



## **Cultural and Heritage Policy**

Abridged version

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## Introduction

The adoption of a cultural and heritage policy is a fundamental step for the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville, which aims to be a player on the regional scene of social, economic and cultural development.

A study, conducted<sup>1</sup> between June 2010 and January 2011, has shown the role culture plays in the lives of citizens and how this sector is brimming with valuable assets. Also highlighted is the urgent need for action to ensure that the MRC's citizens benefit from services comparable to those available to their regional neighbors.

In fact, the MRC has established a cultural and heritage policy with a view towards improving the quality of life of the entire population of the territory.

## Assets

The evolution of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville is told through many works, published over the years, telling the history of its constituent municipalities. The significant presence of artists and people in the artistic trades found in the MRC is a tremendous asset. The MRC is also characterized by the communities themselves looking after large segments of cultural life.

Existing and emerging organizations show considerable motivation. School-aged children are entitled to certain cultural services, in conjunction with the Cultural Policy of the Grandes-Seigneuries school board. Each of the municipalities of the MRC has a library; they do not all, however, offer the same type of services to the local population. Finally, several events are gaining popularity, making the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville shine on the regional and even provincial scene.

### Identified needs and key issues

The cultural portrait study has led to a number of findings that should be kept in mind when implementing the policy. Here are the most important:

- ♣ The amateur creative arts and literature sector has more visibility than the professional sector;
- ♣ Artists have limited opportunities to showcase their talents to the public;
- ♣ The attraction exerted by neighboring towns is also important;
- ♣ Organized events are mainly associated with agritourism attractions;
- ♣ The Anglophone community of Hemmingford is a unique group with distinctive characteristics;
- ♣ Opportunities to practice cultural activities in the area are limited and children have little opportunity to be introduced to the arts and culture;
- ♣ MRC artists have the chance to act as ambassadors for the region;
- ♣ The MRC has the ability to attract the population from outside its territory into contributing towards the region's cultural vitality;
- ♣ Volunteers play a key role in cultural life and have few human and material resources available to them;
- ♣ Few artists, volunteers and organizations are involved in the region's cultural life;
- ♣ The promotion of local artists is limited;
- ♣ The municipalities of the MRC have few resources to support cultural life.

The MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville will face many challenges over the next decade in helping to establish a support structure.

### Regional vision for cultural development

Implementation of the policy rests on the belief that the MRC should be an open environment for arts and culture, as well as a support for subsequent projects. Citizens, artists, volunteers, cultural workers and elected officials feel increasingly conscious of culture's impact on the quality of life.

To highlight the potential of artists, understand them better and to practice cultural activities, it is necessary to strike a balance between a region's cultural offerings and the vitality of cultural centers. In doing so, everyone will come to know and enjoy more of what is available on the territory; thus culture can elevate the living environment of citizens and benefit the region's social and economic development.

## Policy framework

The policy is built on basic concepts in harmony with the socio-economic position of the MRC and is intended to provide the community with access to a flourishing cultural environment. In this context, the involvement of the MRC is based on principles to which the whole community is committed.

These are:

- ♣ territorial affiliation
- ♣ local and regional participation and interest, citizen participation;
- ♣ recognition;
- ♣ accessibility;
- ♣ development and enhancement of the community;
- ♣ self-realization.

In addition, so that culture and heritage are the real issues of regional development, the MRC is setting general goals that will inspire all decisions and actions related to the welfare and development of citizens:

- ♣ allow citizens to have access to MRC activities, events and quality services;
- ♣ recognize the work of artists, organizations, cultural workers and volunteers of the territory;
- ♣ promote the benefits of a rich cultural life.

## Guidelines

The policy is directed towards four areas. The MRC intends to take these lines of action to make the policy a lever of development for the whole community.

### Orientation: Information, consultation and cooperation

So that the envisaged cultural development can be a real factor of growth for citizens and so that they can enjoy a stimulating environment, all local stakeholders are invited to work together on a daily basis in order to maximize their efforts.

A vibrant cultural life will happen when the players, craftspeople and participants all come together to join forces.

To advance in this direction, the MRC wants to:

- ♣ Integrate all local players in regional cultural development;
- ♣ Maintain continuous interaction between the area's stakeholders;
- ♣ Improve the flow of information between municipalities, artists, volunteers, cultural workers and all concerned.

### Orientation: Venues for practice and dissemination

Cultural practice, creation and dissemination will be able to grow and develop to their full potential if given an appropriate space. Thus, the MRC wants to:

- ♣ Make quality places available for cultural practice, creation and dissemination;
- ♣ Promote show tours and exhibitions.

## Orientation: Support

The MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville has welcomed many artists who have chosen to settle there to find, away from Montreal, a space for reflection conducive to creativity. The MRC, with the quality of the environment and its rural setting, ensures an intimate setting for their art or for respite.

Some prefer to live in the shadows, while others want to take advantage of this unique cachet to practice their art or share their achievements with visitors and spectators.

So that artists wishing to interact with people can find adequate spaces for creation and opportunities to showcase their art, the MRC wants to:

- ♣ Make technical and stage equipment as well as expertise available;
- ♣ Ensure a political leadership that supports regional cultural development;
- ♣ Implement policies and support programs;
- ♣ Make a service available that will allow users to find and access the territory's resources;
- ♣ Recognize artists, volunteers and cultural workers;
- ♣ Equip municipalities to better support local cultural development.

## Orientation: Promotion and enhancement

The MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville is brimming with artists from diverse backgrounds and a significant wealth of territorial heritage. Furthermore, the MRC has the organizations and individuals wanting to highlight these assets.

So that people may derive greater benefit from this environment and take pride in their local heritage and in the artists with whom they live, the MRC intends to:

- ♣ Develop strategies to promote the arts, culture and heritage both within and outside the MRC and the impact of a rich cultural life;
- ♣ Develop tools to make artists, organizations and activities more widely known;
- ♣ Promote and enhance regional history;
- ♣ Make tools available to ensure the protection of heritage.

## Implementation of the policy

The policy will become an important development tool for the community in the MRC, to the extent that it is taken forward by elected officials and that all stakeholders in the regional cultural community make it their common mission. In order to initiate the implementation of the policy, the following actions will be supported by the MRC:

- Conferring the mandate for cultural development and heritage to an elected official;
- Creating a cultural committee with the responsibility to monitor the project's implementation and to consult the community;
- Updating the action plan, identifying projects to put forward and updating avenues for development.

## The role of stakeholders

The policy is based on the commitment of policymakers, officials, workers, community volunteers and artists. With this in mind, everyone will need to put their shoulder to the wheel to achieve the prescribed goals.

### The MRC will:

- ♣ Play a leadership role to ensure that the policy is implemented;
- ♣ Ensure consultation within the community and municipalities;
- ♣ Stimulate cultural development by supporting community initiatives (including municipalities).

### Municipalities are invited to:

- ♣ Establish and support cultural structures, particularly a local joint committee;
- ♣ Ensure consultation on the development plan among local organizations, artists, etc.;
- ♣ Provide access to existing infrastructures.

### The community is encouraged to:

- ♣ Engage in a regional partnership to identify development priorities;
- ♣ Liaise in order to share resources;
- ♣ Organize and conduct activities for residents and tourists.

## Working Committee

The culture and heritage policy has emerged thanks to the involvement of the cultural community of the MRC and the commitment of the members of the Working Committee, namely:

- ♣ Nicole Inkel, Executive Director of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville
- ♣ Ariane Filion, rural development officer at the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville
- ♣ Isabelle Ricard, representative of Hemmingford Village and Township, Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and Chair of Arts and Culture Hemmingford
- ♣ Mr. Michel Dubé, representing Napierville, Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville, Saint-Jacques-le-Mineur and cultural worker of the Regional Park of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle
- ♣ Claudine Caron-Lavigueur, representative of Sainte-Clotilde, Saint-Patrice-de-Sherrington, Saint-Édouard, coordinator of *Apprendre en Coeur* and Commissioner of the Grandes Seigneuries school board.
- ♣ Gisèle Desrochers, representative of Saint-Rémi, Saint-Michel and founding member of the Société d'histoire des XI
- ♣ Isabelle Bouchard, consultant
- ♣ Suzanne Lemieux, consultant and project manager

## Action Plan

The guidelines and objectives of the action plan are:

### 1. Information, consultation and cooperation

- 1.1 Involve all local players
- 1.2 Maintain ongoing interactions between stakeholders
- 1.3 Improve the flow of information

### 2. Venues for practice and dissemination

- 2.1 Provide access to available places
- 2.2 Promote show tours and exhibitions

### 3. Support

- 3.1 Provide access to technical and stage equipment as well as expertise;
- 3.2 Ensure a political leadership supporting regional cultural development;
- 3.3 Implement a policy and support programs;
- 3.4 Provide a service supplying information on and allowing access to the territory's resources;
- 3.5 Recognize artists, volunteers and cultural workers;
- 3.6 Equip municipalities to better support local cultural development.

### 4. Promotion and development

- 4.1 Develop strategies to promote, both within and outside the MRC, the arts, culture and heritage as well as the impact of a rich cultural life;
- 4.2 Develop tools to publicize artists, organizations, activities;
- 4.3 Promote and enhance regional history and scientific components;
- 4.4 Showcase the community's customs, traditions and knowledge;
- 4.5 Provide access to tools ensuring the protection of heritage.

In order to simplify the presentation of the action plan, the reader should refer to the numbers corresponding to the objectives outlined above.

Note on costs: low = less than \$ 3,000; medium = \$ 3,000 to \$ 25,000.

### Action plan

Orientations Objectives	1			2		3						4					Responsibility of	Associated cost
	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5		
<b>Organize, network and inform</b>																		
Appoint a resource person at the MRC responsible for culture	√	√	√				√										MRC	none
Form a cultural committee consisting of representatives from each municipality (elected official, participant, artist or school representative)		√					√	√			√	√	√				MRC	none
Produce an English version of official documents	√		√														MRC	low
Stage a launch event for the policy which includes families and seniors	√		√				√										MRC	low
Produce and distribute a directory of artists and participants	√	√	√							√		√	√				MRC and Committee	Prod: none Dif: low
Produce and distribute a calendar of seasonal activities			√		√							√	√				MRC and Committee	Prod: none Dif: low
Produce and distribute a directory of equipment and premises						√						√					MRC and Committee	Prod: none Dif: low
Survey school boards to determine their interest in collaborating	√											√					MRC	none
Add a component "heritage discovery" to the <i>Journées de la Culture</i>														√		√	Committee	low

**Action plan**

Actions	Orientations		1			2		3						4					Responsibility of	Associated cost
	Objectives		1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5		
<i>Consolidate and share</i>																				
To implement a tool assisting the stakeholders in research funding									√				√	√	√				Committee	low
Support municipalities wishing to establish a local cultural committee/network	√		√											√					Committee	none
Realize a regional event highlighting good practices in cultural development and recognition	√	√							√			√					√		MRC	low
Explore the possibility of collaborating with school boards for the implementation of a range of activities	√		√																MRC	none
Explore the feasibility of producing a cultural information tool (virtual or printed) for the entire territory			√					√				√		√					MRC	none
Conduct a survey of organizations, institutions and private companies to explore the possibility of loan agreements /site rentals				√			√												MRC	none
Establish a system of equipment loans		√		√			√												MRC	none

**Action plan**

Orientations	1			2		3						4					Responsibility of	Associated cost
	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5		
<b><i>Collaborate and develop</i></b>																		
Gather all players within an existing event or one to be created		√					√			√					√		Committee	medium
Set up a toolkit for municipalities wishing to support their community							√				√		√				MRC	none
Produce agreement templates (loan of equipment, room rental, exchange of expertise, etc.).				√		√											MRC	none
Assess the impact of the cultural and heritage policy							√										MRC	none