

NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

- Early Spring 2008 Hike
- May 2007 AGM report
- Mont O'Brien Brief and Presentation to BAPE
- Resolving Board problems
- Development
- Benefit, Hike with BBQ
- Forests and Trails
- Contact a Board Member

The Mont O'Brien Association Mandate

"To maintain the wilderness environment of the Mont O'Brien area by protecting the numbers and varieties of flora and fauna while providing educational opportunities and recreational access to the forests, lakes, rivers and mountains"

Please note that the website "www.montobrien.com" does not represent the Mont O'Brien Association. A new website is being planned.

2008 family memberships must be raised to \$20/year, in order to cover the cost of liability insurance. Your membership is important – not only because you gain access to these 25 square miles of beautiful Public Forest, but also because you are demonstrating your support so that it will be preserved for future generations.

JOIN US FOR AN EARLY SPRING HIKE!

**Saturday, May 10, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Meet at the Mont O'Brien gate off of Highway 301
which is five kilometers west of Danford Lake Village.**

May 10 will be a good day for a hike, because it's before the first blackflies emerge here (in small bubbles from the pure water of forest streams), and it's a sunny moment before leafing-out of trees. May 10 is when spring-bloomers and ephemerals begin: trout lily, spring beauty, trilliums, bellflower, polygala, blue cohosh, amelanchier, leatherwood, violets.... You are welcome to bring a friend.

The hike on the Mary Haydon trail, up the north side of Mont O'Brien and down the east side, takes about 3 1/2 hours (approximately 7 km, including a few steep places). We recommend you dress appropriately and bring water, sunscreen, hat, a light lunch, and wear good hiking shoes. No dogs permitted on this hike.



To register for the hike contact Jennifer Heeney at (819) 467-3087, or e-mail mary.francis-007@hotmail.com.

May 2007 AGM Report

The Mont O'Brien Association held its 2007 Annual General Meeting May 20th at Bethany Hall in Danford Lake. About 30 people came to lend their support at the meeting that was chaired by John McDonnell, Executive Director of Forêt-la-Blanche Ecological Reserve near Mayo, Quebec. About 20 new memberships were added at the meeting.



Bertha and Chris Kirby enrolling new members

Four directors stepped down: president Allen Noel; secretary John Noel; treasurer Joe Jamison, and Ellis Adams, member at large. These are all very dedicated volunteers who have spent many hours of personal time for many years working on behalf of the Association – with the Thanksgiving Family Hikes as the annual highlight. The Association is very grateful for their commitment to Mont O'Brien, and we look forward to their continued involvement.

Continuing as board members were Charlene Scharf as representative from the municipal council, and Lindsay Peck and Paula Armstrong, who were elected in 2006 for two-year terms.

We believed at the AGM that the board could include up to eleven elected board members, so we elected nine more (in sequence, from notes of John Noel and Pam Miles): Roy Peck, Harold Emery, Renato Livinal, Ralph Lafleur, Stacy Molyneaux, Jennifer Heeney, Jan McCambley, Jason Emery, and Stephanie Milford. (In late September we learned that our charter permits only seven board members, which cannot be changed at an AGM or by a board resolution, so in October we recognized just the first four elected. This problem is discussed further on in this newsletter.)

At the first board meeting, May 27th, the directors chose Renato Livinal as president, Jennifer Heeney as vice-president, Roy Peck as treasurer, and Stephanie Milford as secretary.

MegaDump Vote Result

In our spring newsletter, the entire membership was asked to vote by ballot on the proposed technical landfill site in Alleyn-and-Cawood municipality, on public land about six km west-north-west of Mont O'Brien itself. The results were tallied and announced at the AGM: Of the 107 votes received, 5 memberships wanted the association to remain neutral, 0 supported the proposed landfill, and 102 were opposed. Therefore we wrote and submitted a brief to BAPE (Bureau d'audiences publiques) in June.

BAPE Commission Report



Planning contents of Mont O'Brien's Brief to the BAPE Commission, June 2 at the Lachapelle Restaurant in Kazabazua: Stephanie Milford, Pam Miles, and Jennifer Heeney.

The Mont O'Brien Association made a formal presentation at the BAPE hearings June 15, 2007, organized by the Québec Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Parks. Pam Miles presented the Association's opposition to the proposed engineered landfill in Alleyn-and-Cawood, and our encouragement of waste management alternative technologies.

We submitted a formal brief to the Commission, elaborating the history of the Association along with our anti-landfill position. Our brief may be read at www.bape.gouv.qc.ca along with briefs by Pontiac Environmental Protection (PEP), Renato Livinal, Roy and Irma Peck, Jan McCambley, and many others.

The report of the Commission was announced in September. It concluded that the engineered landfill project would not be the best solution to the waste management problems of the Outaouais Region.



--Just before AGM: We almost met in the fire hall, but then we were able to move to Bethany Hall (thank-you, Irma).

Resolving Board problems and following our mandate

The Mont O'Brien board members are Lindsay Peck, Jennifer Heeny, Paula Armstrong, Charlene Scharf, Renato Livinal, and Ralph Lafleur. This was not clarified until October.

The legal Charter of our Association, registered with the Québec government, specifies a board with seven members. At the AGM May 20th, the representative from council was already appointed (Charlene Scharf), and two directors were continuing a two-year appointment from 2006 (Lindsay Peck and Paula Armstrong). Therefore four more directors could be elected. The sequence in which directors were elected was: Roy Peck, Harold Emery, Renato Livinal, Ralph Lafleur. Five more were elected after those, because we mistakenly thought there could be a total of 12 members.

We obtained a copy of our charter from the government in September, so at that point we knew we had too many board members. We also knew that errors in proper democratic conduct of board meetings were occurring and guidance was needed. Part of the duties of a vice president is to act in the event of neglect by a president, and since the president had refused to do so, Jennifer Heeny, as vice-president, called all board members to a board training session set for October 9th, with Gilles Parent, a professional board trainer. This session was attended by Roy, Lindsay, Paula, and Jennifer, as well as several regular members of the Association. We knew then that the legitimate board under our charter, which permits seven members, must meet as soon as we could obtain a reliable record of the election sequence, and therefore who were the first four elected. We also understood that we must follow democratic procedure much more carefully than it was followed during the summer and September board meetings.

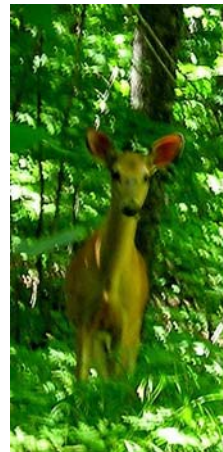
All of the members of the oversized board were then invited to a board meeting set for October 28th to explain the charter and what was learned during our board

training session. The meeting began with a treasurer's report from Roy; then with a quorum, Jennifer was elected to the board to replace Harold, who resigned in August.

We met again November 3rd with a quorum. At this meeting a resolution was passed to remove Renato from the position of president, even though he must remain a member of the board, since board members cannot be removed except by a vote of the regular members of the Association. We decided that the newsletter must be published as soon as possible, since it had not been published since about May 1st, and since misinformation was being shown on a website, www.montobrien.com.

October 29th the Association's computer was taken from the municipal hall, and an attempt was made to register several non-board members as having signing authority on our bank account. (The bank account was then frozen.) In November we found that Stacy Molyneaux had attempted to change the permanent "domicile" of the Association to Stephanie Milford's residence. Moving the domicile of a registered non-profit organisation cannot be done even by a legitimate board. We are obliged to take action to prevent such attempts.

Our mandate: Protect the forest



Meanwhile, we are dealing with an environmental problem, because our ability to follow our mandate was hindered by poor governance at board meetings in the summer and September:

A consultation on logging on the Mont O'Brien territory (and on public land elsewhere), covering the next five years, 2008-2013, was held by the ministry of natural resources from August 20 to a September 13 deadline. At the September 9th board meeting, the topic of making an agreement to limit logging

sufficiently to protect future trails, was brought up as an emergency item. However, discussion of this was refused by the president, and then prevented by conspiring to have a false adjournment.

In late October we learned that an email message had been sent to the ministry of natural resources October 3rd by Stephanie, and again by Renato October 13th, saying that Jennifer, Charlene, and Paula "are no longer board members", and therefore could not speak for the Association to try to protect the forest.

Sending false information and preventing discussion damaged our mandate "to protect wilderness, forests, and lakes". But we have since met with the ministry, giving

them evidence that the forestry committee (Roy, Jennifer, and Paula) does represent the Association. We are again pursuing an agreement to limit damage to the forest and future trails.

DEVELOPMENT

The Association continues to pursue its goal of protecting the ecology of this natural wilderness area, preserving it for appreciation and recreation by the public for generations to come. A combination of different strategies and agreements will be needed to reach our goal.

One strategy is to have registered trails that will be used for light recreation (hiking, skiing, nature education...). Trails protect the forest because clear-cut logging is not allowed within 30 m on either side. Trails on public land must be registered with the ministry of natural resources and wildlife. The Municipality of Alayn-and-Cawood passed a resolution in the spring of 2006 to support registration of our present and future trails. In September, 2006, we requested such a resolution of support from the Pontiac MRC. The MRC responded by saying that a strategic development plan for the Mont O'Brien region would be needed in order for them to support such registration. Of course, we already knew that we should write a development plan to cover at least the next five years.

The creation of a proper development plan will help us to obtain funding, create good hiking/nature trails, improve protection, and benefit economic activity in the surrounding communities. Plan development should be done by a combined committee of some board members and regular members. Now that the operating board is legitimate, and proper democratic, collaborative process is followed in meetings, a development committee is able to work on our plan. We expect it to be completed and approved by the board by April. It will be submitted to the membership at the AGM in May of 2008.

Other strategies for fulfilling protection under our mandate will involve pursuing certain types of official protection, such as "Site floristique" and "Refuge biologique" (see "Forests" below). Although we will probably not be a "biodiversity reserve", other forms of protected areas are possible under the Québec environment ministry's Natural Heritage Conservation Act.

Along with official protection, our members will participate actively by hiking on trails and appreciating nature, both alone and in groups, by serving on a committee to help build and maintain trails and access roads, by creating and posting trail and information signs, by fund-raising activities in the community, such as the successful prize drawings of the past (cedar chest, picnic table, harvest basket), by writing funding proposals, by

attending regional committees on land management, by publishing our newsletter, and by helping us to learn about the biological diversity of the Mont O'Brien territory. We have invited FloraQuébeca to visit us again, the Club des Ornithologues to bird-watch with us, and the Mycologues of Gatineau to conduct a mushroom-hunting excursion with us next summer or fall.

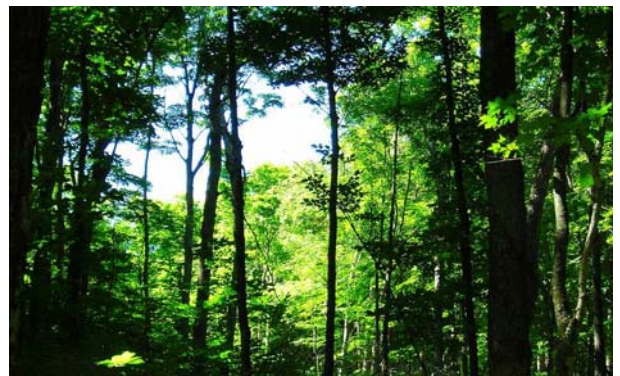
With a super group of regular members, a fine history of earnest volunteerism (volunteers having devoted many hundreds of hours to building the access road), and a promising future for the Mont O'Brien territory and the surrounding community in which it lies, we go forward with confidence for Mont O'Brien and the community.

Summer barbeque, mini-jamboree-benefit

For a change of pace, a barbeque and short hike was held at O'Brien Lake August 25th. The food was the star of the show, until Stacy showed up with amplified music from his truck!

The night of September 29th, a benefit, also with good food and music, was held at the Little Bar in Otter Lake. Jan McCambley MC'ed, and the Scaliwags played. Thank-you to June Lafleur for managing the food.

FORESTS



An old forest has natural sunlight gaps

This spring the ministry of natural resources designated many old-growth "refuges" across the Outaouais region. These are areas of productive forest that will be set aside from logging and allowed to recover to an "old growth" state, with large hollow trees, undisturbed streams, and with fallen large trees and hollow logs that provide shelter and habitat for many plant and animal species. About 200 acres on the Mont O'Brien territory, situated on a hill to the south that has not had logging for many years, will be

saved. One of our future trails will pass there, near a small stream.



"Fairy fan" mushrooms on an old mossy log

On the summit of Mont O'Brien, many colonies of the nourishing parasitic plant "Squaw-root" grow in June and July. This rare plant will obtain a "site floristique" designation for at least another 200 acres (see Fall 2006 newsletter). FloraQuébeca discovered the plants. They may return to explore other areas of the Mont O'Brien territory next summer.

Logging on the "Rocky-face hill" and about a square mile of adjacent forest is planned for the years 2008-2013. An official public forest management consultation was held from late August to early October.



A threat for 2008-2013: old trees hauled away for pulp

It was a blow to our mandate to protect the forest that we were not able to meet with the mills before September 13th (see Resolving Board problems, on page 3). The planned logging and associated road-building would destroy the small, shady old roads that we plan to have become part of our future trail network.

However, near the end of a board meeting September 25th, our forestry committee obtained a resolution that we write to the ministry and the mills representative anyway, during the final stage of the official consultation process. We did this in October. This last-ditch plea may still gain the forest and trails some protection.

Hiking Trails



Robert Wills by a hemlock 99.7 cm in diametre

One of our most important strategies for protecting the forest will be the creation of hiking trails on the 25 square miles of the territory. Some hiking trails should of course be in sunlight. Some trails can be simple, like this one crossing a wetland in Virginia:



Old planks of decay-resistant hemlock & cedar were all that was needed for this trail across a marsh in Virginia.



Some trails can be elaborate (and safer for children and elderly bird-watchers). This stairway trail at Forêt La Blanche was built by John McDonnell and volunteers.

But the main purpose of built trails (besides guiding hikers) is so that they do not increase soil erosion or plant trampling, so that hikers are reasonably safe, and so they are brought to interesting places.



This trail takes walkers safely along the side of a hill

Carefully planned trails give interesting views of nature, both close-up and far away.



Rosettes of polypore mushrooms on a fallen beech log



A Cladonia lichen in moss on rock



Sylvain Drapeau & view south from summit, May '07

Some of our trails, especially those using an old forest road, will remain simple ATV trails, but with protection against soil erosion. Trails must be carefully designed, however. Trails development will require funds for hiring an experienced supervisor for the summer - fall season for several years, as well as some paid labour, and weekend volunteer helpers. Such funds are available if planning has been carefully done.



Hemlock varnish mushroom, *Ganoderma tsugae*, in an old-growth Eastern hemlock forest in Alleyn-and-Cawood. This mushroom only grows on dead hemlock, a key old-growth tree species in the Mont O'Brien area. Sadly, all Eastern hemlock is presently threatened with extinction because of the hemlock woolly adelgid, whose spread north from New England is accelerated by climate change.

A big part of the reason we spoke out against the MegaDump is because protecting nature at Mont O'Brien means protecting it in the surrounding territory. Animals and even plants, over time, must migrate onto and off the territory. As well, for several years we have taken part in public consultations on logging contracts ("CAAFs") that cover both Mont O'Brien and the surrounding public land. Members are invited to participate in this effort through the forestry committee.

Become A Member

Help build a legacy in the Danford Lake area and have access to beautiful wilderness by becoming a member of the Mont O'Brien Association.

Membership forms and Responsibility forms may be obtained from Ralph Lafleur or Jennifer Heeney, or they may be emailed to you.

The annual membership fee is \$20.00 and includes families with children 17 years or younger.

A separate membership is required for all those 18 years or older.

Mail the membership form, responsibility form, and annual membership fee to:

Mont O'Brien Association, 10 Jondee Rd., Danford Lake, Qc, J0X 1P0

The Board meets once a month, on the last Sunday of each month.

Please give one of us a call for more information.

Thank-you to Paula Armstrong, editor, and Michèle Borchers, translator, for preparing and publishing this newsletter, and to others for mailing it! Note that **colour** electronic pdf versions of all of our newsletters, including this one, are available.

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Secretary & municipal council representative:

Charlene Scharf
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"I strongly support board training, especially for new board members and as a refresher course. A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities frees up the board to fulfill the mandate of the organization. I wish the Mont O'Brien Association well in its efforts at good governance. I look forward to the resumption of activities that encourage Mont O'Brien members to get out and enjoy the superb natural environment of Mont O'Brien."

--- Marilee DeLombard, Executive Director, Western Quebec Literacy Council, Secretary/Treasurer, Pontiac Environmental Protection (PEP), Mont O'Brien member

Treasurer:

Ralph Lafleur (819) 467-3644

Community representative

Lindsay Peck
(819) 467-4254

Community representative

Renato Livinal (819) 827-5803

Forest, Trails, & Development Committee:

Ralph, Paula, Lindsay, Jennifer, Roy, Chris
Regular members are invited to serve on the committee.

"We commend the board for their commitment to the conservation of the Mont O'Brien territory while providing educational opportunities and recreational access to the community. The protection and management of an important ecological and scenic resource such as the Mont O'Brien territory is a testament to the dedication and cooperation of board members and community volunteers past and present."

--Outaouais CEDEC

(Community Economic Development and Employability Committee)