



Bassin versant du Lac Heney Watershed

Summer 2021 Newsletter and Annual Report

After an unprecedented and challenging year, we are looking forward to seeing as many people as possible at this year's annual meeting and even sooner at the BBQ, to share a drink and some food among friends!

BBQ planned for Chez Malo, Lac-Sainte-Marie, August 29!

While the Association has concluded it is more practical to move the formal AGM to a virtual format this year, we are looking forward to ensuring that the Foundation and Association membership can meet our Boards in-person at the barbecue. This event will be held at **Chez Malo** (formerly Pub McVeigh – 306 chemin de Lac-Sainte-Marie) on **Sunday, August 29th, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**, unless we can't for reasons beyond our control.

As in previous years, the Association will be providing the food. One soft drink, a beer or a glass of wine will also be offered. Other drinks can be purchased as well. We plan to have membership and merchandise tables set up for members' convenience.

The planning committee is working to make sure we meet current sanitary restrictions. Recognizing that the situation might change, we hope that this event will allow for important networking and consultation with our members.

Association and Foundation 2021 virtual Annual Meetings to take place October 16

Following a broad discussion concerning the uncertainty of current COVID-19 related restrictions and their impact on venue and numbers of attendees, it was agreed that the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) should be held virtually. Therefore the 2021 AGM will be held on October 16, 2021, 9:30 – 11:00 am via Zoom.

The formal reports and resolutions, including the State of the Lake PowerPoint, will be posted **before** August 29 and the Foundation and Association directors will formally present them by zoom/ webinar at the AGM.

A vote from members will be required to approve last year's financial statement and the year's budget, and to elect new and ongoing directors to the Board. If you are interested in contributing to the good work of the association, now is the time to let us know! Please contact Nominating Chair Tom McKenna (*contact info below*).

Governance of the Foundation is distinct from the Association. Expressions of interest in joining the membership of the Foundation are welcome. Please contact Tom McKenna, Foundation President; or Chantal Proulx, Secretary-Treasurer, at the emails below.

Important: You must be a member in good standing to vote. This includes having your membership fees up to date. If you haven't yet renewed your membership, you can do so on our website at <https://bvlachenev.ca> To email us, go to the Contact us tab. A membership renewal form is also attached should you prefer this option. You will either need to provide an email address to vote online or you can confidentially send your votes to Ashwin Shingadia, Association Secretary (*contact info below*).

Annual Report - the year in summary

Board members continued with regular meetings with the municipality of Lac-Sainte-Marie & city of Gracefield to establish stronger communications with our community and to address various issues (roads, beaver dams, property sizes and zoning changes).

Increased membership engagement:

- Emailed bulletins 'E-Blasts' and more news on our website – *please register!*
- Bay Captains
- Website & videos
- Ongoing education efforts continue through posting to our website (bvlacheney.ca/)
 - "Did You Know" series and (new this year) videos
 - Suggestions for future DYK messages or videos are always welcome
- New Citizen Scientist activities planned for 2022
- Bird watching/counting via eBird technology (<https://bvlacheney.ca/2021/02/13/join-the-great-backyard-bird-count/>)
 - Encouraging our membership to pay attention to the natural ecosystem by submitting bird counts to a global data network. Free to download and a fun family activity.

Water Quality Monitoring:

- Overall, there was little change in the water quality, with all watershed lakes showing pronounced environmental challenges.
- This year, results for Lac Desormeaux, in particular, are concerning.
- Water monitoring ride-along
 - Join the science committee during a monthly water sampling event to understand how it works and why it is important.
 - *Postponed due to physical distancing challenges.*

Call for volunteers – new committee members, bay captains, new ideas – Island captains?

IMPORTANT NOTE: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2021

This November 7th, the city of Gracefield and municipality of Lac-Sainte-Marie are holding municipal elections. This is our chance to be heard! Cottage owners make up a substantial proportion of voters and taxpayers. If we vote in significant numbers, we can have a significant influence.

Unfortunately, a combination of the distance and weather (and the complications of absentee ballots) have kept lake association members from getting out the vote. **This needs to change!** There are important issues that your association is engaging in, and our influence would be so much more if owners demonstrated their commitment by voting.

This November 7, let your voice be heard, and vote! But first, register to vote at the City of Gracefield website or the Lac-Sainte-Marie site. YOU MUST BE REGISTERED TO VOTE.

Bassin versant du Lac Heney Watershed activities during the past year

Science and Environment Committee

Scientific assessment of the water quality trends for the five major watershed lakes was completed for 2020.

- Overall, there was little change in the water quality. Lac Heney has stabilized at approximately 9.5 ug/L Total Phosphorus. With the exception of Lac Vert, the watershed lakes all have Total Phosphorus significantly higher than Lac Heney.
- Water sampling reports & results are posted on our website and displayed in our kiosk.
- Several **algae blooms** have been noted recently on Lac Heney and Lac Desormeaux. The warm weather, in conjunction with the significant rainfall, has led to this scenario as the rain washes additional nutrients into the lakes. More reason to reduce grass cutting and increase shore planting.
- The **higher-than-normal water levels** are a result of the significant rain falls as well as a large beaver dam at the outlet of Lac Heney. The board is working with the municipality of Lac-Sainte-Marie to clear the dam as the high water impacts the lake water quality as well as shore birds and animals.
- Boaters are reminded to be wary of their wake and to minimize it when in bays and near swimmers and other watercraft. **Watersports such as wake boarding, wake surfing, tubing, etc. should be conducted well away from shore in the larger part of the lake.** Wakes have recently thrown occupied fishing boats against the shore and have also destroyed docks.
- Significant weeds have been washed ashore in parts of Lac Heney. **If cutting weeds, you must remove them from the lake and place far from the shore.** Residual weed cuttings easily propagate and results in more weeds throughout the lake.

Membership and Communications Committee

Update on the 3E (Educate, Elevate, Engage) Initiatives

The 3E committee (Educate, Elevate, Engage) is taking steps to improve the consistency and effectiveness of our communications and overall branding. Our main objectives are to increase membership communications, renew interest in the health and the future of the lakes, and successfully influence decision-makers (particularly at the municipalities of Lac-Ste-Marie and Gracefield).

A multi-year communications plan was developed to improve the frequency and content of our communications. Moving forward, we will emphasize the use of "Bassin versant du Lac Heney Watershed" in a consistent manner. To further emphasize our mandate as a bilingual watershed association, the website address was changed to [Bvlacheny.ca](https://bvlacheny.ca) (note all previous names will still work). We will continue to update the various pages to reflect this change.

To simplify and speed up the delivery of information, the website will be our key communications vehicle with paper mail-outs conducted only as a last resort. Members are asked to sign up using this link <https://bvlacheny.ca>

E-Blasts

Agreeing to email notifications will ensure you receive new items when posted (members that previously consented to email notifications should have received a recent notice about this). Members can also follow the Facebook page since all website posts will be duplicated on that platform.

We will also try to use other platforms, such as *La Voix de chez nous* (LVDCM) which is the Lac-Ste-Marie quarterly newsletter and website to improve outreach.

<http://www.lavoixdecheznous.com/en/>

The Foundation provided \$3,500 of funding over 2 years to support our 3E efforts. This funding will be used to offset the costs of educational materials (Kiosk, Bay Captains, Islands) and technology services (website related costs) designed to deliver the Foundation mandate.

Island Stewardship

After a number of concerns were raised by members regarding damage caused by camping on the islands in Lac Heney, both municipalities agreed to contribute to the cost of installing signage encouraging better environmental habits. The signs were installed earlier this summer and volunteers are regularly checking on the conditions.

The main issues that the 3E team (in collaboration with the science committee and bay captains) will be looking at in the future are winter fishing, shoreline erosion due to large wakes, algae education and property stewardship.

Calling all Bay Captains!

Bay Captains are selected from various points on each of the watershed lakes to help us better reach all of the owners on our lakes with important information about the Association and about what they can do to help protect our lakes. It is also an opportunity to gather feedback from our seasonal and permanent residents on priorities.

We still need more captains! Consider joining the group of volunteers to help engage and activate our community.

Association Merchandise for sale

Association merchandise have proven popular since they were made available for sale; even with the restrictions of the past year and we've had to order more! You can buy **Lac Heney watershed-theme coffee and new travel mugs, T-shirts and hoodies** at the **Beggars Bench** (5, rue Faith, Lac-Sainte-Marie). Proceeds from the sales help support Association activities.

The Association Needs More Members!

Today, Lac Heney is much healthier, but without the hard work of the association and its dedicated members, it could have been otherwise. **And that is why we need members!** Lac Heney is a sensitive lake. **It will always be at risk.** The other watershed lakes that feed Lac Heney are just as sensitive and seem to be under even more pressure.

Our strength is in numbers. Membership numbers have plateaued over the past few years. When the Association speaks out on property size and zoning impacts on the water quality, we need to be in a position to show that we have the support of a large cross-section of property owners, especially new members from some of the watershed lakes other than Heney. **We need you!** Please consider your membership as a vote - and a voice - for the work the association is doing to continue to protect the Lac Heney watershed. Also, current members are encouraged to communicate with neighbours and encourage them to join the Association to support our efforts.

Call for New Directors to serve on the Board

As at all our AGMs, about half of the Board will be standing for re-election. Newcomers are welcome and needed to succeed retiring Directors.

Specifically, anyone from those lakes now forming part of the expanded Watershed Association – **Lac Desormeaux, Lac à la Barbue, Lac Vert and Lac Noir** – who are willing to add their representation to the current Board are welcome and needed. We also encourage inclusion of all our community, particularly francophone, women, and permanent residents.

Association Membership Dues Renewal

A membership renewal form is attached for renewing dues payments. For all members who are joining or renewing, you may forward your cheque in the envelope provided, **but we prefer if you visit the website (www.bvlacheney.ca) to pay online using PayPal.** Membership annual dues are \$35 per person or property-owner. Membership dues are used to fund the Association's base operating costs such and subscriptions, insurance, website costs, etc.

ALL members are requested to fill in the attached Membership Form to help us capture your coordinates to update our association membership list. It is important that we properly match our members' known addresses with that of the official list provided from MRC taxpayer database. Equally important is that you provide your **email addresses** so we can launch more frequent reporting to our members during the year with regular emailed bulletins. Thank you for your cooperation on this initiative.

The Foundation

The Heney Lake Foundation is distinct from the Association. It is a legal entity incorporated under Part III of the Quebec Companies Act in accordance with the terms of an agreement following a class action lawsuit which started in the 1990s. Its purpose is to manage the funds received as a result of the lawsuit. The main activities of the Foundation consist of funding the rehabilitation programs of Lac Heney and the conservation of its ecosystem and its watershed.

The Foundation's mandate involves significant overlap with that of the Association's, but as noted, the Foundation is responsible for the disbursement of the balance of the funds available from the class action lawsuit of the 1990s.

The Association

The Bassin versant du Lac Heney Watershed (BVLH) association was formed in 1979. Originally called the Association for the Protection of Lake Heney (APLH), it advocated from the beginning for the protection of Lac Heney, working with cottage owners, permanent residents, municipalities, the MRC, and the provincial government to monitor water quality, educate owners on reducing phosphorus inputs, and re-naturalizing shorelines to reduce nutrient inputs due to the increasing residential impacts.

As some of you will remember, however, the lake Association's greatest challenge came in the 1990s, when the Ministry of the Environment issued a permit for a fish farm on the east side of the lake. With the influx of phosphorus this caused, it quickly became apparent to residents that Lake Heney was in trouble – moving from a problem to a crisis. For a lake that renews or turns-over its total volume only once every seven years, it would not be long before the lake was unusable. So, in a true David versus Goliath moment, the Association and the residents went to battle for the future of Lac Heney, eventually going so far as to launch a successful class-action lawsuit against the Province and the fish farm owner. With the fish farm closed the Association quickly went to work on a sweeping rehabilitation plan, using some of the brightest minds and most innovative technologies available.

Thank you for your continued support!

Roger Larson, Association President (Ph: 819-463-9925)
Tom McKenna, Foundation President (Ph: 819.463.3792)
Hélène Goulet, Association Vice-Présidente
Ashwin Shingadia, Association Secretary
Shelley Taylor, Association Treasurer
Chantal Proulx, Foundation Treasurer
Rock Radovan, Foundation Vice-President
Liz Stirling, Association Membership Director
Aileen Shaw, Bay Captains
Sean Sutton
Michael Wolfson
Ted Billey
Diane Billey, Merchandise
Chantal Landry

Attached: Membership Form