



## MEMPHREMAGOG CONSERVATION INC.

### ACTION PLAN 2008

MCI is proud to begin its 41<sup>st</sup> year of work to protect Lake Memphremagog and its watershed basin, with some 1200 members and a board of fifteen directors.



#### **PRODUCTION OF A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE DRAINAGE BASIN**

MCI held a special event to mark the launch of its *Guide des résidents du bassin versant*/Guide for watershed residents on Saturday May 17 at the Cinéma de Magog. This short documentary by filmmaker Ismaël Auray was intended to make the residents of the drainage basin aware of the actions to take going forward, to improve the water quality in the lake. Twelve hundred copies of the DVD have been distributed without charge to members of MCI, to lake associations and to elected officials. MCI will also present a second documentary film by this young filmmaker, entitled *Sauveteur d'O*, which will feature Camille Rivard-Sirois, the biologist who carried out the Operation Healthy Lake studies in Quebec and Vermont. MCI provided support for Ismaël in the summer of 2007 for the production of these two films on Lake Memphremagog.

#### Synopsis



#### **The guide for watershed residents**

Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI), a not for profit association, has devoted its efforts for 40 years to protecting the health of the lake

When the alarming degradation in the health of the lake was noted, the group asked for the active participation of all residents in the drainage basin. Through the services and information provided by Michel Duteau, a young biologist specializing in aquatic

ecosystems, citizens were asked to take concrete steps to reduce their negative impacts on the lake.

In order to protect this natural treasure, the value of which cannot be overestimated, Michel will guide residents of the drainage basin towards behaviours which respect this fragile ecosystem. Because we love this lake and we benefit so much from it, we must act to preserve this precious heritage for the future.

Filmmaker Ismaël Aurey, one of the seven participants in the Course Estrie, agreed to produce this short documentary film.



## **FREE CONSULTATIONS WITH EXPERTS**

MCI has promoted the renaturalizing of the shoreline for many years and we are continuing these efforts.

To help our members and residents of Lake Memphremagog and its drainage basin to comply with the new municipal by-laws, **MCI** is offering free consultations with experts in renaturalizing the shoreline.

**MCI** has an agreement with *Aménagement Natur'eau-Lac* which will offer its services, for a period of one hour, to persons that make a request.

Degraded shorelines must be replanted and renaturalized to stabilize the shore and halt soil erosion, to filter pollutants such as phosphorus, to create shade, prevent silting, reduce algae and aquatic plants and keep the water clean and cool, for aquatic life.

### **How to consult an expert:**

- Notify MCI that you are interested in participating, by telephoning **819-340-8721**
- **MCI** will forward a list of those interested and their contact information to *Aménagement Natur'eau – Lac*;
- The biologist in charge of waterfront landscaping will contact you to set up a meeting to visit you;
- The biologist will advise you about ecological landscaping of your shoreline and will provide a list of recommended plants and a sketch of the proposed landscaping plan which you will have discussed during the visit. A landscaping service can also be proposed, if you wish;
- **MCI** will cover the cost of this visit. A reduction of 10% will be offered if you decide to use the landscaping services of *Aménagement Natur'eau – Lac*.



## **THE FIGHT AGAINST CYANOBACTERIA AND OTHER CAUSES OF PREMATURE AGING OF THE LAKE**

This year, we will be continuing our efforts to fight the proliferation of blue-green algae. The appearance in 2006 of cyanobacteria is a sign of the degradation in the quality of water and constitutes a significant threat to human health, and animal and

aquatic wildlife. In 2007, two municipalities had to post advisory notices not to use water from the lake and residents who draw water directly from the lake were warned not to use the water.

MCI is putting together, for the third straight year, a network of volunteer watchdogs. They will check for outbreaks on a daily basis and report any findings of blue-green algae. They will also keep an eye out for any threat to water quality in the lake. Their observations will be collected and forwarded to the MDDEP, Quebec's environment and sustainable development ministry and to municipalities concerned.

We will continue to provide information to citizens about reducing phosphorus and the battle against soil erosion.



## **TWO REPLANTING PROJECTS**

### **WEIR BEACH: PHASE II**

**On June 14 and 15, 9h30, citizens are invited join volunteers from MCI to continue the work of renaturalizing Weir Beach.** Specialists at *Aménagement Natur'eau Lac* are in charge of this project. It is the second phase of the renaturalization of this beach. The cost of \$ 20,000 has been financed jointly by MCI and by a grant from the Pacte rural of the MRC de Memphrémagog.

The Ville de Magog, in association with RAPPEL, COGESAF and Memphrémagog Conservation Inc, organized a shoreline replanting project on Saturday May 24. This activity took place in the Pointe Audette sector, on the shore of Lake Memphremagog. The Ville de Magog offered a workshop on revitalizing the shoreline with MCI and specialists from RAPPEL. Everyone was invited to see the different methods of planting and the species that can be used to replant the shoreline.

This is an concrete field project that can offer a "green showcase" with a double mission of replanting and providing a demonstration site accessible to the public. Information panels financed in part by MCI will identify the different species of shrubs and trees planted, and the techniques of renaturalizing a shoreline.



## **NETWORKING: LAKE PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS**

MCI puts a great deal of emphasis on meeting different property owners' associations and environmental associations to protect lakes and the drainage basin. MCI offers the following types of collaboration to these groups:

- A short presentation by a member of the board of directors on the concerns and priorities of MCI, on blue-green algae, the renaturalization of shorelines and actions that must be taken by citizens to deal with problems of the degradation of water quality;
- An offer of free one-hour consultations by specialists in renaturalizing the shoreline, by the company *Aménagement Natur'eau – Lac*;

- Presentations by Édith Smeester, biologist, author and excellent speaker, on replanting the shoreline and various subjects, including:
  - Ecological lawns and other groundcovers;
  - New alternatives to the traditional lawn;
  - Ecological horticulture ;
  - Horticulture and protecting bodies of water.



### **AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

MCI again plans to take a series of aerial photos to identify the most troublesome tributaries in the watershed. This will provide an additional tool to convince citizens and politicians that the health of the lake is directly influenced by the tributaries and that an assessment of the impact of all human activities in the entire drainage basin of the lake must be undertaken.



### **MCI'S LAKE PATROL**

Every year MCI provides funding for a lake patrol. This summer a third patroller will be added to the team to better watch over the vast territory and provide a more complete service to our members and residents. Our patrollers are Sophie Paré, head of the patrol, Simon C. Tétreault and Samantha Morley. Sophie and Simon are students in biology and ecology and in marine biology at the Université du Québec à Rimouski and are beginning their studies towards a master's in environment. Samantha is doing her undergraduate degree in environment and geography at Bishop's University. The patrol has a number of roles:

#### **Watchdog Mission**

The mission of MCI is to watch over water quality in the lake and its tributaries. Our patrollers are the first line of defence for the municipal inspectors and the MDDEP. Their mandate is to report any infraction of the laws or by-laws and regulations that deal with environmental protection. At the beginning of the summer, our patrollers meet all the municipal inspectors to establish good lines of communication with them.

#### **Water quality monitoring**

We are continuing to check water quality in the lake. We are taking water samples for the MDDEP to test. The patrollers will also watch out for the presence of blue-green algae.

#### **Renaturalizing the shoreline**

Our patrollers are trained to give information about how to renaturalize the shoreline. We are ready to provide support to waterfront property owners and to the various lake associations that would like to implement a similar project.

#### **Public education**

Since public education is one of MCI's most important missions, our patrollers meet young people in day camps to talk about protecting water quality in our lakes.

### **Up-dating of the *Operation Healthy Lake: Quebec-Vermont* study**

To update our study and evaluate the continuing or declining extent of the invasion by aquatic plants, we will have five sampling stations in Canada and three in the United States. This data will be added to our study every year.

### **Dissemination of information**

In addition to publicizing the actions and mission of MCI, our patrollers will distribute pertinent documents about reforestation and replanting, control of soil erosion and elimination of the use of fertilizers and pesticides. We have also prepared a code of ethics for the users of the lake (available on our website).

### **Representation at summer events**

The patrollers will be at the MCI booth at the Canada Day celebrations in Georgeville and at the Fête du village in Austin.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The annual general meeting of members of ACA will be held on Saturday, August 2, 2008 at 9:30 am, at the Chapelle de Southière sur le lac.



### **MAJOR FILES UNDER STUDY**

#### **The MRC's land use planning and development plan**

The MCI will closely follow the amendment process for the MRC's land use planning and development plan, because it has a major impact on the environment of the entire drainage basin.

#### **Protection of the ecological and territorial integrity of the Parc national du Mont-Orford**

MCI continues to play a leadership role in this important battle to preserve the integrity of the Mount Orford provincial park and will continue to press the government to reintegrate the 458 hectares of land in the park which is protected by the Parks Act.

#### **Magog dump site**

The MCI participated in the public hearings about the environmental impact held by the BAPE in Magog on May 22 and 23, 2007 and presented a brief on June 18, during the second part of the hearings. MCI is still waiting for the decision of the Ministre du développement durable, de l'environnement et des parcs (MDDEP).

#### **Coventry, VT Landfill Expansion Phase V Project**

MCI has applied for "party status" in the Act 250 public hearings which are expected to take place once the waste management company deposits its Phase V application. Party status would afford MCI greater influence in the hearings.



## **MOTOR BOATS**

There are more than 4,000 boats on Lake Memphremagog. Boating causes environmental and social impacts that must be considered. We are studying the possibility of conducting a research project with a student from Bishop's University, on the various by-laws and actions already in place in Canada and the United States dealing with water-based activities on potable water reservoirs.

### **Speed boat noise**

Excessive noise from speed boats is a nuisance for all lake users. We invite users and residents of the region to file formal complaints to the provincial police force, the SQ, and to the Régie de police de Memphremagog lake patrol to create pressure to eliminate this nuisance that threatens the quality of life.

### **Creation of a management committee for Lake Memphremagog**

MCI is taking an active part in starting the CLB (Comité local de bassin versant) the local drainage basin or watershed committee bringing together all the intervenors in the drainage basin to set common goals to improve water quality in Lake Memphremagog.



## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

### **Newsletter**

Preparation and distribution of our newsletter to members, municipal councils, chambers of commerce and the various media

### **Website**

We have set up a website to disseminate all information related to the protection of the lake. The address is: [www.memphremagog.org](http://www.memphremagog.org)

### **Info-letter**

We have prepared an info-letter available on our website, to which readers may subscribe to obtain the most recent information. The info-letter allows us to treat specific subjects of general interest in greater detail.



## **MCI IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:**

### **QUEBEC-VERMONT COMMITTEE**

MCI was invited to take part in the Quebec-Vermont Committee, and Mr. Donald Fisher sits as MCI's representative. We support the creation of an environmental emergency measures plan between Canada and the United States that would enable a rapid response to any environmental disaster that could contaminate Lake Memphremagog.

### **MEMPHREMAGOG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION (MWA)**

A new committee to protect the environment is being formed on the Vermont side. It is made up of citizen volunteers who work for the protection of the health of Lake Memphremagog. Mrs. Susan Watson, a member of the board of directors of MCI, is a very active member of this committee.

### **LAKE MEMPHREMAGOG, TOMIFOBIA AND COATICOOK RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL**

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has undertaken to create a council of residents in the drainage basin of the lake, based in Newport, called the *Lake Memphremagog, Tomifobia and Coaticook Rivers Watershed Council* which is intended to bring together a large cross-section of representatives of various sectors in the region. To date, a recruiting strategy has verified through public meetings that there is an interest in this initiative. Our board members, Susan Watson, Tom Fletcher and Donald Fisher, have attended these meetings. To date, almost all the participants have come from the environmental sector. Liaison with MCI will be handled by Susan Watson who was invited to join the council by ANR. At this time, the initiative is just getting underway.

### **COGESAF and CLB**

MCI has taken part in meetings organized by COGESAF to form a new local committee for the Lake Memphremagog drainage basin (CLBV).

### **RAPPEL**

MCI is an active member of RAPPEL (Regroupement des associations pour la protection de l'environnement des lacs et des cours d'eau de l'Estrie et du haut bassin de la rivière St-François) a group set up to protect the environment of lakes and rivers in the Townships, and participates in its various activities.

