



Association du bassin versant du lac

En onde BLUE SEA Shorelines

The Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association Bulletin

Issue No. 19 – January 2015

Association Priorities for 2015

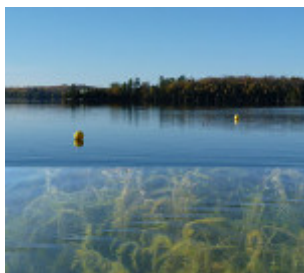
In keeping with the mission and strategic orientations of the Association, the following are the Board of Directors' priorities for the current year:



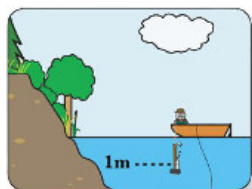
Septic Systems. Because septic systems are the major human source of excessive phosphorus in our watersheds and a direct cause of both blue-green algae blooms and Eurasian milfoil growth - two key threats to our waterways - we will continue to advocate for stronger municipal septic system inspection and control measures on both the mainland and the islands.

Invasive Species. Because of the omnipresent threat of invasive species being brought into our lakes by visiting pleasure craft, we will continue to advocate and work with municipal officials for the establishment of a comprehensive boat rinsing program and by-law.

Eurasian Milfoil. One of the invasive species already present throughout Blue Sea Lake and other lakes in the watershed is Eurasian milfoil. As per the past two years, we will continue to install yellow buoys to mark the areas most affected by this aquatic plant. We will also continue to monitor the ABV des 7 milfoil abatement trial in Lac Pemichangan and - as a preparatory step in initiating a similar program in Blue Sea Lake - we will conduct an extensive survey of milfoil beds around the lake.



Lac Laverdure. The 2010 GEIGER Report identified concerns with Lac Laverdure, one of Blue Sea Lake's tributaries. In response to these concerns, the Association initiated two studies of that lake as well as a supporting study on beaver management. We will continue to work with our municipal partners and other key stakeholders to implement the key recommendations of these three studies.



Monitoring Water Quality. We will continue to monitor the quality of the water and will expand this testing to include other lakes in our watersheds (eg: Lac Grenon and Lac Roberge). We will also continue to support the RSVL

program by translating their protocols and by encouraging

(and supporting) other lake associations within our region to implement RSVL protocols.

Ice Fishing. Based on our concerns about the potential negative impact on both the environment and fish stocks occasioned by an anticipated increase in ice-fishing on Blue Sea Lake due to the temporary prohibition of such fishing on other lake trout lakes in the region, we will closely monitor the situation and continue to advocate for appropriate control and/or closure of this activity.

Communication/Education. We will continue to produce and disseminate information and tips to help residents and cottagers become better environmental stewards. We will also assess the feasibility of expanding our communication capability through the use of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. In addition, with the cooperation and support of local school officials, we will continue to coordinate a youth educational program.



Collaborative Action. Finally, we will work collaboratively with municipal and local leaders as well as with other associations and organizations who

have a genuine interest in preserving our watershed for the benefit of future generations.

If you have any questions regarding these priorities, please contact us at "info@associationbluesea.org".

Ice Fishing on Blue Sea Lake

Background. On April 1, 2014 new fishing regulations came into effect in Quebec. Among other things, these new regulations prohibit ice fishing on all officially designated lake trout lakes. By imposing this closure, the government is



basically admitting that they have no other means of controlling poaching and

of protecting the stocks of naturally reproducing lake trout. Blue Sea Lake is one of only four lakes within the Outaouais region exempted from this closure. It received this exemption primarily because its spawning beds are no longer viable as they are covered with a layer of algae (ie: periphyton), the growth of which is directly related to decades of environmental negligence.

Meeting with Wildlife Officials. Knowing well in advance that Blue Sea Lake would remain open to ice fishing, the Municipalities had - In the spring of 2013 - organized a meeting to explore the possibility of creating an 'Aire faunique communautaire' (AFC or - in English - a Community Wildlife Region) as a means of managing the anticipated increased fishing and environmental pressure on the lake. At this meeting, government wildlife officials explained the implications of and the procedures for creating an AFC.



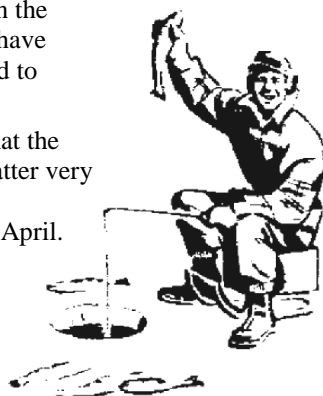
Association Action. As there were no developments on this matter after the aforementioned 2013 meeting, our Association chose to err on the side of caution and - in October 2014 - officially requested that the municipalities close Blue Sea Lake to ice fishing for the 2015 season ([click here](#)¹ to see a translation of our resolution).

Municipal Response/Action Plan. In late November, the Municipal Councils of Blue Sea and Messines met to discuss our request. Lacking any hard data to justify the closure of the winter fishery, they decided instead to adopt an action plan that focuses on monitoring the situation and educating participants on ice fishing best practices. Under this plan, the municipalities will:



- erect signs at each of the public boat ramps apprising fishermen of the situation;
- distribute educational flyers through various local outlets and directly to sportsmen on the lake;
- patrol the lake to welcome visitors and to encourage compliance with best practices;
- time allowing, install a camera system at the municipal dock to monitor the main winter access point; and
- meet with our Association in the spring to discuss what they have observed over the winter and to reassess the situation.

Conclusion. We are pleased that the Municipalities are taking this matter very seriously and look forward to revisiting the issue with them in April. If you have any thoughts or observations on this matter, please let us know at info@associationbluesealake.org.



Combating Exotic Invasive Species

Introduction. As we have learnt from our ongoing battle with Eurasian milfoil, an infestation of an exotic invasive species can have a disastrous effect on the health of a lake. First introduced into Blue Sea Lake in the 1980's/early 1990's, Eurasian milfoil has become a progressively bigger problem across the lake and is contributing to the premature aging (eutrophication) of the waterway.



Battle Strategies. There are three basic ways to combat an invasive species:

- **Eradication.** The least effective, but often the most expensive, method is to try to eradicate an invasive species once it has become established.



Unfortunately, there are very few eradication success stories, not just in Quebec but also across Canada and the world.

- **Early Detection/Intervention.** This strategy requires constant surveillance by a team of properly trained and highly motivated volunteers. Assuming that we can get enough volunteers, our Association plans to implement this approach once the applicable protocols are developed by RSVL in consultation with the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (MVLMP). ([click here](#)² to visit the MVLMP website).
- **Prevention.** By far the most effective and - in the long run - least expensive strategy is prevention. Given that the predominant agent in the spread of most invasive species (including the zebra mussel) is recreational boating, our Association is strongly recommended to the municipalities that they implement a boat rinsing/washing programme.



Educating Municipal Officials. At the Association's urging, the municipalities visited Lac Cayamant early last summer to take a look at the boat rinsing operation



implemented by that community in 2013. Although municipal officials found the visit quite informative, they subsequently asked us

to brief them on the full extent and nature of the exotic invasive species threat. Accordingly, we put together a slide presentation which we delivered to them at a meeting in October, 2014. ([click here](#)³ to view the presentation).

Short Term Municipal Plans. Concerned about the costs involved in establishing and maintaining a Lac Cayamant-type boat rinsing program and about the difficulties involved in ensuring that all boaters comply with any attendant

regulations, the municipalities have decided not to implement such a program at this time. However, they have committed to:

- actively enforce existing regulations that require that boats be launched only at the two municipal boat ramps and at no other public or private location;
- install a photo monitoring system at the municipal boat ramps to track usage and, thereby, help quantify the scope of the threat; and
- assign a councillor from each municipality to work with our Association on environmental issues including the development and analysis of other boat rinsing and regulatory enforcement options.

Although falling short of what we have recommended, we are hopeful that these measures constitute a first step in the implementation of a full blown boat rinsing/inspection program.

Final Word. Rest assured that we will continue to advocate for those measures we deem necessary to help minimize the threat of exotic invasive species.

2014 Door to Door Information Campaign - A Big Success

Planning and Execution. Last summer, the Association undertook one of its most ambitious projects to date: a door to door information campaign that covered most of the major lakes within our two watersheds. The purpose of this campaign was to raise awareness about the state of the Blue



Sea Lake and Blue Sea Creek watersheds, to publicize the mission and activities of the Association, and to get feedback on the various threats and challenges facing our waterways. With the outstanding support of

40 plus volunteers, 575 homes/cottages located on or near Blue Sea Lake were visited and over 400 residents/cottagers were interviewed. In addition, through the excellent cooperation of several lake associations/outreach contacts, an additional 215 information packages were delivered to the residents/cottagers of nine other lakes within our two watersheds.

Feedback. Based on the feedback we received during this campaign, it is clear that many of our friends and neighbours are worried about the state of our waterways. They are concerned about the negative impact of power boats on both the environment and the quality of life around the



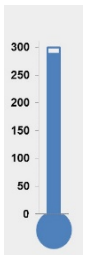
lake; about the proliferation of non-indigenous aquatic plants and the threats posed by other invasive species (eg:



zebra mussels); and about the ramifications of allowing ice-fishing to continue on Blue Sea Lake while this practice is prohibited on all but three other "lake trout" lakes in the region. To help mitigate these and other related environmental concerns, people

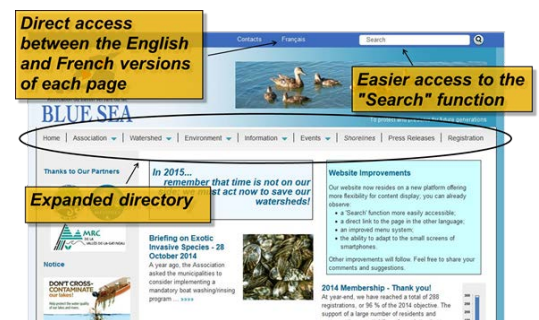
strongly support the implementation of a boat-rinsing program, the continued enforcement of shoreline regulations, the implementation of a better septic tank control system on the islands, and the banning of ice-fishing on Blue Sea Lake. Rest assured that your Association will use this feedback to help establish its priorities both now and in the future.

Impact. While it is too early to assess the mid to long term impact of this campaign, there are several indications that it has significantly enhanced the Association's profile and that it has had a very positive impact on our membership. With the number of website visitors nearly doubling in July and August, and - more importantly - with the addition of 56 new members and the renewal of 26 lapsed memberships, it is very clear that we achieved our objective. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we would like to sincerely thank the many volunteers whose dedicated efforts made this campaign such a success.



Website Improvements

We have recently transferred the website to a new platform that gives us greater flexibility in content display, allowing us to make the website more user friendly.



With the transfer to this new platform:

- the "Search" function is now at the top of each page, making it much easier to access;
- there is a direct link between the English and French versions of each page;
- the website directory has been expanded and is very easy to navigate.

Additional enhancements will follow. Please let us know what you think of these changes.

1. www.associationbluesealake.org/images/documents/Resolution_CA_2014_10_24_en.pdf
 3. http://www.associationbluesealake.org/images/documents/Diaporama_EEE_R00_en.pdf

2. <http://www.mainevlmp.org/>