

NEWSLETTER

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

Visit the Mont O'Brien
Association website:
www.danfordlakevillage.qc.ca/mo.html

Mont O'Brien Association
Box 904, Danford Lake
Quebec J0X 1P0

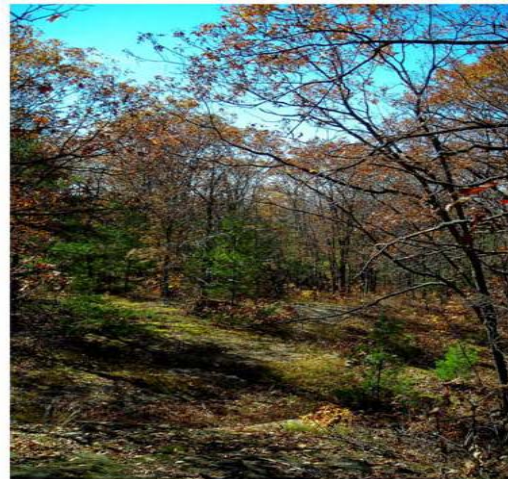
Thank-you to Paula Armstrong and Pam Miles for preparing the spring 2007 newsletter, and to Bertha and Chris Kirby for their role in managing the membership database.

Annual General Meeting Sunday, May 20, 2007 1:00-2:30 P.M.

Library, Municipal Hall
Jondee Road, Danford Lake

By attending the AGM, members will have the opportunity to elect board members and to contribute to Mont O'Brien's Five Year Strategic Plan presently under development. See page 4 re a special poll of members.

Let us know if you will be attending by contacting Joe Jamison (819) 459-3933 or by e-mail jbj@travel-net.com.



2007 Membership Renewal

Your membership is important – not only do you gain access to this beautiful piece of Québec Public land, but you also help to ensure its protection for future generations.

Membership forms are included with this mailing. Otherwise, use the web-site to download the 2007 membership form: Go to www.danfordlakevillage.qc.ca and click on our link on the left.

Forest Update

--Paula Armstrong

Fortunately there has been no further clear-cut logging in the Mont O'Brien area during the past year. Still, the year has not been uneventful! On an excursion with FloraQuébeca, John and Allen discovered the rare plant "Squaw-root" on the Mont O'Brien summit. (See the autumn 2006 newsletter for details, posted on our web-page.) This finding means that most of the Mont will probably be designated a "site floristique" with the and be protected from logging.

Of course, our concerns extend to the rest of the 25 square miles, especially since it appears that our area will not be granted Protected Area status, at least not in the next five years. I have seen the Environment Ministry's map of the Protected Areas for l'Outaouais. It includes the Dumoine River but not Mont O'Brien. Formal announcement of these Areas has been delayed because some mayors objected, saying too much land was designated in MRC Pontiac.

However, the new "Objectives" policy of the MRNF includes more protection for mature and old forest, which benefits many species of birds and other animals that use large and hollow trees, alive and producing acorns and beech-nuts, and later as snags and logs. Early in 2006, part 4a of the policy was to be implemented, setting aside over a thousand small "refuges" (50-150 ha each), evenly scattered across Québec Public forest, for development of "old growth" forest. Although these future old growth refuges have all experienced partial logging at least once in the past, they are never again to be cut or roaded.



Last year was fantastic for colourful mushrooms in our region. This is the Northern Tooth Polypore. Remember to bring your camera, and try taking nature photographs!

Feeling overburdened, the mills did not set aside the old-growth refuges as they were directed to last year by the natural resources ministry. One mill that did propose a refuge area promptly built a wide trucking road through its middle. But the MRNF held fast, and this year selected refuge areas itself. We learned recently that one of the proposed refuge areas, about 100 ha (247 acres), is in the Mont O'Brien area, about three miles south of the Mont, in one of our most wild and natural corners.

Michele Sura, our first president, took part in a 2003 meeting organized by the mills for other stakeholders: ZECs, MRCs, outfitters, FAPAQ, two lake associations, and Mont O'Brien. The meeting was called because of a 2002 amendment to the Forest Act giving us the right, if invited, to participate in the writing of the next long-term General Forest Management Plan ("PGAF"), including uses other than timber harvesting. However, we had not studied the amendment and we believed



the meeting was only to record our concerns. Michele of course said that we did not want more harvesting in our area (about 18 fifty-acre clear-cuts were carried out between 1998 and 2005). With the other participants, we received a table in September, 2003 saying our concerns

were noted and asserting that the "refuges" part of the future Objectives policy, along with the RNI standards (which prohibit clear-cutting within 30 m of a registered trail) would satisfy our concerns. The General Plan was originally scheduled to start in 2005, but it was delayed and is now scheduled to start in 2008.

We have just learned that the mills intend to deposit a PGAF plan with the ministry in May, without any real contributions from us or the MRC forester. We have followed changes in forest management rules after 2003 more closely. Because of the report of the Coulombe Commission, and because of consultation results on the Objectives policy, measures for better biodiversity protection are now possible, especially if they are in the PGAF plan and in agreements in Annual

Plans--Objective #10 legitimizes written agreements improving forest protection as part of a PGAF or Annual Plan. Since we now realise that we were supposed to take part in writing the PGAF plan, not merely to have our concerns noted, we have contacted the ministry to ask to have more specific input before the plan is deposited. There will also be a public consultation period this summer after deposit. Our experience so far is that these are superficial, but Objective #10 now says that valid protection agreements may be signed then. We applied 18 months ago to have our future trails registered with the ministry, and we must continue to press for this in order to develop interesting trails and to protect the forest. (Members, your help is wanted and needed!!)



A Hypholoma mushroom commonly known as "Brick top".

As for the Marle sector, just north of the Picanoc River, the mill has applied to log the area that the ministry had proposed as an "old-growth refuge" (see the autumn 2006 newsletter), which they built a road through. The ministry is now suggesting about 300 acres of a wild and beautiful hill and valley, with large old hemlocks, to be an "old-growth" permanent refuge, never to be cut or roaded. A wetland on its lower slopes was alive with a hundred different bird songs last May. I'm negotiating to also have some old forest close to the river set aside as refuge under this new policy.

For more information on the new Objectives policy (eleven Objectives), go to www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca, and click on "les forêts", then "Consultation du public et des partenaires", then down the page to "Objectifs de protection et de mise en valeur des ressources du milieu forestier". Then under the heading "Documents découlant des résultats de la consultation publique" go to the second choice, "Objectifs de protection et de mise en valeur des ressources du milieu forestier - Plans généraux d'aménagement forestier 2007-2012", where "format pdf 3.35 Mo" gives the French implementation document, and "version anglais" gives the English translation. Or call toll free (866) 248-6936, ask for document code 2004-3041 English or 2004-3040 French. Or email service.citoyens@mrnf.gouv.qc.ca. You can also obtain the Report of the Coulombe Commission on the ministry website or by phoning.



What's this? Cinnabar polypore on a black cherry log.



What's this? A wolf track that you might find on your walk near mud or fine sand, and a bear track? Yes, there are wolves and bears at Mont O'Brien, and you might find tracks yourself. The wolf has four toes, the bear, five. Roy Peck is knowledgeable about animal tracks and the behavior of wildlife. If asked, he will lead a walk to look for animals and their habitats, so that we may eventually compile a list of all wildlife here. (Roy's favorite animals are butterflies, however, whose tracks are very hard to see.) We would also like to look for birds, and we have invited the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais to visit (see www.coo.qc.ca).

The Board encourages members to support our local community and economy by patronising businesses (Danford corner store, hotel, florist, garage, chip stand...) and participating in community activities (clubs, churches, Wednesday night social, Fire Hall, and more).



The Board of Directors

For additional information on the Association and our plans for the future:

- Allen Noel, Co-Vice President
(613) 748-9794
 - Roy Peck, Co-Vice President
(819) 467-5473
 - John Noel, Secretary (819) 459-2479
 - Joe Jamison, Treasurer (819) 459-3933
 - Harold Emery, Road King (819) 467-5251
 - Paula Armstrong, Forest Biologist pda@cam.org
- Members at Large:
- Lindsay Peck (819) 467-4259
 - Ellis Adams (613) 234-0813

The Board meets once a month. Members may attend. See the Web-site at www.danfordlakevillage.qc.ca and click on Mont O'Brien – or call one of us to learn our schedule.



Joe Jamison and his truck--ready for anything at the 2006 Thanksgiving Family Hike



From the history (already) of Mont O'Brien--A trail clearing crew from 2002: Ron Bedford, Bertha Kirby, Chris Kirby, Georgia West, and Lana Merrifield



Our dreams for the future include a handmade boardwalk and bridge at the edge of lake and marsh. This one is at Forêt La Blanche, built by volunteers, mostly from wood on site.

Members: The Board of Directors has decided to poll the membership to see if they would like the Board to state the Association's position regarding the regional engineered landfill that is proposed in Allyn-and-Cawood. Mail the attached ballot form to C.P. 904, Danford Lake, Québec, J0X 1P0 before May 15, or members may vote by ballot at the AGM May 20, 2007, 1:00 p.m. at the municipal hall library. If you need to join or renew your membership, our treasurer will be present by 12:30.

To take advantage of better conditions
The Mont O'Brien Association
**is moving the 2007 spring hike
to August.**

Stay tuned for more details.