



Association du bassin versant du lac

En onde BLUE SEA *Shorelines*

The Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association Bulletin Issue No. 24 – March 2016

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Why revegetating our shorelines is an urgent matter: It's been seven years since the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau introduced regulations requiring that owners of shoreline properties ensure a barrier of vegetation is in place to protect the lake. Too many are avoiding this responsibility. We explain why this is unacceptable.

2016 Municipal Funding: We report on our Association's annual funding request to our local municipal partners. It's mostly good news!

Profile of a New Administrator: In this issue we profile Jean-Claude Joliceur, who joined the Administrative Council in July 2015.

An Update on Ice Fishing: The Association and the Municipalities continue to encourage and enforce responsible ice fishing practices. We report on how things are going this winter.

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Outreach to the Provincial and Regional Municipal Governments

In our Association's ongoing effort to protect our lakes, we have come to realize that some, if not many, of the measures needed to do so are beyond the financial and/or regulatory capability of our local municipalities. In an effort to address this, we have sent letters to our local MNA - Ms Stéphanie Vallée (who is also the Minister of Justice and the Minister Responsible for the Outaouais) and to the Minister of the Environment - Mr David Heurtel, asking them to help save our waterways from the threats posed by the inflow of excessive nutrients (eg: phosphorus) and by aquatic invasive species. To read the letters we sent on your behalf, please [click here](#)¹.





We have also combined forces with 25 other lake/watershed associations in the region and have sent a joint letter to all mayors in the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau (MRC VG), urging

the regional government to develop and implement a comprehensive, region-wide program to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into our waterways. To view that letter, please [click here](#)².

If you are a resident of Quebec or a property owner within the MRC VG, we would ask that you support our cause by sending a short note to the Quebec government and/or to your local municipality, expressing your concern with the health of our lakes and demanding that they do much, much more to protect them.

Urgent Action Required to Regenerate Our Shorelines

As our readers know - and, as anyone who has frequented Blue Sea Lake over the past several years may have observed - the health of this once pristine lake is in serious decline. One clear indication of this is the fact that lake trout can no longer reproduce naturally in the lake due to the thick layers of periphyton covering their spawning beds. Another sign is the lake-wide presence of Eurasian milfoil, an invasive species that, unlike its indigenous cousin, can promulgate via cuttings. The result: areas of the lake that are so infested with this plant that one can no longer navigate through them.



Periphyton

There are two ways of combatting this accelerated degradation of our lakes:

- first, by preventing the introduction of invasive species through mandatory boat rinsing; and
- second, by using shoreline vegetation to reduce the inflow of nutrients (eg: phosphorus).

The issue of aquatic invasive species has been addressed in several previous [Shorelines articles](#)³, but it's been a while since we focused on the very important role that shoreline vegetation plays in protecting our lakes.



Shoreline Vegetation – An Effective Barrier

For several decades, scientists have agreed that vegetated shorelines constitute a very effective barrier to the inflow of phosphorus, etc. because shoreline vegetation consumes many of these nutrients, thereby preventing them from reaching the lake and feeding aquatic plants. As noted in a 1984 study by Peterjohn and Correl, a 19 metre-wide vegetated shoreline strip can reduce the inflow of nutrients in run-off water by a remarkable 90%.

Shoreline Revegetation – It's Compulsory

To destroy a section of the shoreline is a form of vandalism, one that not only harms the health of our lakes but also adversely affects the surrounding properties and our quality of life. Such vandalism is punishable under regulation [RCI 2009-206](#)⁴. That regulation also stipulates that the shoreline must be revegetated by the property owner if it is not in its natural state. Although RCI 2009-206 does, in exceptional circumstances, provide some exemptions, the basic thrust of the regulation is very clear: shorelines must be revegetated.

Shoreline Revegetation – It's Easy To Do

The essential characteristics of a properly vegetated shoreline are:

- three strata of vegetation: trees, shrubs, and grasses;
- a vegetated band that - depending on the slope - is a minimum of 10 to 15 metres deep, and
- if it is required, only one pathway through the band, a pathway that is no more than 5 metres wide.

Below are two aerial photos of the same property taken six years apart. The one on the left was



taken in 2007, while that on the right, in 2013 (the building has been obscured at the request of the owner). Quite a change, eh?

You might not believe this but the property owner swears that, apart from planting a few evergreen seedlings here and there in 2003 and then again in 2007, he did nothing to revegetate the 15 metre band. Nature did the rest. Clearly, regenerating your shoreline is easy to do.

Shoreline Revegetation - It Must Be Done Now

Based on what your Association found during last summer's shoreline survey, it is apparent that - seven years after RCI 2009-206 came into effect - many lakeside residents and cottagers have done little or nothing to revegetate their shorelines. After seven years this is no longer acceptable. It is essential that lakeside property owners revegetate their shorelines, before it is too late.

2016 Municipal Funding

Last October, we submitted our annual funding request to Blue Sea and Messines, asking that each municipality grant us \$3,355 to support a number of our activities, specifically:

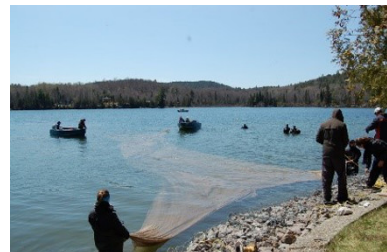
- the taking of RSVL water samples on various lakes;
- the installation of Eurasian milfoil bed markers (ie: our "yellow buoy" program);
- the design and installation of signage re Blue-Green algae blooms and aquatic invasive species; and
- the submission to the Quebec government of a request for authorization to install jute tarps over Eurasian milfoil beds



We are pleased to announce that both municipalities have approved our funding request.

In the same submission, we also asked that:

- Blue Sea fund the installation of jute tarps over the Eurasian milfoil beds located in front of the "public beach" and adjacent to Raymond Lacroix's marine gas pump, and
- Messines fund the installation of jute tarps over the Eurasian milfoil bed located adjacent to their public boat ramp.



We are pleased to announce that Blue Sea has allocated \$8,000 for the above-noted project. Messines has not yet allocated any funds for their portion of this project.

New administrator: Jean-Claude Jolicoeur

Jean-Claude Jolicoeur hails from Rouyn-Noranda where he was employed for 35 years as a nurse in the local hospital. His wife, Louiselle Labarre, also from Rouyn-Noranda, pursued a career at Hydro-Québec in human resource management. They have three grown children who have, thus far, blessed them with nine magnificent grandchildren.

In 2008, in anticipation of their full retirement, Louiselle and Jean-Claude, together with three other couples who were long-time friends, decided to purchase the Auberge des Pins in Messines and live there as residents. Jean-Claude and Louiselle fell in love with the beauty of the lake and the colours of the sunsets. Seven years later, the property has been acquired, subdivided, and renovated and the four couples enjoy a paradise on the shores of Blue Sea Lake. They live an active life. Their days are filled with kayaking and canoeing, fishing, and yoga, as well as numerous social gatherings with family and friends, impromptu cocktails, hiking along the bicycle path, volunteering, travel, movies and theatre.



Since taking up residence at Blue Sea Lake Jean-Claude has noticed that there is increased boating activity on the lake and that the Eurasian milfoil beds have grown larger and thicker. Because of this, he has decided to become a more active member of the Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association. For Jean-Claude, Blue Sea Lake is a jewel which must be preserved, not just for our benefit, but more importantly, for that of our children. He hopes to help do that.

Update on Ice Fishing:

As reported in the [January 2015 edition](#)⁵ of Shorelines, Blue Sea Lake is one of only four lake trout-designated lakes in the Outaouais region that has been exempted from the moratorium on ice fishing. Over a year ago, the Association expressed its concern that this exemption could result in an increase in the lake's winter fishery and thereby have a long term negative affect on the health of the lake. In response, our municipalities agreed to monitor and evaluate the situation on an ongoing basis and to publicize and enforce the applicable regulations. The Association is satisfied with the municipalities' response and pleased that our municipal leaders have taken this matter seriously.



Ice-fishing activity on the lake last winter and so far this winter has, in fact, been relatively quiet, possibly as a result of adverse weather and poor ice conditions. No matter what the level of activity, we encourage all fishers to follow good ice-fishing practices.

Ironically, Blue Sea Lake was exempted from the ice-fishing moratorium because it can no longer naturally sustain this species due to the poor state of its spawning beds. After decades of excessive nutrient (e.g., phosphorus) inflow, a layer of periphyton (algae slime) now covers the spawning rocks, rendering them unsuitable for supporting lake trout reproduction. Blue Sea Lake's lake trout population can now only be maintained by stocking.

Membership Reminder

The Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association's mission is to help protect the health of our lakes and watershed. To do this, the Association depends on the financial support and active participation of its members. Your contributions help us pay for such activities as youth education, information and awareness campaigns, water sampling, etc.

Our membership roll is of paramount importance to the Association as it demonstrates to our municipal and regional partners just how committed and concerned our residents/cottagers are about the state of our watershed. Strength in numbers helps give our Association a clear and respected voice, a sine qua non in our ongoing struggle to convince politicians at all levels that much more must be done to protect our waterways. This year, our Association is taking a more activist role in this struggle which makes your membership renewal that much more important.



Memberships in the Association are renewed on a calendar year basis. It is now time to renew your membership for 2016. If you have not been a member or have let your membership lapse, please take a moment to register. To do so, or to renew your membership online, simply [click here](#)⁶ and follow the instructions for on-line registration. You may also download the registration form and print it or complete the on-line form on line to register yourself and other members of your family. If you choose to mail in your registration, please send it, with your payment, to the following address:

Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association
70, rue Principale
Messines QC J0X 2J0

Volunteer Opportunity: Youth Co-ordinator

At the Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association, we believe that to preserve the health of our lakes and watershed we must engage the next generation. That's why, in cooperation with local schools, the Association organizes a Youth Awareness Day each year during which we teach students about the local environment and the issues that affect our watershed. In addition to classroom training, students get to experience



nature directly, through "hands-on" activities on and around the lake. For example, they learn how to conduct water transparency tests and identify invasive species. They also get the opportunity to express in poetry and in art what a clean environment means to them.



Our Youth Awareness Days have been a hit with participants and the community. We have received excellent support from local businesses, municipalities, and individual volunteers. In the process of developing this program, we have assembled educational resources that are being sought by schools in other regions.

Unfortunately, our Youth Coordinator for the past two years, Marlène Thonnard, is no longer available to continue this project. As a consequence, we need someone with a passion for teaching and the environment so that we can continue to offer this program and thereby build on the excellent work that Marlène and her predecessor, Denis M. Côté, have started. If this is something that interests you, we invite you to contact Don Karn at blueseas@picanoc.ca or (819) 463-3013.

AGM: Mark Your Calendars

This year, our 8th Annual General Meeting will take place at the Municipal Hall in Messines, the morning of Saturday, July 23rd. Details will follow. For now, please mark your calendars and plan to attend.



- 1 www.associationblueseas.org/index.php/en/information/letters
- 2 www.associationblueseas.org/images/documents/ABVLBS_LET_2016_03_03_Maires_mairessees_MRC_VG_en.pdf
- 3 www.associationblueseas.org/index.php/en/newsletter-22-october-2015#eee
- 4 www.associationblueseas.org/index.php/en/environment/regulations#rci
- 5 www.associationblueseas.org/index.php/en/newsletter-19-january-2015
- 6 www.associationblueseas.org/index.php/en/registration

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

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