

MAY 2022 memphremagogconservation memphremagog.conservation www.memphremagog.org SUMMARY

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MCI's **Patrol 50** years on the Lake

President's message

My good friends,

2021 was a difficult year for Lake Memphremagog. Cyanobacteria blooms, the continuing spread of zebra mussels, the evident impact of climate change on water levels, the perpetual battle that is the Coventry file, as well as much unreasonable construction, tree clearing, and dynamiting have kept MCI on high alert.

The good news

In the last municipal elections, 14 new mayors were elected in the 17 municipalities of our MRC. This new cohort is more sensitive to environmental issues. At the MRC, a new interim control regulation was adopted in October which bans construction on steep slopes.

2021 was also notable for several donations of natural landscapes, protected in perpetuity by generous residents, including the superb Molson Island. This year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of our patrol and the 55th of MCI at our annual general meeting!

MCI, more qualified than ever

This summer, our patrol will consist of four graduates of or students in university programs in environment or biology, all of whom have previously been part of our team! With a competent, efficient team, we are ready to take on the projects and challenges needed to ensure the environmental health of Lake Memphremagog, as we have been doing for the past 55 years.

The board of directors would like to thank all of those with whom we collaborate at various levels, but also emphasize the unwavering support of you, our members, who allow us to promote the protection of our common natural richness that is Lake Memphremagog. Many thanks!

Have a great summer!

Robert Benoit, Volunteer President

An experienced patrol for 2022

This year, we are fortunate to welcome a patrol made up entirely of returning employees! You already know them all!



Frédérique Thibault-Lessard

Frédérique will be the patrol coordinator this year. She was a member of the patrol in 2020 and is currently an environmental project manager with MCI. She completed her bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies at the University of Sherbrooke in December 2020.



Fanny De Blois

Fanny was a member of the patrol in 2021 and has been a project manager in biology with MCI since the winter of 2022. She received her bachelor's degree in ecology at the University of Sherbrooke in December 2021.



Eric Phendler

Eric was a member of the patrol in 2019 and its coordinator in 2020. He has also been a member of MCI's board of directors for two years. Eric is currently completing a bachelor's degree in ecology at Bishops University.



Sarah Carroll

Sarah Carroll is a graduate of Concordia University with a bachelor's degree in Geography and holds a graduate degree in Coastal Ecology from Coast Mountain College. Sarah also completed an internship with MCI in the fall of

This summer, the team will use its experience and expertise to pursue its many projects. These include monitoring the quality of the lake's water, tracking exotic invasive species, and raising public awareness.

We invite you to send us your observations, comments and questions by phone or text message at (819) 620-3939, by email at patrol@memphremagog.org or via Facebook.

This summer, follow the activities of our patrollers

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Frédérique Thibault-Lessard, Environmental project manager and 2022 Patrol Coordinator

мсі's patrol: **50 years** on Lake Memphremagog

This year, our patrol celebrates its 50th anniversary! MCI's patrol was created in 1972 under the initiative of Mr. Graham Taylor. Then called the "Youth Patrol", this team, made up mainly of young riparian residents, was responsible for raising awareness among citizens and boaters concerning good environmental practices. They were also responsible for the maintenance of more than 60 outdoor garbage cans located in various public places around the lake. The team also carried out daily cleaning of the shores to remove the trash that collected there.

An Evolving Patrol

MCI's patrol has come a long way since 1972: the "Youth Patrol" became the "Lake Patrol", and then "MCI's Patrol". Over the years and summers, many projects have been added to their list, including raising children's awareness in day camps, taking samples to analyze water quality, and many more and more complex tasks. Today, the patrol's activities cover an impressive

range of themes, including exotic invasive species, water quality, harmonious cohabitation of users, protection of natural environments and much more.

Youth and Expertise Within MCI

In 2022, MCI is proud to have students or graduates in the fields of environment and ecology on its patrol. Their specialization and skills allow MCI to get involved in ever more stimulating and ambitious projects. Our young members on the patrol, in addition to bringing their technical and scientific knowledge, contribute greatly to MCI with their new ideas and their enthusiasm. Indeed, they are the ones who are at the origin of several large-scale projects, such as the creation of a census of waterfront properties or an inventory of pleasure crafts on the lake. Their innovation and dedication have propelled the already well-established leadership of our organization.



The Mérite Estrien prize awarded to two members of our Board of Directors

Last fall, two eminent members of MCI's Board of Directors were awarded the prestigious Mérite Estrien prize, awarded by La Tribune and its partners. Robert Benoit, volunteer president and Gisèle Lacasse Benoit, Board member and former president, received this prize in recognition of their exceptional work in environmental protection here in the Eastern Townships. Their involvement in environmental causes goes back a long way, and much of their effort for the environment has been undertaken in tandem with the actions of MCI, notably in important files such as the SOS Orford fight and the battle against the Coventry landfill site.



Congratulations and many thanks to these two defenders of the environment who have been battling for many years to ensure the perennity of our natural landscapes, and protect our health and our magnificient lake.

2021 watercraft inventory: surprising results

During the summer season, boating is a hot topic. For quite some time, the presence of ever bigger and faster boats has raised questions regarding their impact on the environment and the quality of life of shoreline residents and boaters. Unfortunately, Lake Memphremagog is not immune to this problem: waves, noise, dangerous driving and pollution from boats dumping their wastewater into the lake are themes often in the news.

The MCI patrol's involvement

MCI's lake patrol conducted its first inventory of boats moored on Lake Memphremagog in 2002. A second, more exhaustive inventory was done in 2009-2010. Last summer, to get a clear picture of how the situation has evolved since then, the lakeside municipalities asked MCI to carry out a new inventory of pleasure boats moored on the Canadian portion of the lake.

2009-2010 results

MCI's 2009-2010 inventory counted a total of 4,137 permanent watercraft, of which 2,152 were motorized. More than half (2,220) were moored within the City of Magog.

A notable change

The 2021 inventory counted 5,203 watercraft on the Canadian side of the lake, an increase of 25.8% over 2009-2010. The most significant change was noted in the very light category (paddleboards and kayaks), but changes were also noted in certain motorized categories (pontoon boats, wakeboats and jet skis). A survey carried out in 2021 by MCI indicated that boat waves were a serious problem. This is likely explained by the difficult cohabitation between fast, powerful boats and light craft at the mercy of the waves.

As for their distribution, the number moored in Magog has remained basically unchanged (2,325), while the number of boats noted in Potton and Ogden has almost doubled since 2009-2010. The 2021 inventory also counted the number of structures on the shoreline, such as docks, boat houses and boatlifts

Frédérique Thibault-Lessard, Environmental project manager





to residents and boaters around Lake Memphremagog. Noted for the first time in 2017, this harmful little mollusc has been much in the news in recent years. MCI has been carrying out geolocation, monitoring, and control activities of this exotic invasive species since 2018. Last year alone, with the help of several volunteers, MCI removed 22,500 mussels from the lake! Our team has also begun monitoring their larvae (called veligers). This monitoring is being done at four locations on the lake using a zooplankton net. This method allows us to follow the evolution of the larvae in the water column and thus identify the periods of maximum reproduction over the course of the summer. We would like to thank all of our partners who collaborated in the monitoring of this exotic invasive species in Lake Memphremagog.

A massive wave of reproduction was noted in the lake in the fall of 2021, presaging an important increase in their spread in 2022! MCI plans to continue its zebra mussel monitoring and control activities this coming summer to get a better handle on the evolution of the problem.

reproduction also coincided
with the first observations
of zebra mussels in Lake
Massawippi. This lake is
particularly vulnerable to this
species given its high calcium
content, upon which the mussels
depend for shell formation. As a result, Blue
Massawippi undertook a vast research and control operation
in their lake. MCI was there to help: Ariane Orjikh, our General
Manager, accompanied by Denis Mongeau of Plongée Magog,
carried out multiple dives between October and December to
help with the control activities in Lake Massawippi. Ariane
returned this spring to continue the work.

To learn more about the actions carried out by MCI since 2018, visit our web site at:

https://www.memphremagog.org/en/zebra mussels

Monitoring of invasive aquatic snails

Two new aquatic invasive species have recently been found in Lake Memphremagog, the Banded Mystery snail, (Viviparus georgianus) and the Chinese Mystery snail (Cipangopaludina chinensis). Although these molluscs are less harmful to natural ecosystems than the zebra mussel, they compete with indigenous species for food. Their significant proliferation over the past few years justifies a more serious analysis of their evolution in the lake.

These snail species were first seen in the lake a few years ago. Although focussed on the zebra mussel in recent years, our team has been following the evolution of these snails in parallel for the past two years. We have observed a notable increase in their population in certain sectors of the lake. This year, the patrol team will carry out a more detailed analysis using snorkel gear to map out their distribution in the lake.



Banded Mystery snails

An alarming number of **cyanobacteria blooms** in 2021

Did you observe any cyanobacteria blooms last year? Many blooms were noted in the summer of 2021. Often covering several hundred metres, even several kilometres, these blooms were seen in every lakeside municipality last year.

Although cyanobacteria occur naturally in our waterways, this phenomenon is an indicator of the precarious health of our lakes. Several anthropic activities can cause an increase in cyanobacteria blooms: intake of large quantities of nutrients into our waterways, the release of sediments from the lake bottom via boating, etc. However, climate change is also increasing this phenomenon. In fact, these activities bring with them a whole series of changes to the climate risking major changes to our lakes. These changes include lower water levels (caused by low rainfall during the summer), increased water temperature as well as increased nutrient upload during heavy rain events in spring and fall. Lower water levels, increases in temperature and increased nutrient loading all stimulate the proliferation of cyanobacteria blooms.

MCI has been monitoring cyanobacteria blooms for many years in Lake Memphremagog. Since 2021, we have been participating in a new provincial environment ministry program called Lacs Témoins. This program allows us to carry out a more intensive monitoring of cyanobacteria blooms to get a better picture of the situation.

Frédérique Thibault-Lessard,

Environmental project manager



anobacteria:

MCI would like to thank all who took the time to send us pictures of cyanobacteria blooms on the lake. Your help allows us to better document the problem and mobilise stakeholders.

If you see a cyanobacteria bloom, take a photo, note the date, hour, and location of the observation! You can then send us the photo and accompanying data via email, and we will follow up on the ground and with the Environment ministry.



To advise us of a cyanobacteria bloom, call us at 819-620-3939 or send us an email to patrol@memphremagog.org

warning: avoid swimming or coming in contact with a cyanobacteria bloom, as it may be toxic.

New fishing regulations for the 2022 SEASON

The Québec Wildlife ministry has announced an important change to Lake Memphremagog's fishing regulations for the coming season. Among other changes, the daily catch limit for salmonids goes from 20 to 2, including at most one lake trout. These changes are the result of two major initiatives: the two-year sport fishing study undertaken in partnership with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and an updated inventory of lake trout carried out by the Québec Wildlife ministry. Thanks to these studies, hard, reliable data have been obtained and collated, allowing for better

decision making. This is a positive step for the continued viability of sport fishing on Lake Memphremagog, a special lake requiring tailored management.

Here at MCI, we are happy to ensure the environmental health of our lake by supporting initiatives based on rigorous science.

Maxime Veillette

MCI Board member

Will **leachate again be dumped** in the Lake Memphremagog watershed?

MCI has been following the Coventry landfill site, located in Vermont near Lake Memphremagog, for decades. In recent years, MCI has mobilized strong opposition to the expansion of the landfill, as well as to the treatment of leachate (also called garbage juice) at the Newport waste treatment facility or anywhere else in the Lake Memphremagog watershed.

The Vermont government has had a ban on the treatment of leachate at the Newport waste treatment plant since July of 2019, until such time as 'new scientific data and/or new technologies show or work to show that the risk to the quality of Lake Memphremagog's water is not unduly unfavourable'

However, last September, public consultations were held regarding a proposal for a leachate pre-treatment permit at the landfill. If the project is accepted, the company could propose a three-year pilot project to treat the leachate using a technology purported to eliminate the pollutants. This project aims to demonstrate that the treatment of leachate poses no risk to the quality of Lake Memphremagog's water. As we write these lines, the Vermont government has not yet made a decision following the public consultations held last November. The permit has still not been approved.

MCI fears that the granting of this permit will reauthorize the treatment of leachate in the watershed for three years, and that the results of the pilot project will be used, once again, to officialise the treatment of leachate in the lake's watershed.

Given the importance of Lake Memphremagog, we believe that the precautionary principle must be applied and that no pilot project or treatment of leachate should be done within the watershed. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has inventoried 86,000 toxic chemical products, of which thousands are highly carcinogenic, found mostly in landfill sites. The fate of many of these contaminants throughout the treatment process, their impact on humans, their bioaccumulation up the food chain and the cumulative effects on Lake Memphremagog will not be completely understood after a three-year pilot project. The government of Vermont needs to seek alternatives to bury their trash and treat their leachate outside of the watershed on a permanent basis. Leachate from American garbage must never again enter Lake Memphremagog, a source of potable water for 175,000 Canadians, or its watershed.

Robert Benoit, Volunteer President **Ariane Orjikh**, Biologist and General Manager

Results of the **Best Roads Practices Project**

On the Canadian side of Lake Memphremagog's watershed, the road network is responsible for approximately 20% of phosphorus inputs originating from human activities (GCEM, 2020). In 2021, MCI therefore set in motion a project aimed at developing municipal expertise in responsible road management as well as raising awareness among private road owners about the best practices to adopt.

In collaboration with RAPPEL and the municipalities of the Canton de Stanstead and Ogden, more than 500m of municipal roads were first upgraded to solve pre-existing erosion problems. MCI also produced a pamphlet that was sent to all owners of private roads in the two municipalities. This pamphlet is still available in an electronic format on our website.

Subsequently, two informative webinars, about municipal roads and private roads, were organized (see diagram). Finally, 150 RAPPEL guides detailing best road practices were distributed.

This project was carried out thanks to a contribution from the *Regional Support Program for Water Issues* of the *Quebec Water Strategy* of the Government of Quebec. We would like to thank RAPPEL, the municipalities of Ogden and Stanstead Township, COGESAF, and the Memphremagog MRC for their invaluable collaboration in this project.

Ariane Orjikh, Biologist and General Manager



Webinars on road management



107 attendees

Number of RAPPEL guides distributed 150 guides Number of pamphlets distributed 366 pamphlets

Municipalities: **a leading actor**in the protection of our natural landscapes

Municipalities are the level of government most in control of the management of their territory, with the power to organize its development. As a result, they have a primordial role in the protection of the environment and of their natural landscapes. In fact, management without a plan or vision will likely result in a net loss of wetlands and forests, and thus a degradation of the lakes and other watercourses in the territory.

By protecting their natural landscapes, municipalities preserve biodiversity and benefit from the ecological services they provide. For example, runoff gets filtered by vegetated shorelines, wetlands absorb heavy rains and moderate flooding, while forests capture water, purify the air and control erosion. In the context of climate change, the protection of natural landscapes is crucial to capturing carbon and limiting the quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. As well, being interconnected, natural landscapes can provide ecological corridors used by wild species for migration or to adapt to changes in the climate.

The first step for municipalities consists of a thorough knowledge of their territory by carrying out a conservation plan to identify the natural landscapes, in particular fragile areas of ecological interest meriting protection. To date, MCI has produced conservation plans for four municipalities in the Lake Memphremagog watershed: Austin, Stanstead Township, Magog, and Ogden. These tools highlight various regulatory measures allowing them to designate authorized usages in these natural landscapes to ensure their continued existence. Zoning and building regulations, as well as overall management plans and architectural integration and implementation plans can also be used. For example, a municipality could adopt a bylaw indicating that no construction, filling, or dredging be permitted in all their wetlands as well as in their buffer zones. They can also promote ecological corridors by requiring the maintenance of a minimal area in its natural state in these areas. It should be noted that in addition to bylaw measures, municipalities can protect natural landscapes by creating parks or protected zones, and collaborating with conservation organizations, such as MCI.

All actors are needed to reduce the impacts of the current ecological and climate crisis, and municipalities have an important role in the management of their territory and the protection of their natural landscapes.

Ariane Orjikh Biologist and General Manager

For more information:

A new municipal toolbox for municipalities, produced by Appalachian Corridor and available online, outlines regulatory tools and other strategies to protect natural landscapes:

https://ecological connectivity.com/node/69.

MCI is here to help!

If you value the natural landscapes on your property and would like to preserve them, several options are available to you to ensure their protection, such as a private nature reserve or an ecological donation. MCl's conservation experts are here to answer your questions. Our goal is to help you to achieve your conservation and financial objectives by developing a plan that meets your specific needs. If you choose to go ahead, MCl will guide you through the conservation process, step by step, in a totally confidential manner.

For more information on conservation options, visit our web site at https://www.memphremagog.org/en/conservation-by-private-property-owners. For all questions related to conservation on your property, you can contact us at conservation@memphremagog.org.

Molson Island: One of Lake Memphremagog's jewels **now protected**

MCI would like to offer our sincere thanks to Mr. Andrew Howick, who has generously donated Molson Island to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). This island of 26 hectares (64.2 acres), entirely forested, is one of the largest islands in Lake Memphremagog. This new protected area adds to the other private protected areas in the Lake Memphremagog watershed, contributing to the maintenance of biodiversity, water quality and the fight against climate change.

Mr. Howick's ecological donation will hopefully inspire others to follow his example. As well as protecting the environment, conservation of natural landscapes in perpetuity for ecological purposes offers fiscal advantages thanks to Canada's ecological donation programs and Québec's fiscal Visa program.

Francine Hone, Biologist



"I want to carry out the original intention, to conserve this jewel of nature, by offering it to Nature Conservancy Canada. It's my small contribution to future generations as well as to the fight against climate change. My wife and kids fully support me. They recognize the importance of protecting the island. I hope more people hear about the Ecological Donations program and decide to donate their land or act in a way that conserves the environment.

The protection of Molson Island contributes to the conservation of our natural landscapes and the region's biodiversity, in complete harmony with Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI)'s objectives over its more than 54 years of working to protect lake Memphremagog and its watershed."

18.54 hectares of land protected in perpetuity on Fitch Bay by the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation

The Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation is pleased to announce that it has secured 18.54 hectares (46 acres) of land to be protected in perpetuity in the Fitch Bay area. The project, initiated by Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI) and coordinated by Appalachian Corridor (ACA), is the result of a 2-year collaboration that culminated in part sale by and part ecological donation from the Fluet family. This is the second Nature Reserve for the Foundation and will be named in honour of Gladys and Albert Fluet once the nature reserve status is recognised by the Environment Ministry.

The Foundation is delighted to be able to protect one of the richest natural areas located on the shores of Fitch Bay, including 450 linear metres of riparian wetlands. The protection of rich forest, streams, wetlands, and species at risk in Quebec and Canada contributes to maintaining the region's biodiversity and natural Conservation of these important natural areas also contributes to water quality and slows down climate change by capturing and storing carbon daily. The Fitch Bay area is considered a hotspot and therefore is known for its high ecological value.

The Foundation thanks Anita Fluet Mackay, Collette Fluet Desautels, Sylvia Fluet Beauregard and Raymond Fluet for their generous donation and leadership to make this project a reality. As well, the Foundation thanks ACA for its coordination of the project that secured funding from several organizations including the Municipality of Stanstead Township, the Fondation de la Faune du Québec, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the Echo Foundation, the Government of Quebec, the Government of Canada, MCI, and private donations collected by the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation.

The Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation, established in 1991 by Stewart Hopps, is a conservation organization dedicated to the protection of natural environments and habitats, particularly the wetlands and forests of Lake Memphremagog's watershed and the Tomifobia River valley in the Eastern Townships. For information about the Foundation, contact judy.hopps@sympatico.ca.

Judy Hopps,

President of the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation

Testinomy of the Fluet Family

"We recently transferred to the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation land that had been in our family for nearly seventy years. The land was purchased by our parents, Albert and Gladys (Lacasse) Fluet, in 1954.

The land is located in the Narrows, an environmentally sensitive area of the lake, and is made up of beautiful woodland and wetland that supports a wide variety of wildlife. Our parents shared with us their love of the land and throughout the years our father took great joy in looking after the woods. It is this love of nature and the land, our wonderful memories and the strong connection we formed to Lake Memphremagog growing up that we treasure to this day.

Recently we decided it was time the land that had been passed down to us by our father remain undeveloped and preserved in its natural state. With the help of MCI, Appalachian Corridor and the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation the land is now officially recognized as a nature preserve and it will be named in memory of our parents later this year."



Promotional articles

MCI has renewed its stock of promotional materials! Visit our page https://www.memphremagog.org/en/promotional-articles to see what is available. To order an item, contact us at patrol@memphremagog.org or at 819-620-3939.

益 2022 Calendar

May 9: Patrol activities begin

May 20 from 1 PM to 3 PM: Free distribution of trees at Ogden town hall

May 21 from 9 AM to 11 AM: Free distribution of trees at the store in Austin and at Parc Forand in Stanstead Township

May 29 from 9 AM to 3 PM: Free distribution of trees at LAMRAC in Magog

June 18: MCI's annual general meeting and celebration of the patrol's 50th anniversary

June and July: Information kiosks on exotic invasive species at the Magog boat ramp

Beginning of July: Phragmite control activity in Fitch Bay

August: Zebra mussel collection activity using snorkels in Magog

End of August: End of the lake patrol season

October: End of activities on the lake

Contact us for more information on this summer's planned activities at info@memphremagog.org or at 819-620-3939



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Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of MCI's members will take place at the Hermitage club in Magog on Saturday, June 18, from 9:30 AM to 11:30AM. On the agenda are an overview of our work in 2021, the 2022 patrol's plans for the season as well as our struggles and accomplishments. It is also the occasion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our lake patrol and the 55th anniversary of MCI! Please write to admin@memphremagog.org to register and receive the documents for the meeting!

HERITAGE CIRCLE MEMBERS

Club de Voile Memphrémagog

Abott, William

Ass. des Propriétaires de la Pointe Drummond

Bang Marketing Inc.

Bannerman Foundation, A/S Mr. Paul Bannerman

Bédard Pascale et Jean-François Blais

Benoit, Robert

Bishop, Donald

Bombardier, J.R. André

Brandt, Albert

Caron, Eric H

Caron, Trevor H

Colas, Bernard

Coughlin, Peter F

Cyr, Johanne

Davidson, Howard

DeLange, Andrew J

Eakin, Gae

Famille Reford-Delplace

Fondation Huguette et Jean-Louis Fontaine

Howick, Andrew

Hurley, John

lvory Joan F

Ivory, Sarah

Jewett, Carolyn

Klein, Mike

Lacasse Benoit, Gisèle

Ledson Management ind

Lépine, Peter

Marshall, Sandra Milne. Catherine A.

Nitoslawski, Marek

Oosterwaal, Jan

Perout, Alena

Poirier, Germain

R. Howard Webster Foundation

Racette, Bernard

Robinson, Robert

Ruest, Jean-Jacques

Shevelow, Sandy

Sinclair, Yannick

Sirois, Sean

Spencer, Norman & Susan

St-Germain, Guy

Straessle, Tony

Talon, Jean-Denis

Thornburn, Cynthia Caron

Wilson, Janet

Yates, Henry & Melodie

In addition to those mentioned, certain donations were made anonymously.

We would like to thank the municipalities of Orford Township, Stanstead Township, Austin, Abbaye Saint-Benoît, Ogden, Magog and Sherbrooke

In Memoriam

Gaudreau, Maryelle Sudlow Jennifer

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