



Photo: G. Gagné

Railcar excursion cancelled due to state of track

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND – The state of the Gaspé Peninsula railway and the uncertainty with regards to future repairs hurts tourism in the region. The *Draisineurs du Québec*, a group affiliated to the North American Rail Car Operators Association (NARCOA), is cancelling the June 2017 trip to the Gaspé Peninsula due to the lack of guarantee by Transport Québec that the damage sustained by the rail line in six places of the Chandler, Grand River and Percé area will be repaired on time for the excursion. “We had 25 railcars (...) We were to spend five nights on the Gaspé Peninsula. We have to cancel the trip (...) We might try for September if the track is repaired,” says Louis-François Garceau, of *Draisineurs du Québec*, a group of motor car owners based in the province. A number of owners were to come from the United States for the occasion. The Matapédia to Gaspé line has been chosen by NARCOA members of affiliated associations on many occasions over the past 20 years, notably in 1998, 2001, 2006 and 2011. A member of NARCOA, Alan Freed, came by himself using hi-rail car in August and November 2016, supervised as in the case of other excursions by a crew of the Gaspésie Railway Society, the operator of the line. The Gaspé Peninsula line is considered one of the finest pieces of railway in North America, scenery-wise. The line belongs to Quebec’s department of Transport. The Gaspésie Railway Society sent an assessment of the damage sustained during the December 30 storm and it amounts to approximately \$900,000, including protection dykes for the line. The damage could have been avoided with proper maintenance between 2011 and 2016, stated Luc Lévesque, director general of the Gaspésie Railway Society.