PRESS RELEASE

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A Lasting Legacy for Lake Memphrémagog watershed: Ivory Family Property Recognized as the Neil-B.-Ivory Nature Reserve

Fondation Nature Memphrémagog and Memphrémagog Conservation celebrates the recognition of 15.8 hectares of ecologically significant land near Cummins Bay

MAGOG, Québec (November 16, 2026) — Fondation Nature Memphrémagog (FNM) and Memphrémagog Conservation (MCI) are pleased to announce an important milestone in the permanent protection of natural areas in the Lake Memphrémagog watershed: a portion of the former Ivory family property near Cummins Bay has now been formally recognized as the Neil-B.-Ivory Nature Reserve by the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Protection de la biodiversité, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCPBFP).

The 15.8-hectare property was generously donated to Fondation Nature Memphrémagog by Mrs. Joan Fraser Ivory, with the intention that the land be protected in perpetuity as a natural habitat for birds, wildlife and future generations. The property will bear the name of her late husband, Neil B. Ivory, whose lifelong appreciation of nature and the environment inspired the family to see the property protected forever.

The MELCCPBFP's recognition of the property as a nature reserve represents an important step in ensuring the long-term conservation of its natural characteristics and ecological values. The official recognition was granted on April 29, 2026.

A family connection to the land spanning more than six decades

Joan and Neil Ivory purchased the property in 1959, shortly after they were married. A graduate in Science from Pembroke College, Cambridge, Neil had a lifelong interest in nature and the environment. He particularly enjoyed walking around the property, listening to birds and observing the natural surroundings.

"He always hoped that our property would be a sanctuary or haven for the birds and animals," said Mrs. Ivory. "If he were alive today, he would be leading the charge to protect the precious environment and biodiversity around Lake Memphrémagog. I am happy that I have been able to ensure that this property will be forever protected through my donation to Fondation Nature Memphrémagog."

A property of significant ecological value

The Ivory property forms part of an increasingly important network of protected natural areas in the Cummins Bay area and contributes to the protection of biodiversity and water quality within the Lake Memphrémagog watershed.

The property is characterized by a combination of mature forest, wetlands and two tributaries of Cummins Bay. Its forest cover is dense, with two mature forest stands occupying much of the property. The forest consists of an eastern white-cedar and red maple stand, and a yellow birch stand with balsam fir, paper birch, red maple, and white ash.

Ecological inventories have documented a diversity of plant and animal life on the property, including 57 plant species and 10 bird species, as well as wildlife such as white-tailed deer, red squirrels, snowshoe hares and American mink. The property also provides habitats that may support species considered at risk in Quebec.

The ecological importance of the land has been recognized through several planning initiatives, and its wetlands were identified for protection in the 2023 Plan régional des milieux humides et hydriques de la MRC de Memphrémagog.

The conservation objectives associated with the nature reserve include protecting its aquatic, riparian, wetland, open and forest habitats; maintaining its natural ecological characteristics and processes; and supporting the maintenance and recovery of species at risk in Québec and endangered in Canada.

MCI: protecting Lake Memphrémagog since 1967

In 2016, MCI contacted Mrs. Ivory to inform her of the ecological importance of her property and the conservation options available. In 2020, Mrs. Ivory approached MCI about moving forward to donate part of her property so that it could be protected in perpetuity. MCI subsequently invited the Fondation Marécages Memphrémagog to assist with the MELCCPBFP and the Environment and Climate Change Canada Ecological Gifts Program. The Foundation ultimately accepted the donation and the responsibility for ensuring its long-term conservation.

“This new nature reserve demonstrates what we can achieve when landowners, conservation organizations, and governments work toward a common goal,” said Johanne Lavoie, President of Memphrémagog Conservation. “Protecting natural habitats means protecting biodiversity, but also our water and our quality of life. We are very pleased with this partnership with the Fondation Nature Memphrémagog, and we hope that government support for this type of initiative will continue to grow. Every hectare protected today is a tangible investment for future generations.”

FNM: protecting natural areas for generations to come

For FNM, the recognition of the Neil-B.-Ivory Nature Reserve is more than the protection of one property. It is another example of the importance of working with landowners who share a vision of protecting the natural heritage of the Lake Memphrémagog watershed.

“Joan Ivory has given the Lake Memphrémagog watershed an extraordinary gift,” said Judy Hopps, President of Fondation Nature Memphrémagog. “Her family’s love of this property has now become a lasting conservation legacy. FNM is honoured to be its steward and to ensure that the natural habitats protected here will remain protected for generations to come.”

FNM gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Protection de la biodiversité, de la Faune et des Parcs and Environment and Climate Change Canada, in helping make this nature reserve possible.

The Neil-B.-Ivory Nature Reserve joins other protected areas in the region and strengthens the growing network of natural areas that help safeguard the biodiversity, ecological functions and water quality of the Lake Memphrémagog watershed.

About Fondation Nature Memphrémagog (FNM)

Established in 1991, Fondation Nature Memphrémagog (formerly Fondation Marécages Memphrémagog (until 2024) is dedicated to protecting natural environments and habitats in the Eastern Townships, with a particular focus on the wetlands, forests and waterways of the Lake Memphrémagog watershed and the Tomifobia River valley. Through partnerships with landowners and other organizations, FNM works to conserve ecologically significant areas and ensure their protection for future generations.

About Memphrémagog Conservation (MCI)

MCI is a non-profit organization that has been protecting Lake Memphrémagog and its watershed for present and future generations since 1967. It works in concert with various regional and government bodies, as well as with citizens, to take concrete action. It relies primarily on scientific knowledge to inform, raise awareness and empower the various players involved in ensuring the environmental health of Lake Memphremagog and its watershed. https://www.memphremagog.org/

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