

The Newsletter



The Sustainable Development Committee

Our first edition: under the water sign

That famous American prognosticator, Punxsutawney Phil, was right on the money this year. He saw his shadow as he looked out of his burrow on February 2, correctly predicting at least six more weeks of winter, while his alter egos Warton Willie from Ontario and Shubenacadie Sam from Nova Scotia, who did not see their shadows, erroneously predicted an early spring for 2008.

With the eventual arrival of more spring-like weather, Quebecers, like northern people everywhere, have come out of their homes to renew human contact, talk to their neighbours, smile at the world, think about outdoor projects and become involved in the community. The ideal time of the year, the MRC de Memphrémagog decided, to reach out to residents of the MRC through this newsletter, as a way of showing the connection between regional activities and the general theme of sustainable development.

Spring in this corner of the Townships is especially spectacular because of the hydrography of our region which endows our natural world with its own particular beauty. Hence the overall theme of the first newsletter of the Sustainable Development Committee of the MRC de Memphrémagog is the management of aquatic ecosystems.

Never before has water been such a current topic of debate and discussion. Whether it is the question of the watershed or the sensitive subject of the impact of human activities on them, these themes are increasingly a part of the public debate. The diversity of "users" of a watershed is so great that it would be naïve to think that one sector of activity could be singled out as the major cause of the negative effects on the environment that have been observed. We must not lose sight of the fact that the phenomenon of pollution as an environmental problem really first appeared during the Industrial Age, and was boosted in large part by the use of synthetic products (in the 1930s) and the widespread use of such products after the Second World War. These environmental consequences cannot be dealt with in a few years, even with massive efforts. Joint, coordinated and continuing action and perseverance by all stakeholders are required. What must be determined is how human activities can be carried on with less impact on the environment.

Citizens, organizations representing many different areas and interests and the municipal sector have already shown a willingness to work together that has been translated into events to bring people together and by changing attitudes. The council of elected representatives, made up of 17 mayors from the territory of the MRC, intends to continue efforts to inform and work with all the stakeholders in the

region, through the publication of the newsletter. This first issue provides information about the strategies put in place by the municipalities in various files, such as the protection of water quality and the riparian area (the buffer zone along the shores of lakes and watercourses). Among other questions: the joint management process for the entire watershed area of Lake Memphremagog with the State of Vermont, a process which is not new, but which is perhaps not well known. The most recent efforts to address some of these concerns in municipal by-laws will also be described.

Whether you live here permanently, as a seasonal resident or for a few weekends a year, you work, enjoy leisure pursuits, garden, shovel snow – in short, you are all change agents in one or another watershed. This issue will provide several basic concepts to help you carry out your activities and your consumption in a perspective of responsible management of waste materials, as set out in the MRC's Residual Materials Management Plan, which has been in force since 2004.

One section of this newsletter will present regional activities related to the environment, management of waste materials (garbage, recycling, RDDs) and sustainable development.

We hope that this new newsletter will give you ideas, provide answers to questions you might have and propose activities that you will enjoy – and give you a feeling of belonging here that will help ensure that the beauty of our corner of the world will be protected for the future.

I hope you enjoy this first issue!

Christine Labelle
Project director



Watershed of Lake Memphremagog

A watershed or drainage basin is a part of a territory delineated by the highest points (the mountain crests), from which the waters drain towards a common outlet or low point: a watercourse or lake.

People are organizing around a vital issue: Water

By Alexandra Roy,
Environment project manager

For some years now, cyanobacteria bloom has been a source of concern for Quebecers. Residents of the Eastern Townships have begun to be alarmed about the eutrophication of lakes and, as a direct result, the proliferation of blue-green algae, because a number of lakes serve as reservoirs for potable water. In addition, the quality of the environment, which brings many tourists and seasonal residents into the area, is an important driver of socio-economic activity in the MRC de Memphrémagog.

Stakeholders of all kinds, including associations to protect lakes and citizens' associations, municipalities, the MRC, university researchers, students, the Quebec government and others, have studied the

Eutrophication, or aging, is a process of gradual enrichment of a lake by nutritive materials, causing it to pass from the oligotrophic stage (meaning that it is little nourished and there is little decomposition), through the mesotrophic stage, and on to the eutrophic (which indicates that it is well nourished). The main consequences of eutrophication are the excessive development of algae and degradation in water quality.



Tomifobia River
Photo : Christine Labelle, MRC de Memphrémagog

evolution of natural environments in our region for more than 50 years. The governments of Quebec and Vermont have also recognized the international importance of Lake Memphremagog by signing environmental cooperation agreements to manage the waters of the lake and the entire drainage basin in 1989 and 2003. Since 1996, the two governments have ensured that water quality in Lake Memphremagog is monitored. The majority of the observations point to a mesotrophic condition, the intermediate level in the aging of a lake. More advanced signs of aging have been noted in the shallower parts of the lake, mainly in Fitch Bay (Quebec) and in



Stukely Lake
Photo : Christine Labelle, MRC de Memphrémagog

South Bay (Vermont). The Operation Healthy Lake study, conducted by Memphremagog Conservation inc. in 2005, also arrives at the same conclusions. Water quality monitoring in the tributaries of the drainage basin, by the MRC de Memphrémagog since 1997 and by the NorthWoods Stewardship Center in Vermont since 2005, have also made it possible to identify and describe the sectors where high quantities of phosphorus and suspended solids are carried by surface waters, streams

and rivers. The majority of other lakes in the MRC also present the same portrait; the more anthropogenic (human-induced) pressure in the drainage basin, the greater the threat to the equilibrium of the body of water.

In general, all the stakeholders come to the same conclusions in their studies. They say that it is not too late to take actions to slow the degradation of zones where there are problems, improve the general quality of the lake water and protect the sectors which are still healthy. Tremendous efforts have been made by elected representatives, municipal employees, farmers, volunteers and representatives of lake associations and citizens. The involvement of the entire community is essential for the sustainable development of our region.

On the Web

Study by Memphremagog Conservation inc. 'Operation Healthy Lake'
http://www.memphremagog.org/article.php3?id_article=85&lang=en

*Sampling programs in the tributaries
MRC de Memphrémagog (in French only)*
http://www.mrcmemphremagog.com/program_echantillon.html

NorthWoods Stewardship Center
<http://www.northwoodscenter.org/conservationscience.html>

New by-laws to protect bodies of water

By Steve Otis,
Coordinator of land use planning and development

For the past few years, the Memphremagog region has faced the recurring problem of blue-green algae proliferation in several bodies of water in its territory, a situation that has become a concern to the population and the elected representatives of the municipalities. The nutrient load, including nitrogen and especially phosphorus, is one of the deciding factors in the degradation of water quality because it is a cause of the proliferation of algae and other aquatic plants. There are many sources of nutrients like phosphorus, and controlling them at the source involves multiple actions from the different levels of government. We note that the Quebec government is preparing to regulate the quantity of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent, an initiative which has been followed as well by the federal government.

The Land Use Planning and Development Act gives the MRC the power to regulate or prohibit land uses, taking into account their proximity to a watercourse, to protect the environment of the shoreline and the littoral. The scientific literature shows, incidentally, that when the riparian zone (or shoreline of riverbank area) is made up of three strata of vegetation, the shoreline or riverbank is protected against the erosion, provides a screen against excessive heating of the water and acts as a barrier against sediments and nutrients being deposited in the water.

This, is the context in which the MRC de Memphrémagog has undertaken to change its land use and development plan to back up its intention to establish a regulatory framework to support a progressive return to the natural state of shores and banks that have been artificialized or degraded. From now on, the MRC requires that each of the municipalities on its territory ban any intervention to control the vegetation, including cutting the grass at the edge of any lake or watercourse, on a strip of land a minimum of 5 or 7.5 meters in relation to the slope. Furthermore, within 5 years (by 2013), the MRC intends to extend this by-law to all shorelines and watercourses to a width of 10 to 15 meters, depending on the slope.

By-law 6-07 came into force on March 13, 2008. The municipalities have six months, that is, by September 13 at the latest, to integrate these new norms into their respective zoning by-laws.

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The 3 Rs: Do they sound familiar?

By Mélanie Morel

Adapted by Mélanie Desautels, Project manager

This year, the MRC de Memphrémagog celebrates the fourth anniversary of the adoption of the Residual Materials Management Plan. Efforts to promote the reduction at source, recycling, recovery and reuse of residual materials have continued. For example, all municipalities in the MRC now collect recyclable materials, which was not the case in 2000. Despite these efforts, there is still much to do.

Last fall, Recyc-Québec published the statement for the year 2006 of the management of residual materials in Quebec. We know that impressive quantities of garbage are generated annually in the province by

Selective collection for recycling (blue bins) is increasingly successful. In our MRC, the amount collected has risen from 0.03 tonne per inhabitant in 2000 to 0.12 tonne in 2007, a fourfold increase!

the residential, industrial, commercial, institutional and construction sectors. In 2006, this was a whopping amount of nearly 13 million tons, or an average increase of 1.7 ton per inhabitant... and this average has continued to grow since 1996.



An MRC de Memphrémagog eco-adviser discusses management of residual wastes with residents of Stukely-Sud.
Photo : MRC de Memphrémagog

But what happens to all this garbage? It is estimated that nearly 92 % of the "garbage" we produce could be reused, recycled or composted. However, the majority of residual materials are still sent to landfill. When we look at the Quebec average, we see that the rate of recovery of materials that could potentially be used for something else is only around 52 %.

In this MRC, the residential sector produced 25,400 tons of residual materials in 2007. Nearly 45 % of this waste material has been recovered and or transformed rather than being sent to landfill.

The Quebec government has directed municipalities to reach a recovery and reuse target of 65 % of these materials between now and the end of year 2008. Every one of us can participate in reaching this objective. There are many different ways to give the residual materials that we generate a second life. Garbage is actually a valuable resource that can be recovered and re-used, and this helps to reduce the pressure on landfill sites and hence on the environment.

Get moving! Adopt the 3 Rs

The 3 Rs are the best way to decrease the quantity of waste materials destined for landfill. There are many small things you can do to be part of the solution:

Reduce at the source by changing your consumption habits. For example, you can:

- Choose products sold in bulk to reduce over-packaging;
- Assess your needs and buy smaller amounts to avoid waste;
- Make durable rather than disposable products your priority;
- Leave the lawn cuttings right where they fall (herbicycling);
- Use rechargeable batteries and long-life light-bulbs.

Did you know that fluocompact lightbulbs contain mercury? It is very important to dispose of them properly so that this metal that is harmful to the environment doesn't end up poisoning the environment. Call your municipality to find out where you can safely dispose of them.

Re-use and Recycle objects that you possess more than once. You can:

- Give away used clothing;
- Buy second-hand books and CDs;

Have you visited your ecocentre lately? Ecocentres are places where you can bring all kinds of things and materials that you can't put in your recycling bin. Call your municipality to find out where your nearest ecocentre is located.



Magog Ecocentre
Photo : Ville de Magog

- Use bags and containers more than once;
- Make torn or stained clothing into cleaning rags;
- Choose re-usable cups;
- Use recovered /recycled construction materials.

To find out more about places that promote re-use (second-hand clothing stores and counters, used furniture depots, recovery of metal and construction materials), contact your municipality or check the list of recycling and recovery services on the MRC website at: www.mrcmemphremagog.com.

Your recyclable materials can serve as raw materials for another uses or other persons. To find the list of materials that you can put in your recycling bin and places where you can take other materials, contact your municipality.

Give new life to organic wastes (leaves, vegetable peelings, garden wastes) by composting. You will reduce the weight of your garbage bag by more than 40 %.

By applying the 3 Rs in your daily life, you will be doing your part to help make the *Residual materials management plan* a success in the MRC de Memphrémagog.

To learn more, call the Info-environment hotline at the MRC at (819) 843-9292 extension 63 or visit:

www.mrcmemphremagog.com
(environnement section)
www.recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
www.compost.org



**BEFORE YOU THROW IT OUT,
LISTEN TO THE GREEN VOICE OF REASON!**

DO GOOD DO GREEN.com

Regional Noticeboard

Municipality of Ayer's Cliff

Launch of International Composting Week

Date: Saturday, May 3, 2008
Time: 9 am to noon
Place: Ayer's Cliff Elementary School
952, rue Sanborn

You are invited:

- To discuss your experiences with BLUE BINS, brown bins, other bins, etc.
- To ask questions and receive answers.
- To get information, tips and tricks to help you sort your recycling and garbage.
- To test your knowledge – and win a prize!

Event organized by: CCE (Comité Consultatif en Environnement).

Municipality of the Township of Stanstead

Composting

A brown bin on wheels for compostable materials will be delivered to each residence at the beginning of summer 2008 and collection will begin on July 14, 2008. We encourage you to compost more and to keep on composting because the main objective of this pick-up is to reduce materials we send to landfill that creates biogas, and thus to help to create a healthier environment.

Ville de Magog

Spring pick-up of green residual wastes

From May 5 to 9, 2008
From June 2 to 6, 2008

- **Paper bags** must be put on the street, behind the recycling bin, on the day of the pick-up of recyclable materials. They will be collected on the same day or shortly after.
- If it rains, please protect the bags with a waterproof cover.
- The green materials collected will be taken to an authorized composting site.

PSST! BREAKING NEWS!

This year, you must use paper bags for green wastes! They cost \$0.25 each at several grocery stores and at the town's service outlets.

Household composting workshop

Free
Date: Saturday, July 5, 2008
Time: 9 am
Place: former town hall in Omerville
51, rue St-Jacques Ouest, Magog

To reserve a seat, please call 819 843-7106.

Parc régional Massawippi

Week of the Tree

From May 17 to 24, 2008

In association with:

- The member municipalities of the Parc régional Massawippi;
- Local environmental advisory committees (CCEs);
- The Association forestière des Cantons de l'Est (AFCE) and the MRC de Memphrémagog.

Donation of trees

Date: Saturday May 17, 2008, in the morning
Place: Ayer's Cliff (municipal skating rink), Canton de Hatley (Centre Montjoye), Hatley (town hall)

Date: Saturday, May 24, 2008, in the morning
Place: North Hatley (Dreamland park)
Ste-Catherine-de-Hatley (town hall)

The following species will be offered, without charge:

- Birch (yellow birch)
- White Birch
- Sugar maple
- Bur oak
- White pine, red pine
- White spruce
- White ash, red ash

Limited quantities; First come, first served.

Sale of shrubs

Date: Saturday, May 24, 2008, in the morning
Place: Ayer's Cliff (municipal skating rink), Hatley (Ayer's Cliff skating rink), North Hatley (Dreamland park), Ste-Catherine-de-Hatley (town hall)

The shrubs are mainly for waterfront property owners and must be ordered in advance through each participating municipality **before May 15, 2008**. When they are distributed, a team of volunteers will be on hand to offer technical advice.



Calendar of Activities 2008 – MRC de Memphrémagog

April

Talk on the ABCs of household composting

by Mélanie Morel, Fondation RHA
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: MRC de Memphrémagog
455, rue MacDonald, Magog

May

Workshop on reforesting the shoreline buffer zone

by Alexandra Roy, MRC de Memphrémagog
Date: Saturday, May 3, 2008
Time: 10 am
Place: Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley town hall
35, ch. North Hatley

Talk "Solutions écologiques en horticulture" / Ecological gardening solutions

by Edith Smeesters, CAP
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: Township of Potton town hall
2, rue Vale Perkins, Mansonville

Depending on the requests received, the conference will be offered in English OR French

Workshop on household composting (50 seats available)

by Monique Clément, Nova Envirocom
Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2008
Time: 6 pm
Place: Eastman town hall
160, ch. George-Bonnallie
Cost: \$30 tax incl.
Obtain a household composter

June

Workshop on household composting (100 seats available)

by Monique Clément, Nova Envirocom
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2008
Time: 9 am
Place: former town hall in Omerville
51, rue St-Jacques Ouest, Magog
Cost: \$30 tax incl.
Obtain a household composter

Talk "Des végétaux pour l'eau"

by Raphaël Leblond, Consult'Eau Québec
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: North Hatley Community Centre
3127, ch. Capelton

July

Talk "Quelques trucs pour éliminer l'utilisation des pesticides" (Tips to eliminate the use of pesticides)

by Edith Smeesters, CAP
Date: Thursday, July 3, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: Ogden town hall
70, ch. Ogden

Depending on the requests received, the talk will be given in English OR French

Workshop on household composting (50 seats available)

by Monique Clément, Nova Envirocom
Date: Thursday, July 10, 2008
Time: 6 pm
Place: Austin town hall
21, ch. Millington
Cost: \$30 tax incl.
Obtain a household composter

Talk "La bande riveraine, une solution pour améliorer la qualité de l'eau!"

by Nathalie Bédard, RAPPEL
Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: MRC de Memphrémagog
455, rue MacDonald, Magog

August

Workshop on reforesting of the shoreline buffer zone

by Alexandra Roy, MRC de Memphrémagog
Date: Saturday, August 9, 2008
Time: 10 am
Place: Austin town hall
21, ch. Millington
Date: Saturday, August 9, 2008
Time: 1 pm
Place: Township of Stanstead townhall
778, ch. Sheldon

Talk "Les installations septiques enfin démythifiées"

by Maité Dubois, RAPPEL
Date: Tuesday, August 12, 2008
Time: 7 pm
Place: Canton d'Orford town hall
2530, ch. du Parc

To register, please call Ms Émilie Gagnon at 819 843-9292, ext. 22.

For a description of these activities, visit the website www.mrcmemphremagog.com.

NOTE: All these activities are free for citizens of the MRC de Memphrémagog, except the composting workshops (\$30 taxes included).