



WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Action Saint-François is now five years old in fact, on August 5th 1992, our group was incorporated as a non-profit organization. Our mandate: restore the banks of the waterways in the Saint-François river watershed. Our problem: improve water quality and respect aquatic and riverine ecosystems. Our strength: hundreds of citizens ready to participate in a concrete project involving individual and collective responsibility.

Five years, not long when you stop to think about it and so much has been accomplished. Let's take a look: dump sites cleaned up along 20 streams; 115 metric tonnes of garbage picked up (30 tonnes this season); some 250 volunteers participated at least once in the clean up operations; almost 6000 homes visited; 2300 people became members (for at least one year); currently 750 active members. Not a bad five year plan! We certainly have reason to rejoice. These accomplishments reflect the voluntary mobilization of the populace as well as the concrete application of the slogan "think globally and act locally".

In light of these results two important questions arise: what is the en-

vironmental impact of our action? Obviously, many stream banks are now free of an important quantity of metal which instead of deteriorating in the environment has been recovered and recycled. A positive concrete action with admittedly limited impact when one considers the seemingly innumerable sources of pollution associated with our way of life. The second question: what is the social impact of our action? In pursuing its campaign to increase public awareness of water related issues, Action Saint-François goes well beyond its simple clean up mandate. Our work becomes much more meaningful if and when each individual contacted begins to view our way of life and our vision of progress in an environmental

context. An environmental approach implies that we become conscious of our responsibilities and our power as consumers of our resources.

Action Saint-François is an unassuming group much less important than the cause for which it works. It is a tool for social and environmental action permitting people to come together and work for a common cause. After five years it is important to take stock and to clarify our orientations for the years to come. Thus, the board of directors held a special meeting in order to revise our mandate (if necessary) and to discuss ways and means of fulfilling it. All this of course not losing sight of our basic objectives. The results of the meeting will be presented at the upcoming annual general assembly. By the way our activities continue (some clean ups and a lot of inventories) until the snow sets in, so if you are interested...

William Lucy



Cleanup operation in Magog Township

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Cleaning up the banks

Here we are amidst abandoned, derelict cars!

That was said by a lot of clean up volunteers, this season. And we certainly saw a vast number of old wrecks as well as many other types of trash. Between May and September, some 70 volunteers participated in 35 cleanup operations for a total of 900 work hours. These mop-up operations resulted in more than 30 metric tons of garbage being removed from the banks of 10 waterways. Eighty-seven percent of the material collected was recycled (see Table page 3). Bravo and thank you everyone!

The initial cleanup program was slightly changed during the course of the season. Certain sites found this summer, whether by chance or by the inventory team, were given priority and integrated into this summer's activities. As a consequence, other waterways were put aside temporarily and others needed much less work than previously thought. This is notably the case of a stream in Hatley Township which we have temporarily named, "des Arbres Tombés". A significant percentage of the trash on this stream was found to be outside the flood plain and consequently was not picked up. After all, our mandate is the bank and the flood plains of the waterways.

Once again this year, Action Saint-François benefitted from an Environment Canada subsidy via the Action 21 program. Let's recall that Action 21 is a program aimed at community organizations to implement projects concerning the conservation, the protection and the improvement of the natural environment. This \$12 000 subsidy covers only the cleanups and represents 48% of the total cleanup budget. The other fifty-two percent is furnished by Action Saint-François



First cleanup operation of the year on the "de la Pente forte" stream in Stanstead East. From left to right : Ghislaine Durocher, Louis Boivin, Louis Tessier and Benoît De Champlain



Clean up operation using containers (Olympic métal) and a crane (Les grues Martel et fils) in Rock Forests "d'Or" stream.

(volunteers, donated equipment, metal sales and membership dues) and by various businesses in the form of discounts, or gratuities on goods and services. Environment Canada's financial assistance allows for greater structuring of the operations and at the same time to have more of them.

Cherry river wetland

Over the course of next season, Action Saint-François will collaborate with the Friends of the Cherry River Wetland (Les Amis du marais de la Rivière aux Cerises, LAMRAC) to clean up a site bordering the marsh

which is located in Magog Township. This non-profit organization has as its goal the protection and enhancement of the wetland. Since the marsh was used as a dump site during numerous years, its enhancement must necessarily be preceded by a partial cleanup which ties in very well with the goal of Action Saint-François, after all, our objective is to improve the quality of the aquatic milieu in the St-Francis River watershed. Late this season preliminary work was carried out in order to allow us access to the principal dump site for May of 1998.

(Cleaning : contd page 3)



THE SHERBROOKE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The quality of the water in the Saint-François river has improved in the last few years, as we pointed out in our last issue. This encouraging fact can be in part explained by the opening of a water treatment plant in the Sherbrooke region in 1991. Here are a few facts concerning this plant and the way it functions.

A brief history

In June 1984, the municipalities of Ascot, Fleurimont, Rock Forest, Lennoxville and Sherbrooke united in their effort to find a solution to the problem of used water emptying into the surrounding waterways.

At the time, the 125 000 inhabitants of these cities emptied about 82 million litres of water into the Magog and Saint-François rivers. The municipalities of these cities then



Sherbrooke Region Water Purification Board

Sherbrooke region water treatment plant, inaugurated in 1991.

formed the Water Purification Board of the waters of the Sherbrooke region (RAERS). An agreement was signed concerning the construction,

the redemption and the use of the common infrastructures for the treat-

(Treatment : contd page 4)

(Cleaning : contd from page 2)

Finally, taking note of the inventories carried out this season, we can say that, a tremendous amount of work awaits us for the next few years. Accordingly, it will allow us to easily build a diversified program permitting the participation of a greater number of volunteers both young and not so young. Our apologies to those of you who expected to be contacted but were not, take note that next spring all of you will be contacted and pressganged into working of the cleanup whether you want to or not. Ha! Ha! Well, have a good autumn and enjoy the winter.

Charles Coulombe

Summary of operations - 1997 (incomplete results)

Stream	Metal (kg)	Glass & plastic (kg)	Tires (kg)	Trash (kg)	Total (kg)
De la Pente forte	2 309,1	210	190	810,0	3 519,1
Enchanteur	1 400,0	0	172,7	0	1 572,7
Pomeroy	3209,1	0	204	932,7	4 345,8
Chaloux	81,8	0	0	0	81,8
Nick	127,3	0	0	281,8	409,1
Des Arbres tombés	563,6	0	162,9	64,4	790,9
Paré	863,7	0	444	319,6	1 627,3
D'Or	7 850,0	110	336	1 063,6	9 359,6
Des Vignobles	1 872,7	0	24	176	2 072,7
Aux Cerises	4 814,5	290	0	n.d.	5 104,5
Total	23 091,8	610	1 533,6	3 648,1	28 883,5

(Treatment: contd from page 3)

ment of the waste water. In February 1989, another agreement was reached for the collection and treatment of septic tank sludge from some 25 000 people living in rural areas. The following municipalities are included in the agreement : Ascot, Brompton township, Deauville, Fleurimont, Lennoxville, Orford township, Rock Forest, Saint-Élie-d'-Orford, Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley and Sherbrooke. In all the RAERS serves about 150 000 people (RAERS 1994).

A lot of construction had to be undertaken in order to fulfil the boards mandate. In June 1989, five years after the creation of RAERS, construction began on the water treatment plant. The plant is located at the northern end of Sherbrooke on Highway 143. Its official inauguration was on June 19, 1991. Concurrently with the building of the plant, seven pumping stations and 30 kilometers of pipes were being installed, their function being to deliver used water to the plant. Hydro-carbon and flood detectors, and flow controls were installed along the system in order to more precisely control the intake at the plant. The water treatment centre cost \$60 million: 55 from the provincial government and 5 from the municipalities involved.

Functionning of the plant

The water treatment station annually treats 30 million cubic meters of used water and 11 000 cubic meters of septic tank sludge. Water treatment is a four step process. First of all, the solid material is removed via grills, desanding procedures and defatting techniques. The resulting material is sent to the landfill (about 700 metric

tonnes annually). Then, by various flocculation processes (adding polymers and iron chloride) and settling the sludge is separated from the water. Following this, biological filtration which uses bacteria fixed to small stones (biodites) assures the digestion of pollutants in the water. Finally, this biofiltered water passes through a channel under 112 ultraviolet lights. The ultraviolet light destroys coliforms still present in the water and completes the treatment of used water which is then emptied into the Saint-François river a few hundred meters distant.

The sludge, separated during the second step, also must undergo several treatments before leaving the plant. The first step involves the thickening of the material by a gravity system. The result is about 6% solid matter. During the second stage the sludge is stabilized by the addition of lime. Thirdly, by using press filters the material is dehydrated producing sludge containing about 45% solid matter. The following stage (the conditionning) consists of breaking up the sludge and, once again, adding lime depending on type of use foreseen. During the fifth step, the sludge is taken to a nearby site where it is either composted or stored with future use in mind. Of the 12 000 tonnes produced annually only 3 500 are limed and 8 000 are composted. The waters draining from this site are collected and returned by truck to the water treatment plant and processed.

Our heritage to future generations

Conforming with its mission the board promotes its slogan: "treated water returns to the river; value added

sludge returns to the land". This slogan explains well the importance, attached by the board, to the integrated achievement of its mandate as a function of its mission and objectives. The quality of the river benefits, without a shadow of a doubt from the work of the board to conserve our natural heritage and to profit fully from our waterways we must all contribute to cleaning up the water. Finally, lets not forget that the less we pollute the water, the less complex and costly it will be to treat it.

Simon Trépanier

Source:

Sherbrooke Region Water Purification Board



INTERVIEW WITH MANON FLEURY

The energetic Manon Fleury a Sherbrooke resident for a number of years and an active Action Saint-François (ASF) member since April 1997 participated in cleanup operations in Stanstead, Rock Forest and Magog. Here, she shares with us some of her impressions regarding environmental action and her participation with Action Saint-François.

ASF - How did you come to know about ASF?

MF - It was through newspaper articles last year and at the Fleurimont Landscape and Outdoor Decoration show this past April where I met and spoke to some ASF members. A few weeks later a recruiter knocked on my door. I had forgotten somewhat about the organization but, by chance, my ASF pamphlet was on the table so I said to myself: "It's time, I'm ready".



ASF - Did you join intending to participate?

MF - Yes. It corresponds exactly to something that I can do. Acting alone you can quickly lose your motivation, but being with a good team sharing a common interest is very stimulating. We laugh, enjoy ourselves and have fun. There is the environment as well as the social aspect.

ASF - After having participated in a few cleanups can you say that your expectations have been fulfilled?

MF - Oh yes!! Around lakes and along waterways in the Laurentians and near Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu I had already seen old dump sites. It's quite a shock to suddenly come

upon piles of garbage and rusty metal. It's an abrupt way to spoil a pleasant walk along a secluded stream. I've done a little of this type of work but never with an organization such as ASF.

ASF - Have you participated at all with any environmental organization?

MF - No, I've never had the occasion to. It's somewhat a question of circumstances. I find it interesting to be doing it now.

ASF - During one of the cleanups you said that when you were a child you told your father that you would like to buy a pickup and gather up trash here and there. Now it's becoming reality.

MF - (laughs) Perhaps I had a little too much foresight. Thirty years ago when talking about the environment I was considered, by friends, to be something of a crackpot. Now, organizations exist, it's more tangible. People are now more aware of and feel more concerned about the environment.

ASF - It has been years now that the environment has been a topic of discussion. Are changes in personal habits coming too slowly?

MF - Yes and it's a pity. When the facts are known and the alarm is sounded why does it take 20 to 30 years before anything happens. And when we do begin to act it can take just as long before any real improvements are made. Sometimes it never happens. In a few minutes we can pollute an environment for generations to come. I find that an organization such as ASF is useful for doing some of the work needed in the environment. If 1000 people each picked up a piece of metal from alongside a stream there

would be that much less left to deteriorate.

ASF - Do you have the impression that over the years your friends have become more aware of the environment and are actually doing something about it?

MF - I think so. In any case, being a mother I can have a certain influence on my children in making them more aware of the environmental problems. People talk more about pollution today than they did thirty years ago; more information is available today. But, as for actually participating, doing something concrete I think it's marginal. Anyway, being more aware tends to make us pay more attention to what we are doing. My adolescents are more aware now than my generation was at their age. When I was twenty and talking about the environment it was as though I was talking about something that didn't exist.

ASF - Is there enough being done to increase peoples' awareness?

MF - I don't believe so. We must never stop talking about the environment lest we lose our good habits. According to a friend, who is involved in recycling, it seems that the quality of collected material has diminished during the past five years. Is it because we are consuming less or have we let slide recycling? Also perhaps, talking about the environment is neither a political nor an economic priority for the various levels of government. Maybe the environment doesn't give much return but if we don't do something, cleaning it up will eventually cost a fortune. We lack long term vision. Take the ozone layer: even if we achieve a zero deficit and everyone is employed what does it matter if we are all fried by ultraviolet. However, I believe that there are enlightened people in all walks of life. It's a gradual process and one we need to believe in.

Thank you Manon



WORD FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR

Action Saint-François is healthy

Much has happened since the last edition. Once again this year a large number of people participated in our activities. More than 80 people gave some 1000 hours of volunteer work. Action Saint-François is healthy.

On the financial side. In addition to the subsidy from the Secretariat for Regional Development (to provide a permanent co-ordinator) and from Environment Canada (for clean up activities) we received 3700\$ from Human Resources. That enabled us to employ two ecology students: Cathy Bergeron and Robert Léo Gendron. Human Resources also made it possible for us to have someone for 34 weeks to coordinate and carry out **inventories of sites to clean up**. Since June, numerous inventories have been made by a team comprising employees and volunteers. In all 106.5 kilometers have been walked, fifty-four streams visited, 16 of which have important dump sites, 25 others with dispersed garbage and 11 trash free. To date we estimate that 5% of the watershed has been inventoried (from ASFs inception).

Door-to-door campaigning remains our principle source of fund raising as well as our best tool to directly meet people. Since last march the north and west wards of Sherbrooke, Saint-Denis-de-Brompton and a few other sectors have been covered. The recruitment team is nearly finished in Rock Forest and the areas selected for autumn include Lennoxville, North Hatley and Sherbrooke East.

The members came together at a corn-husking party held at the ski hut at Bellevue mountain on August 24th.



July 5th 1997: Action Saint-François garage sale at the corner of Ontario and Desgagnés.

About thirty people came. The garage sale raised 800\$ and allowed several members and friends of Action Saint-François to get together.

On the question of **visibility** the clean up of d'Or stream in Rock Forest was covered by several members of the regional media. As well we had information kiosks at the Fleurimont landscape and Exterior Decoration show, at the Grand Ruche and at the canoe descent of the Saint-François river.

On the question of popular education: in the framework of ecology courses at the Le Phare secondary school, Action Saint-François gave a conference and for the Maurilac school commission we recorded a video interview intended for the young secondary students.

This summer Action Saint-François had its biggest paid work force in its history giving support to the volunteer activities. Chantal Bouchard, Pierre Dansereau, Étienne Fisch, Robert Léo Gendron, Annie Jacques, Mathieu Lippé, Danny Mar-

chand, Guy Richer and Patrick Tétrault made up the recruiting team; Cathy Bergeron and Robert Léo Gendron in inventories; Pascal Dansereau and Sandra Roux in the coordination of inventories; Charles Coulombe as clean up co-ordinator and myself Serge Nielly as general co-ordinator. Imagine William preparing the pay...

As for myself, I continue the office work so that everything proceeds efficaciously in a well ordered, regular, clear and secure manner. I'm at the office every week day from 9 AM to 5 PM. Come to see me. Give me the opportunity to answer your question and share the dynamism of Action Saint-François. I am proud to be among you and to devote my energy to the advancement of the project that unites all of us.

SERGE NIELLY
general co-ordinator



WATER: A COMMON WEALTH TO DEFEND

Given its ubiquity in our daily lives we tend to not appreciate water's value and importance. When we get up at 7:30 Saturday morning to do something simple like clean up stream banks on someone else's property, we feel as though we are doing something freely to improve the quality of the water that belongs to everyone.

We feel that we act in the interest of our community, the collective and our planet so that the world will be better. Unfortunately, if our intentions are pure regarding the conservation of "pure" water, certain others have a personal interest in their vision of water management. The Montreal water privatization projects sounded the alarm and pointed out certain dangers in the privatization of potable water. Another troublesome aspect of privatization involves the exploitation of the water table by private enterprise (private meaning: not available for public use) to the detriment of the rights of those who live in the region to be exploited. The citizens of Franklin, just south of Valleyfield, know something about it. The intention to exploit the water table in that region provoked lively debate throughout the divided community. Underscoring the debate was the fact of some artesian wells drying and the lowering (occasionally) of the water table in some areas.

The predominance of the economic aspect is striking in the current discourse on the subject of the water management. Municipalities have an eye on privatization in order to relieve themselves of the cost inherent in the maintenance of infrastructures. Several French and Quebec companies have expressed interest in the privatization and repair of Quebec's waterworks. Water is certainly the perfect investment!! Everybody uses it everyday (out of necessity). Community groups and organizations denounce such exploitation because it results in the transfer of wealth from the public to the private sector. It also leads to loss of jobs and a diminution of services.

On the other hand, we don't talk a lot about detachment: those among the elected who jettison their public

responsibilities for private; those using bottled water taken from the water table while ignoring the protection of surface waters; those who, on the era of globalization, think of making a profit on such a vital resource; those who continue to mishandle this good old planet. What's more, we broach only very discretely the question of public health which is preserved by the guarantee of good quality potable water (absence of micro-organisms and chemical toxins). To what end the great ideas and concepts put forward by the "great ones" of the world? What's the sense of "sustainable development", "watershed management", "partnership"? What are the values our social democracy defends?

The present debate on water management demonstrates the urgent need for an official government policy. Such a policy must not be drawn up by private enterprise nor by bureaucrats and politicians preoccupied by the national debt. The public must be present at the "symposium on water management in Quebec" which will take place this coming December.

We intend, by way of a written report, to make clear to the government our position vis à vis the water management question. We have some reference material at our disposal in order to build our case but we welcome any information that will enrich our efforts. Those of you interested in the development of our memorandum please call our office at 563-5362.

A water policy will have consequences on our daily lives and on the lives of future generations. Real policy comes from public participation.

Clothilde Gingras



**ACTION
ST-FRANÇOIS**

C.P. 291
Sherbrooke (Québec)
J1H 5J1 - (819) 563-5362

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Collaborators : Clothilde Gingras,
Simon Trépanier, William Lucy,
Serge Nielly, Charles Coulombe
and Susan Blaylock.

Lay out : Luc Loignon.

ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN AUGUST 1992 BRINGS TOGETHER CITIZENS CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THE GROUP IS INTERESTED IN THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF AQUATIC MILIEUS OF THE SAINT-FRANÇOIS RIVER WATERSHED. CLEAN UP, EROSION CONTROL AND REPLANTING PROJECTS ALONG WATERWAYS AND FLOOD PLAINS ARE ORGANIZED BY ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS. WE WANT TO HEIGHTEN AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION TO THE NECESSITY TO ACT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE HYDROLOGICAL NETWORK OF OUR TERRITORY. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE 25\$. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL US AT (819) 563-5362.



ACTION ST. FRANÇOIS'S NEW MEMBERS FROM MARCH 15th 1997 TO SEPTEMBER 15th 1997

FLEURIMONT
SYLVAIN AUGER
ARMANDE BEAUDOIN
MANON M. BELISLE
LYNDA-LISE BIBEAU
CLAUDE BILODEAU
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MARCEL GARNEAU
JACQUES HOULE
MARGUERITE SÉVIGNY

318 NEW MEMBERS HAVE JOINED ASF WITHIN THE CURRENT YEAR, TOTALIZING 733 IN-ORDER MEMBERS
