

Lac Gauvreau receives \$14,000 to study creek's impact

By Josh Clipperton

Persistence, careful planning and a clear vision has paid off for the residents and cottagers at Lac Gauvreau, as it was announced last week the municipality of La Peche and the Fondation de la faune du Quebec have donated more than \$14,000

to study Parent Creek, the main waterway flowing into the lake.

The aim of the study – which still requires another \$6,000 from other levels of government, the business community and lake association members – is to evaluate the creek-side and water habits of Parent Creek, while examining the potential

for fish species and at the same time pinpointing the sources of any deterioration, such as high levels of nutrients.

Lac Gauvreau experienced a large bloom of blue-green algae – also known as cyanobacteria – in 2000.

Since then, the lake environmental association has been proactive by working with the municipality and the farmer's union to put together a strategic plan to help combat the problem.

Before the algal bloom, many farms along Parent Creek had no fences, leaving animals to their own devices.

Lac Gauvreau Environmental Protection Association co-President John Leech says fences have now been erected on some properties, along with other proactive initiatives.

"The municipality started inspecting septic systems. There

were also information days to encourage people to use non-phosphate soap as well as shoreline rehabilitation to absorb nutrients," says Leech.

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High levels of nutrients, like phosphates, can lead to higher chances of algal bloom.

The study is expected to get underway by the middle of September.

The municipality contrib-

uted \$6,000 to fund the new study while the provincial environmental organization kicked in another \$8,100.

Leech believes it was his group's organization and willingness to discuss the problems with regards to the creek, rather than to place blame, that led to the new money.

After the study is concluded, it's hoped a feasible five-year plan can be established from the findings, along with previous data collected, to continue to improve the water quality of Lac Gauvreau and Parent Creek.

"We're taking another giant step with this new project," says Leech.

Lac Gauvreau has approximately 170 property owners either on or near the water. Leech says after the study is completed, his association will look to sit down with the municipality to determine the next step.