous community with a safe and calm living environment where the impact of human activities associated with life in the city and in an industrialized natural environment is low and in which several elements of the Anicinabe culture, but also of the Cree, Atikamekw and Inuit cultures (among others), can assert themselves and flourish. The Kinawit cultural site is an ideal place for traditional activities of various kinds, which can be practised in the forest, on the water, in the outdoor kitchen,

around a fire, in a large tipi or on the sacred site with a sweat lodge structure. In this regard, provisions clarifying the primacy of Kinawit's community-based character were adopted by the Centre's Board of Directors a short time ago.

Thus, if the activities intended for visitors are decisive in making Indigenous cultures better known, the question of access to the territory near Val-d'Or for members of the community appears even more fundamental. The profiles of people likely to benefit from the various components of the site are varied and free access to the site often gives rise to a social, multi-national and generational mix, in a spontaneous manner.

For the Indigenous people of Val-d'Or, it is obvious that Kinawit has all the essential characteristics for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge associated with water, life on the territory and the forest. This transmission is carried out according to the principle of the seven generations. The seven generation principle is the idea that our words, struggles, achievements and actions should be carried out in the perspective that they will have a positive impact on the next seven generations, which corresponds to a time horizon of at least 140 years.



**Elder and cultural carrier Roger Wylde working a skin in Kinawit.**

The Kinawit cultural site offers healing activities, learning of trapping techniques, knowledge of medicinal plants, living and surviving on the territory, sharing of knowledge, reappropriation of whole elements of Indigenous cultures, as well as community gatherings that have a significant impact on the members' wellness. Families gather in large numbers in Kinawit and there are many different activities for them. One of the activities most likely to be affected by the Norascon project is small game hunting (hare and partridge, in particular), which represents an important element in the intergenerational transmission of

knowledge related to life on the territory and which is also recognized as the exercise of an aboriginal right by the *Constitution Act, 1982*<sup>4</sup>.

One of the places closest to the proposed gravel pit is the sacred site. This is an area set up in the forest that includes a sacred fire, numerous stones called Mushum (for grandfather, in reference to the ancestors) and a sweat lodge. This is the place where the community members perform purification ceremonies. The ceremony takes place inside the sweat lodge, a dome made of alder bows tied with coloured ribbons of cotton cloth, which is covered with several canvases or blankets during the ceremonies. The hut is built directly on the ground. In the middle is a circular hole where glowing stones are placed (heated until they are red or almost red) on which water is poured so that it instantly turns into steam. The people who perform these ceremonies often experience great emotions while evacuating suffering, making the sacred site a particularly significant and symbolically intense place, which at the same time must remain as peaceful and untouched as possible. We stress here the imperative need for peacefulness in this place. We sincerely believe that the noise of heavy traffic and rock crushing will negatively affect the quietness of the place.

Thus, in general, Kinawit is positioned as a central element in the renewal of Indigenous community life in Val-d'Or and the surrounding area. The site is also a place of encounter and reconciliation *par excellence*. Events such as general assemblies, symposiums, university seminars, business retreats and meetings between decision makers have made the site famous. The proximity of the airport, hotels and services offered by Val-d'Or in a carefully designed location, on the waterfront, surrounded by the forest, away from noise, traffic and concrete, makes Kinawit an exceptional place appreciated by all. It is also clear that the proximity of the site to the forests, lakes and rivers that abound south of Val-d'Or is likely to make it a strategic base camp for the development of new types of community, cultural and healing activities in this part of the Anicinabe territory.

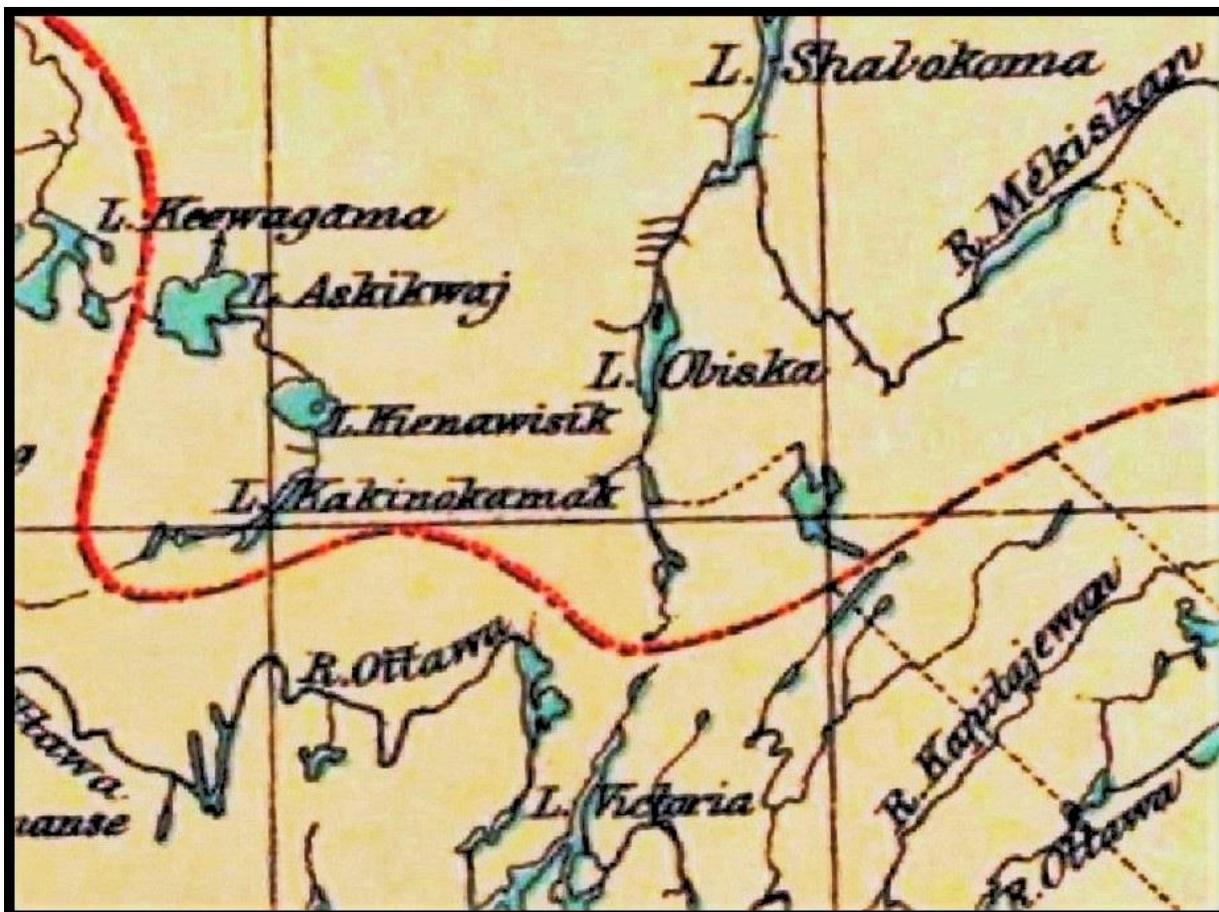
### **Anicinabe Aki**

Regarding the geographic location of the Kinawit site, it is important to note that Norascon's targeted area and those bordering it are part of the Anicinabe territory or Anicinabe Aki. The Anicinabek and their ancestors began to occupy Abitibi-Témiscamingue following the final discharge of Glacial Lake Ojibway into Hudson Bay about 8,000 years ago; a lake that had formed after the retreat of the Laurentian Ice Sheet (glacier) from the Abitibi about 10,000 years ago<sup>5</sup>.

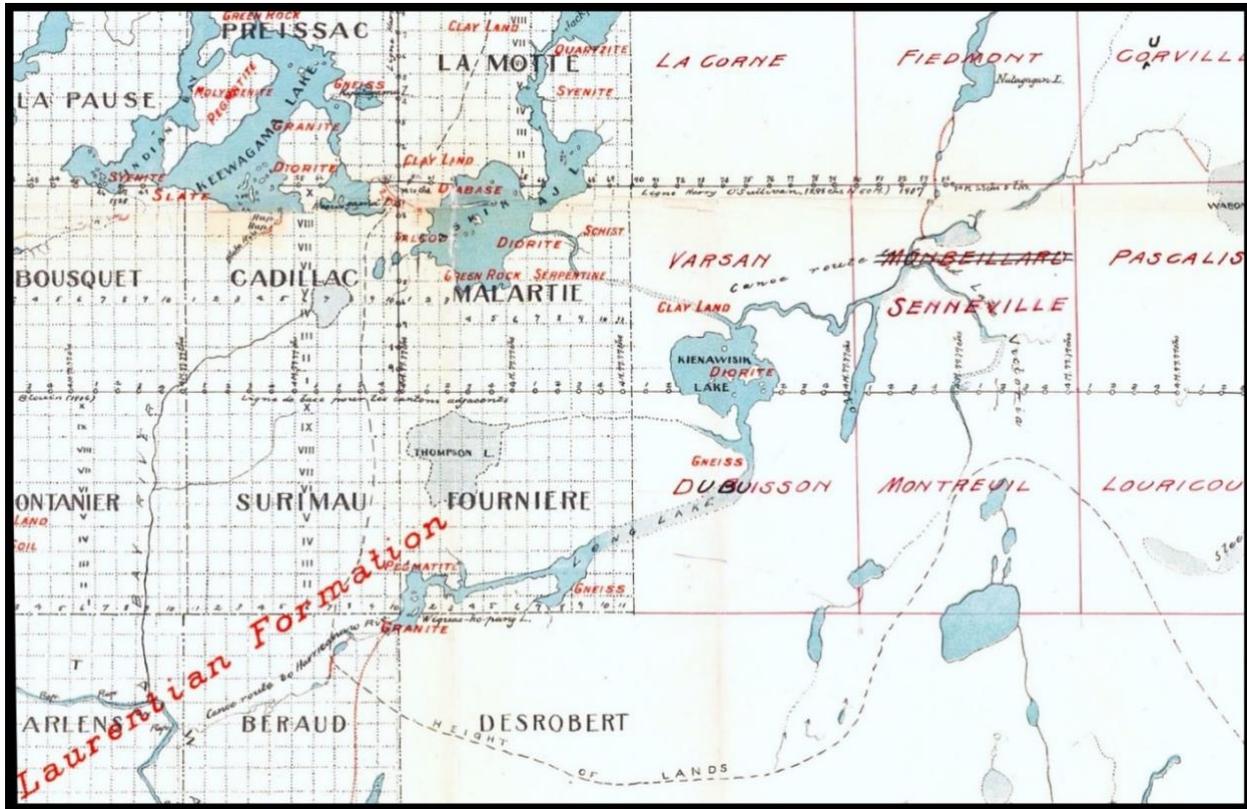
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<sup>4</sup> *Constitution Act, 1982*, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

<sup>5</sup> On deglaciation and the evolution of glacial lakes, see: Jean J. Veillette, « Un roc ancien rajeuni par les glaciers », in Fernand Miron (dir.) *Abitibi-Témiscamingue. De l'emprise des glaces à un foisonnement d'eau et de vie. 10 000 ans d'histoire*, p. 1-38, Ste-Foy, MultiMondes, 2000.



General map of Quebec, 1898 (detail). The map shows that the Preissac, Malartic, De Montigny and Lemoine lakes were called Keewagama, Askikwaj, Kienawisik and Kakinokamak respectively.



Map of " Northern Pontiac " from the Dept. of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries of Quebec, 1907 (detail). This was likely a period of uncertainty about the names of the places to be settled. It is noted that the canoe route from the Ottawa River to the Harricana River (Canoe route to Harricanaw Riv., in Béraud Township) passed through Lake Kakinokamak/Long/Lemoine.

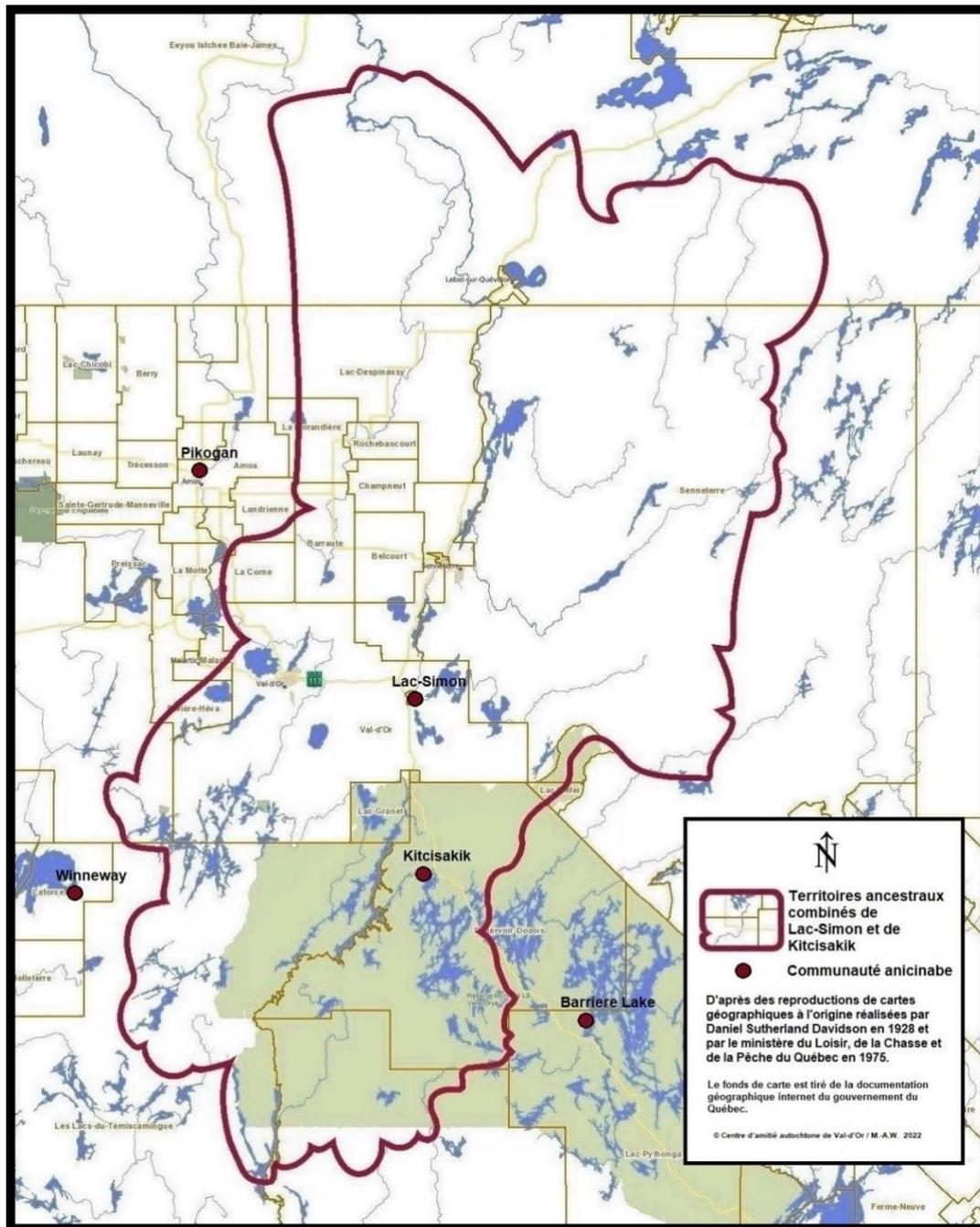
All rivers, lakes and hills were named by the Anicinabek. What we call "Lake Lemoine", located barely a kilometre downstream from the project site under study, was in fact listed as Lake Kakinokamak (long lake) until the early twentieth century on the few historical maps that covered the period before the region was settled.

As for Val-d'Or and the surrounding area, it consists largely of family hunting territories belonging to the anicinabe communities of Lac-Simon and Kitcisakik, as well as some overlap with the hunting territories of Winneway to the southwest. It should be noted that during the 1920s, the "Grand Lake Victoria Band" split up into family groups that now form the communities of Lac-Simon and Kitcisakik<sup>6</sup>. This being so, the territorial interests of the two communities overlap in many respects at the present time. In this case, as in many resource development projects in the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM and in Abitibi-Témiscamingue in general, this situation and its corollary implications did not appear to be part of the promoter's concerns during the consultation.

Yet, "knowledge of a credible but as yet unsettled claim is sufficient to give rise to a duty to consult and accommodate, although this may vary according to the circumstances while remaining consistent with the

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Leroux, Roland Chamberland, Edmond Brazeau and Claire Dubé, *Au pays des peaux de chagrin. Occupation et exploitation territoriales à Kitchisakik (Grand-Lac-Victoria) au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004, p. 38-39.

honour of the Crown"<sup>7</sup>. The *honour of the Crown* is a constitutional principle that states the obligation of governments representing the Crown to act honourably towards Indigenous peoples



**Map of the combined ancestral territories of Lac-Simon and Kitcisakik, based on reproductions of maps originally produced by anthropologist Daniel Sutherland Davidson in the 1920s, and by the Quebec Ministry of Recreation, Fish and Game in the 1970s (see Leroux et al., 2004)**

<sup>7</sup> Josiane Loiseau-Boudreau, « L'obligation de consulter les peuples autochtones. Le cas du projet de mine de niobium à Oka », *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, Vol. 39, N° 1-2, 2009, p. 142.

This principle concerns the reconciliation of the assertion of Crown sovereignty with the prior occupation of an Indigenous people over a particular territory and entails fiduciary responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. In terms of case law, the decision generally referred to in relation to the duty to consult Indigenous stakeholders in relation to the honour of the Crown principle is *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*<sup>8</sup>, made by the Supreme Court of Canada on November 11, 2004. The decision refers to a "balancing of interests process"<sup>9</sup>.

The honour of the Crown is the responsibility of the Federal Crown and the Provincial Crowns. What it legally entails cannot be delegated to third party organisations. However, this does not mean that it is appropriate for the promoters to simply ignore Indigenous considerations in relation to the land. According to Professors Jean Leclair (constitutional law) and Michel Morin (comparative law), what is at stake is the credibility of a given company in the eyes of Indigenous agents and their allies, as well as the latent prospect of multiple delays and obstacles. Consequently, "even if companies do not have a duty to consult, it is in their interest to ensure that this consultation is carried out in accordance with the acknowledged rules"<sup>10</sup> [Translation]. In addition, the "Haida and Taku River cases demonstrate that a breach of the duty to consult Indigenous peoples can result in the invalidity of land use or resource extraction permits obtained by a private company from the government"<sup>11</sup> [Translation].

In this case, the Friendship Centre, according to the information at its disposal, deplores the fact that the promoter did not engage in prior and separate discussions with the Indigenous Nations holding constitutionally recognized Aboriginal rights in the territory covered by the project under study. In this regard, we believe that the promoter's approach blatantly violates the spirit and letter of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*<sup>12</sup> (hereinafter the "Declaration") which proclaims their right to self-determination<sup>13</sup>. The second paragraph of its Article 32 could not be clearer:

"States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources."<sup>14</sup>

The *Declaration* was fully endorsed by the Government of Canada in May 2016 and on June 21, 2021, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*<sup>15</sup> came into force. This means, among other things, that the *Declaration* will serve as a formal reference point for the evolution of Canadian law

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<sup>8</sup> *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*, 2004 3 SCR 511.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*, par. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Jean Leclair et Michel Morin, « Peuples autochtones et droit constitutionnel », in *JurisClasseur Québec*, collection « Droit public », *Droit constitutionnel*, fascicule 15, Montréal, LexisNexis Canada, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Loiselle-Boudreau, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 142

<sup>12</sup> *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Rés. 61/295, Official Doc., G.A.U.N. (September 13, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*, art. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*, art. 32, al. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, L.C. 2021, ch. 14.

relating to Indigenous peoples and that Canada is committed to overseeing the implementation of its provisions. At the same time, this implies a duty on the part of the government to carry out regular and methodical monitoring of policies and legal elements that may deviate from the purposes of the *Declaration*.

### **Actions taken by the Friendship Centre**

The Friendship Centre was actively involved throughout the public consultation process. As early as mid-September, a few days after the announcement of the project under study, the Friendship Centre's Board of Directors adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS the company Norascon has a project to exploit a gravel pit near chemin Baie-Carrière and chemin des Scouts in Val-d'Or;

WHEREAS this project will have harmful impacts on the Friendship Centre's Kinawit cultural site, located on chemin des Scouts;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre take a position against the Norascon project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Friendship Centre participate in the public consultations to be held on September 21, 2022, in relation to this project;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT the Friendship Centre file a position paper outlining the reasons for its opposition to the project at these consultations, no later than October 21, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

On September 19, 2022, two days before the promoter's information session held on September 21, 2022 at the Forestel, the Friendship Centre coordinated, drafted and distributed a joint press release with the organizations *Mères au Front - Val-d'Or*, the *Club cycliste Accro-Vélo de Val-d'Or*, the *Regroupement Vigilance Mines de l'Abitibi et du Témiscamingue* and *Action boréale* to launch "a joint appeal to the population of Val-d'Or and the surrounding area to attend the public consultation in large numbers"<sup>17</sup>. The press release includes the following quote from Oscar Kistabish, president of the Friendship Centre's Board of Directors: "Since 2012, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre has invested time, knowledge and public funds to make a dream expressed by the urban Aboriginal community a reality, that of a site in a natural setting dedicated to healing for urban Indigenous people, to reconciliation between peoples, as well as a place to anchor and disseminate a thousand-year-old culture rooted in the Anicinabe territory. The Norascon gravel pit project on the esker is a definite nuisance in terms of noise and destruction of Mother Earth. This project threatens the very vocation of the Kinawit site as well as the heritage that we want to pass on to future generations."

On September 21, 2022, several leaders, directors, employees and agents of the Friendship Centre participated in a significant way in the promoter's information session, expressing several times their

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that the promoter itself extended the final date for the submission of briefs to November 21, 2022, shortly after its September 21, 2022, information session.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix 1.

concerns and opposition to the project under study. Some of these interventions were reported in the media that covered the session:

"For many organizations and citizens, the project simply does not make sense.

The Native Friendship Centre, the *Corporation des parcs et espaces récréatifs*, the *Club cycliste Accro-Vélo*, *Action boréale* and *Mères au front* have raised several potential issues, such as the fragmentation of the Recreational Forest, the proximity of the Kinawit indigenous site, the loss of cycling trails and also concerns about the protection of groundwater reserves in the sector.

Rodrigue Turgeon, lawyer and co-spokesperson for the *Coalition Québec meilleure mine* (and Friendship Centre representative), hopes Norason has heard the message.

'You can see from the public response that we would all have liked to have had access to information more quickly,' he notes. There were no positive comments, which raises questions about the rest of the process. There is still time to decide, but at the same time, there are obvious decisions that can be made from what we have heard tonight.'

He said he was not reassured by what he heard.

"Right off the top, when we see that they intend to exploit an esker aquifer that can provide water for generations to come, it makes us wonder," he says. It's not just about that, but we were here to get information about the whole project. Beyond that, this is another blatant example of the lack of effort by elected officials to protect the eskers. This opens the door to projects of this kind and to the population having to mobilise in response."<sup>18</sup>

On October 4, 2022, several members, employees, directors and representatives of the Friendship Centre attended the Val-d'Or municipal council meeting and addressed the elected municipal officials to oppose the project under study:

"Two weeks after a public consultation conducted by the company, several citizens attended the Val-d'Or council meeting on Tuesday to remind the city of their opposition to the project. In particular, they expressed their fears for the peacefulness of the Kinawit cultural site and the protection of groundwater."<sup>19</sup>

On October 18, 2022, the Friendship Centre offered a tour of the Kinawit site to the Norascon's CEO, Mr. David Fortin, and Ms. Valérie Pomerleau, associate consultant with the Ryan communication firm. During the visit, the Friendship Center's President, Mr. Oscar Kistabish, conveyed the message of opposition to the promoter in the following clear statement: "When you dig here, it's like digging a hole in our hearts. No means no." Mr. Doris St-Pierre, then board member of the Friendship Centre, also took part in the visit.

On October 25, 2022, the Friendship Centre included an item on the agenda of its Annual General Assembly to address the issue. The Board's opposition received unanimous support from the voting and allied

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<sup>18</sup> Marc-André Landry, « Forte opposition pour un projet de gravière à Val-d'Or », *Radio-Canada*, Septembre 22, Online : <<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1917462/consultations-publiques-norascon-beton-bitumineux>> (visited November 16, 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Marc-André Landry, « Projet de gravière : Val-d'Or n'entend pas se mettre la tête dans le sable », *Radio-Canada*, October 5, 2022 Online : <<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1922524/norascon-baie-carriere-scouts-conseil>> (visited November 16, 2022).

members through a resolution. Several comments were shared. Among many others, Anicinapekwe Elder Alice Jerome shared the following comment and asked that it be recorded in the Friendship Centre's brief: "We need to stop cutting down trees. We need to protect the territory. Our language is connected to the forest, our identity is connected to nature. The Norascon project must not be implemented."

### Comments collected by the Friendship Centre

From October 31, 2022 to November 15, 2022, the Friendship Centre posted an online form, translated into French and English, to gather comments from people having a connection with the Friendship Centre regarding the Norascon project<sup>20</sup>.

A total of 16 people completed the online form (14 in French; 2 in English)

Participants were from Indigenous Nations, communities and diverse backgrounds:

- Lac-Simon (1)
- Kitcisakik (1)
- Cree community (1)
- Val-d'Or (7)
- Amos (1)
- Latulipe (1)
- Quebec City (1)
- Montréal (1)
- Unspecified community (2)

Respondents were members of the Friendship Centre, beneficiaries of the services, employees, managers, allies, friends, former employee.

100% of respondents were against the project.

For 88% the protection of the integrity of the site is very important (5 on a scale of 5); for 12% it is very important (4 on a scale of 5).

Six respondents agreed to submit their comments with their names posted. Six respondents submitted comments with the understanding that their identity would not be revealed. Two respondents voted against the project without comment. A respondent's comment against the project will not be posted due to the lack of response to the question regarding her preference as to whether her comment should be posted or not.

1. **Julie Laperle, ally, Amos:** "Kinawit is a key place in the cultural activities of the First Nations who use it. To undermine and denature Anishnabe Aki is to ignore once again their belonging and their ties to the land. "

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<sup>20</sup><https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=e698c738a5&attid=0.4&permmsgid=msg-f:1749722338805853512&th=184843325c16ad48&view=att&disp=inline>

(visited November 16, 2022).

2. **Abdel, beneficiary of the Friendship Centre's various services, unspecified community :** "Freedom for First Nations".
3. **Lisa, employee or manager, Val-d'Or:** "Environmental and cultural conservation".
4. **Daphne Etapp, beneficiary of the Friendship Centre's various services, Val-d'Or :** "If we have to choose development over Indigenous people again, we will have proof that racism and inequality are part of our system and our community. This site is very important to me, it's a peaceful place to be when you feel overwhelmed by events. It is the community spirit when we are all together. It's the spirit of sharing when we invite MNAs, MPs, mayors, the Val-d'Or community, etc. It's a feeling of being at home, of being able to be ourselves. It's not just an Indigenous site, it's our place. You know the feeling, after a long week, of finally arriving at the cottage. The peace, the tranquility, the letting go, don't take away our haven."
5. **Sandy Authier, ally, Val-d'Or :** "It is essential to leave this healing space in peace for the Indigenous people of Val-d'Or and the surrounding area. Please respect the Indigenous people. Please honour the wealth that is Kinawit, not only for the Indigenous people, but also for the tourism industry of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. It is absolutely unthinkable to condemn an esker and a territory reserved for caribou. Let us think about people's health. Let us think about the preservation of the land. Let's think about protecting the quality of our water. Let's think about the richness of the Recreational Forest for the people of Val-d'Or. And let's have a heart and make sure we protect and let live in peace the poor few caribous that survive near our home."
6. **Danyka, Member, beneficiary of the Friendship Centre's various services, Employee, executive, Lac Simon:** "Protect the animals."
7. **Anonymous person, ally, Cree:** "In strong support of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre and their decision to oppose the Norascon project."
8. **Anonymous, employee, manager, etc., Val-d'Or:** "I believe that the project will be detrimental to the Kinawit cultural site. We are in an era where protection of the forest, water and biodiversity must be prioritized."
9. **Anonymous, ally, unspecified community:** Simply put, "Respect for Mother Earth".
10. **Anonymous, friend, Montreal :** "I imagine that the presence of a gravel pit will have an impact on the urban community, for whom the Kinawit centre is an exceptional access to nature: it is hard to imagine that Mount Royal would be chosen as a quarry (like Mount St-Bruno, which has had one of its slopes stripped away). And what about the water... a catastrophe, no? "

11. **Anonymous, member, Val-d'Or** : "We must stop exploiting the land without considering that the land is borrowed from our children."
12. **Anonymous, ally and former employee, Latulipe** : "We are in the middle of a climate crisis. The exploitation of the lands is over. Let's take care of our territory."
13. **Anonymous, employee, manager, etc., Val-d'Or** : "We need to protect green spaces. Kinawit and the recreational forest are places where it is possible to connect with nature, and this is very close to the city."

In short, the results of the survey and the comments collected show a clear and unanimous opposition to the project under study.

### **Lack of viable alternative**

The promoter has not presented any alternative scenario that would avoid sacrificing any moraine or esker. In fact, everything indicates that the company's business plan is based strictly on the exploitation of these geological formations, which are the pride of the local population. In this time of climate crisis and biodiversity loss in an area largely affected by the cumulative impacts of the mining industry, local populations have the right to expect civil engineering firms to present projects that reduce mineral extraction at its source. For road works, we think, for example, of the reuse of the mineral substances accumulated in the many non-acid generating mine tailings that litter the region's landscape. Such an approach is not utopian since it is currently being used by the firm Fournier et fils, a direct competitor of Norascon based in Val-d'Or, which recycles mine waste rock from the abandoned Sigma mine<sup>21</sup>.

This lack of alternatives consistent with the principles of the Act on Sustainable Development should not lead decision-makers to support the project under study for lack of other acceptable proposals. The promoter has only himself to blame for these shortcomings. It is not for the population to suffer the consequences. Nor is it for the population to submit such counterproposals or alternatives. The people are invited to take a position on the project under study, not to assume the promoters' responsibility to submit acceptable proposals that respect the territory and the people who occupy it. In this case, the Friendship Centre's position on the project is clear, unambiguous and simple: it is a categorical refusal of any form of industrial activity on or around the proposed site

### **Conclusion: a firm opposition**

In conclusion, it should be noted that the people who examined the case at the Friendship Centre were unanimously in favour of irrevocably abandoning the gravel pit project near the chemin des Scouts and Kinawit. We also hope that the City of Val-d'Or's position against the project, particularly for obvious reasons of lack of social acceptability, will ensure that the project will not go ahead, and definitely not. It

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<sup>21</sup> Québec circulaire, « Valorisation des stériles miniers provenant de la fosse Sigma », *Québec circulaire. La plateforme de référence pour la transition du Québec vers l'économie circulaire*, June 19, 2020, Online: <<https://www.quebeccirculaire.org/initiative/h/valorisation-des-steriles-miniers-provenant-de-la-fosse-sigma.html>> (visited November 16, 2022).

is also certain that the vast majority of community members do not want such a "development" to take place in the immediate surroundings of Kinawit. The mere fact that trees were cut down for the improvement of the Kinawit rustic accommodation area caused a huge stir among the members consulted, especially the Elders. Ultimately, for future generations, this part of the forest and the ecosystem that is rooted in it must be saved, as well as the moraine aquifer that is the object of Norascon's greed.

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APPENDIX 1 – Joint press release, September 19, 2022

APPENDIX 2 – Form for comments (French version)

APPENDIX 3 – Form for comments (English version)



Regroupement  
Vigilance Mines  
Abitibi-Témiscamingue

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE  
POUR DIFFUSION IMMÉDIATE

## **Projet préoccupant d'une gravière sur l'esker de Val-d'Or près de Kinawit et dans la forêt récréative : une coalition d'organismes appelle la population à se mobiliser en vue d'une séance d'information ce mercredi 21 septembre au Forestel**

**Lundi 19 septembre 2022, Val-d'Or.** Le Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or, Mères au Front – Val-d'Or, le Club cycliste Accro-Vélo de Val-d'Or, le Regroupement Vigilance Mines de l'Abitibi et du Témiscamingue et l'Action boréale lancent d'une même voix un appel à la population de Val-d'Or et des environs pour assister en grand nombre à la consultation publique organisée par le promoteur Construction Norascon Inc. qui projette d'exploiter une gravière sur un esker dans un milieu particulièrement sensible. La consultation se tiendra ce mercredi 21 septembre à compter de 18h à l'hôtel Forestel de Val-d'Or.

Le projet, d'une durée de 25 ans pour une superficie de 91 terrains de football (64 hectares), soulève de sérieuses préoccupations et peu d'informations ont été rendues publiques à son sujet. Situé carrément sur la moraine d'Harricana (l'esker de la Ville de Val-d'Or) au croisement du chemin de la Baie-Carrière et du Chemin des Scouts, la fosse se trouve également au cœur de la forêt récréative, mais surtout à moins d'un kilomètre du centre culturel Kinawit du Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or (*voir carte en annexe*).

Les organismes invitent donc les gens à se présenter en grand nombre à la séance de consultation et à faire part de leurs préoccupations au promoteur de même qu'aux élus qui seront présents.

**Oscar Kistabish, président du Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or :** « Depuis 2012, le Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or investit temps, savoirs et fonds publics pour concrétiser un rêve exprimé par la communauté autochtone urbaine, celui d'un site en nature dédié au ressourcement et à la guérison pour les Autochtones en ville, à la réconciliation entre les peuples, ainsi qu'un lieu d'ancrage et de diffusion pour une culture millénaire liée au territoire Anicinabe. Le projet de gravière de Norascon sur l'esker constitue une nuisance certaine en termes de bruit et de destruction de la Mère-Terre. Ce projet menace la vocation même du site Kinawit ainsi que l'héritage que nous voulons transmettre aux générations à venir. »

**Frédérique Cornellier, Mères au Front – Val-d'Or :** « Nous croyons que chacune des décisions d'aujourd'hui doit passer par le crible de l'équité intergénérationnelle. Nous parlons ici de 25 ans d'asphalte contre 1000 ans de ressource en eau potable pour les générations futures. »

**Hendrix Mcfadden-Gingras, Club cycliste Accro-Vélo de Val-d'Or :** « Remplacer les sentiers existants ne réglera pas le fond du problème : la forêt récréative est continuellement grugée, et les espaces de nature ne cessent d'être réduits. Il est temps de prioriser la protection de notre forêt collective. »

**Henri Jacob, président de l'Action boréale** : « Rien de nouveau à Val-d'Or : est-on prêt à mettre en danger l'avenir de la source d'eau potable de la ville en échange d'une maigre entrée de taxes, sans consultation préalable de la population ? »

**Marc Nantel, porte-parole du Regroupement Mines Abitibi-Témiscamingue** : « Nous considérons que le projet Norascon a le potentiel de causer un impact négatif sur l'eau de la région et il aura un impact environnemental majeur dans la zone ciblée. Un recul est important pour saisir tous les enjeux.»

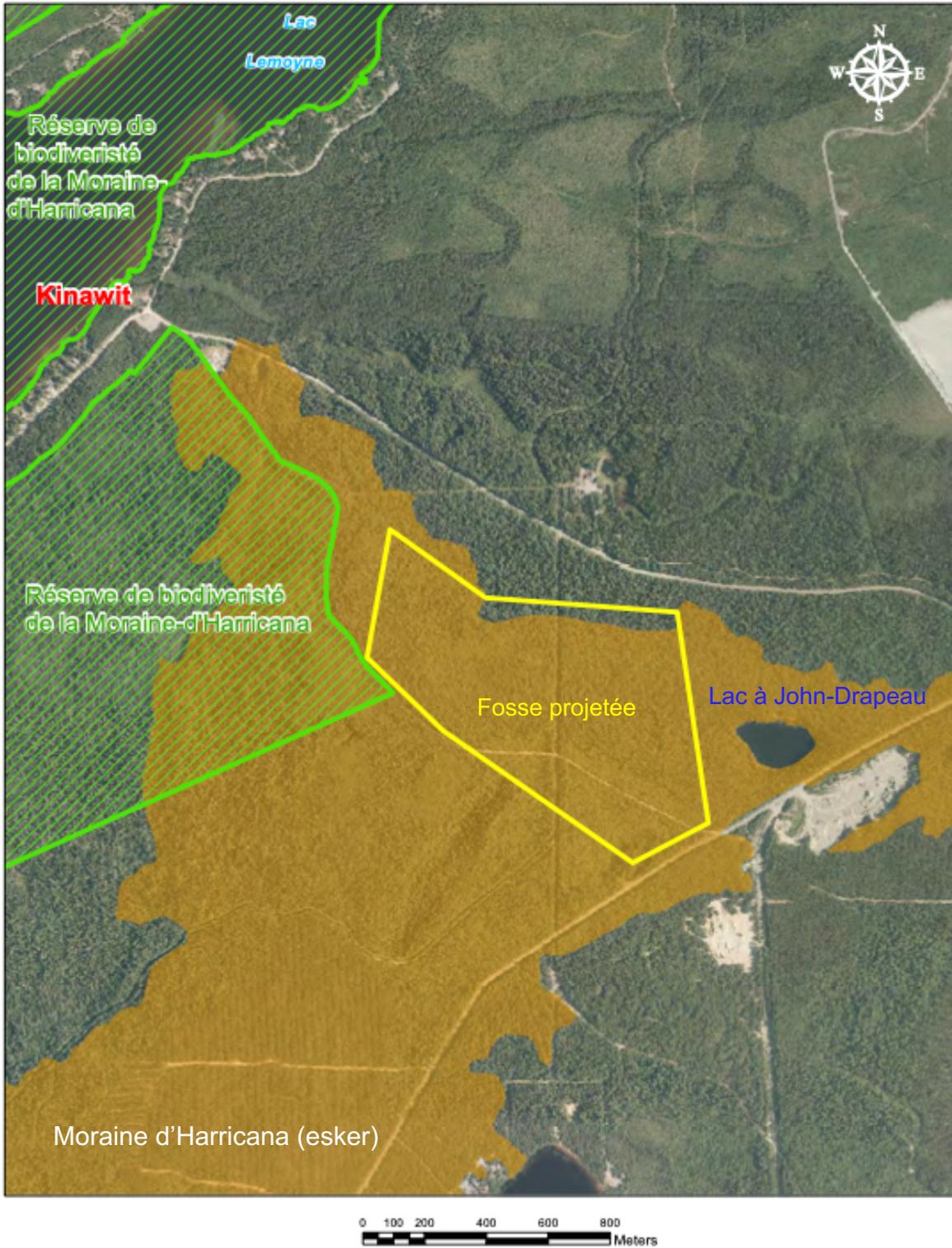
– 30 –

**Source** : MiningWatch Canada

**Pour entrevue:**

- **Doris St-Pierre, Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or** : 819-527-0079, dorisstpierre36@gmail.com
- **Frédérique Cornellier, Mères au Front – Val-d'Or** : 819-527-9240, frederique.cornellier@gmail.com
- **Hendrix Mcfadden-Gingras, Club cycliste Accro-Vélo de Val-d'Or** : accro-vélo@hotmail.com
- **Henri Jacob, président de l'Action boréale** : 819-738-5261, lereve@cablevision.qc.ca
- **Marc Nantel, porte-parole du Regroupement Vigilance Mines de l'Abitibi et du Témiscamingue** : 819-737-8620 ; nanosec55@hotmail.com

### Localisation du projet Norascon





**Un sentier de vélo de montagne menacé par le projet Norascon**



**Les eaux cristallines du Lac à John-Drapeau, à 80 mètres de la fosse projetée**

# Anicinape Aki, Val-d'Or: Le projet minier de Norascon menace le Centre Kinawit

Partagez-nous vos commentaires d'ici le 15 novembre 2022

Nous aimerions les ajouter dans le mémoire du Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or

 [turgeonrodrigue@gmail.com](mailto:turgeonrodrigue@gmail.com) (non partagés) [Changer de compte](#)



\* Obligatoire

Votre nom (pas obligatoire)

Votre réponse

Territoire, communauté ou municipalité d'appartenance \*

Votre réponse

Quel est **votre lien avec le Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or?** \*

- Membre
- Bénéficiaire des différents services offerts par le Centre d'amitié autochtone
- Employé.e, cadre, etc.



Allié.e Autre :

Sur une échelle de 1 à 5, **quelle importance accordez-vous à la protection de l'intégrité du site Kinawit?** (1 = faible importance; 5 = très grande importance) \*

1 2 3 4 5 

Le promoteur Construction Norascon Inc. projette d'exploiter une gravière à ciel ouvert à moins d'un kilomètre en amont du centre culturel Kinawit, au croisement du chemin de la Baie-Carrière et du Chemin des Scouts, à Val-d'Or, sur le territoire ancestral Anicinape Aki. \*

La fosse projetée est située carrément sur la moraine d'Harricana (l'esker de la Ville de Val-d'Or). Elle se trouve également au cœur de la forêt récréative de Val-d'Or. D'une durée de 25 ans, le projet Norascon affecterait une superficie minimale de 91 terrains de football (64 hectares), dans l'habitat essentiel des caribous de Val-d'Or.

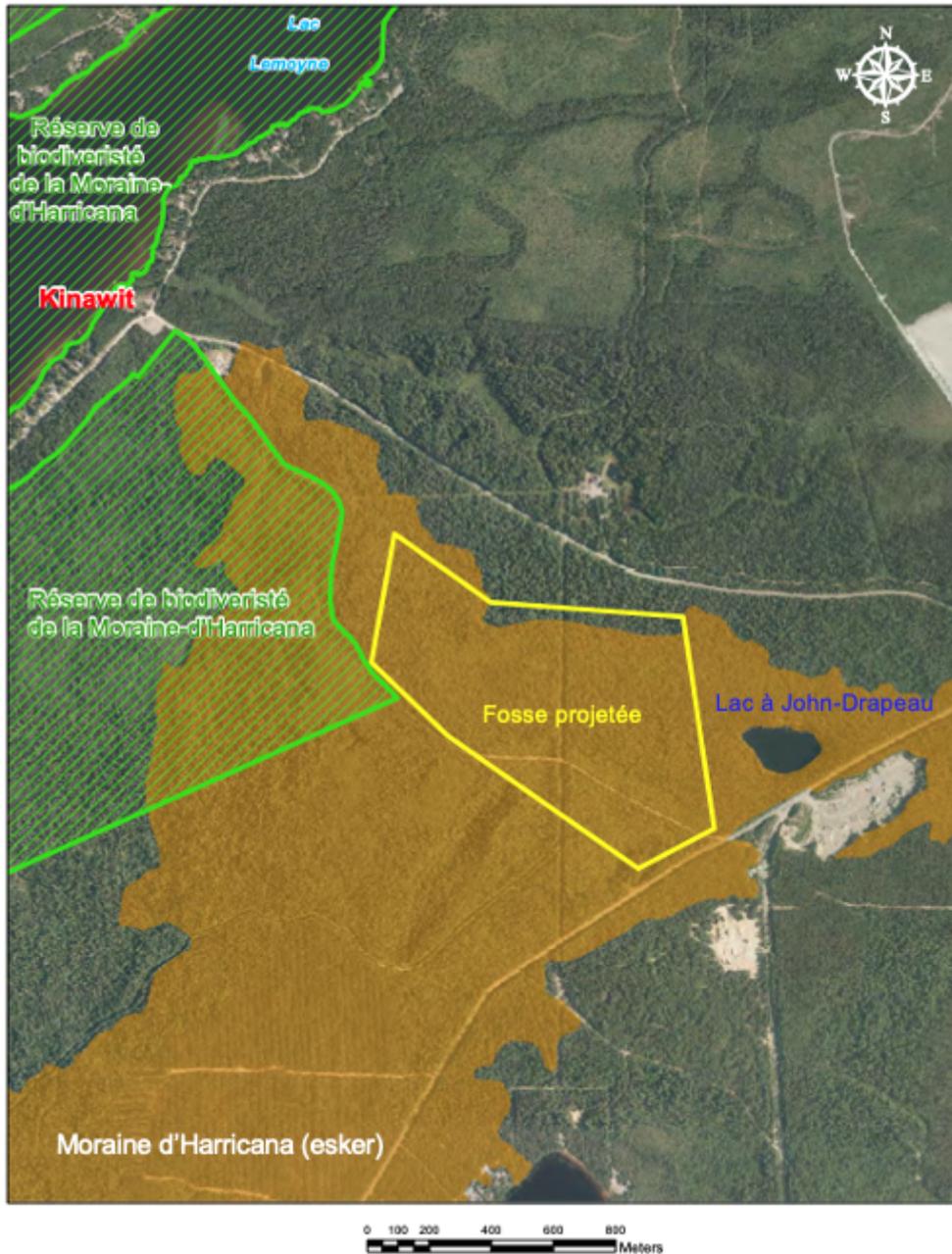
Pour plus d'informations sur les impacts craints du projet Norascon, cliquez sur [ce lien](#). Pour vous renseigner sur le site Kinawit, [cliquez ici](#).

La [Loi sur les mines](#) encadre le processus d'évaluation et de consultation du projet.

**Quelle est votre position concernant ce projet (pour, contre, indécis.e, autre)?**



### Localisation du projet Norascon



Contre

Pour



Indécis.e

Autre

**Voici votre espace pour nous transmettre vos commentaires, messages, positions et arguments pour appuyer votre position. Meegwetch!**



Votre réponse



En septembre 2022, le conseil d'administration du Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or a adopté une résolution contre le projet Norascon, considérant que « ce projet aurait des impacts nuisibles sur le site culturel Kinawit du Centre d'amitié ». Cette opposition a été signifiée au promoteur à plusieurs reprises, notamment lors de la séance d'information du 21 septembre 2022 au Forestel et lors d'une visite du président de la compagnie Construction Norascon Inc. sur le site Kinawit le 18 octobre 2022.

Le Centre d'amitié entend soumettre un mémoire pour signifier son opposition au projet aux instances décisionnelles avant la date butoir fixée au 21 novembre 2022. Nous aimerions y inclure vos commentaires.

**J'accepte que mes commentaires soumis dans ce formulaires soient ajoutés au mémoire du Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or.**

- Oui, en affichant mon nom
- Oui, de manière anonyme
- Non
- Autre :

Envoyer

[Effacer le formulaire](#)

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Google Formulaires





# Anicinape Aki, Val-d'Or: Norascon's mining project threatens the Kinawit Centre

Tell us what you think!

We register comments by November 15

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\* Obligatoire

1. Your name (not mandatory)

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2. Home territory, community or municipality \*

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3. What is **your relationship with the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre?** \*

*Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.*

- Member
- Beneficiary of the various services offered by the Native Friendship Centre
- Employee, executive, etc.
- Ally
- Autre : \_\_\_\_\_

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, **how important is it to you to protect the Kinawit site integrity** \*  
(1 = low importance; 5 = very high importance)?

Marquez un seul ovale.

1

2

3

4

5

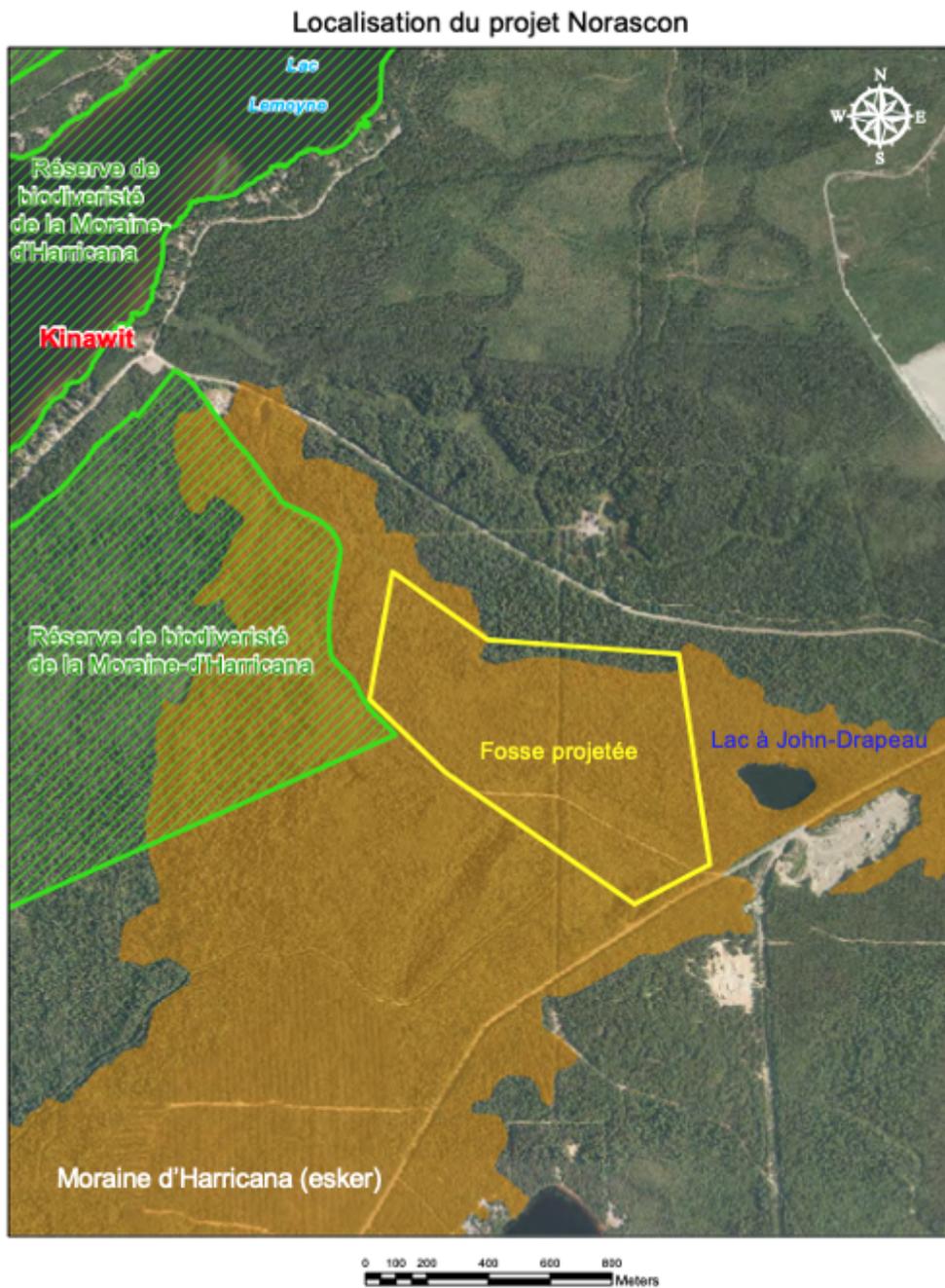
5. Construction Norascon Inc. proponent is planning to develop a gravel open-pit less \*  
than one kilometer upstream from the Kinawit Cultural Centre, at the intersection of  
Chemin de la Baie-Carrière and Chemin des Scouts in Val-d'Or, on Anicinape Aki  
ancestral territory.

The proposed open-pit is located right on the Harricana moraine (the City of Val-d'Or's esker). It is also located at the core of the Val-d'Or recreational forest. The 25-year Norascon project would affect a minimum area of 91 soccer fields (64 hectares), in the critical habitat of Val-d'Or's caribous.

For more information on the feared impacts of the Norascon project, click on [this link](#). To know more about Kinawit cultural site mission, [click here](#).

The [Mining Act](#) governs the assessment and consultation process for this project.

**What is your position on this project (against, in favor, undecided, other)?**



Marquez un seul ovale.

- Against
- In favor
- Undecided
- Autre : \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. **This is your space to share your comments, messages, positions and arguments to support your position. Meegwetch!** \*



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7. In September 2022, the Board of Directors of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre adopted a resolution against the Norascon project, considering that "this project would have harmful impacts on the Friendship Centre's Kinawit cultural site". This opposition was expressed to the proponent on several occasions, notably during the information session held on September 21, 2022 at the Forestel, and during a visit by the president of Construction Norascon Inc. to the Kinawit site on October 18, 2022. \*

The Friendship Centre intends to submit a brief to indicate its opposition to the project to the decision-making bodies before the deadline of November 21, 2022. We would like to include your comments.

**I consent to my comments submitted in this form being added to the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre's brief.**

*Marquez un seul ovale.*

- Yes, showing my name
- Yes, anonymously
- No

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