



EDITORIAL

We live in a beautiful region that is filled with resources. Unfortunately, the water quality of our rivers and lakes has an impact on the quality of life of every citizen. Mistakes were made in the past in the management of this resource. For several years, we have realized that we must change the way we use water. There have been several discussions on the topic, but it is now time to act!

Last September, we shared with you three of our principal mandates. Here are how things have evolved

ACCELERATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION:

Keeping in mind justice and equality, we must ensure that all the current regulations are being respected in particular, in the management of fertilizers (organic and mineral), the buffer zones and the conformity of septic systems. Several agriculture practitioners and citizens have already put in a lot of effort and sometimes had to invest some money to respect the current regulations. It is not fair that people who do not participate in better management practices do not have to pay for any of the consequences.

On the government side, the level of priority given to Missisquoi Bay varies from one ministry to another. The Ministry of Environment does recognize the urgency of the situation and allocates additional resources, whereas the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAQ) is slow to respond. In our region, there is no more money given to the Prime-Vert program, no additional personnel to accompany the farmers and no real incentive to improve farming methods. We are asking a lot from our agriculture practitioners, but they cannot take the entire financial responsibility on their shoulders. A compensation program must be available to farmers that want to go above and beyond the current regulations. A similar problem is encountered with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Several municipalities do not have the money for the installation of proper water treatment facilities, for the collection and treatment of wastewater, or to ensure the conformity of septic systems.

ALBURG-SWANTON CAUSEWAY

We are very happy with the recommendations of the International Joint Commission (IJC) for the Alburg-Swanton causeway. We asked the Commission to not only examine the role of the causeway but to also consider human health issues for Missisquoi Bay residents. In this regard, the work of the Task Force is exemplary (see article Pont-Alburg Swanton). We have to continue our work to ensure that these recommendations are adopted. Although the governments have always taken into consideration the IJC recommendations, there is always a risk that this time, they might not be considered. We agree with these recommendations and we are officially requesting that the Governments of Quebec, Vermont, United States and Canada apply them.

MORATORIUM AND DEFORESTATION

Last December, the Quebec Government realized that in order to reduce phosphorus levels, one must stop increasing the inputs. By exercising some control on the expansion of the pig farming industry, the government has demonstrated how much it cares about protecting water quality. In addition, it has established the maximum surfaces that can be cultivated in the watersheds that have shown degradation of water quality. There is no doubt that Missisquoi Bay belongs in this category!

We appreciate the government's courage in applying these important measures. After an initial negative reaction, our agriculture practitioners are starting to realize that this approach is the right one. It is obvious that allowing an increase in current cultivation surfaces would automatically entail further restrictions on the existing farms. It is important to remember that one deforested acre that becomes cultivated will release 10 to 50 times more phosphorus than one acre of forested land. In addition, we are realizing now, that the phosphorus concentrations have diminished only slightly despite all of the efforts over the last couple of years.

Several people believe that the positive effort invested by the agriculture practitioners over the last few years has been cancelled out by the increase of phosphorus inputs associated with the cultivation of larger surfaces. These new measures should result in a decrease of pressure on the existing farms. Only when we have control on the water quality in our lakes and rivers, could we consider further development.....this would then become sustainable development.

We continue to ask for the participation of all citizens in improving water quality. We all have a role to play.

Thank you for your support.

Pierre Leduc, president

Your support increases our clout and is essential to achieve our goals. By becoming a member, you demonstrate that you agree with our ideas and actions and increase our credibility and success when we interact with the government.

CITIZENS PLANTING TREES...

PROJECT BRISE-VENT 2000 TREES

The trees that we planted in May 2004 are doing well! We reached a survival rate of 98%! Last fall, Richard Lauzier from the Minister of Agriculture (MAPAQ) as well as a group of volunteers from Conservation Baie Missisquoi went

back to the field to prepare all the trees for the winter. The weeds had completely invaded them. The snow was just around the corner, so we had to remove the invaders because together with the snow they had the potential to collapse and suffocate the young

larches, fruit and red oaks. More trees will be planted on Saturday, May 21, to complete this project. Other upkeep projects will also be organized this year to ensure the survival of all the trees that are part of this buffer zone.

UPKEEP PROJECTS

Upkeep projects will also be organized to ensure the survival of the trees that we planted in various projects such as the sponsorship programs of Rock River and Pike river.

WATCH YOUR
EMAIL BECAUSE
WE WILL NEED
VOLUNTEERS!



THE ROCK RIVER by Charles Benoit

The Rock river is deceiving. At the St-Armand bridge just below the Trudeau's it looks like a dynamic torrent, while a few kilometers downstream it becomes a lazy, winding stream. From the Bealac's towards the border, going from the Bellefroid's, Wade's, Dalpé's then to our place and the Pelletier's, it probably multiplies its length by ten times. It takes advantage of all this time to tell all sorts of tales. It pretends to be important as if it was a large estuary and as if Bay Missisquoi was the ocean.

During torrential rain, if the wind comes from the South, there is a reflux in the river; there is tide in St-Armand she likes to pretend! One should then see how the water goes through the windings, in a straight line creating lakes where it once was a river and an estuary where there used to be fields.

It is not surprising that these back and forth motions in this false delta, create huge perturbations. The riverbanks are destroyed and the fields eroded. Tree trunks are brought from upstream or downstream and generate obstacles that create more bank erosion. Even the trees that are so-called river trees, like the stupid Giguere maples and the large black willows, participate in the destruction. Once they reach maturity, their large bodies start bending then fall into the river contributing to more obstacles.

With Jean Bonin, from the MAPAQ, and some CBM friends, my brother started a forced labour project. Several days were invested in removing the trees' dead bodies around the river to stimulate the natural flow. The woodcutters also took a little bit of initiative and cut the bent trees before they started to fall.

In this project, we will restructure the riverbank by planting sturdier trees that will be able to resist the disorganized motions of the river, that will protect the banks from erosion and also supply a shady environment to the fish.

The main hope is that these shrubs and trees, will eventually offer work as well as joy to the agriculture practitioners by supplying wood, fruits and nuts.

This modest experience of riverbank restoration has demonstrated that it is possible to accomplish excellent projects for the improvement of the environment by working with farmers that live alongside our rivers.

We will soon have the opportunity to invite you to our Riber Bay jam tasting. You can then thank our friends from Conservation Baie Missisquoi for the recipe!



SATURDAY MAY 28, 2005 IN ST-ARMAND Big Restoration Project on the Banks of Rock River

You are all invited to participate in planting trees with CBM at 9h in St-Armand, on the Benoits' land, on St-Luke Road. You will simply have to follow the directions from Route 133. We will be waiting for you!

CBM'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

• Pierre Leduc President • Louis Hak Vice-president • Martin Landreville treasurer • Heïdi Asnong secretary
• Nathalie Fortin consultant • Alain Lemieux consultant • Yvan Sinotte consultant

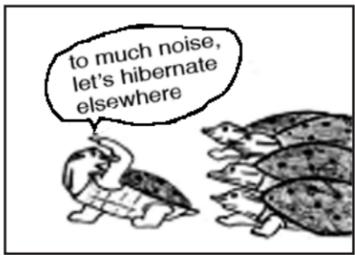
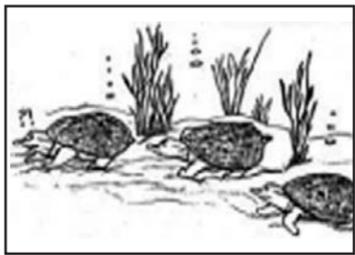
EASTERN SPINY SOFTSHELL TURTLES

The year 2004 has been difficult for the spiny softshell turtles. The abundant rain we had in August and September caused flooding that wiped out all the nests and eggs. Consequently, there were no newborns in 2004.

In addition, the continued construction of the new Alburg-Swanton bridge after September 1st has had a considerable impact on their migration towards their principal over-wintering habitat because this turtle is particularly shy. It is recognized that disturbances such as road work and various nautical activities are important factors that contribute to the disappearance of their habitat.

Seventy five percent of the spiny softshell turtle population hibernate between the old causeway and the railroad bridge. Once the construction of the new bridge has been completed, only 100 meters of the old causeway was to be removed to protect this hibernation site (see article Alburg-Swanton bridge). The turtles start migrating towards this hibernation site at the end of August. The turtles hibernate buried beneath the sand from November until March or April.

Originally, construction of the new bridge was to be interrupted from September 1st until April to respect the migration and hibernation of the spiny softshell turtle. Surprisingly, the strategy has changed! Construction of the new bridge has not been stopped as planned. The radio-transmitters that were installed on some of the turtles (7 in Quebec and 10 in Vermont) demonstrated that half of the turtles completely changed direction when they arrived near the construction zone! They chose instead to sleep peacefully in various sites such as the Missisquoi River, Chapman Bay and in the Missisquoi Bay Natural Refuge.



A **BIG** PARTY

SATURDAY, JULY 9TH!

Known artists will be arriving in Venise to "Save the Bay"

by **Martin Landreville**

The Eau Secours Coalition and various organizations from our region (CBM, CBVBM and the SITE) as well as the municipalities of Venise-en-Quebec are preparing an event for Saturday, July 9th. After a full day of activities such as guided tours and information stands on Missisquoi Bay and the environment, the Venise wharf will be hosting a big party. We are expecting artists such as Richard Séguin, Dobacaracol, Raoul Duguay, Catherine Durand, Claire Pelletier and perhaps Patrick Normand.

Eau Secours is a large coalition of individuals, groups and some « Porteurs and Porteuses d'eau ». The goal of the coalition is to request and promote responsible water management via equality, accessibility, public health, sustainable development and social sovereignty because water is a vital and strategic resource. For example, Eau Secours was responsible for stopping the privatization of the water infrastructures in Montreal (1998 and 2003) and for blocking the multinational companies from collecting underground water that was being used by several municipalities. CBM has been a member of Eau Secours since 2003.

For several years, the Coalition has been organizing benefit concerts for certain environmental groups to help them pursue their work. Tickets are currently being sold at a price of ten dollars for this outdoor concert surrounded by water. All the profits will be invested towards restoration of Missisquoi Bay and its tributaries or for projects that contribute to an improvement of their condition.

"People from the region are invited to come and participate in this big **Water Event**" says Pierre Leduc, president of Conservation Baie Missisquoi. "We want this day to be an important gathering of people who care about water preservation and want to save the bay."

Conservation Baie Missisquoi collaborates with its partners, to ensure that all the players who are concerned with the bay are brought together. The field work accomplished over the last two years, is a good example of the efficiency and the importance of working as a team with the citizens, the agriculture practitioners, water sport amateurs, tourists and elected members of various levels of government.

This "Water Event" is very important to reinforce the bond that is uniting us towards the same objective.... to clean Missisquoi Bay. I invite everyone who wants to participate to buy tickets in Venise-en Quebec or to show up on Saturday, July 9th.

F L A S H TIPS

NATURAL FERTILIZATION

Grass cuttings and dead leaves are natural fertilizers. The accumulated nutrients are released into the soil and can contribute to the health of your lawn. A small amount of grass cuttings and dead leaves applied at the beginning of the spring, can replace commercial fertilizers and compost. **BEWARE!** It is important however, to collect the grass cuttings near the shore because it contributes to increasing the phosphorus inputs into the lake! It is thus recommended to collect grass cuttings from within 10 meters from the shore.

MOWING

The vegetation near the shore contributes to maintain the soil and to reduce the amount of sediments and phosphorus that reach the bay. It is thus recommended to not mow the lawn or to reduce the frequency of mowing within 10 meters from the shore. Maintaining the grass at a length of 8 cm (3 inches) in this buffer zone is also recommended.

NEWS *in Brief*

The members of the CBM board of directors are getting impatient! Therefore, we have asked to meet with several representatives of the government to ask questions, discuss and offer suggestions. Here is a brief summary of our meetings:

FEBRUARY 14, 2005: Pierre Leduc meets with Jean Rioux, provincial deputy of Iberville, Sandra Provencher, political attache of Jean Rioux, Gérard Cusson and Martin Mimeault from the Ministry of Environment of Quebec and Richard Lauzier from the MAPAQ

The Plan of Action of Minister Thomas Mulcair —Summary of the farm inspections :

Evaluated the possibility of requesting the restoration of buffer zones that are larger than what was requested in the « Shoreline protection policy ». The current regulation requests a 3 meter buffer zone for farming activities.

Discussion of the compensation programs: Is it possible in Quebec to have a compensation program similar to the Conservation Reserve Program in Vermont? In this program, the farmers rent their buffer zone to the government to plant trees and shrubs.

DECEMBER 20, 2004: Louis Hak meets with Jean Rioux, provincial deputy of Iberville.

November 16, 2004: Louis Hak and Nathalie Fortin meet with Carolyn Choquette, political attache of the Minister of the Environment of Quebec, Thomas Mulcair, to talk about his plan of action.

During these meetings, we asked that compensation programs for the farmers become available as soon as possible to encourage them to restore their riverbanks by planting trees. We also asked that our watershed get an exemption status from the lifting of the moratorium on pig farming because, despite the fact that the agricultural lands have the capacity to receive more fertilizer, the lake is completely saturated with phosphorus!

**ALBURG-SWANTON BRIDGE
MARCH 31TH 2005**

The recommendations of the International Joint Commission

We have some excellent news! The International Joint Commission (IJC) has urged the Vermont government to take the necessary steps to remove the causeway as soon as possible! In addition, in five years the Commission

wishes to reexamine the quality of water in Missisquoi Bay! Here is a summary of the recommendations:

- That an amount of money equal to the cost of removing the causeway be provided by the governments of Canada and Quebec to reduce phosphorus inputs into the bay and to facilitate the relocation of the spiny softshell turtles' habitat.

- That efforts begin immediately to develop and implement an effective strategy that will guarantee an appropriate habitat for the spiny softshell turtles.

- That the governments of Vermont and Quebec accelerate their domestic programs to reduce phosphorus levels in the bay.

- That the United States and Canada take the necessary steps, both individually and jointly, to assist in reducing phosphorus levels in the bay.

These recommendations are beyond our expectations! Your presence during the various public hearings has had a tremendous impact and has been mentioned several times during



PONT ALBURG-SWANTON MARCH

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

31th 2005

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the various public hearings has had a tremendous impact and has been mentioned several times during the press releases. **Thank you!!!** We can all be proud because we have demonstrated great teamwork! **Congratulations!**

OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS:

On June 15 2004, the IJC formed the International Missisquoi Bay Task Force. This task force was composed of two members from the United States and two members from Canada. Their mission was to examine the transboundary impacts of the Alburg-Swanton bridge. The Task Force handed in their final report on October 20, 2004.

In their report, The Task Force concluded that the causeway causes a 1% increase in phosphorus level and sedimentation in Missisquoi Bay.

On December 6 and 7, 2004, the IJC commissioners organized public hearings in Clarenceville to get the citizen's reaction to the publication of the Task Force report. Here are a few examples of our presentations:

"No agreement was signed between Canada, the United States and the IJC for the construction of this bridge in 1936-1938. This causeway violates clauses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 of the 1909

Boundary waters treaty between Canada and the United States."

"We realize that the removal of the causeway is not the magic solution to our problems, but to this date, no other action with a similar level of impact has been identified. The improvement would be important and immediate."

"Every day, citizens work towards improving the quality of water by saying that every little action helps. Each kilogram of phosphorus they remove represents less than 1/1000 of the target level for Missisquoi Bay."

"The water runoff during the snow melting period has not been taken into consideration by the Task Force. This period lasts three weeks and is important because 30% of the water and 56% of the annual phosphorus inputs are being carried into the bay."

"Do the authorities of Vermont sincerely believe that the turtles are sleeping peacefully in the construction zone?"

"If the IJC concludes that the removal of more than 100 meters of the causeway would have an unacceptable impact on the turtles, we want scientific proof be given to the citizens that the turtles are currently sleeping in the construction zone of the new bridge."

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Conservation Baie Missisquoi has more than 215 members now.

Your support increases our clout and is essential to achieve our goals.

By becoming a member, you state that you agree with the ideas and actions put forward and allow us to be more effective in our interactions with the government.

Send your check to the order of
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publication of this bulletin was made possible by a grant from the ministère de l'Environnement du Québec (PSM-R).

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