

PRESS RELEASE

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BLUE-GREEN ALGAE: GAUVREAU LAKE: A MODEL TO FOLLOW

La Pêche, 27 August 2007 --- Messrs Robert Bussière, Mayor of the Municipality of La Pêche, and John Leech, President of the Gauvreau Lake Environmental Protection Association were pleased to welcome Mme Line Beauchamp, Minister of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Parks, on the occasion of her visit to the Outaouais, part of a provincial fact-finding tour on the problem of blue-green algae. The visit is public recognition of the positive results of concerted efforts over seven years to significantly reduce blue-green algae and the public health threat presented by the production of cyanobacteria.

Proactive from the start of the crisis in August 2000, the Municipality has put in place several programs in collaboration with the Association. To be noted among others are the subsidies and decisive measures regarding:

- 1. water testing (for coliform and phosphates)**
- 2. a university study on the level of phosphate saturation**
- 3. installation and maintenance of an experimental aerating windmill**
- 4. inspection of the cottagers' septic systems**
- 5. support for the upgrading of the septic installations at the Whippoorwill Campground**
- 6. shoreline revitalization through tree planting**
- 7. major financial support for planning the revitalization of the Parent Creek**
- 8. rainwater diversion on the Kennedy Road**
- 9. financial support for electric fencing of fields along Parent Creek to prevent access by animals**
- 10. the elimination of beaver dams along Parent Creek**

The situation at Gauvreau Lake is not yet 100% perfect, but it is reckoned to be at a positive turning point. To get there has taken the collaboration of several other parties, including the regional office of the provincial Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAQ), and the farmers' union (UPA) who sit on a Joint Committee to coordinate action along with the Municipality and the Association. The regional office of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Parks assures conformity with environmental norms for the sites and agricultural

installations along the Parent Creek. This ministry also played an important role in the process to upgrade the septic installations at the Whippoorwill Campsite.

MAPAQ also ensured the farmers were aware of the PRIME VERT program which provides subsidies for fencing the Parent Creek and the installation of watering sites. Similarly, they encouraged subsidized support for the installation of manure storage facilities.

The Gauvreau Lake Environmental Protection Association established a program to convince cottagers to use phosphate-free products and to encourage local merchants to stock such products for their customers. It is also of note that the Association recently received significant grants from la Fondation de la faune du Québec and the Municipality of La Pêche to develop a plan for the revitalization of the Parent Creek, principal inflow to Gauvreau Lake.

“Conditions which have deteriorated over years of negligence or doubtful practices can’t be corrected overnight, but with patience and concerted effort you can get positive results. You have to start somewhere...and not just by relying on new regulations that we don’t have the means to enforce in any case!”, said Mayor Bussière during the meeting with Minister Beauchamp.

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For information:

Mayor Robert Bussière, (819-456-2161, poste 2270)

Mr. John Leech, (819-456-2681)