

September 2013 Newsletter



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Our Mandate

The Mont O'Brien Association is a registered non-profit, charitable organisation, with membership open to the public. The Association is dedicated to protection of the Mont O'Brien Biodiversity Reserve, and to providing responsible public access, hiking trails, nature activities & education.

2013 Thanksgiving Family Hike

The 2013 Thanksgiving Hike will be held the morning of Saturday, October 12, from 9:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. The gate on Highway 301 will be open. Members should drive in on our access road and meet at the "T" junction, 4 km south of Highway 301, inside the Mont O'Brien Biodiversity Reserve. The hike will follow the Mary Haydon Trail to the summit.

Please wear sturdy shoes, dress to suit the weather, bring a snack, your family, and a guest, if you like. Dogs must be on a leash. Rain date will be October 13 at 10 a.m. Contact a board member (p. 4) if you need more information.



Photo taken in 2003: Members at the Mont O'Brien summit on the very first Thanksgiving Family Hike, 11 years ago, before the Mary Haydon Trail and the access road were finished.

C.O.O. Birders visited the new Brulé

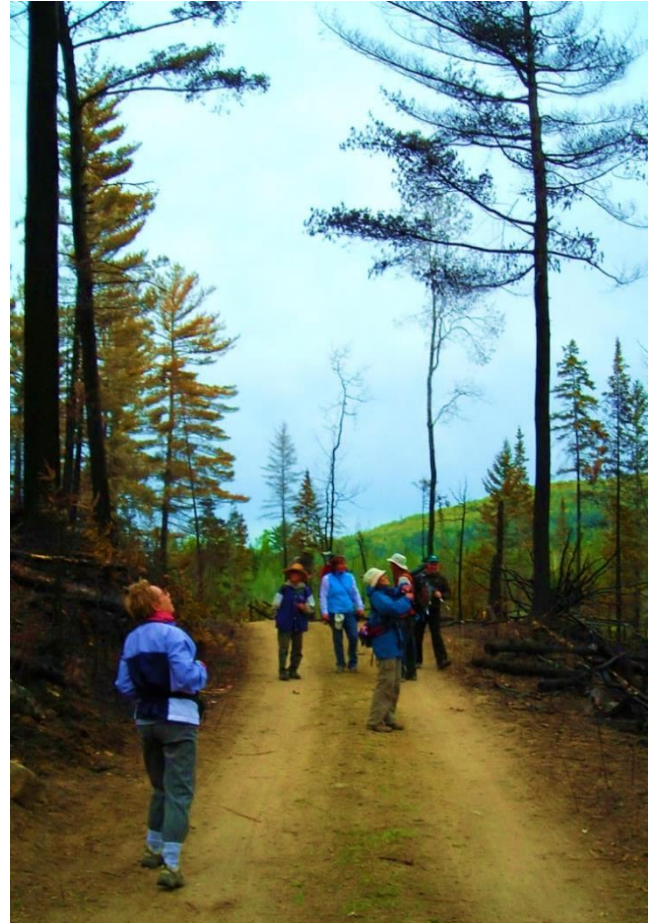
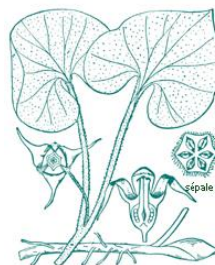
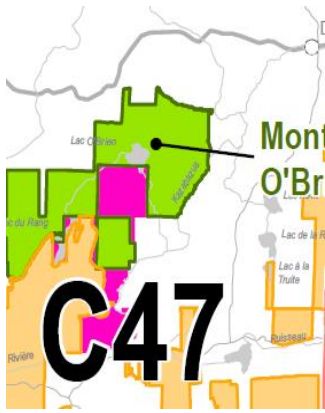


Photo May 19: Association members and Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais birders search for a woodpecker in the new 15-ha brûlé of white pines adjacent to the biodiversity reserve.



The May 5 wildfire started from a campfire near the Kazabazua River. Wildfire flames were seen by Association member Denise Renaud from a mile away. Sylvain Drapeau, in a SOPFEU helicopter, also spotted the fire. Water-bombers went in, followed by volunteer fire-fighters from Allevyn-&-Cawood and other municipalities. The fire did not spread to

Mont O'Brien. The birders identified 37 bird species during their visit to Mont O'Brien, as well as the threatened plant species "Wild ginger", likely marking the most northern occurrence of the species in Québec.



BIODIVERSITY RESERVE UPDATE:

A public consultation on increasing Outaouais "territories of interest" was held in November of 2012. A report on the consultation was published this June (available at [www.crrnto.ca / Publications/autres documents](http://www.crrnto.ca/Publications/autres documents)). This report published the submitted memoirs, including one from the Mont O'Brien Board.

Protection for "territory of interest" in pink has been increased. As well, both the MRN and a mining company with mineral exploration permits supported protection of the old forest hill located approximately under the top of the "C" on this map.

Lake O'Brien Road brushing and repair



Sortir du Bois crew sharpening their saws

The Association has about 9 km of roads for access to the Mary Haydon Trail and Lake O'Brien. Most Mont O'Brien Association members are no doubt aware that these roads are deteriorating. The roads have become eroded due to inadequate ditches and the sudden, heavy downpours of the past 2 - 3 years. Along with this, about 70% of our access roads are in sunlight, which means that tree saplings and brush grow vigorously on the roadsides, and are starting to crowd the road-bed. In 10-20 years, the forest canopy will become dense enough to shade the road so that such brush will no longer be a significant problem. Meanwhile, however, brush must be controlled. Logging companies no longer maintain these roads, the private landowner will not help to tend the roads, and The not enough Association members have volunteered to help cut roadside brush. But if brush & erosion continue uncontrolled, our access roads will soon be lost.

Therefore the board decided to employ a local non-profit organisation, "Sortir du Bois", to clear some roadsides of woody brush. Sortir du Bois has existed for 15 years in The Pontiac, playing a valuable role in training and employing

local young men in forestry skills. (See a short video about Sortir du Bois by high school student Gabriel Larivière at [www.crrnto.ca / "Contest videos"](http://www.crrnto.ca/)).

A Sortir du Bois crew supervised by an experienced foreman is clearing the worst two km of roadsides, concentrating on the road to Lake O'Brien. If the board is satisfied with their work, they will clear another two km next spring,

The Association has also hired David Tanner to repair the worst roadbed erosion on parts of the road to Lake O'Brien, thanks to a small grant from the Municipality of Allevyn-& Cawood.

We will need to continue road repair and roadside brushing for several more years, which will require added funding. Therefore, the Association will use its charitable status in a campaign for protecting our road access and to enhance recreation and other facilities at the lake and on our trails. Income tax receipts will be issued by our treasurer.

Preservation of road access is necessary, not only for members to enjoy the Mont O'Brien area of public land, but also to attract more visitors and tourists to enjoy the beauty of our area and to learn about the biodiversity that the Reserve protects.



COO excursion—37 bird species, May 19.

Tree and Shrubs Identification Excursion

An excursion to identify our Trees and Shrubs, was held on Sunday morning, July 21. However, this was just three days after the major wind-storm that brought trees down on our access road and across The Pontiac. Our little group could not drive all the way to Mont O'Brien, thus we parked and walked ahead on the first section of our road. Nevertheless, we identified **21 species** (ten trees & eleven shrubs). Mature butternut (a threatened tree species) was found—here the tree is at the northwestern limit of its natural distribution in Québec. Butternut trees may also be seen on the east side of the Municipal Hall in Danford.

October 2013 Hikes: See next page....

Group Hikes (4) in October:

"Feel Fit" Hike (with Muriel Davies' group from Bristol) Tuesday, Oct. 8, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., on the Mary Haydon Summit trail. Mont O'Brien members may take part. Meet at the gate on the highway at 10 a.m.

Possible mushroom identification stroll—This would be for members, 3 – 5 p.m. the afternoon of October 8, depending on sufficient demand—on the "Easy Trail". Call/email M. Walker or email P. Armstrong before October 7 if you are interested.

Thanksgiving Family Hike to the summit:

Saturday morning, October 12, 9 a.m. Meet at the "T" road junction, inside the Reserve (see p. 1 of this newsletter). Rain date Oct. 13 at 10 a.m.

CPAWS-OV (Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society, Ottawa Valley Section) will bring a group of members from Ottawa/Gatineau on Sunday October 20 for a late Fall excursion to discover the Mary Haydon Trail. Please let a board member know if you would like to come along.



Solitary Hikers please note:

(1) A small printed map of the Mary Haydon Trail is available from board members Kim Milford or Marie-Thérèse Kazeef.

(2) Licenced hunting and fishing is permitted in Québec biodiversity reserves such as Mont O'Brien. The rifle hunting season for deer starts November 2 this year. We do not recommend that you hike at Mont O'Brien during the rifle hunting season.

(3) The Mary Haydon Trail is within the Mont O'Brien Provisional Biodiversity Reserve; it is registered with the Québec Environment Ministry, and was created by the Mont O'Brien Association.

This is a wilderness trail, however, and you use it at your own risk. The trails are flagged but they are not patrolled. The use of Lake O'Brien and the roads is also at your own personal risk.

Please dress for conditions, and keep your children close and supervised. Please respect the Conservation Plan of the Reserve (available at the Québec Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Parks website:

www.MDDEFP.gouv.qc.ca in the section on Québec biodiversity). Mary Haydon Trail length is about 5 km. Length is about 7 km if you start at the north trailhead, follow the trail to the summit and continue down the east side of the mont, then follow the road from the east trailhead back to your vehicle at the north trailhead (or do the reverse). Elevation change is about 150 metres.

Regional Presence:

The Mont O'Brien Association will be represented in the future on the board of CREDDO ("Regional Council on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Outaouais"), which receives funding from the Québec MDDEFP, by John McDonnell of CPAWS-Ottawa Valley. John will speak for us regarding the integration of biodiversity protection reserves in overall land-use planning, for increasing the local economic benefits of these reserves, and for using biodiversity reserves to mitigate climate change.



Become a Mont O'Brien Member and help to build a legacy in the Danford Lake area!

To have access, and to promote stewardship, the Association must register members each year. We keep the annual registration fee as low as possible (\$15).

Please see Kim or Marie-Thérèse to register, or download the Membership form and the "Responsibility form" from our website, www.montobrienassociation.org

Fill in the forms (please write clearly, and include an email address if possible), and mail the forms with the \$15 annual fee to:

Mont O'Brien Association, P.O. Box 904, Danford Lake, Qc J0X 1P0

Kim or Marie-Thérèse will then send you a year 2013 or 2014 membership card and a new code to the gate lock*.

To contact a board member:

Michael Walker, President
(819) 467-2219
mhwalker@ca.inter.net

Lindsay Peck, Vice-president
(819) 467-4259

Paula Armstrong, Secretary
pauladalgaardarmstrong@gmail.com

Marie-Thérèse Kazeef, Membership
(819) 467-2580
marie-theresek@sympatico.ca

Kim Milford, Membership, and Municipal Council Rep.
(819) 467-4077

BOARD MEETINGS are held in Danford Lake, normally on the second Monday evening of each month. Please contact your board members with questions, and with your own information about the trails, etc. The next AGM will be held May 25, 2014—please plan to attend!

***GATE LOCK:** This summer, the combination lock on the gate was damaged-- the shaft of the lock was slightly twisted. It is quite stiff. To open the lock, you must align the code carefully, then jerk the lock body down forcefully.