



MEMPHREMAGOG CONSERVATION INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention Publicity directors

The réserve naturelle du Ruisseau-Tompkin, the first private nature reserve in the Memphremagog watershed guided by MCI : 50 hectares of natural landscapes protected in perpetuity!

Magog, June, 2015 : In line with its mission of preserving the environmental health and natural beauty of Lake Memphremagog and its watershed, Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI) is pleased to announce the creation of a private nature reserve, thanks to the collaboration of the owners of the property.

Since the creation of its program aimed at preserving natural landscapes in 2009, MCI has been working with property owners, helping them navigate the process of protecting the natural landscapes on their properties.

The réserve naturelle du Ruisseau-Tompkin

50 ha (123 acres) of forests, wetlands and waterways are now protected in perpetuity thanks to the commitment of its owners. They have chosen to have a large part of their property recognized as a private nature reserve, thus ensuring the protection of their landscapes forever, and allowing them to use the rest of their property for other purposes.

The property is mostly forested, containing an important wetland along the shores of Tompkin's Creek, a stream which bisects their property and flows into Lake Memphremagog. The property has undeniable ecological value, fostering the presence of a rich biodiversity of plants and animals. The protection of these natural landscapes ensures the maintenance of the quality of the water of the streams on the property, and is essential to the conservation and improvement in the quality of the water downstream in Lake Memphremagog.

Although a large portion of the property is protected, the owners can continue to use it for hunting, fishing, hiking, and gathering a certain amount of firewood.

According to MCI's President, Claude Bernier: « The natural landscapes and the biodiversity which will be preserved on this land not only contribute directly to the protection of Lake Memphremagog, an important source of potable water, but also maintain the beauty of the landscapes of the region and the quality of life of the residents. We can only thank the owners for their exceptional contribution to conservation. »

For the property owners, this initiative reflects their profound attachment to their land. «For our family, Lake Memphremagog has always held an important place in our lives. My father was born in Magog, and our family spent their summers on the lake, moments we will always treasure. Today a group of property owners in Ogden are helping to preserve this heritage. The beauty of the region and a respect for nature was instilled in us from a young age. Now that we live here, we want to preserve the peace and tranquility of the area. » Thanks to the recognition of the réserve naturelle du Ruisseau-Tompkin, and the support of MCI, this exceptional landscape will be protected for future generations.

Note that in order to preserve the fragile and unique elements of the area, which, for the most part, is privately owned, MCI counts on the voluntary participation of private property owners through the following four options : donation for ecological purposes, conservation easements, obtention of the status of private nature reserve, or the sale of property for conservation purposes. The recognition of this nature reserve by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de lutte contre les changements climatiques (MDDELCC) is in line with the other actions supported by MCI and numerous partners, which has led to the preservation of properties on Mount Chagnon, Owl's Head and in the Millington wetland.

Over the next year, MCI will continue to support property owners who wish to preserve their properties.

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About MCI : **Memphrémagog Conservation inc. (MCI)** is a non profit organisation formed of volunteers, working since 1967 for the protection of the environmental health and natural beauty of Lake Memphremagog and its watershed. With the strength of its membership, it works to ensure that all residents of the region, permanent and seasonal, waterfront or not, can benefit from and enjoy a healthy lake, for today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Technical specifications

The private nature reserve

There are a number of ways to preserve natural landscapes on private property in the Lake Memphremagog watershed. Among them, for those wishing to maintain ownership of the property, the recognition of a private nature reserve on all or a part of their property could be of interest.

What is a private nature reserve?

Since 2002, it has been possible to designate one's property as a nature reserve under the *Loi sur la conservation du patrimoine naturel*. In order to obtain this designation, the owners must enter into a legal agreement touching on conservation measures with the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MDDELCC). Under this agreement, the property owner(s) voluntarily give up the right to carry out certain activities in order to protect the natural attractions found therein (such as forests, waterways, wetlands, etc.). The status of private nature reserve allows the property owner to remain owner, and gives them the right to a reduction in property taxes and an exemption from paying school taxes. The legal agreement is tied to the property title, and thus any future owners are required to respect the agreement.

More than 184 private nature reserves recognized to date in Québec have allowed for the preservation of 20,058.99 hectares.

In the Lake Memphremagog watershed, MCI is currently working with a number of property owners towards the designation of private nature reserve on their properties.