

Draft minutes for AGM 10:00AM July 6, 2024, Salle Desjardins, La Peche Sports Complex

Called to order: 26 members in person, 19 members on zoom

1. Introduction: John Leech started by reviewing the meeting agenda and outlined the protocol for zoom guests.
Motion to approve agenda from Bob Dorion seconded by Diane Rutherford, motion carried.
2. Approval of 2023 AGM minutes. John Leech mentioned that they have been posted on the website for members to review. Motion to approve 2023 AGM minutes from Bob Dorion, seconded by Jennifer Loeven motion carried.
3. Annual Report: John Leech provided updates on the work that Enviro Lac Gauvreau has undertaken and indicated that the board of directors had met six times or more over the previous year. A thank you was extended to the mayor/municipality for the \$24K green fund grant. Progress in the ongoing programs was discussed including education, water testing, quality assurance and scientific advice, shoreline restoration and milfoil. Highlights in each of these areas are as follows:

Education: There have been periodic email bulletins and updates to Facebook and the website. Boating guidelines were distributed during the year and we finished putting up signs relating to them. Members were encouraged to contact the association if they have a topic that they would like to see communicated.

Water Testing: Lac Gauvreau is part of the provincial RSVL (resource service volunteer du lac program), which included water testing at 1 RSVL location. In addition to the RSVL water testing site, we have engaged in a series of additional water testing sites for E.coli in the lake and total phosphorus in Parent creek. E.coli levels are monitored once a month in the summer for swimmer safety reasons. Thanks were extended to the team lead by Emma Doorly-Pelletier. Notable results in 2023 E.coli were excellent except for in Parent Creek. Results were reported to the municipality who concluded that the high levels of E.coli towards the end of the summer were likely due to runoff. Samples were sent this year in June and we're awaiting results. Rink de Lange indicated that testing in Lac Gauvreau and Parent Creek was to establish baseline conditions that will enable us to monitor change as we work to renaturalize the creek. In 2024, each week in Parent Creek and one site in Lac Gauvreau, the Association tested conductivity, total solids, pH, Oxygen concentration, oxidation reduction potential, turbidity, temperature and water levels.

Boat traffic affects water quality. Based on RSVL testing, Lac Gauvreau was, for years, ranked in the category of a Meso-eutrophic Lake on the way to becoming Eutrophic. The latest 2023 results show an improvement in water quality, and Rink de Lange stated that improvement can be linked to a reduction in boat traffic, which led to increased clarity of the water and a reduction in the amount of phosphorus (since there is less silt displacement in the water with less traffic and therefore less phosphorus). Good news!

Lac Gauvreau managed to go from red to orange in the article published in the *Journal de Montreal*. So please keep adhering to the boating guidelines and encourage others to do so!

Questions were entertained from the audience about the camping site on Lac Gauvreau. Rink de Lange indicated that the site has been closed. Bruce commented that the placement of buoys seems to have migrated, and Rink de Lange indicated that they will be put back in their proper place.

Parent Creek Project: There is a process to develop a filtering wetland on Parent Creek and to help re-meander the creek. John Leech indicated that the initiative, funded in part by the Green Fund, has been led by co-president Rink de Lange and asked Rink to elaborate. Rink de Lange indicated that the goal of this project is to help to stop the eutrophication of Lac Gauvreau by working to re-meander Parent Creek (which had been artificially channelized) and create a new wetland area. If Parent Creek is allowed to re-meander, it will help silt to deposit naturally within the creek and will reduce the amount of nutrients that end up in Lac Gauvreau. We hope to see mini-wetlands throughout the creek and increase the size of the floodplain, which will give the creek more capacity to filter while also improving habitat for plants and fish. We want to avoid the destruction of beaver dams because they help the creek to re-establish the natural meandering. Beaver dams also benefit the lake by slowing down the flow which allows more nutrients to dissolve or be absorbed naturally before reaching the lake. Thanks to the beavers, some meanders are re-established, and wetlands re-created. In June 2024 biologists conducted electrofishing in Parent Creek to determine what species were present and also to figure out where wetland areas could be re-established. They found trout! Rink de Lange also indicated that boat ramps are a problem leading to road water runoff into the lake. New developments can have an impact, such as one example on Rue Fortin close to a stream which leads to more silt/runoff into Lac Gauvreau. Members were encouraged to inform the municipality or Enviro Lac Gauvreau if they see activities underway that may have a negative impact on the lake. If a complaint is filed with the municipality, it remains anonymous and the municipality will investigate. Environmental issues are a priority for the municipality, as confirmed by the Mayor during the meeting.

Questions were entertained from the audience regarding the increased numbers of Canada Geese seen on the lake. Rink de Lange indicated that last year the Canada Geese were likely related to the elevated E.coli levels at some sites, and emphasized the importance of making shorelines less attractive for geese (by planting shrubs/trees instead of grass near the shore). If owners were to have a buffer area around the lake, it would be good for the water quality. One audience member indicated they had 10 geese on their property, despite owning a dog (to ward them off). Rink de Lange indicated that the Canada Geese are something that can be looked into, but he doesn't have an immediate answer to the problem. Another audience member suggested flags that can be purchased from Amazon and placed on your property to ward off geese. Rink de Lange suggested that the board look into what other good ideas could be implemented to minimize geese. Another audience member was concerned about the blasting and

noise heard above the cave at the end of the lake and was concerned about whether or not the construction was permitted. Rink de Lange knows there is a permit but is also concerned about the blasting and potential runoff into turtle bay and is planning to visit the municipality to discuss this. Rink de Lange also emphasized the need to make sure that septic systems are properly maintained.

Questions were entertained from the audience about the Parent Creek project and whether the landowners had been contacted. Rink de Lange indicated that one farmer who owns land around Parent Creek is on board, and it is hoped that after the first project is underway, more landowners will express an interest. The Parent Creek project has 3 partners, CREDDO, ACRE and Enviro Lac Gauvreau. CREDDO is the non-profit organization making it possible for us to do this, with a team of 20, and ACRE is also critical to have because their focus is on land trusts and ecological corridors, and they have expertise to buy land or servitudes from farmers. The idea is that ACRE would manage the lands that may be brought under servitude. We have also had assistance from a hydromorphologist from Concordia University who did the initial assessment of Parent Creek. Terre et Habitats Consulting firm working directly with CREDDO is providing technical expertise with how to design the project. CREDDO also provided Lac Gauvreau with water quality equipment so that we were able to do water quality testing in Parent Creek and Lac Gauvreau. Questions were entertained from the audience as to whether we have involved NCC. Rink de Lange indicated that ACRE has been in contact with NCC especially related to servitudes. Another audience member asked about whether we have been in contact with ALUS, since they fund a diversity of projects with farmers in riparian zones. Rink de Lange indicated that he had been in contact with ALUS.

Rink de Lange outlined the expected timeline for the Parent Creek project as follows:

2023 – Project definition, research, baseline data collection

2024 – Funding requests filed, start of field work, apply for phase 2 PRCMHH funding

2025 – Implementation – as defined as PRCMHH (phase 2) and EcoAction funding feasibility study request

2026 – Expand project to more landowners

The current Parent Creek project partners are:

- Municipality of La Peche - provided subsidy from Green fund to finance feasibility study
- MRC des Collines de l'Outaouais – endorsed the project through a motion proposed by the mayor
- Ministry of Environment, Quebec – Pending approval, financing phase 1 and 2 of the project (PRCMHH)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (pending approval of the EcoAction funding request)
- ACRE – will raise funds/subsidies for environmental servitudes
- CREDDO – provides project management and funded equipment to establish baseline data for water quality

Shoreline Restoration: In 2024, we had a program to distribute plants to landowners to help them naturalize their shorelines. In 2024 twenty one properties were provided with over 140 plants, funded by the Green Fund municipal grant (\$2,500). Thanks to Daniel Kobewka and Laura Wesley for organizing.

Milfoil: John Leech indicated that our approach has been two-fold 1) responsible boating guidelines and 2) researching options for direct measures. In researching the environmental regulations that apply to the removal of milfoil there are two provincial regulations that apply, these are managed by two different Quebec ministries (the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Fauna). The Ministry of Environment does permit a limited 75 m² amount of manual removal of milfoil, however the Ministry of Fauna does not allow any removal without first applying for an authorization. John Leech commented that the regulations keep changing and costs escalating, but the milfoil committee has been researching options. One of the best examples is from Ontario (the Farlain Lake Association), which has had a milfoil suppression project ongoing since 2013 using a mix of herbicide, bottom mats and diver assisted harvesting. All components of their project required authorizations from many government departments and the costs were enormous. That particular lake is interesting because they started to use a different herbicide that has been used in many lakes in the U.S. Our board has decided it would not be wise to become the first trial of this product in Quebec. The main take home message is that when we undertake a project, it will be expensive, there will be a long planning process and multiple authorizations will be required from different authorities. John Leech put a call out for any volunteers who might have experience with grant writing to lend a hand. The milfoil committee is currently seeking quotes from a couple of Quebec organizations: Fyto Tech and ABV des 7. John also indicated that we've been wrestling with differences of opinion within the government departments. ABV des 7 has been frustrated with the interpretation of provincial regulations, so is unwilling to quote for a multi-year milfoil suppression project but would provide a quote for updating the Lac Gauvreau milfoil map (2-3K). Also with regard to ABV des 7, they participated in a project to suppress milfoil in nearby Lac Philippe and we've been attempting to get a copy of that project report.

Questions were entertained by the audience regarding the use of rakes to remove milfoil. John Leech asked Kim Mandzy to elaborate on her research into the Quebec regulations. The take home message is that no rakes are allowed unless you have first applied for an authorization to the Ministry of Fauna under the Quebec Wildlife Regulations (which protect fish habitat) and also have applied to the Ministry of Environment under their REAFIE regulation. These applications would be done through an association on behalf of the land owners. Rink de Lange indicated that Enviro Lac Gauvreau is no longer using rakes, but knows that some landowners may want to use them and cautioned that owners should be aware of fish spawning time periods and take that into consideration. Kim Mandzy cautioned that fish habitat is not necessarily just for spawning, but also for rearing of young, and all life stages, and Enviro Lac Gauvreau is not suggesting that landowners use rakes from a legal point of view. Comments from the audience included no observations of fish activity around milfoil. Kim Mandzy indicated that she is aware of a three year provincial study which has demonstrated that fish do

use milfoil and that the province of Quebec does consider it to be fish habitat (therefore requiring authorization to remove it).

4. Official welcome was extended to the mayor, Mr. Guillaume Lamoureux who was asked to give a brief presentation. The mayor generally thinks that the municipality is going in the right direction and spoke to the concerns raised from an audience member about construction/blasting that is occurring at the end of Murray Road. He sees that there are two components to that development, the access road to the house and the house itself. They do have a permit, but they have broken some rules with respect to their access road construction which is close to a wetland area. The biologist has been on site and has notified them regarding the rules regarding proximity to the wetland. The mayor is very happy with our Parent Creek project and is happy that the Green Fund supported us. The municipal biologist and director of sustainable development are both former employees of CREDDO, and the mayor is the Chair of the Board of Directors. With regard to new developments, the mayor indicated that it is no longer possible in La Pêche to build new roads (except in multi-use zones), which puts pressure on consolidation since there are many vacant lots that have become (as a result of the new rules) of more interest. The mayor noted that 2023 has been difficult for all municipalities in Quebec with labor shortages, but there are two ongoing projects at the municipal level 1) shoreline restoration (stop mowing lawns & allow for buffer zones) and 2) septics – with a priority focus on older systems.

5. Association Administration:

Bylaws: John Leech passed the floor to Bruce Stockfish who outlined the proposed revisions to the Enviro Lac Gauvreau Bylaws. Bruce Stockfish went through the Bylaws line by line outlining where changes had occurred and allowed for audience questions article-by-article as the bylaw review progressed. Bruce Stockfish motioned to accept the bylaws, Bob Dorion seconded, and an official vote occurred by show of hands and virtual voting (17/26 in-person members were in favor, 9/12 virtual member attendees were in favor). Motion carried. The full Bylaws as proposed and accepted are linked here: https://lacgauvreau.ca/About_Us/Association/

Financials: Tom Booth reviewed the budget and financial statements from 2023 and current status in 2024. Highlights include receipt of the 12K Green Fund income in 2023, almost 2K in membership fees and expenses of roughly \$6,900. In 2024 Enviro Lac Gauvreau expects to receive the second half of the Green Fund grant which amounts to another 12K. The bank balance stands at around 20K and we want to encourage more memberships to aid our activities, because other than the Green Fund, our memberships are a significant source of funding. Tom Booth indicated that the financials presented are accurate and represent the period up to one week prior to the AGM. John Leech indicated that if we spent everything we had planned for we'd probably need to raise the membership fees next year because we'd have run down our reserves. Questions were entertained by the audience regarding the likelihood of the money being spent this year and whether there was a time limit for spending the funding. Rink de Lange indicated that we didn't spend money on Ducks Unlimited that we had anticipated we would, but

instead spent some money for the Parent Creek feasibility study. John Leech indicated that the municipality has been fairly flexible with the Green Fund funding and we have provided an interim report to them. Rink de Lange's experience is that the municipality has been very understanding. Motion to approve 2024 financial statements from Bob Dorion, seconded by John Shaughnessy, motion carried.

Board of Director Candidates for Election: John Leech indicated the following people were up for re-election and opened up any further nominations from the floor. Samuel Breau, John Leech, Rink de Lange, Paul Loeven, Bruce Stockfish, Emma Thom. Further nominations included Nicolas Parent who expressed interest in being a candidate for election. Rink de Lange seconded the nomination and further invited a self-introduction from Nicolas. Nicolas indicated that he lives on Ch. Bertrand, became a member in January and has been a community organizer for a long time. Nicolas is a geographer and works in policy and has mapping skills and has been working in advocacy. John Leech asked if there were any further nominations from the floor. Laura Wesley indicated that Bora Plumptre was interested in becoming a board member candidate. Rink de Lange invited Bora to introduce themselves. Bora has worked for several NGOs and has been working for two years promoting electric vehicle systems. Bora has a background in policy, grant applications, writing and is looking forward to being involved as a member or on our board. Tom Booth indicated that a vote would be required since we now have 7 people who are running to fill 6 positions. Bruce Stockfish indicated that if John Leech is staying on in a role as past president (which is a non-voting member outlined in the Bylaws), then there is not a need for an election. John Leech agreed to step down from the Co-President position to take on the position of Past President. Rink de Lange indicated that there was therefore no need for an election as we have a full board and therefore the board members standing for election are found to be acclaimed.

6. Other business: No other business
7. Adjournment: John Shaughnessy motioned to adjourn meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:38 PM.