

## Newsletter



Lunch on the Old-growth Refuge hill

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Website: [www.montobrienassociation.org](http://www.montobrienassociation.org)

### **Mandate of the Mont O'Brien Association:**

- **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.**

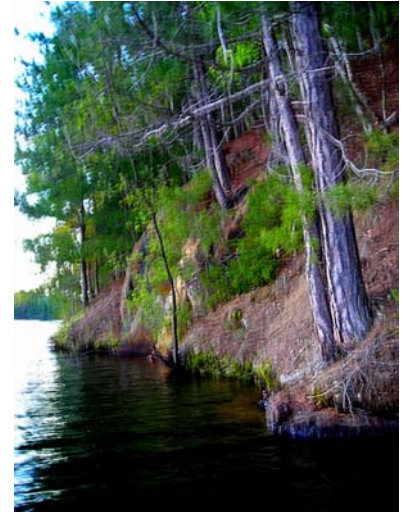
## The Mont O'Brien Biodiversity Reserve

Mont O'Brien and the forests and lakes to its southwest, along with a section of Kaz Creek, now have the status of a provisional biodiversity reserve with the Québec government.

This came about because in 2003 Association members decided at a Special General Meeting to apply for this special status. In 2005, the board submitted an official application. In 2008, the Québec environment ministry designated Mont O'Brien and territory reaching about three miles to the south-southwest as a Provisional Biodiversity Reserve.

The main purpose of the Reserve is conservation, with light recreation permitted. Fishing and hunting are still permitted, but hunting within a kilometer of the Mary Haydon trail in October will probably be restricted. Logging and new roads, cottages, shacks, hydro lines, mining, etc. will not be permitted. Hiking trails are permitted if approved by the ministry (see p. 2 re development of trails).

The Association's mandate and experience puts it in an ideal position to help with goals of the Biodiversity Reserve. More information will be available on our website.



### **The Board is Back!**

The Association became an official non-profit organisation in 2000, when it obtained its charter from the Québec REQ ("Registre des Entreprises"). Because of board problems, actions in 2007 that conflicted with Québec law, and a number of board members at variance with its charter, an

official board training session was held with Gilles Parent. We reviewed our charter and bylaws.

(continued on page 2)

**The Board, continued:** Following this review, we applied to the REQ in January of 2008 for Administrative Recourse, as discussed in our Spring 2008 newsletter. Such a Québec government administrative ruling was the simplest legal alternative to clear up the dispute regarding board membership. The REQ held a hearing in Montréal June 19, 2009, and gave its final ruling September 15, 2009, which resolved the situation. The proper board was then able to begin functioning.

The Administrative Recourse took 20 months, however, and during this period the opposing party held some mail taken from our siège social office containing cheques, and a few members sent cheques to the private address on their internet advertisement. However, the cheques were not cashed or deposited anywhere. The board now has these cheques from 2008, past their time limit and invalid. If you wish, we can return such a cheque to you. Otherwise we will safely destroy them.

The board has met regularly since September 15, 2009, and it has been very active, especially re trail development, the biodiversity reserve, and protecting the Mont O'Brien area from destructive roading and logging. We have also pursued more administrative training with COCo and PCDC.

Our registration number is 1149617178, and details about the Mont O'Brien Association's purpose, siège social, board members, etc. can be found on the Québec government (REQ) website, [www.registredesentreprises.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.registredesentreprises.gouv.qc.ca)

## Trail Development

The Mont O'Brien Association now has permission to improve the Mary Haydon trail on Mont O'Brien, and to improve and develop a smaller trail on Rocky Face Hill. The Association will see to maintenance of our access road from Highway 301. We should be able to maintain road access to Mary Haydon Trail, and most of the way to O'Brien Lake.



We greatly need development of trails during the next couple of years: for safety, to protect the environment, and to guide hikers to the most scenic

areas. Some nature information posts are also planned.

The board has applied for funding for three workers this year, to begin improving the two trails. Two will be students from the local area, the third will be a specialist. We would have about \$5,000 for materials and expenses. If we receive full funding, the specialist will work on Saturdays for several hours with volunteer Association members.

A Brushing/cleaning Day on the Mary Haydon Trail is planned for Saturday afternoon, May 8, 2010. We will hold our traditional guided Thanksgiving Family Hike in October.

Members should note that unless one is quite experienced in semi-wilderness hiking, it is best to go with a guide, or with a more experienced companion, rather than alone. An encounter with a black bear or other wild animal is possible. Or one might become lost far from a road. Dress appropriately, and tell friends/family where you are going and when you expect to return.

The Association will soon be able to provide members with a simple new map of Reserve trails/roads.



The Reserve includes several pristine lakes. Photo from a canoe paddle that was part of the 2008 Spring Hike.

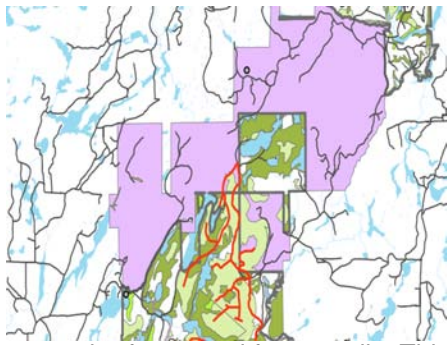
## Protecting Trails and Forest

February 11, 2008, the present Board and our Forest Committee submitted a resolution and a map to the ministry illustrating a 29 km<sup>2</sup> (11-square-mile) territory delimitation that is better for the permanent biodiversity reserve than that which the government proposed--better for nature protection and for trails, as well as better for eventual ecotourism development to benefit the local economy. The better delimitation plan includes O'Brien Lake, Copeland, Green, Tuffet and Paddy's Lakes, the Old-growth Refuge, tiny shaded old roads for trails, and stretches of the Kaz River. The northern border is at Ross's Creek. This territory is surrounded by forested public land, which provides a buffer zone. At public consultations in 2008, this better plan received broad public support, and the Pontiac MRC has passed several supporting resolutions. We thank the municipality for their past material support.

However.....see page 3 about a **threat** to the forest inside the better future biodiversity reserve delimitation.



Wild Purple Clematis blooming on the Mont O'Brien summit May 20, 2007.



Re a **threat**: to the forest and future trails: This ministry map shows the Provisional Biodiversity Reserve in mauve. At the south end is a mottled area in green, the better delimitation that we believe should be included in the Permanent Reserve. But during the next two years, until the better delimitation is accepted, this mottled area is threatened by bulldozing of wide new logging roads (red lines) and clear-cut logging. The Old-growth Refuge there is also threatened.



What we don't want--large roads shoveled and bulldozed through mature old forest, and destroying future trails.

By monitoring plans of the Québec Ministry of Natural Resources (MRNF), we should be able to prevent such despoilment. Members can help by joining a committee, or by making a donation (we are applying for the right to give tax-deduction receipts).

## Biodiversity at Mont O'Brien



Blue-spotted Salamander, from the sheltered area of the threatened Old-growth Refuge.

Pink Lady's-slipper orchid, usually found with conifer trees.



## Biodiversity is....



White-faced Skimmer dragonfly.

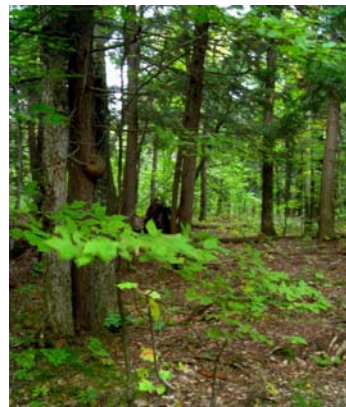
Tiny perfect Marasmius mushrooms from an MAO expedition.



## Trails are....



...on an old road built by a crew of local people about 60 years ago. These shady trails should be preserved as a cultural heritage.



...on a path through a hemlock grove.



...connected by a road for occasional use by ATVs, as long as wildlife and people are not disturbed.

## 2010 AGM

The Annual General Meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 23, 2010. Elections will be held for six of the seven Board positions (the seventh representative is a councillor appointed by the Allevyn-and-Cawood Municipal Council). To provide continuity, three directors will be elected for a term of one year, and three directors for a term of two years. Voting will be by ballot. Year 2010 memberships and cards will be available after the meeting.

Directors work with committees of regular members, who bring their decisions to the Board. Dedicated committee members are essential to the efficient and effective functioning of the Association. This means that the Association is always in need of volunteers.

Details about the AGM will be available toward the end of April. In the meantime, please give serious consideration to volunteering and taking an active part in implementation of the Association's mandate.

### BECOME A MEMBER!

Have access to a beautiful wilderness, and help build a legacy in the Danford Lake area.

First contact Lindsay Peck, Michael Walker, or Roy Peck for a 2010 Membership form, and a Member Responsibility & Key Form to fill out. The two forms may also be emailed to you (contact [pda@cam.org](mailto:pda@cam.org), or [mhwalker@ca.inter.net](mailto:mhwalker@ca.inter.net)).

Forms and fees should be mailed to **The Mont O'Brien Association, c.p. 904, Danford Lake, Qc J0X 1P0.**

The annual membership fee is \$15 for a family with children aged 17 years or younger, and \$5 for a refundable key deposit. A separate membership is required for those 18 years or older. A key & membership card may be mailed to you, or received from our treasurer. Forms, keys, and 2010 membership cards will also be available after the AGM.

Association expenses run over \$2,000 per year--for road maintenance, registration & legal fees, newsletters & stamps, website, office expenses, hikes, maps, and participation in meetings to protect the forest, wetlands, animals and waterways.

Before the work of the Mont O'Brien Association, access to this public land was very difficult, and logging of the forest by the international mills Bowater and Louisiana-Pacific provided almost no jobs or benefits to the local community. To change this, Association members have donated about ten thousand hours of volunteer labour since the year 2000.



Board President Michael Walker seen learning fine points of a fern from a FloraQuébeca expert, Prof. Gordon Macpherson

### To contact a board member:

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**Paula Armstrong, Secretary**  
[pda@cam.org](mailto:pda@cam.org)

**Roy Peck, Treasurer**  
(819) 467-5473

**Lindsay Peck, Vice-President**  
(819) 467-4259

**Lori-Ann Russett, Council Representative**  
(819) 467-4808

**Website:** [www.montobrienassociation.org](http://www.montobrienassociation.org)

**You are invited to serve on a Nature, Trails & Road, Membership, or Development Committee.** Call Roy, Lindsay, or Michael, or email Michael or Paula, and we will get back to you.

We have scheduled a trail cleaning and brushing day on the Mary Haydon Trail for May 8, 2010. Please check with a board member if you would like to help out.

Due to the spring thaw, our access road will be closed to vehicles during April, 2010. A sign is on the gate.

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*Colour electronic versions this newsletter and past newsletters are available from the website, or from a board member with email. Most newsletters are also available in French.*