



THE WATERSHED : AN INTRODUCTION

AS WE HAVE TAKEN THE WATERSHED AS OUR TERRITORIAL CONTEXT, AS THE LIMITS OF OUR AREA OF ACTIVITIES, PERHAPS WE SHOULD FAMILIARIZE OURSELVES WITH IT.

A WATERSHED OR, USING THE MORE PRECISE TERM, DRAINAGE BASIN CAN BE DEFINED AS THE AREA FROM WHICH ALL PRECIPITATION FLOWS TO A SINGLE STREAM OR SET OF STREAMS. THE SET OF STREAMS IN QUESTION IS, OF COURSE, ALL THOSE THAT FLOW DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY INTO THE ST. FRANÇOIS RIVER.

IN A RELATIVELY SMALL AREA OF 8756 SQ. KM. IN QUEBEC AND ANOTHER APPROXIMATELY 1474 IN VERMONT, WE FIND A TRULY IMPRESSIVE QUANTITY OF WATER. FLOWING IN THOUSANDS OF SEASONAL AND PERMANENT, SMALLER AND LARGER STREAMS INTO AND OUT OF SIX MAJOR LAKES AND NUMEROUS SMALL LAKES, PONDS AND WETLANDS, THE WATER PASSES INTO AND ALONG ABOUT 20 PRINCIPAL RIVERS CONVERGING, AT DIFFERENT POINTS, ALONG ITS LENGTH, WITH THE ST. FRANÇOIS RIVER. THE ST. FRANÇOIS GATHERS THESE TRIBUTARY WATERS AND TAKES THEM TO LAKE ST. PIERRE. WHERE THEY BECOME A SMALL PART OF A MUCH LARGER WATERSHED : THE ST. LAWRENCE.

A LOT OF WATERWAYS, A LOT OF WATER AND, ALWAYS ON THE MOVE. BUT, AS WE ALL KNOW, THAT'S NOT THE WHOLE STORY. INTIMATELY AND ESSENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE WATER ARE THE COMMUNITIES MAKING UP THE POPULATION OF LIFE IN THE BASIN. TWO COMMUNITIES INTERACT HERE : THE PLANTS AND THE WILD ANIMALS AND THE PEOPLE.

THE HUMAN POPULATION PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE WATERSHED.

HISTORICALLY AND CURRENTLY OUR ACTIVITIES E.G. RECREATION, AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, INDUSTRY, URBANIZATION TO NAME A FEW, HAVE HAD IMPORTANT AND, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THE QUALITY OF THE WATER AND THE AQUATIC AND SEMI-AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS. WE DUMP TOXIC WASTES, DOMESTIC SEWAGE AND HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE AROUND AND INTO STREAMS, RIVERS AND LAKES. WE CLEARCUT STREAMS AND RIVER BANKS AND FLOODPLAINS, OPENING THE DOOR TO MASSIVE EROSION AND ITS SUBSEQUENT PROBLEMS. WE DRAIN MARSHES, DESTROYING NATURAL WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEMS. THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR ACTIVITIES DETRIMENTAL TO THE RIPARIAN ENVIRONMENT AND, ULTIMATELY, TO OURSELVES.

LIKE OTHER BEINGS, WE ARE NOT IMMUNE TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF A POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT. WE MUST ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS AND REMEDY THAT WHICH WE HAVE, OFTEN UNWITTINGLY CAUSED. TO THIS END, WE NEED TO ENLIST THE AID OF THE OTHER COMMUNITY.

FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS IN NORTH AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE, PLANTS AND ANIMALS EVOLVED TOGETHER FORMING INTRICATE ASSEMBLIES OF INTERDEPENDENT HABITATS AND ECOSYSTEMS IN, AROUND AND AROUND WATERWAYS. OUR REGION, THOUGH RELATIVELY YOUNG, DATING FROM THE END OF THE LAST ICE AGE APPROXIMATELY 20000 YEARS AGO, WAS COLONIZED BY ALREADY WELL DEVELOPED AND SOPHISTICATED FLORAL AND FAUNAL SPECIES. IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER NATURAL PROCESSES, THEY HELPED CREATE THE ENVIRONMENTS WHICH WERE SETTLED FIRST BY THE INDIGENOUS

PEOPLES AND THEN, BY THE EUROPEANS. THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS SUCCEEDED VERY WELL IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A WELL BALANCED, INTERDEPENDENT, HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY. BY APPLYING OUR VAST KNOWLEDGE OF HOW PLANTS AND ANIMALS INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT E.G. SOIL, WATER, PERHAPS WE CAN BEGIN TO CORRECT AT LEAST SOME, IF NOT ALL OF THE DAMAGE WE HAVE CAUSED.

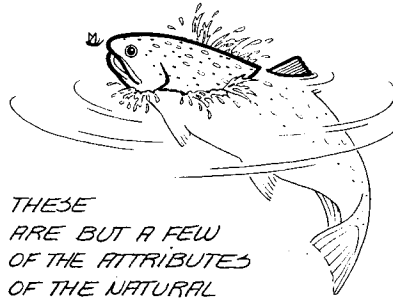
A WIDE BAND OF TREES, SHRUBS AND OTHER FLOWERING AND NON-FLOWERING PLANTS GROWING ALONG THE BANKS AND SHORES OF WATERWAYS GREATLY INCREASES THE QUALITY OF THOSE AREAS AND OF THE WATER FLOWING THROUGH THEM.

THE CANOPY OF LEAVES AND BRANCHES SHIELDS THE SURFACE FROM EXCESSIVE SOLAR RADIATION. THIS MODERATING AND REGULATING EFFECT KEEPS WATER TEMPERATURES WITHIN A RANGE MOST CONDUCTIVE TO FAVORABLE GROWTH AND BIODIVERSITY IN THE AQUATIC HABITATS.

THE EXTENSIVE ROOT SYSTEMS HOLD SOIL IN PLACE, PREVENTING EXCESSIVE EROSION WHICH IF LEFT UNCHECKED, LEADS TO SERIOUS SOIL LOSS AND HABITAT DESTRUCTION. ROOTS ALSO FILTER OUT AND ABSORB MANY ORGANIC AND INORGANIC ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE RUN OFF INTO AND CONTAMINATE THE WATERWAYS RESULTING IN ACCELERATED EUTROPHICATION AND INCREASED DOWNSTREAM PURIFICATION COSTS. PLANTS PROVIDE FOOD FOR ALL ANIMAL LIFE. THE SALMON OR TROUT THAT EATS THE INSECT THAT POLLINATES THE FLOWER. THE WORMS AND OTHER INVERTEBRATES THAT

DECOMPOSE THE FOREST LITTER MANUFACTURING MORE FERTILE SOIL, AND THEMSELVES BEING FOOD FOR OTHER ANIMALS.

MARSH AND OTHER WETLAND PLANTS, BY ABSORBING HEAVY METALS AND OTHER ELEMENTS, HELP TO PURIFY THE WATER THAT FLOWS THROUGH THEM.



THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE NATURAL NON-HUMAN WORLD FROM

WHICH WE MAY LEARN HOW TO LIVE IN A MORE RESPONSIBLE, LESS POLLUTING MANNER. THROUGH COOPERATION WITH AND RESPECT FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES, BOTH HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN, WE CAN AND WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE WATERSHED AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES.



REPORT ON THE 2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE ORGANIZATION'S 2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TOOK PLACE AT THE SHERBROOKE COLLEGE ON OCTOBER 16, 1993. PRESENT WERE 16 MEMBERS AND 2 GUESTS. THE AGENDA INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING POINTS: THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND REPORT CONCERNING THE AWARENESS, RECRUITMENT AND FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN; THE REPORT ON PROJECTS; THE CORPORATION'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND THE FORMATION OF SUB-BASIN COMMITTEES.

THE PRESIDENT, MR. MAUSOOD DANIS, READ HIS REPORT CONCERNING THE FUND RAISING, AWARENESS AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR 1992-1993 (SEE TABLE). THE REPORT ON PROJECTS WAS GIVEN BY MR. WILLIAM LUCY. IT APPEARS IN THIS NEWSLETTER UNDER THE TITLE OF "PROJECTS REPORT". MR. PIERRE DOMINGUE C.R. READ AND EXPLAINED THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT, WE PAUSED FOR A SHORT BREAK DURING WHICH WE ALL HAD THE OP-

PORTUNITY TO MEET ONE ANOTHER AND WATCH A VIDEO OF ONE OF OUR CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS.

TO BEGIN THE SECOND HALF OF THE MEETING, MR. GUY THÉBERGE SPOKE ABOUT THE SUB-BASIN COMMITTEES. HE EXPLAINED ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS' SHORT AND MEDIUM RANGE OBJECTIVES CONCERNING THE COMMITTEES AS WELL AS THEIR ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS. FOLLOWING HIS SUCCINCT EXPLANATION, MR THÉBERGE INVITED ANY AND ALL MEMBERS INTERESTED IN DOING SO, TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE. SIX MEMBERS REPLIED AND THE MASSAWIPPI RIVER SUB-BASIN COMMITTEE WAS FORMED. WE CONGRATULATE AND WISH WELL THE NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS: ANDRÉ ROY, JOYCE BOOTH, FRANÇOIS GAGNON, GILLES LABRIE, HÉLÈNE TREMBLAY AND PASCALE HÉRAUT.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WELCOMES, WITH PLEASURE, THE FORMATION OF THE MASSAWIPPI COMMITTEE, AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE DE-

VELOPMENT OF OUR ORGANIZATION AND A STIMULANT FOR THE YEAR TO COME.

THE TREASURER, MS. MARIE-JOSÉE LAURIN EXPRESSED THE GENERAL FEELING HELD BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, THAT INSPITE OF SUCH A SMALL TURNOUT, THOSE MEMBERS WHO WERE PRESENT SHOWED AN ADMIRABLE WILLINGNESS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE REALIZATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S GOALS.

WE THANK ALL THOSE MEMBERS AND GUESTS WHO PARTICIPATED. WE ALSO WANT TO REPEAT AND EMPHASIZE THAT ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE GENERAL MEETINGS OF THEIR ORGANIZATION. EACH MEMBER HAS THE RIGHT TO VOTE, THE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE PROPOSITIONS AND MOTIONS AND THE RIGHT TO QUESTION AND BE ANSWERED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL.

SO PLEASE ALL OF YOU, ATTEND OUR NEXT ANNUAL MEETING, YOU ARE VERY WELCOME.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OUR THANKS TO THE MUNICIPALITIES OF LENNOXVILLE, ASCOT, ROCK FOREST, ST-ÉLIE-D'ORFORD, ST-DENIS-DE-BROMPTON, CANTON D'ORFORD ET FLEURIMONT FOR HAVING GIVEN US PERMISSION TO CONDUCT OUR AWARENESS AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN ON THEIR TERRITORY.

AND TO ALL OF YOU WHO BECAME MEMBERS OR DONATED WHAT YOU COULD, A BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR WONDERFULL SUPPORT.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 JULY 1993.

<i>INCOME</i>	
<i>CONTRIBUTIONS</i>	22 973.00
<i>SUBSIDY</i>	1 232.00
	<u>24 205.00</u>
<i>EXPENSES</i>	
<i>SALARIES + RELATED EXPENSES</i>	3 776.00
<i>INSURANCE</i>	596.00
<i>MISCELLANEOUS</i>	259.00
<i>OFFICE EXPENSES</i>	385.00
<i>BANQUE EXPENSES</i>	30.00
<i>BAD CHEQUES</i>	160.00
<i>TRAVELLING EXPENSES</i>	310.00
<i>RESEARCH EXPENSES</i>	506.00
<i>SERVICE TO MEMBERS</i>	2 461.00
<i>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</i>	350.00
<i>TELECOMMUNICATIONS</i>	510.00
	<u>10 603.00</u>
<i>INCOME LEFT AFTER EXPENSES</i>	13 602.00
<i>MEMBERS HOLDINGS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR.</i>	0
<i>MEMBERS HOLDINGS AT END OF YEAR.</i>	<u>13 602.00</u>
 <i>BREAKDOWN OF INCOME</i>	
<i>739 MEMBERS</i>	18 475.00
<i>836 DONATIONS</i>	4 338.00
<i>SUBSIDY</i>	1 232.00
<i>BAD CHEQUES</i>	160.00
<i>DEPOSIT TOTAL</i>	<u>24 205.00</u>

STATEMENT OF AWARENESS AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN • NOVEMBER 92 TO JUNE 93

MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OF DAYS	HOUSES VISITED	ABSENTEES	NOTHING GIVEN	DONATIONS		MEMBERS		TOTAL \$
ASCOT	15	801	298	300	106	578.40	97	2425.00	3003.40
LENNOXVILLE	25	1421	489	503	251	1004.41	178	4450.00	5454.41
NORTH HATLEY	2	93	29	45	6	31.30	13	325.00	356.30
ROCK FOREST	40	1875	725	571	309	1617.26	270	6750.00	8367.26
ST-DENIS	10	506	233	143	58	255.00	72	1800.00	2055.00
ST-ÉLIE	16	778	386	204	105	566.00	83	2075.00	2646.00
TOTAL	108	5474	2160	1766	835	3932.37	713	17825.00	21757.37
OTHER					6	405.62	26	650.00	1055.62
GRAND TOTAL					841	4337.99	739	18475.00	22812.99



REPORT ON OPERATIONS

ON JULY 10TH 1993, ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS BEGAN ITS FIRST EVER CLEANUP OPERATION. THE STREAM CHOSEN FLOWS THROUGH THE NORTHERN PART OF SHERBROOKE AND EMPTIES INTO THE ST. FRANÇOIS RIVER. THE STREAM, NOT YET OFFICIALLY NAMED, FIGURES IN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT PLANS THE REALIZATION OF WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A SIGNIFICANT AREA OF THE CREEK. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE SUBJECT OF THIS REPORT.

THE CLEANUP OPERATION INVOLVED EIGHT MEMBERS, ALL VOLUNTEERS, WORKING FOR FOUR DAYS. THE WORK WAS DONE OVER TWO WEEKENDS. AMONG THE ALMOST THREE TONS OF REFUSE PICKED UP WERE AN OLD AUTOHOBILE BODY, A REFRIGERATOR, A 30-FA, PLASTIC, METAL AND GLASS CONTAINERS, AN OLD RUG, STYROFOAM, PIECES OF METAL, 20 ODD TIRES AND A VAST ARRAY OF OTHER (IDENTIFIABLE AND UNIDENTIFIABLE) OBJECTS. WE WERE SURPRISED AT THE VARIETY AND QUANTITY OF THE RUBBISH FOUND IN AND AROUND SUCH A SMALL WATERWAY; ABOUT 1.5 KILOMETER LONG. WE SENT THE METAL TO A SCRAP DEALER AND THE REST WENT TO THE MUNICIPAL LAND-FILL. IN OCTOBER, DURING AN INSPECTION TOUR, WE REMOVED ANOTHER APPROXIMATELY 200 POUNDS OF DEBRIS THAT HAD BEEN MISSED IN JULY.

OUR SECOND OPERATION TOOK PLACE IN AUGUST ON A STREAM, ALSO NAMELESS, IN ROCK FOREST. ONCE AGAIN, THE TASK TOOK TWO WEEKENDS, AND THE PARTICIPATION OF 12 MEMBERS. OVER A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 300 METERS, WE PICKED UP AT LEAST 30 TIRES AND JUST UNDER A TON OF ASSORTED GARBAGE. THE TIRES WERE SENT TO ANIMAT

ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONS

BASIC EXPENSES

INSURANCE	223.00
WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION (CST)	369.51
GLOVES	58.30
FIRST AID KIT	25.30
TOTAL	<u>676.11</u>

TRANSPORT SITE # 1	46.14
TRANSPORT SITE # 2	176.75
LANDFILL SITE # 1	38.75
LANDFILL SITE # 2	17.75
TOTAL	<u>279.39</u>

GRAND TOTAL 955.50

SCRAP REMOVED

LANDFILL SITE # 1	1.405 TON
LANDFILL SITE # 2	.786 TON
RECYCLED SITE # 1	1.500 TON
RECYCLED SITE # 2	.468 TON
TOTAL	<u><u>4.159 TONS</u></u>

FOR RECYCLING, THE REST TO THE LAND-FILL. IN OCTOBER, WE CONTINUED UPSTREAM TAKING OUT ANOTHER 600 POUNDS.

THANKS TO THE WILLING AND ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP. WE WERE ABLE TO KEEP THE COSTS AT A MINIMUM: \$ 955.50. ALSO DURING THE SEASON, WE WERE ABLE TO DEVELOP AND ELABORATE PLANS FOR A NUMBER OF OTHER WATERWAYS TO BE CLEANED NEXT YEAR.

ON THE SURFACE IT COULD APPEAR AS THOUGH WE HAD NOT ACCOMPLISHED VERY MUCH AND THAT ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS COULD HAVE OR, SHOULD HAVE DONE MORE. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE CASE. AS IT WAS OUR FIRST YEAR OF EXISTENCE, WE HAD TO DEVOTE SOME TIME, MORE THAN WHAT WE HAD ANTICIPATED, TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODUS OPERANDI. A CLEANUP IS THE CONCLUDING EVENT IN A LONG, TIME CONSUMING SERIES OF ACTIVI-

TIES WHICH BEGINS WITH THE FINDING OF A WATERWAY IN NEED OF CLEANING. THE SECOND STEP INVOLVES DETERMINING OWNERSHIP OF THE LOTS ABUTTING THE WATERWAY AND GETTING FROM THE OWNERS, WRITTEN PERMISSION TO PROCEED WITH OUR ACTIVITIES.

ALSO SOUGHT ARE AUTHORIZATIONS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY (IES) IN QUESTION, THE MRC AND THE PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT. AFTER ACQUIRING THE RELEVANT AUTHORIZATIONS, WE RECONNOITER THE STREAM AND SURROUNDING AREA AND INVENTORY THE REFUSE, ACCESS ROUTES AND TEMPORARY STORAGE

SITES. GIVEN ALL THE INFORMATION GATHERED DURING THE RECONNAISSANCE, THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE DEVELOPS A PLAN OF ACTION INCLUDING A DETAILED MAP INDICATING PLACEMENT, COMPOSITION AND SIZE OF OBJECTS TO BE REMOVED. ALSO INCLUDED IS ALL OTHER INFORMATION PERTINENT TO A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. FOLLOWING THIS STEP, OF COURSE, IS THE ACTUAL CLEANUP WHICH, IN ITSELF, CAN TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME OF EQUAL IF NOT GREATER IMPORTANCE IN DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF WORK DONE, WAS THE TIME FACTOR. MOST OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD FULL-TIME JOBS AND THUS WE-

RE LIMITED TO WEEKENDS AND EVENINGS. THIS IS A SITUATION WE HOPE TO REMEDY NEXT YEAR. CONSIDERING ALL OF THE ABOVE FACTORS, I THINK WE CAN JUDGE OUR FIRST YEAR AS HAVING BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

A YEAR OF LEARNING HAS TAUGHT US WELL. THE WELL-DEVELOPED PROCEDURES, THE MEMBERS' ENTHUSIASM AND OUR INCREASED EXPERIENCE WILL HELP US TO DO MORE NEXT YEAR AND IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS.

A HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL MEMBERS WHO DONATED THEIR TIME, ENERGY AND RESOURCES TO ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

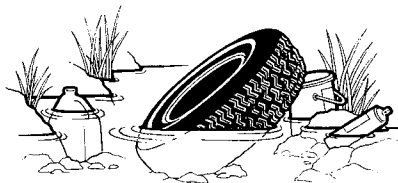


TESTIMONY

LIKE MOST OF THE READERS OF THIS NEWSLETTER, I AM JUST ONE OF MANY MEMBERS OF ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS. HOWEVER, DURING THE PAST SUMMER, I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN A CLEANUP OPERATION OF A STREAM THAT EMPTIES INTO THE MAGOG RIVER. THIS SHORT ARTICLE ALLOWS ME TO SHARE WITH YOU AN ENRICHING AND SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

A PHONE CALL INVITED ME TO MEET THE OTHERS SATURDAY MORNING AT THE MOUTH OF THE STREAM. WE WERE ABOUT TEN PEOPLE. OVER A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 300 METERS, WE PICKED UP SOME 30 ODD TIRES AND AN ASTONISHING QUANTITY OF OTHER OBJECTS OF ALL KINDS. BUT THE MOST SURPRISING ELE-

MENT WAS NOT THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF THE OPERATION, BUT THE SPIRIT THAT REIGNED THERE.



THIS SPIRIT WAS EXPRESSED BY THE SIMPLICITY AND RELAXED ATTITUDE OF THOSE PRESENT. SHOWING THAT IT WAS NOT A "SACRIFICE" TO BE THERE. EVERYONE WANTED TO BE THERE! EVERYONE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION WITH PLEASURE, CERTAINLY BECAUSE OF THEIR FIRMLY ANCHORED CONVIC-

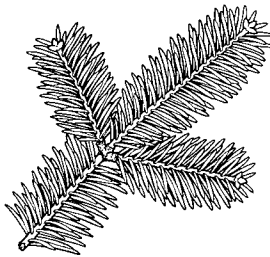
TIONS. NO REMORSE VISIBLE ON THEIR FACES NOR ANY DOUBT ABOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION. THIS QUIET DETERMINATION APPEARED TO BE A DEFINITE SIGN OF A REAL ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS. IN FACT, THE POLLUTION, THE DEFORESTATION, THE WASTE AND GENERAL DESTRUCTION OF NATURE CAN BE AVOIDED ONLY IF SUCH A CONSCIOUSNESS AWAKENS IN US.

IN ENDING, I WOULD SUMMARIZE MY EXPERIENCE AS THIS: I SAW IN ACTION A CONSCIOUSNESS SENSITIVE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND THAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO SAVE NATURE FROM BLIND AND INSENSITIVE DESTRUCTION.

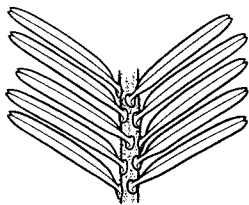
RICHARD LAIR



THE BALSAM FIR



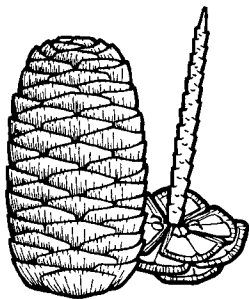
BRANCH



NEEDLES



SILHOUETTE



CONE AND AXEL

LATIN NAME: *ABIES BALSAMEA*
COMMON NAMES: CANADA BALSAM, EASTERN FIR, BALSAM FIR, WHITE FIR, CANADIAN FIR

ABIES: LONG-LIVED
BALSAMEA: BALM (BECAUSE OF ITS AROMATIC RESIN)
HEIGHT: 10-15 METERS
DIAMETER: 30-80 CENTIMETERS
HABITAT: COOL, MOIST SOIL; ALBERTA TO LABRADOR. NORTH TO BAY OF UNGAVA - 58° N. LATITUDE.

LIGHT: SHADE TO SEMI-SHADE
FOLIAGE: SHORT NEEDLES (3-4 CM) WITHOUT PETIOLES; DARK GREEN ABOVE; TWO NARROW WHITISH LINES BENEATH. SLIGHTLY CURVED UPWARD ON UPPER BRANCHES, FLATTER ON LOWER BRANCHES.

BARK: THIN, GRAYISH BROWN WITH RESINOUS BLISTERS.
WOOD: WHITE, SOFT AND LIGHT WEIGHT
CONES: DARK-PURPLE, CYLINDRICAL AND UPRIGHT. FROM 5 TO 8 CM LONG. GROW ON TOPMOST BRANCHES, LOSING THEIR FINE SCALES AND WINGED SEEDS IN AUTUMN. THEY DEVELOP AND MATURE IN THE SAME SEASON.

OF THE 33 KNOWN SPECIES OF FIR IN THE WORLD, 9 ARE INDIGENOUS TO NORTH AMERICA, FOUR INDIGENOUS TO CANADA AND ONE TO QUEBEC THAT BEING THE BALSAM FIR. IT ALSO IS THE NORTHERNMOST OF ALL NORTH AMERICAN FIRS AND THE MOST VIGOROUS OF OUR CONIFERS. VERY SLOW FOR THE FIRST FOUR TO FIVE YEARS, ITS GROWTH RATE THEN INCREASES, MAINTAINING A RELATIVELY FAST RATE FOR THE NEXT 60 YEARS, MORE OR LESS. SLOWLY DECREASING THEREAFTER UNTIL GROWTH FINALLY STOPS AT AN AGE ABOUT 150 YEARS. HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT THEN DIE. FIR TREES REPRODUCE BY SEED AND MARCOTTAGE I.E. THE FORMATION OF ROOTS FROM A BRANCH WHERE IT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH THE MOIST SOIL FORMING A NEW INDIVIDUAL (AS DOES THE BLACK SPRUCE).

KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD AS "CANADA BALSAM" AND IN QUEBEC AS "GOMME DE SAPIIN", BALSAM FIR RESIN HAS BEEN THE MOST USED AND MOST EFFECTIVE OF ALL CONIFER RESINS IN THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH-CANADIAN PHARMACOPOEIA. IT WAS USED AS AN ANTISCORBUTIC, ANTISEPTIC FOR WOUNDS AND A POULTICE FOR BURUS. THE RESIN SERVES ALSO AS AN INGREDIENT IN GLUES, CANDLES, SOAPS, PERFUMES AND DEODORANTS. OTHER MAJOR USES INCLUDE OPTICAL CEMENT AND MOUNTING SPECIMENS FOR MICROSCOPIC STUDY.

THE WOOD IS USED PRINCIPALLY AS A SOURCE FOR PULP AND PAPER, FOR MAKING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, BOXES, DOORS AND INTERESTINGLY, KNOTTY-PINE PANELING. PERHAPS IT IS ITS UNFORGETTABLE AROMA THAT ENCOURAGED ITS INITIAL USE AS DECORATION DURING FESTIVE TIMES. SUCH THAT, FOR MANY OF US, FIR IS SYNONYMOUS WITH CHRISTMAS...

IN THE ST. FRANÇOIS BASIN, WE SEE FIR USUALLY GROUPED TOGETHER NOT FAR FROM A STREAM. OTHER CONIFEROUS AND DECIDUOUS TREES GROW AMONG THEM. SOME BIRDS FIND REFUGE AMONG ITS BRANCHES AND IN WINTER, MOOSE AND DEER BROWSE THE LOWER GROWTH.

WHAT MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A MATURE, HEALTHY FIR? PERHAPS A CLUSTER OF DARK GREEN BABY FIRS, THEIR FEET IN THE COOL EARTH COVERED BY A CARPET OF EMERALD GREEN MOSS; PROTECTED FROM THE ELEMENTS BY THE OTHER, OLDER CONIFERS.



THE ST-FRANÇOIS RIVER BASIN : A COMMON WEALTH

MEMBERSHIP IN ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS DEMANDS FIRST AND FOREMOST, A COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE AND IMPROVE, WHERE NECESSARY, THE ENVIRONMENT. THIS IS THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE ORGANIZATION. THIS COMMITMENT GOES BEYOND SIMPLE UTILITARIANISM AND ENTERS INTO THE HISTORY OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY OF THE BASIN.

THE ST-FRANÇOIS RIVER IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TRIBUTARIES OF THE ST. LAURENCE. UP UNTIL RAILWAY AND TRUCK TRANSPORT SUPPLANTED RIVER TRANSPORT, THE ST-FRANÇOIS WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR MEANS OF PENETRATION INTO THE TERRITORY.

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS REVEAL AN AMERINDIAN HISTORY OLDER THAN EXPECTED TO DATE. EXAMPLES OF POTTERY AND OTHER ARTIFACTS PREDATING THE CHRISTIAN ERA HAVE BEEN FOUND IN LAKES MEMPHREMAGOG AND MEGANTIC. THE REGION WOULD HAVE BEEN A CORRIDOR AND COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE CENTER BETWEEN PEOPLES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE CONTINENT.

IN THE 18TH CENTURY, THE ABENAKI THREATENED BY OTHER AMERINDIAN NATIONS, ASKED THE FRENCH FOR PROTECTION. THEY RESPONDED BY PERMITTING THE ABENAKI TO SETTLE ON THE BANKS OF THE ST-FRANÇOIS, A TERRITORY THEY HAD LONG BEEN EXPLORING. THE REGION TOPONYMY TESTIFIES TO THIS OCCUPATION, BUT FEW VISUAL CLUES REMAIN.

THE FRENCH AND BRITISH USED THE RIVER FOR TRANSPORTATION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO EXPAND THEIR AMERICAN COLONIES. AFTER THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, LOYALISTS AND THOSE AMERICANS WISHING TO AVOID PAYING TAXES TO DEFRAY THE WAR COSTS MOVED TO THE BASIN. FREE LAND WAS OFFERED BY THE BRITISH MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN THE TOWNSHIPS. SOME MINOR SKIRMISHES OCCURRED THERE BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN TROOPS DURING THE WAR OF 1812.

THE RAILROAD ARRIVED WITH THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, AND IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT PEOPLE BEGAN TO TURN AWAY FROM THE RIVER. TOWNS AND VILLAGES DEVELOPED ALONG

THE RAIL LINE. THE REGION EMERGED FROM ITS RELATIVE ISOLATION AND DEVELOPED EVER NARROWING LINKS WITH INDUSTRIAL CENTERS. NOW, THE COMMUNICATION LINKS FOLLOW ECONOMIC RATHER THAN GEOGRAPHICAL LINES.

THESE ARE ONLY SOME OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF THE ST-FRANÇOIS BASIN. IT WOULD BE ILLUSORY TO WANT TO FORM AN ORGANIZATION TO DEFEND AND DEVELOP A NATURAL MILIEU SOLELY AS A GESTURE. SUCH AN ORGANIZATION HAS VALUE ONLY IF IT ENTERS THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTINUITY.

IN ANSWER TO THIS DEMAND, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING IF THOSE MEMBERS OF ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS WITH A KNOWLEDGE OF THE HERITAGE AND/OR HISTORY OF THE BASIN WOULD PUT PEN TO PAPER AND, THROUGH THE NEWSLETTER, SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP. THE BETTER WE KNOW THE AREA IN WHICH WE WANT TO ACT, THE BETTER WILL BE OUR JUDGMENT WHEN WE ACT.

FRANÇOIS GAGNON • SECRETARY
MASSAWIPPI SUB-BASIN COMMITTEE



**ACTION
ST-FRANÇOIS**

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THE MEMBERS OF ACTION ST. FRANÇOIS • JUNE 93 TO NOVEMBER 93

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THERESE GRENIER

NOVEMBER 92 TO NOVEMBER 93

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ELIZABETH LOUDON
JACQUES DUQUETTE
LUCIE THEBERGE
GERALD LAROSE
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TERESA HOWICK
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NANCY BURGEY
SCOTT STEVEN
PHILIPPE CALLEBERT
REBECCA DESAULTIERS
LEONARD ALLEN
GAETAN DUFRESNE
VICTOR FRECHETTE
MICHEL PRESENT
DENIS BOUFFARD

ONTARIO
SHANNA BRADEN
ROB BOLLAND
JASON MC INNIS
ADAM CRAGG
RENE DESMARAIS
HILDRETH RINEHART

BRITISH COLUMBIA
BARB WITHROW
KIM MCLEAN

FRANCE
MADELEINE CARREAU
MICHELE GOMON



ALL OUR WISHES
FOR A JOYOUS
CHRISTMAS AND A
YEAR OF PEACE AND
HARMONY FOR YOU
AND YOURS.

THE TEAM