

Draft minutes for AGM 10:00AM July 5, 2025, Salle Desjardins, La Pêche Sports Complex

Called to order: 30 members in person, 14 members on zoom

1. Introduction: Rink de Lange started by reviewing the meeting agenda and outlined the protocol for zoom guests. Rink also indicated that we have guest speakers from Fyto who will be explaining the work that they are doing to map milfoil in Lac Gauvreau and create a multi-year management plan for milfoil management. Rink indicated that he hopes that after Fyto presents their report in fall 2025, we would like to do a webinar about it.
2. Approval of 2024 AGM minutes. Rink mentioned that they have been posted on the website for members to review. Motion to approve 2024 AGM minutes from Bob Dorion, seconded by Nick Parent, motion carried.
3. Annual Report: Rink de Lange provided updates on the work that Enviro Lac Gauvreau has undertaken and indicated that the board of directors has many ongoing programs including education, water testing, nutrient and silt reduction through shoreline planting & restoration and milfoil management. A thank you was extended to the mayor/ municipality for the green fund grant. A thank you was extended to Stuart Fraser for the website. Progress in the ongoing programs was discussed. Highlights in each of these areas are as follows:

Education: There have been periodic email bulletins and updates to Facebook and the website, as well as a brochure that highlights our programs and a door-door campaign. Education continues surrounding the boating guidelines which were developed to reduce the spread of milfoil and also to reduce the flow of nutrients into the lake. Rink believes that the guidelines have been associated with an improvement in water turbidity over the last 2 years. Members were encouraged to ask questions.

Audience Questions were taken. Someone asked where boating guidelines could be found. Rink indicated that they are online but also in a brochure that we distributed. Another person asked whether the guidelines covered kayaks or fishing boats trolling in neutral, and was that OK. Rink indicated that the guidelines cover all boats, and that every boat should stay out of the buoy area. All boats should also be washed to prevent other invasive species from entering the lake. If canoes or kayaks go through milfoil beds then the paddles can also disturb and break the plant apart and help spread it. An audience member remarked that Roots & Shoots farm will take and compost milfoil.

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. Thanks were extended to the volunteer team for the work that was done. Notable results in 2024 E.coli was excellent except for in Parent Creek and one sample from August 2024 in the mouth of Parent Creek (Site 4 in Baie St. Anne). Water quality in the lake itself is great, but Parent Creek is not recommended for swimming. Rink also indicated that testing in Parent Creek for other parameters was to establish baseline conditions for the Parent Creek project.

Based on RSVL testing, Lac Gauvreau is ranked in the category of a Mesotrophic Lake on the way to becoming Eutrophic. The latest 2024 results show an improvement in water quality, and we think 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).

Parent Creek Project: Enviro Lac Gauvreau projects are based on quality assurance and scientific advice. The Parent Creek project will re-meander the creek, increase the floodplain and create mini wetlands. Rink de Lange indicated that one farmer who owns a lot of land around Parent Creek is on board, and it is hoped that after the first project is finished, more landowners will express an interest. The Parent Creek project has 3 managing 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 bought under servitude. Creddo is managing the project for us and the first phase of it is done regarding designs. In fall 2025, they will start the 2nd phase of the project and apply for funding.

Shoreline Restoration: In 2025, we had a program to distribute plants to landowners to help them naturalize their shorelines. It is hoped that the distribution of native lakeshore plants will promote the protection of the lakeshore and reduce silt and nutrient inputs into the lake.

Strategic Plan: Our board decided to do a strategic plan to define our goals and objectives which is available to view on our website. Members were invited to submit a motion to approve the strategic plan, which is not limited to just the lake itself but also a surrounding healthy ecosystem. Rink extended thanks to Bruce Stockfish who took the lead on this. Motion to approve the strategic plan from Jane Touselle and seconded by Charles Kazan. Motion carried without objections. Questions from the audience were encouraged. An audience member asked if there was anything in the strategic plan about changing the rules for boating. Rink de Lange indicated that there is nothing about changing boating guidelines in the strategic plan. Rink de Lange indicated that we rely on the cooperation of everyone on the lake regarding the boating guidelines. They cannot be policed but encouraged people to talk to their neighbours and keep people informed. Bruce Stockfish elaborated that the strategic plan is a high level document that

sets out high level goals for the association. The operations or action plan will take it down a level and discuss the activities we will undertake. An audience member wanted to know that if the boating guidelines are followed, is there no damage done. Rink de Lange indicated that the guidelines are a compromise and it doesn't mean that there is no damage, but that there is a big improvement.

Milfoil: Rink de Lange indicated that our approach has been two-fold 1) responsible boating guidelines and 2) researching options for direct measures. Diane Houle-Rutherford was invited to come up to briefly discuss the work that the milfoil committee has done and to introduce guest speakers from Fyto who will be giving a presentation. We decided that to do anything about milfoil on a larger scale, we would need to have a plan. That is why our milfoil committee approached a couple of different organizations and eventually we ended up getting Fyto involved (presentation to follow). Milfoil is not a new problem, it's all over Quebec, Ontario and the U.S. but we have a distinct problem of being one of the worst in the Outaouais. Diane mentioned that she decided to get involved in 2021 after the AGM and joined the milfoil committee. We met and did research on the issue and this led to trying tarps (which was a disaster) and we had even researched a chemical called Procellacor which is used in the U.S. and Ontario, but Quebec will not authorize it and we realized that it may not be socially acceptable. After all of the dealings with government and other lake associations, we realized that we needed to do something and it was clear, especially from talking to other lake associations that Fyto was a great company to work with. The first step is to contract Fyto to characterize/map the milfoil beds in the lake to have an updated map. This work will start next week. The map will be the basis to decide how to manage milfoil. Having a strategy is not enough, it's reassuring to have a first step forward. A little word of caution is that it will be an expensive undertaking to implement the strategy.

Audience Questions were taken. Someone asked what are the average costs of these kinds of activities. John Leech indicated that is why we are getting a multi-year management plan for the milfoil. A part of this plan will include cost estimates. Rink de Lange indicated that the municipality is mostly paying for Fyto to do the milfoil strategic plan, but they said not to expect subsidies from the Green Fund for the milfoil suppression. An invitation was extended to Vincent Gagné from Fyto to speak regarding the milfoil strategic plan development.

Presentation from Vincent (Fyto): We are an environmental consultant specializing in the control of invasive species in lakes. They are a 4yr old company with experience working in many regions of Quebec with milfoil (Lac des Cedres, Lac Chapleau, Lac St. John, and a lake in the Saguenay region etc.). Vincent founded Fyto after many years of study in milfoil and worked doing research in 2017 on it. With the need we had in Quebec, he founded the company to help lake associations, leading diving teams to map and build strategies and suppress milfoil. Maude Keyser introduced herself. She is a biologist and professional diver. Maude indicated that Milfoil is in more than 54 lakes in the Outaouais. Maude presented the strategy (steps #1 to 5).

Step 1 is doing the inventory which includes identification of plants (by boat and drone) which creates a map of the area where you find the invasive species. **Step 2** is obtaining

information on the lake, the size of the beds and deciding on realistic goals (make sure we have enough funds to bring it to as low amount as possible) and then calibrate the objectives. The goal is to control milfoil as much as possible. **Step 3** is obtaining funding. What is required from Enviro Lac Gauvreau is to try to find money to make this happen. It's always better to start the project as soon as possible to lower the cost. Enviro Lac Gauvreau will have to look for foundations/grants and perhaps some tax that you can ask residents to pay. It's important to have continuous funding for the project for it to be a success. **Step 4** is obtaining authorizations. Once the mapping and milfoil strategy are developed, the project will need to get authorizations from 3 levels of government 1) Quebec Ministry of Environment, 2) Quebec Ministry of Fauna and 3) Canada (Department of Fisheries and Oceans). The second big step, when we've gotten rid of the main milfoil, we have a maintenance step to make sure that as small milfoil comes back, we take it out as fast as possible.

Step 5: Implementation control strategy. Milfoil Action Plan: when we build an action plan (which is needed by the government regulators), we build it in regions (map regions) and each colour on the map represents the plan for removal for a particular year. The technique we use is with tarps, installed by divers to smother it. We also do hand pulling and use a special pump and bags to hand pull it. Maude illustrated before and after pictures of the removal process. The tarps are removed at the end of the season. Maude emphasized that volunteers are needed when they work. They will need a lot of volunteers to come and make sure that no fragments are going away when the work is being done. Maude indicated that they have free guides online that explain their techniques and they also have more information on the Fyto website.

5 Key Ingredients to make it work longterm:

- 1) Longterm budget
- 2) Communication. It looks like Enviro Lac Gauvreau already has that re: buoy markers etc.
- 3) Great involvement of the association and local residents
- 4) Install buoy markers around areas
- 5) Ensure that when we do the big step of taking it out, there is also a maintenance step to make sure that it doesn't come back as big as before

Audience questions were entertained. Someone asked what would happen if we had motorboats everywhere and nobody did anything to suppress milfoil. What would happen. Would it kill everything? Fyto response: For sure milfoil would get worse. Not everything will die. He's seen lakes with milfoil for 20 yrs and the biodiversity of plants is almost all milfoil (nothing else). The milfoil grows at the surface, creates a mat and is not inviting for swimming, kayaking and is not something we want in front of properties.

An audience member asked about what happens to other animals (turtles, fish, snakes). What would happen to these species without milfoil control. Fyto response: scientific research isn't clear on what it does to fauna, but we know it has an impact on plants in

the lake. Some fish may prefer milfoil beds but others may not use milfoil beds. It depends on what species of fish you look at. Milfoil is not toxic to humans.

An audience member asked if since the municipality has gathered information several times, are we able to use any of the older information or is it too outdated. Fyto response: we can use older information from the association but we need to do our own inventory because the milfoil beds are changing annually.

An audience member asked what would happen if we didn't follow through on the plan in a few years, would we need to do this again? Fyto response: yes

An audience member asked where boat cleaning stations were located. Rink de Lange indicated that individual owners are responsible for cleaning small boats/kayaks themselves but since there is no public access to the lake, this helps minimize boats coming from elsewhere. Rink heard a rumour that there is a boat cleaning station in East Aldfield.

An audience member asked how to get in touch with the association to volunteer. Rink de Lange indicated that the email is on our brochure.

An online audience member wanted to know that since Diane indicated that tarps were tried without success, why are Fyto using them. Fyto response: they don't know why the tarps Diane spoke of didn't work, but perhaps it was a poor technique being used. Diane indicated that the tarps used before were different and were not installed professionally.

An online audience member asked if there were any cases that didn't work well and if yes, what were the causes and what was learned. Fyto response: project funding can cause problems, for example if a project is lacking funding in their 3rd year, all the efforts in the first 2 years can be setback and milfoil can regrow.

An online audience member asked if once a lake is contaminated, is it realistic to expect complete elimination or are we just trying to control what is there and are expected to follow the guidelines religiously after your intervention? Fyto response: The first year is intensive tarps, with the objective to obtain the lowest milfoil and then following that there is a need to maintain low milfoil with lower effort – but it needs to be followed up every year

Rink de Lange commented that we need to spend money to get a strategic plan, but we need to get a maintenance plan and get a clear agreement from people living on the lake and if we need to change the boating guidelines, we might need to. Important thing is to have full agreement from everyone to adhere to the guidelines.

An audience member wanted to know that if the raking system seems to be effective, what would be needed to get a permit. Fyto response: In the strategic plan, we will probably propose that residents own their own shoreline and inform people of how to do it and how to do it well and we will have the permit/authorization if the strategic plan is approved by the government agencies to do it.

Bruce Stockfish commented that he has the sense that the lake is basically saturated and can't get much worse. Two or three people have approached him and said that it

seemed like the milfoil was better this year than other years and was wondering if the boating guidelines are contributing to a reduction in milfoil. Fyto response: there seems to be a cycle with the milfoil beds. Year after year on each lake that they work on, some years appear to have aggressive milfoil and some years less aggressive growth. Speculation that it could be fluctuations in winter severity (but not sure).

The mayor asked a question of Fyto regarding how other municipalities were able to do a sectoral tax. The mayor indicated that he had a discussion with Lac Bernard on how to do this but based on an internal analysis of tax law, it was a legal nightmare and because of all the servitudes, you'd have to involve a notary to assess how many properties are involved. He was asking Vincent what was done in other municipalities, because it didn't seem like a simple thing at all.

4. Official welcome was extended to the mayor, Mr. Lamoureux who was asked to give a brief presentation. The mayor spoke to the bridge on Kennedy Rd. They took 2 large culverts out and replaced it with wood and steel. The work went well in general and the contractor/designer is working on repairing some damage. The mayor indicated that the zoning review is almost done. The MRC adopted a master plan, and the first draft of the zoning bylaws will be ready on Monday. The document is approximately 400 pages and it is typical to see 1 or 2 small bylaws to do some small corrections to tweak it. The mayor invited people to let them know if they notice anything problematic with the current version of the bylaws. The mayor indicated that they finally have a small team dedicated to septic conformity. Right now they are building a database and now they are starting to do the inspections of all septic systems in La Pêche over the course of a year. As you know a faulty septic system puts a major stress on bodies of water. The mayor congratulated Enviro Lac Gauvreau on their success and indicated he's been president of CREDDO for a few years and that networking is key. All MRC's in Quebec have received funding for climate change mitigation. If you are able to connect work to climate mitigation, they have Green Fund locally. The mayor also reminded people that La Pêche is turning 50 and that invited people to attend the casual BBQ celebration in August. The mayor also reminded people to participate in the local elections to be held Nov 3rd. It is typical to get low participation rates in local politics, but he hopes people will remember to participate.

Rink de Lange invited audience members to ask questions. An audience member asked that if we don't get funding from MRC and the municipality for our lake our size what sort of estimate/ballpark funds would be needed per property (if we have 100-150 property owners)? What would Fyto charge? Rink de Lange indicated that the question is premature right now and we don't know yet. John Leech mentioned that it will become a lot clearer once we see the scope of the plan. Diane commented that the funding will change depending on whether the strategy is for 3yrs or 5yrs. Rink de Lange compared it to a renovation of a kitchen, typically people are willing to spend up to 30K. People need to ask themselves how much is an improved lake worth.

Tom Booth asked the mayor how much longer the Green Fund would continue to exist, not necessarily assisting with this particular project, but just in general. The mayor indicated that last year the Green Fund raised around \$100K which was funded from 1 cent per \$100 of the municipal property evaluation. The Green Fund could be at risk if the council was against it, but right now the council is behind it. The mayor doesn't believe the Green Fund is at risk knowing that the MRC is getting new funding at a regional/provincial level for climate change adaptation. Rink de Lange thanked the mayor for participating and for all that he is doing.

5. Association Administration:

Rink de Lange invited Tom Booth (treasurer) to go over the finances.

Financials: Tom Booth reviewed the budget and financial statements from 2024 and current status in 2025. The spreadsheet was shared with the audience and on the left hand side covering a period of 18 months we have a balance of \$589.45 indicating that we brought in more money than we spent last year. On the right hand side, the spreadsheet shows the projections for next year. We have some costs committed already (e.g. Fyto). The bottom line is we'll have a little under \$5K left at the end of this year (which goes to July 2026). We're continuing all the good things we are doing and we are solvent.

Questions were entertained by an audience member who wanted to know about the windmill line item. Rink de Lange explained that it had been installed with the purpose of aerating the water around it, but that it was broken and had been removed at the request of the landowner. We were able to purchase the part to repair it.

Motion to approve 2025 financial statement and budget from John Shonnesy and seconded by Ian Arnold, motion carried.

Board of Director Candidates for Election: Rink de Lange asked if anyone from the floor wanted to stand for election to the board. There were no volunteers. The current candidates for re-election are Tom Booth, André Poliquin, Nicolas Parent, David Giannadrea (unsure of spelling?). Nicolas Parent and David Giannadrea were invited to briefly introduce themselves. 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: Bob Groshon (don't know spelling of last name) motioned to adjourn meeting, seconded by Gislean Deselles. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.