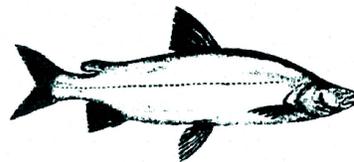


**Association
des Propriétaires du
Lac du Poisson Blanc, Inc.**
17, chemin Mélodie
Lac-Ste-Marie (Québec) J0X 1Z0

Current situation report on
Lac Poisson Blanc's south section
(July 2013)



At the beginning of the summer, Michèle Beach asked me to become a member of the Association and to be responsible for the environmental aspect. Afterward, our association's executive gave me the mandate to analyse and provide a report on the current situation in Lac Poisson Blanc's south section along with response strategies. This report has been established following consultations with various organizations and does not represent my personal ideas. During the month of July, I met with Martin Lafrenière (municipal inspector), James Annis (president of the Association du Lac Pémichongan), Denis Lacroix (councillor for the Municipality of Bouchette and president of SAGE for 31-Mile Lake Watershed), Marc Mercier (president of F.L.A.L.), Marc Grégoire (president of the Association for the protection of water for the Gatineau Valley and of the Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association) and Claude Bonhomme (Lac Castor Association). Moreover, I had discussions with the Blue Laurentides and COBALI organizations and I took some advice from a few local residents. Finally, along with Katja (COBALI), I visited the entire Newton Bay network. I would have liked to meet or discuss with the elected councillor responsible of the file for the lakes, if it has not already been done.

To start, I must say that we are not among the trailblazing associations going green in the Gatineau Valley. While reading FOCA's (*Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations*) website documentation, I realized that rules are much more stringent in Ontario. Within our municipality (Lac-Sainte-Marie), the Heney Lake, Pémichongan Lake and Sam Lake associations have already launched a revitalization program for their respective lakes. Here, for Poisson Blanc, an island revitalization program has been launched by the Poisson Blanc regional park for the north part of the lake. Our lake's south section remains unprotected. Consequently, I will limit myself to our lake's south section since I believe that we do not have any members in the north section.

Since several lots are for sale or have already been sold (especially in the Newton Bay sector), it is crucial to act immediately. I must pay tribute to Michèle Beach and Dave Gibson as well as to others who have decided this year to make our association more proactive regarding several environmental issues. Being in charge of this portion, I will present my findings and will offer a few response strategies. It will be up to you to decide whether or not to implement them.

Based on my discussions, here are the problems occurring here or at other waterways in our region:

- 1.1. motor vehicles travelling at excessive speeds on sensitive waterways or near the banks;
- 1.2. some cottagers use phosphate products;
- 1.3. natural removal of vegetation from shoreline due to bank landscaping;
- 1.4. some lakes have issues with algae proliferation;
- 1.5. some lakes have issues with the proliferation of aquatic plants (water milfoil);
- 1.6. inadequate or non-compliant septic systems;
- 1.7. urbanization around waterways;
- 1.8. cottagers' and campers' waste management and recycling;
- 1.9. lake contamination (bilge water, mud, plants, fish and bait) due to boats not being cleaned (or properly cleaned) when transported between bodies of water.

Finding this file already quite intense, for this report, I limited myself to everything that had to do with water management. I have not included other fields such as access roads, the impact of ATVs and snowmobile trails on wildlife, tourist routes, our lake's south section island camping management, stocking, trash and recycling, etc.

The lake's reservoir makes its management difficult. Some sectors are under the Municipality of Denholm's jurisdiction, another sector is under that of Lac-Sainte-Marie and the north section is managed by the Municipality of Notre-Dame-du-Laus. I do not know if there is any coordination between the three of them regarding the rules and the development of our body of water. As far as I

am concerned, I only had contacts with the Municipality of Lac-Sainte-Marie. I visited the furthest south section of the lake (municipal boat launch site near the outdoor recreational area) and, with COBALI, I visited the Newton Bay sector. In order of importance, here are our findings:

- 1.1. several cottages have inadequate or non-compliant septic systems;
- 1.2. most cottagers are uninterested in the revegetation of the shoreline;
- 1.3. bank eroding (south side), propagation of aquatic plants due to rapidly circulating motor boats in the channel at the end of Newton Bay and in the furthest south section of the lake;
- 1.4. proliferation of aquatic plants (water milfoil???) in two very small bays (Lafontaine and Synott) and at the end of Newton Bay as well as around the public boat launch in Denholm. To be analysed scientifically;
- 1.5. no water safety patrol (SQ) in the lake's south section;
- 1.6. for boat safety purposes, there is a lack of buoys in the south section indicating where the shoals are.

In so, based on our observations, I think it necessary (especially to comply with the rules and with regards to other associations) to:

1. for our Association to officially adhere to the COBALI organization;
2. bridge the gap with the Poisson Blanc Regional Park organization;
3. ask the Lac-Sainte-Marie municipality by means of a formal request to inspect the septic systems of all cottages built prior to 2000 and that have been built within 15 meters of the water's edge in order to reduce the addition of phosphates and nitrogen to Newton Bay;

4. ask the municipalities of Denholm and Lac-Sainte-Marie by means of a formal request for COBALI's permission to undertake the revitalisation of the banks with our association's support;
5. after consulting with the municipalities of Denholm and Lac-Sainte-Marie and the Poisson Blanc Regional Park organization, to ask for our adhesion to the 'RSVL' program in order to allow us to better know our lake and avoid its deterioration in order to protect it for our children;
6. ask each year at the Association's annual meeting for the participation of its members in a chore for the improvement of the environment and the protection of our lake. Several associations do this, including the Pémichongan Lake association where buoys were installed to indicate where water milfoil is. Our executive can decide on the annual chore;
7. for security reasons and the protection of the banks, to formally request the Lac-Sainte-Marie municipality to install speed limit signs (10 km/h) at both ends of the channel between Dave Gibson's and just before the new boat launch in the opposite direction;
8. distribute pamphlets and other environmentally educational brochures (COBALI and others) at meetings and through all correspondence with our association's members;
9. and finally, it may be realistic or not, but as on FOCA's site, ask members to sign a cottager's ethics code that must be followed (to be included on the members' coordinates form during registration) at contribution time. This way, we could create a sense of belonging and a mission for our waterfront and island property owners to preserve this resource that is our lake that is "still" wild. This ethics code would be discussed with our Association's executive; models are available online.

Thank you for reading this document and I hope that several aspects presented here will be accepted by the majority of the members. I am realistic and I understand that we will never 100% agree regarding the implementation of these ideas, but little by little, through the example of other members and the use of incentives (ex.: small signs to be installed to indicate the revegetation project of

a property, the Association's annual chore, etc.) we can do it.

En espérant avoir satisfait aux exigences du comité exécutif de notre association, je demeure disponible pour toutes questions ou suggestions.

I hope that I have met our association's executive committee's requirements. I'm available for any questions or suggestions.

Pierre-Jean Charlebois

(In charge of environmental file)

512 Grand-Poisson-Blanc

pierrejc@xplornet.com

(819) 712-1210

Links and references:

- 1.1. <http://www.foca.on.ca/Associations> (Federation of Ontario Cottagers)
- 1.2. <http://www.seauvegarde.org/> (Seauvegarde Vallée-de-la-Gatineau)
- 1.3. <http://abv7.org/> (Agence des bassins versants de 7)
- 1.4. Charles-Olivier Laporte, tel. 819-440-2422, pde@cobali.org
- 1.5. <http://www.troussedeslacs.org/> (Support kit)
- 1.6. <http://www.fedecp.qc.ca/documentation/environnement> (motor vehicles)
- 1.7. http://psll.ca/f/004/004_cobali_boater_responsibilities.pdf (for boats)
- 1.8. <http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/biodiversite/eae/intrus.pdf> (for aquatic plants)
- 1.9. <http://www.crelaurentides.org/publication/publications/depliantis-web.pdf> (for septic systems)
- 1.10. <http://banderiveraine.org/> (riparian strips revegetation)
- 1.11. http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/pub/shore-rivages-on/pdf/shore-rivages-on_f.pdf (for riparian strips)
- 1.12. La Semaine Verte video about riparian strips (in French)
<http://www.radio-canada.ca/widgets/mediaconsole/medianet/6692191>
- 1.13. <http://www.apl31milles.ca/> (website for the Association for the protection of 31-Mile Lake / Association similar to ours in regards to lake

size (waterfront and island property owners)

- 1.14. http://www.lacsam.org/phosphorus/env_report_fin.pdf (Sam Lake association's environmental report)

Translation note: RSVL stands for Réseau de Surveillance Volontaire des Lacs, which can be loosely translated as Voluntary Lake Monitoring Network.