

# Fall 2020 Newsletter



AMIS du LAC  
FRIENDS of the LAKE

The fall colours are spectacular this year, reminding us just how privileged we are to be a part of this wonderful place. We don't normally send out a Fall newsletter, but this has not been a normal year. Many families and friends were present this summer, but the lake stayed remarkably quiet as social distancing kept us separated. The club was closed for the first time but the laker spirit rose up and some unique community activities were organised. Thanks to technology, some of these events were shared with those who were unable to be here with us.

As for Amis du lac activities this summer, we adapted and successfully moved forward on a number of priorities. Getting volunteers to assist was not a problem, but the logistics were. All said and done, it was a very successful season for us.

Here is an update on the numerous initiatives and activities of Amis.

## **Mini-Biofilia Environmental Project**

As outlined in our summer newsletter we funded with the municipality a "mini-Biofilia" environmental study this past season. The study is mostly complete – one last water test is necessary. Below is a synopsis of the preliminary findings from the two scientists. A complete report will be published late this year or early next.

This year was unusual for the lake environmentally due to the pandemic – less boat traffic, less people = less septic activity, etc. This resulted in lower levels of indicators of environmental degradation than previous measurements (see details below). Perhaps one positive result of the pandemic! Over the long-term however, climate change, warmer air and water temperature, bigger boats, more and bigger cottages, etc. affect phytoplankton (microscopic algae) and the transparency of the water (again see details below) and result in environmental degradation.

Phosphorus in the water (naturally occurring but greatly increased by human activity) directly influences the growth of phytoplankton. Measurements so far have indicated a 20% decrease in phosphorus compared to the previous 2 years – a positive result perhaps due to decreases in human activity.

Periphyton (the algae on the lake bottom close to shore) was measured by a team of six volunteer teens over the summer and compared to the measurements taken in 2009 in the Biofilia study. Again, the results were positive – an approximately 33% decrease in the thickness of the periphyton (or algae) was observed. The pandemic...??

Independent of this study Jean-Louis has noticed a marked decrease in visibility over the last three years at the thermocline (the area where water temperature changes from warmish to

coldish – around 5-7 metres deep). The water becomes very opaque. This year it was less apparent as the season progressed. (Good news....again, the pandemic??)

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) are a commonly occurring and almost always benign alga in lake water. Cyanobacteria were measured at the thermocline and found to be quite concentrated as were phosphorus levels. Testing revealed that there were almost zero toxins present and the water was drinkable (with filtration and boiling).

Results from this year, given pandemic related lack of human activity, were mostly quite positive. This may be an aberration and your association is seriously considering repeating portions of this study next year or later when activity on Lac-des-Seize-Iles returns to normal.

We await the final report

### **Jean-Louis Courteau and CIEL**

Our association funded Jean-Louis Courteau's efforts on our lake again this year with a \$5,000 grant. JL had a successful summer; he and another diver cleared all the mifoil from the entire shoal between Cunningham's Island and Blueberry Island. He also checked Big Bay Shoal for regrowth, as well as Prentice's Island, removing anything new.

During his dives he discovered five big modern nautical batteries. He removed them. Apparently, they had been dumped together. Batteries are a real issue in our lake. Jean-Louis has been pulling them out everytime he finds one. Estimates are there could be hundreds of batteries sitting on the bottom of the lake. Many of these are 80+ years old and crumble when disturbed. Thankfully, JL carefully removes what he finds.

The algae bloom that has been going on since 2018 on the thermocline zone (roughly 12 to 20 feet down), was a lot better this summer, although not gone. JL commented on how it was good to again have nice visibility while diving.

CIEL's little museum was closed this summer, sadly but for obvious reasons. It gave Jean-Louis time to continue the immense work of entering artifact data in the computer. There are over 700 artifacts and each one has it's story, pictures, occasional video and internet links and data.

Big news - CIEL will be the organizer and producer of a special event next spring at the lake.

An experimental archeologist accompanied by specialists from two museums will build a dugout canoe, using only techniques and tools that were used in prehistoric times.

This is a first in Québec. The whole adventure will be documented in video by Richard Lahaie. The completed canoe along with the video and tools will then be the object of exhibitions in different history and archeology museums. After which the dugout canoe will come back to CIEL for permanent exhibition. Very exciting.

This will be a major opportunity for scientists to study the making of such boats and our understanding of how they were built.

Finally, another bit of exciting news, Jean-Louis is proud to announce that a book he has been writing (for a long time) will finally be published in September, 2021. It is called *Seize Îles* and is a collection of short stories about the lake. We can't wait to get our hands on it.

### **Loon activities**

Our efforts on awareness produced three significant signs that raise awareness of the loon families, warning boaters to be on the lookout and to slow down. We will be pushing the municipality to install the fourth sign next spring.

This spring, Jean-Louis installed all three of our floating loon nests (head, middle and foot of the lake). Monitoring revealed that the platforms were not used this year, but in speaking with Martin Picard (our loon expert from Développement ornithologique Argenteuil) we know it can take a few years before they get utilized. Sadly, this year there were no loon chicks spotted, anywhere on the lake. As mentioned earlier, this spring was cooler and that has an impact on the loon mating. A nasty species of black fly that targets the loons specifically is a real problem in cooler spring seasons. These flies viciously and relentlessly attack the loons, making it very difficult to mate and protect their eggs. There are other things that can impact the loon mating, some of which are related to water quality. Boat traffic was rather light, so we don't see that as having an impact. Hopefully, next spring we will have a bunch of loon babies to follow throughout the summer.

### **Lake Life activities**

Last summer we launched the **Lake Life** and **Kids on the Lake** initiatives. Lake Life is a branding exercise, focusing on sustainability; how we can lessen our impact on the lake and what we can do to nurture it. Kids on the Lake is a juniors' initiative, inviting the next generation to build on the Lake Life sustainability concepts and to bring the spirit of Amis du lac into the future.

This summer we saw Bob (Amis du Lac) and the Club join forces to present *Green Bay Bingo in Boats with Live Music*. The notion was to bring some form of community activity, during these difficult times, that would be something like a Club event but observing the restrictions and guidelines of the Government of Quebec (COVID-19). The combination of Bingo, fundraising and live music by local musicians was a huge success. The Bingo/Music event happened twice and, with the generous donation (auction) of Jane Magee's beautiful Blueberry Island painting, the club raised more than \$11,000 towards their capital fund goal to rebuild the docks. Labour Day weekend saw the final music presentation, "Benningtons and Rum Band - Mega Jam 2020" which was broadcast live on Facebook. The Lake Life spirit in everyone helped us rise above the challenges and, if only for a brief time, allowed us to be together, regardless of where we were. There are discussions about making this an annual event.

Our Lake Life t-shirts (very limited production) appeared to be a big success. Volunteers who helped with the mini-Biofilia data gathering were rewarded with a limited edition t-shirt, as were a few other volunteers. We will be making a small adjustment to the layout of the shirt and will offer them for sale (online shop) next spring. We will also be offering other products that reflect our position on sustainability and are ecologically friendly. More to come on that.

## **Municipal news**

The Municipality has been fairly busy this summer considering the year.

The public beach area has had a total refresh with new landscaping (sod, tree plantings, paths etc.). Hopefully this will attract new tourism and be beneficial to local taxpayers without lake access.

Construction has also begun on the long ago planned toilet facilities beside the gazebo adjacent to the parking lot. This will be of service to tourists from the Aerobic Corridor and the general public passing through the village. It will also act as a convenience to our residents and perhaps as a change room if the skating rink is erected in the parking lot.

The municipality is looking to control the parking lot that services lake residents and eliminate non-resident parking in the lot. There is space for 130 vehicles and their first crack at control is to issue one parking pass to each property on the lake not serviced by road. This is not an adequate solution as there are significantly more cottages on the lake not serviced by road than there are parking spaces. Many of these require more than one space (co-ownership, visiting children, family and friends). At the only council meeting with distanced public attendance on September 17 this issue was front and centre in the question period. Lake residents presented the problem - we hope and believe the council got the message.

At the above mentioned council meeting in response to a question the mayor stated that all of the older more dangerous/tippy docks would be replaced in the 2021 year. Our residents who pay for those docks look forward to this improvement.

Finally we are approaching the last year of the term of this council. Dave Estall and Corina Lupu (who represent most lake/seasonal residents) will have both been on council for 8 years at the election next fall. We thank them for their service to our community. We do need representation from the lake so if there is anyone who would step up to run for council please talk to either Dave or Corina.

### **Hammonds Bay buoys**

As previously mentioned, we met with municipal DG Simon Leclerc and discussed a number of possibilities with regard to the buoys in Hammonds Bay, which direct traffic away from the milfoil area in the centre of the bay. It was agreed that a simpler, less burdensome approach could be taken. The municipality has agreed to take full responsibility for signage and buoys in Hammond's bay. While there were no new buoys installed, we understand that something is being developed. Again, we will continue to work with the DG to ensure boat safety and ecological responsibility remain a priority with respect to signage.

### **Calendars**

Amis du Lac calendar sales were a huge success this year. Thank you to Tim Boswell for once again creating a superb calendar with a beautiful and varied collection of photos. It is Tim's generosity and dedication that keeps the calendar possible each year.

All 200 calendars were sold-out before Labour Day weekend. Due to the exceptional circumstances brought on by the pandemic, a new online ordering system was offered this year with the option to request shipping by mail. The online orders were extremely popular with over 90% of calendar sales reserved online. A few members took advantage of the option to receive calendars by mail although most calendars were picked up at the Club dock on a designated day or delivered by hand.

A HUGE thank you to our calendar team, Elise Latour, Nan Laurenzio, Mary Campbell and Tim Boswell!!! We raised more than \$2,500.

### **Membership**

As we close out the summer of 2020, we have 108 members. It was a challenging year and we hope to have a more visible membership campaign next year, once events start happening again and we can interact with lakers and friends.

Our new [online membership process](#) with Interac (e-transfer) payments has made the process much easier for everyone. However, we will continue to use the traditional mailing system for situations where the online system doesn't fit.

Big thank you to Mary Campbell who expertly handles membership.

Amis is always looking for new members. Our priorities and successes come from our membership. If you, or someone you know, would like to become a member, please visit our online membership page [website \(here\)](#).

**AGM - there will be no AGM this year.**

Look for our Spring 2021 newsletter for updates and plans for next year. Please send any comments, suggestions, etc. directly to me. I will ensure they get read by the executive.

Be safe - be warm.

Michael Hyde

President, Amis du lac/Friends of the Lake.