

The Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association Bulletin
Issue No. 49 – September 2021

Save The Date: The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association will take place VIRTUALLY on Saturday, October 23rd at 10am via Zoom. Details and documents to follow.

Jute Tarp Bags Successfully Removed from Blue Sea Lake



Phase two of the Jute Tarp eurasian milfoil project has been executed successfully. Over the course of two arduous week-ends, June 18-19 and July 17-18, a team of divers from Club Scuba-Action in Gatineau, supported by Blue Sea Lake Association volunteers, removed nearly 2700 bags *which had been used to install the tarps in 2020. Included in the total bags removed were some 250 retrieved manually by volunteers with masks and flippers.

The risky and complicated operation was the results of months of careful planning and coordination by a team of volunteers working with the dive team leader, Gilles Arial. The work required a barge equipped with a crane and winch to pull a cage full of bags from the lake. The cage itself was designed especially for this purpose by a member of the dive team. A second barge transported the

divers supplementary oxygen supply and other equipment. and patrol the area. Additional watercraft and volunteers picked up floating milfoil and patrolled the zone to maintain a secure perimeter between other boaters and the work area. Arrangements were made to accommodate and feed the divers who came from Gatineau and beyond to participate in the project.



Figure 1 Scuba-Action Dive Team: Front Row (L2R): Michel St-Amour, Gilles Arial. Back Row (L2R): Jean-Pierre Deslisle, Denis Campeau, Éric Petitclerc, Jean-Marc Bertrand, Alain Latreille, Philippe Castonguay. Not pictured (2nd week-end) : Martin Dostie. Photo by Ben Belisle.



Figure 2: Théo Jean and Pascal Samson, ABV des 7

Pascal Samson, Senior biologist with ABV des 7, was on hand both week-ends to oversee the operation and ensure that the removal of bags was carried out thoroughly and in conformity with the requirements of the Quebec Government. He was impressed with the work carried out and pronounced the operation a resounding success.

People to thank

Strong volunteer participation and in-kind support helped minimize the costs of this project. Accordingly, we have many to thank for their help.

First and foremost, the members of the project team, comprising Doug Burnside; Bob Butler; Ben Edwards; Francis LeBlanc; Guy Gauvreau; Dave MacLaren; Gab McConnery; and Nick McConnery guided, oversaw, and helped carry out the project: .

Secondly, Gilles Arial and his team of top-notch, experienced divers at the Scuba-Action diving club responded enthusiastically to the challenge, collaborated effectively in the planning, and worked every bag safely and efficiently from Blue Sea Lake.



Figure 3: Kevin Bouschel



Figure 4: Chris Shires

Thirdly, the owners and operators of the barges were critical to the success of the project. Kevin Bouschel of Messines Marina configured his barge to serve as the main vessel, and drove it for both week-ends; Chris Shires, lent and drove his barge for the first week-end; and Simon Lafrenière lent us his barge for the second week-end. Raymond Lacroix used his backhoe to help offload the bags and store them temporarily away from the lake on his property. These key assets were made available without charge to the association.

Sylvain Drapeau of Escapade Eskimo, Otter Lake, hosted the divers at his inn for a reasonable rate both week-ends. Hélène St. Denis graciously offered free accommodations to Pascal

Samson and his assistant at her B&B, Jardin d'Elen.

The Municipalities of Blue Sea and Messines provided support to the project whenever needed.

Ben Edwards coordinated the volunteers and helping at various stages in the process. He and Alexis and Maxime Turnbull Neault, manually removed bags which helped us meet our objectives.

Others pitched in to support the divers, help move the bags, and catch any stray milfoil. All in all, it was a well-coordinated team effort and our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone involved.

What's next for the project?

The removal of the bags concludes the active work on the project. There remains one interim evaluations by ABV des 7 in 2023 and a final evaluation and report in 2025. In the meantime, our Association will seek to determine what lessons we can learn from this and the work of other Associations and how we might apply these lessons to helping to better control this problem on our lakes.




Figure 5: Maxime Turnbull Neault retrieving a bag

** While this number does not represent the estimated 4100 bags that were filled and launched last year, the bags removed were the result of copious efforts by the experienced dive team to locate and retrieve the bags tied or deposited on or around the jute tarps. Further efforts are being deployed to reconcile the numbers.*

Encouraging good stewardship among renters

More and more people are discovering the pleasures of Blue Sea, and increasingly, residents and cottagers are renting their properties to visitors. The Association supports this trend. However, we want to make sure that people renting cottages or homes on the watershed understand and practice good environmental stewardship. At our last AGM, it was suggested that the Association prepare information and tips that can be shared with renters and short-term visitors. That is happening. Judy McConnery has taken on the job of preparing a brochure and would welcome any suggestions our readers might have. Please email her at jdmccconnery@hotmail.com



**COLLOQUE
SUR L'EAU**

- s'unir pour mieux protéger -

6 mai 2021

Qualité de l'eau:
Détecter et prévenir les apports en
sédiments et en nutriments

7 mai 2021

Envahisseurs:
De la prévention au contrôle des
espèces exotiques envahissantes

Lessons from “Le Colloque Sur l’eau «

Commentary by Francis LeBlanc



In early May I participated in a two-day virtual conference on invasive species and water protection, organized by RAPPEL (www.rappel.qc.ca), a consultancy on water management located in the Eastern Townships. The conference, entitled *Colloque sur l'eau: s'unir pour mieux protéger*, brought together more than 110 representatives of watershed associations, municipalities and other interested groups from across Quebec to explore issues related to the protection of our waterways.

The conference covered topics such as erosion control, management of rainwater, water quality monitoring, association-municipal relations, boat washing, and invasive species. The conference featured presentations and expert panels drawn from RAPPEL and other organisations as well as

academics such as well-known Université Laval professor and authority on invasive species, Claude Lavoie.

Drawing from his two-volume study and extensive research on invasive species, Professor Lavoie provided a stimulating and detailed talk covering not only Eurasian milfoil and other species with which we have grown familiar, but future threats which we can expect, largely as a result of climate change. Other biologists and experts shared their experiences with efforts to control eurasian milfoil and protect their waterways and I had an opportunity during the question and answer period to speak about our efforts here at Blue Sea.



If there was a single take away from the Conference, I think it is this. Combatting invasive species and keeping our lakes and waterways healthy is long term work; individuals, associations, and governments have to be prepared to stay the course. When it comes to invasive species, prevention is by far the less costly option. As we have discovered at Blue Sea Lake, and in many other lakes in the Outouais and across Quebec, once an invasive species has established itself, it is virtually impossible to get rid of and even containing it requires sustained effort and expense.

This is why the establishment of mandatory boat washing, as was done here in Blue Sea, is such an important initiative. It is too late to prevent Eurasian milfoil but it can prevent the next, potentially dangerous, predator from entering our watershed. That is why our municipal partners should not be shy about enhancing and strengthening the operation of the boat washing stations. They are a very good investment in the protection of our common waterways.

It can't be forgotten either that it is largely pleasure craft, traveling from one lake or river to another, that is the main cause of the transportation of invasive species. Owners of such water craft need to accept their responsibility and wash their boats thoroughly before entering a new body of water, whether required to or not. Since protecting lakes from invasive species is a costly burden which mainly falls on residents and local governments, in my opinion it is good public policy for municipal

authorities to impose a charge on visiting pleasure craft operators through a system of docking access fees.

When it comes to addressing an existing invasive species situation, as our Association has with Eurasian milfoil, through our yellow buoy, jute tarp, signage, and other initiatives, the message of the conference was that this will require an ongoing investment in the efforts of people and in money.

In the case of suppressing Eurasian milfoil using biodegradable jute tarps, as we are doing here on Blue Sea or through synthetic, reusable tarps as is being carried out by our neighbouring Association at Lac des Cèdres, these efforts will likely need to be followed with manual extraction, pulling the plants out by the roots, using experienced divers and volunteers. We cannot simply lay down the tarps and declare: mission accomplished.

Finally, the conference revealed that there is much that we can learn from one another. So networking is key. So, too, is good old political activism. People should make their views known to their elected representatives, especially around election time. These are collective issues and governments, at all levels, will have to be involved.

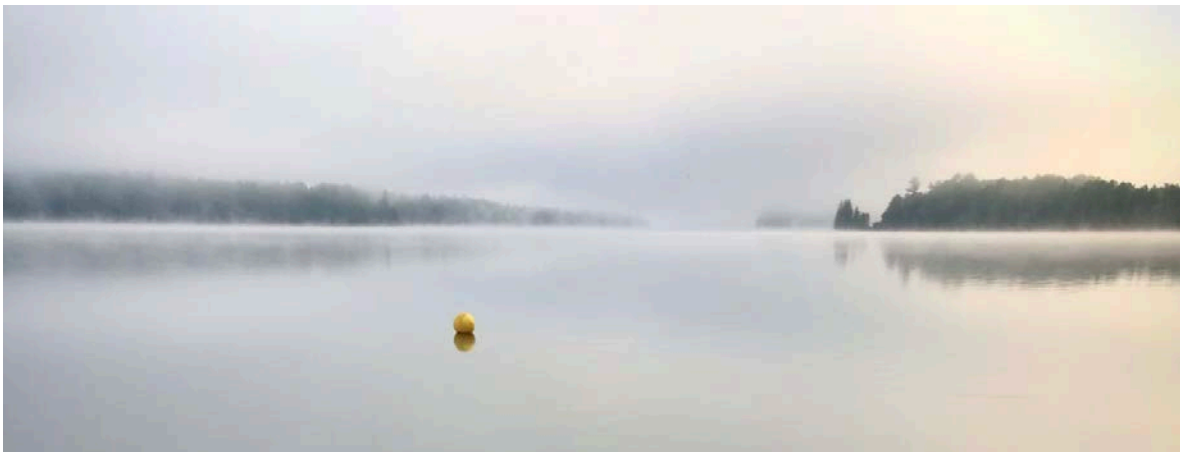


Figure 6: Photo by Alfred MacLeod

Shorelines is a production of the Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association.

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