

- [View the map of mineral claims in the Eastern Townships \(November 2022\)](#)
- [View map of mineral claims in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspésie \(November 2022\)](#)
- [See the table of mining claims in three regions of southeastern Quebec \(November 2022\)](#)
- See also [open letter from 9 RCMs representing 142 municipalities](#) and [Municipal Forum January 2023](#)



PS – A delegation from the Coalition will meet with the MRNF Minister in Quebec City on November 22

Mining claims: the urgent need for a moratorium

Quebec, November 21, 2022. In the aftermath of COP27 on climate change and as the [Quebec Mines + Energy](#) conference opens today under the theme "A transition powered by our resources," a coalition of environmental organizations unveils new maps showing a boom in mining claims ranging from 63.4% to 139% over the past 24 months in southeastern Quebec ([Eastern Townships](#), [Lower St. Lawrence](#), [Gaspésie](#)). The coalition joins dozens of municipalities in calling for a moratorium on the granting of new claims until regulations under the Mining Act are changed to protect the environment and the population.

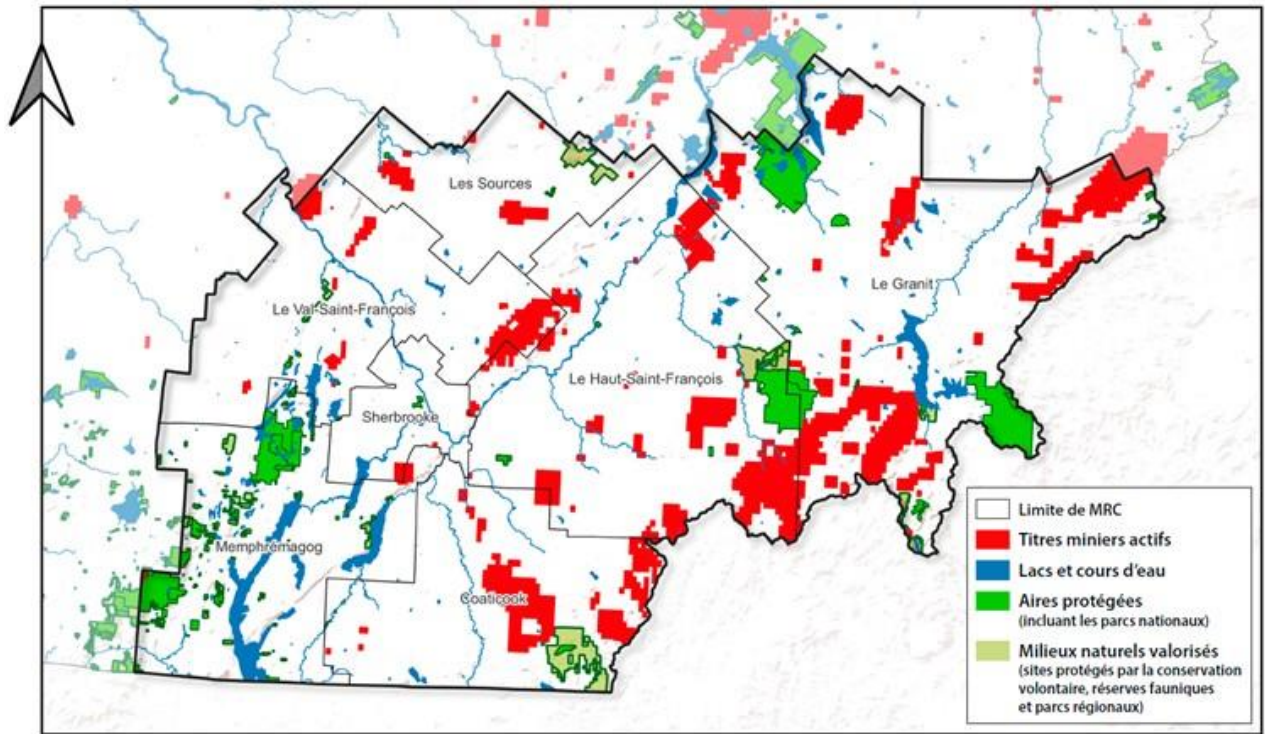
This latest boom in mining claims is in addition to the one already documented earlier this year in [southwestern Quebec](#) and is tied to the increasing global demand for minerals to supply [the military and energy industries](#) in particular. This boom is also tied to the launch of the [Quebec Plan for the Development of Critical and Strategic Minerals](#) in the fall of 2020, as well as the [high price of gold](#) over the past two years — [92%](#) of which is used by the financial and jewelry industries.

The organizations note the following highlights:

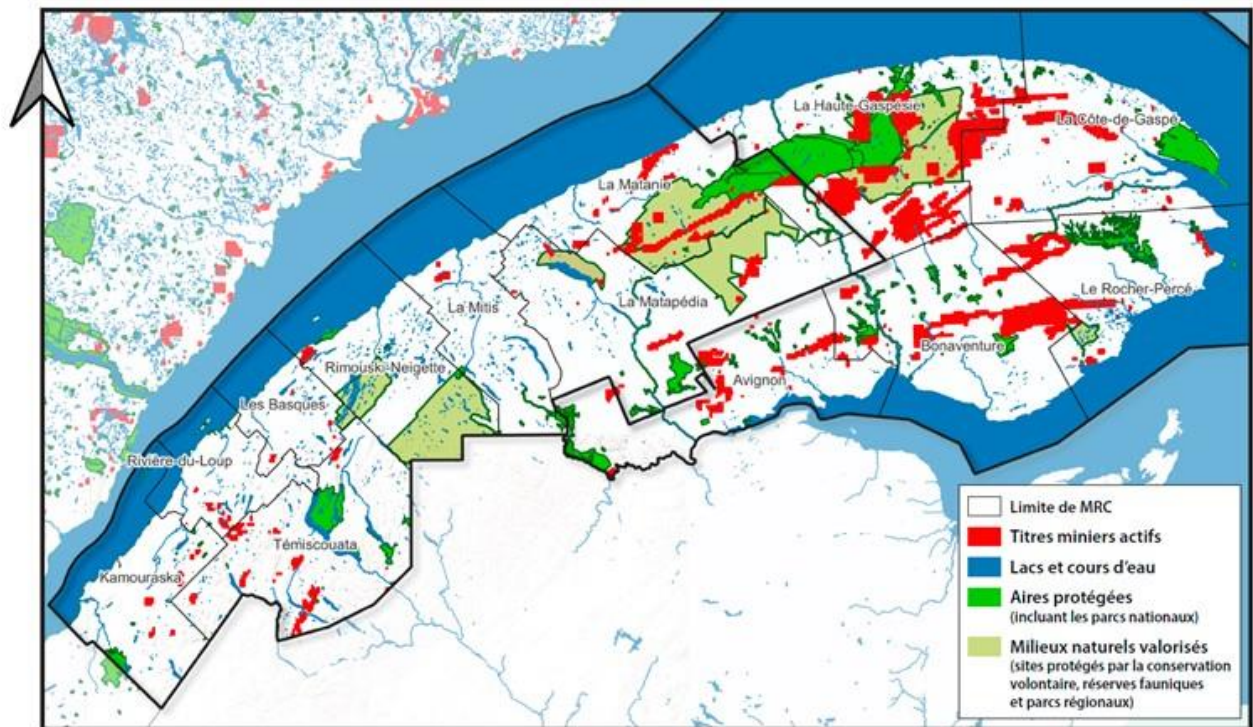
- **An average 107% increase** in the number of mining claims which were granted over the past two years in the three regions analyzed in southeastern Quebec, including the Eastern Townships (+63.4%), Lower St. Lawrence (+87.5%) and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (+139%). This rate is 2.6 times faster than the Quebec average (+40.6%) over the same time period, and is similar to the previously-documented boom in mining claims in [southwestern Quebec](#) (+129% from January 2021 to August 2022).
- **Over 20,000 claims in Southern Quebec** - There are now over 20,000 claims in seven regions of southern Quebec, including 7,674 claims in three regions of southeastern Quebec as of November 2022: Eastern Townships (1,739), Lower St. Lawrence (1,242), and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (4,693). More than 15,000 mining claims have been identified in [southwestern Quebec](#) as of August 2022 (Laurentides, Lanaudière, Mauricie and Outaouais).
- **More mining claims than protected areas** - Two of the three regions analyzed have more mining claims than protected areas in terms of surface area: Gaspésie (1.6 times) and Eastern Townships (2.6 times). All three regions have low rates of protected areas, far behind the international target of 30% of the territory by 2030: Lower St. Lawrence (3.39%), Eastern Townships (3.48%) and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (7.86%).
- **Interconnectivity and integrity of natural habitats threatened** - Hundreds of mining claims are [located in large national parks or within valued natural habitats](#) such as wildlife reserves and regional parks, threatening the integrity and interconnectivity of these environments that are important sites for conservation. Examples of national parks and protected areas where the peripheral buffer zones are being threatened include Parc national de la Gaspésie, Parc national du Mont-Mégantic, Samuel

Brisson Ecological Reserve, Grande-Rivière Ecological Reserve, Ruisseau Grand-Nord White-tailed Deer Confinement Area, etc. Among the valued natural habitats that have mining claims within or adjacent to their boundaries are the Chic-Chocs and Matane Wildlife Reserves, as well as the Hereford Forest. Several forest and agricultural areas are also affected.

- **Populations that are not informed or consulted** - There is currently no obligation under the Mining Act for mining companies to inform or consult citizens, municipalities or Indigenous nations before acquiring new mining claims on their territories. With the click of a button, anyone can acquire a claim online for less than \$45. Once acquired, the claim bestows an "exclusive right" to its holder who can then renew it indefinitely at little cost, carry out drilling work, and eventually operate a mine if a mining permit is obtained.
- **Integrated planning and development of "mined" land** - In addition to allowing drilling activities to take place without environmental assessment or public consultation, it is virtually impossible to revoke mining claims under the current laws. The presence of mining claims for many years (often for speculative purposes) prevents integrated land-use planning, as well as environmental conservation during this period. Quebec is already lagging far behind in its conservation efforts to meet international targets of 30% by 2030, especially in southern Quebec.
- **Nine RCMs representing 142 municipalities** are calling on Quebec to [review the Mining Act](#) and government guidelines for the designation of "Territories Incompatible with Mining Activity" (TIAM), in particular to better protect natural habitats, lakes, and areas for recreational tourism. A recent [Leger survey](#) indicates that three out of four people in Quebec (75%) say they are in favour of "banning all mining projects in tourist or resort areas"; a similar proportion (78%) want "to require the consent of local populations (e.g. municipalities, First Nations) before authorizing any mining activity on their territory"; and almost all (89%) want "to ban the dumping of mining waste in any lake, river or sensitive ecological environment."
- **Solutions sought on the eve of the COP15 on biodiversity in Montreal** - The Quebec Civil Society Collective for COP15, which brings together more than 70 environmental, labour and funder organizations, supports an end to the prioritization of mining activities and calls for conservation to be prioritized in land-use planning. The organizations call on Quebec to repeal section 246 of the Act respecting land use planning and development, to modify the government's guidelines governing territories incompatible with mining activities (TIAM), and to revise certain sections of the Mining Act (s. 82, 304, 304.1.1) in order to broaden their scope so that mining claims can be revoked for public interest reasons, such as environmental conservation.



Titres miniers (rouges) en Estrie (novembre 2022)



Titres miniers (rouges) dans les régions du Bas-Saint-Laurent et de la Gaspésie (novembre 2022)

Évolution des titres miniers dans trois régions du sud-est du Québec*

Année	Estrie	Bas-Saint-Laurent	Gaspésie-Î.-M.	Total 3 régions sud-est Qc
Titres miniers actifs (1er novembre 2020)	1 064	669	1967	3 700
Titres miniers actifs (1er novembre 2022)	1739	1242	4693	7 674
Augmentation depuis 2 ans (nb titres miniers)	675	573	2 726	3 974
Augmentation depuis 2 ans (%)	63,4%	85,7%	139%	107%
Nb de fois supérieur à la moyenne du Qc (40,6%)	1,6	2,1	3,4	2,6

*Source: Coalition Québec meilleure mine à partir des données GESTIM et des cartes de titres miniers du MERN (2020-2022)

Titres miniers vs aires protégées dans trois régions du sud-est du Qc*

Année	Estrie	Bas-Saint-Laurent	Gaspésie-Î.-M.	Total 3 régions sud-est Qc
Superficie (ha) miniers (1er novembre 2022)	100 133	62 999	257 171	420 303
Superficie (ha) d'aires protégées	36 604	76 768	160 511	273 883
Superficie (%) d'aires protégées	3,48%	3,39%	7,86%	5,11%
Nb de fois supérieur (claims vs aires protégées)	2,7	0,8	1,6	1,5

*Source: Coalition Québec meilleure mine à partir des données GESTIM et l'Inventaire des aires protégées du MELCC (2022)



For more information

- Rodrigue Turgeon, Coalition Québec meilleure mine and MiningWatch Canada, 819-444-9226
- Alice de Swarte, Société pour la nature et les parcs (SNAP-QC), 514-575-4941
- Cyril Frazao, Nature Québec, 581-777-2690
- Rébecca Pétrin, Eau Secours : 514-246-9075
- Martin Vaillancourt, Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement: 418 265-7545
- Pascal Bergeron, Environnement Vert Plus (Gaspésie), 581.886.1189

Signatory organizations (in alphabetical order):

- Action boréale
- Association québécoise des médecins pour l'environnement (AQME)
- Centre de recherche en éducation et formation relatives à l'environnement (UQAM)
- Coalition Québec meilleure mine
- Eau Secours
- Environnement Vert Plus
- MiningWatch Canada
- Nature Québec
- Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement (RNCREQ)
- Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes
- Société pour la nature et les parcs (SNAP Québec)
- Vivre sans mine (www.vivresansmine.org)

Quotes:

(national organizations and organizations in southeastern Quebec)

"The survival of the Gaspé caribou will depend on our ability to provide it with more land. The mining claims adjacent to the Parc de la Gaspésie will quickly become an obstacle to the expansion of a dedicated protected area, an essential condition for its survival." - Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for Environnement Vert Plus in Gaspésie

"The last few years have made us realize the importance of increasing our food autonomy. Is it normal to allow for the **purchase of mining claims on the fertile agricultural lands of the St. Lawrence Valley and southern Quebec**? Will the government really agree to **sacrifice Quebec's food supply** so the mining industry can profit?" - Noémi Cantin, co-spokesperson for the citizen committee Vivre sans mine en Estrie

"The current mining system is an obstacle to implementing the next global framework on biodiversity, particularly in terms of achieving the target of 30% environmental conservation. In the run-up to COP15 on biodiversity in Montreal in December, the **government must prioritize biodiversity conservation in all its actions** and adjust its laws and policies accordingly." - Alice de Swarte, Senior Director at SNAP Quebec

"In December at COP15, the eyes of the world will look to Montreal for the future of global biodiversity. Quebec must set an example. However, the **presence of mining claims in the Gaspé Park prevents the effective protection of the essential habitat for the Caribou** — a major emblem of biodiversity in the country and a symbol of hope to rally citizens to act in the face of a global loss of biodiversity." - Cyril Frazao, Executive Director of Nature Québec

"Environmental protection forms the basis of a responsible and competitive mining industry. Quebec has many assets to position itself as a leader, but it must not give in to this sense of urgency. **The government must meet its environmental objectives and ensure that projects are socially acceptable to host communities.**" - Martin Vaillancourt, Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement

"Quebec must not bend to the world's demand for gold, nor that of the American military and automobile industries. **The energy transition must not be used as a pretext for sacrificing the environment, forcing [mining] projects on communities, or for trampling on the rights of Indigenous nations.**" - Rodrigue Turgeon, spokesperson for the Québec meilleure mine coalition and MiningWatch Canada

"Adding the words **'critical and strategic'** as qualifiers to describe minerals tends to suggest that it is **more acceptable to mine these non-renewable resources**, as if the impact on ecosystems is de facto less destructive than for other minerals. At best, this is green paint. At worst, it is a complete disregard by those who claim to responsibly manage our common resources on our behalf." - Henri Jacob, President of Action Boreale

"This rush to extract minerals is nothing more than an ephemeral business opportunity. There is nothing strategic about destroying the environment and spaces where people live — be it through diesel machines or electric. **Short-term profit will never bring about the equitable and environmentally sustainable society** that our current responsibility to life and future generations demands." - Chantal Levert, Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes

"Municipalities are responsible for ensuring the safe supply of drinking water for their citizens and should have a say in any new mining projects within their boundaries. **These projects always pose a risk to the**

water given the destruction of water sources, the discharge of wastewater, and the unbridled water consumption by this industry. We must protect these environments. Our drinking water, our quality of life, depends on it." - Rébecca Pétrin, Eau Secours

"According to our research, we are seeing a significant increase in socio-ecological conflicts caused by the expansion of the extractive industry. **There are currently 25 cases of conflict in Quebec** involving all 17 Administrative Regions. The expansion of extractive frontiers seems endless, especially now, in connection with the current trend of minerals for energy transition technologies. The affected populations are demanding to be informed and to take part in decisions that affect their realities." Isabel Orellana, Director of the Centre de recherche en éducation et formation relatives à l'environnement et à l'écocitoyenneté

"The health of the environment can no longer be separated from human health. It is imperative that the associated and cumulative health effects from the environmental impacts of various projects be finally taken into account in the economic, industrial, and land-use planning across Quebec. What is at stake is true environmental justice and the viability of our healthcare system. Citizens have been harmed for decades by these decisions, decisions that need to be changed to adopt a more sustainable and healthy perspective for people and the environment." - Claudel Pétrin-Desrosiers, President of the Association québécoise des médecins pour l'environnement (AQME)

"Quebec cannot move forward with so-called 'future minerals' with laws and policies from the past. The Mining Act must be modernized, the rules governing territories incompatible with mining activity must be updated, and Quebec must adopt real environmental regulations specific to the mining sector that are enforced with the power of the law." - Ugo Lapointe, co-founder and co-spokesperson of the Québec meilleure mine coalition
