

THE FRENCH FEDERATION

a water policy actor

In the 1970s, formation of the first territories committees: Regulations evolve, with the awareness of the reality of paddling and the pedagogical potential of this practice. The first environmental content is dispensed within the federation.

In the late 1980s, the French Canoe Federation engaged itself in water management in France, to ask navigation restrictions, to secure the practice and the sport and make it known to other water users, and state representatives.



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In 1990, a new water law reaffirming the common status of water and the legitimacy of all uses was in preparation. It was the occasion to mobilize all the good will, and in particular Jean-Michel Darolles, lawyer, associate professor of universities. Since then, he has been a driving force for all the major legal advances for our practices and the guarantee of access to water (cf. insert)

Many associations participate in the national spring cleaning operation, initiated by the Ministry of the Environment. This annual operation has remained a staple in paddle sport structures and prefigures the River Guardians (Gardiens de la Rivière®).

The Equipment Commission of the Federation becomes the Nautical Heritage Commission, due to awareness of the federation leaders of the fragile and precious nature of the paddle sports practices sites.

It was also in the early 1990s that a partnership between FFCK and Electricité de France was established, for the management of water spills in particular.

The 2000s saw the priority of the environment in the federation progression system: the Pagaies Couleurs.

At the turn of the 2010s, the FFCK started writing Technical Equipment Books, which still are a basis for consultations and opinions that must be given by the federation, through its public authority prerogatives, which are assigned to it by delegation contract signed with the Ministry of Sports.

In 2017, the Nautical Heritage commission becomes the National Commission of Spaces, Sites and Routes, Sustainable Navigation with the Jean Zoungrana's election, who makes Spaces, Sustainable Navigation Sites and Routes the 3rd pillar of its federal governance, reinforcing even more the role of the federation as a water actor in France.

Since then, our role in the National Water Committee has been strengthened, the federation is represented on the National Biodiversity Committee, in all Basin Committees and contributes to all the projects of Master Plans for Water Management. New partnerships are created, with the National Association of Elected Members of Basins.

Over the last two decades, more and more volunteers have been working across the country to represent the federation in local water commissions, Natura 2000 or Sensitive Natural Areas steering committees. They were also able to develop their skills, thanks to the network exchanges, conducted by the Nautical Heritage national and regional commissions, then "ESIND".

The Federation is spreading its message to the greatest number today, through programmes aimed at members of the Federation and the general public, which are the River Keepers (Gardiens de la Rivière®), Water Trails (Sentiers Nautiques®) and Nature Paddle Points (Points Pagaie Nature®).

This work is still necessary, in view of the challenges that are opening up, including water sharing, the implementation of the French Water Plan or the National Biodiversity Strategy.

The FFCK's major legal advances with the support of Jean Michel Darolles (Jurist Expert JED):

- The 1992 Water Law, thanks to interventions by the deputy Guy Malandain, rapporteur of the law, recalls the common status of water, usable by all, and define the free-movements principles for non-motorized boats. Water sports and leisure activities are integrated as protected interests, whose needs must be satisfied or reconciled, especially when carrying out works in rivers...

- The law on sport of 6 July 2000, thanks to the support of the deputy Germinal Peiro, recognizes the legitimacy of «access to facilities, spaces, sites and routes related to nature areas» and the tools for the development of open-air sports: the Departmental Commissions of Sites and Routes (CDESI) and the Plans related to them (PDESI). The consideration of water sports and leisure activities during work in the river is once again reinforced.

- The Water and Aquatic Environments Act of 2006 made it possible to secure navigation on waterways, by integrating the consideration of non-motorized nauticalcrafts in river maintenance operations, and above all, the obligation for prefects to draw up lists of structures to be marked and to be adapted to ensure the safety of nautical craft, requiring owners or operators to make boat passes and/or bypass roads, as well as to install signage around their works.

On these legislative and regulatory bases, as well as the jurisprudence that follows, the FFCK has established a proven strategy for access to water:

- Lead the upstream consultation of projects within its ministerial delegation in as many cases as possible;

- Bring the case to the administrative litigation whenever these rights are cheated.

