



WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Now well into our third season and six months since you last heard from us I would like to bring you up to date on what we have accomplished in the preceding half year.

One important development was the hiring of two paid employees to carry on the fundraising and membership campaign begun by Mansoor and Guy almost three years ago. Much heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Mansoor and Guy for their many many months of volunteer campaigning for the cause.

We moved the office from a private residence to a building at 18 Wellington North. All members are invited to drop by for a visit, though, hopefully not all at the same time (after all there are 900 of us).

The cleanup operations, for which this winter we

finalized the plans and procedures for 10 streams, involve the participation of many members. In an effort to get together all of you who expressed the desire to take part in our activities we once again operated the telephone campaign to invite everyone to the April meeting at the Cégep wherein we discussed the then upcoming season. The turnout was less than expected but the meeting was a success.

Another one will be held in August for the fall activities. We began the season in Rock Forest on May 6th. cleaning up part of one stream where we encountered much more things to pick up than expected. We followed up with operations every weekend when the weather permitted us to do so.

Also during the winter months we attended some

meetings and conferences with other organizations e.g. an annual meeting with C.R.E.E. and the Summit on the Private Forest. In February we submitted a memoire to the Commission on the Future of Québec (summary included in newsletter). In April, François, Guy and Mansoor presented Action Saint-François to four classes at the Sherbrooke Cégep.

All in all, 1995 unfolds rather well and hopefully will continue to do so. What remains critical is the level of member participation. We are looking for ways to increase your involvement. Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Well, time for me to go, so read on and enjoy the newsletter and have a good summer.

WILLIAM LUCY



COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF QUÉBEC

The Commission régionale de l'Estrie sur l'avenir du Québec conducted its hearings last winter. Action Saint-François' Board discussed the opportunity of sending a brief to the Commission. A consensus was attained considering the following points: Action Saint-François' goals are relevant to Québec's future, regardless of the constitutional framework in which it evolves; the Commission's hearings would be a good way of making ourselves known by more people; Action Saint-François' statutes and mandate did not allow us to side with either option in the upcoming referendum; we could

come up with relevant motions to present at the hearings.

A brief was drafted and approved by the Board. A warning in the brief made it clear that Action Saint-François did not favor any option in the upcoming referendum but that it would make its positions on the environment known in any public consultation on constitutional matters since environmental problems transcend any constitutional framework. The brief contained the following: a brief description of Action Saint-François; two motions to be added to the Avant-projet de loi sur la souveraineté du Québec, a descriptive list of the main

problems facing the environment of the Saint-François watershed: elimination of uncontrolled domestic garbage disposal, cleaning up of domestic dumps along the rivers and streams, revegetalization of banks and floodplains, logging control, industrial waste control, control of agricultural pesticide and fertilizer use, enforcement of existing laws.

The two motions submitted to the Commission read as follows:

The constitution should include a charter for the protection and restoration of the environment. It should guarantee that Québec's economic develop-

ment will not be detrimental to the environment and that polluted or degraded sites will be restored in so far as possible. It should also recognize the right for future generations to inherit an environment propitious to their development and the realization of their aspirations. Québec should actively seek new treaties which would enable

it to protect and restore its environment. Such treaties should be sought with neighboring states and those exploiting natural resources in the international zone contiguous with its territory.

The second was retained by the Commission and has been included in its final report.

The complete version of the memorandum is available in English and French. You can have a copy sent to you by sending a self-addressed, stamped 8 1/2 x 11 envelope (we hate licking stamps) and 2\$ to Action Saint-François.

FRANÇOIS GAGNON



CREE

C.R.E.E. stands for *Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Energie*. It is the crossroads of environmentalist groups of the Townships. In order to gather more information on C.R.E.E. we met with its chairman Mr Roger Riendeau.

Le Comité régional en environnement de l'Energie was founded in 1989 by several municipal delegates. No significant or lasting environmental action came out of it. The group's action was limited to organizing a few punctual actions, a conference and miscellaneous activities. By 1992 the group's inertia had created such frustration that a public consultation was organized from within. Meanwhile the *Comité régional en environnement de l'Energie* became the *Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Energie* following a similar move by environmental groups active in other regions of Québec. Groups and organizations active in environmental matters in the Townships were polled on what their vision of a *Conseil régional de l'environnement* was. In 1993 C.R.E.E.'s present structure was agreed upon.

C.R.E.E.'s board has 19 members : 7 representatives from environmental groups, 7 elected municipal officials (1 from each of the 7 M.R.C. of the Townships), 2 educators or researchers, 2 members active in health services and 1 chosen by the 18 other members.

According to Mr Riendeau, C.R.E.E.'s goal is to bring together people active in different fields in the hope of attaining sustainable economic development in the Townships.

C.R.E.E. is not an environmental group as such but rather an umbrella for environmental groups. Its mandate is to serve as a watchdog and to make sure that environmental problems are brought forth, discussed and solved. Mr Riendeau was careful to point out that C.R.E.E. should not be expected to be at the forefront of environmentalist actions in the Townships because its role is to encourage, help and get environmental groups to unite and join forces in the pursuit of frequently shared objectives.

Six committees share the task of working on

C.R.E.E.'s concerns of which water treatment and garbage disposal are the two most important. C.R.E.E.'s main current preoccupation is the project "ESTRIE ZONE VERTE" created in early 1994 to pursue sustainable development. In the coming years, "ESTRIE ZONE VERTE" will seek to put forth environmental protection programs in all fields of economic activity. It will also promote the "green" character of the Townships. The cornerstone of the program will be the drafting of an environmental charter in the course of 1995.

Since 1993 C.R.E.E. has been financed by municipal, provincial and federal grants. These grants have been awarded for specific projects. C.R.E.E. is presently expecting a statutory grant that would be used to hire an employee.

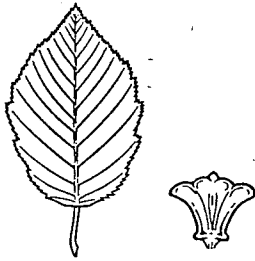
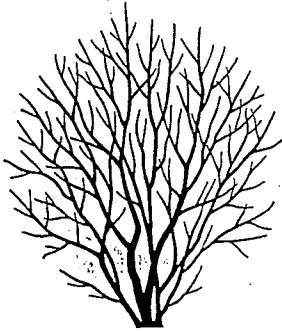
This spring, Action Saint-François will participate in a joint effort by C.R.E.E. to develop a policy on watershed water management. Action Saint-François members will be informed of the outcome of this effort.

MANSOOR DANIS



SPECKLED ALDER

Alnus Rugosa (Du Roi) Spreng., Betulacea : Birch family



- Synonyms :** *A. incana* (Linneus) Moench, *A. tennifolia* (Nutt.) Breitung, *A. serrulata* Aiton.
- Common names :** rough alder, speckled alder, tag alder, gray alder
- Alnus :** possibly, though controversial, from the Celtic meaning neighbour of rivers
- Rugosa :** wrinkled - due to texture of underside of leaf
- Height :** 6 m, growing in clumps
- Diameter :** 10 cm
- Light :** sun
- Habitat :** humid soil along rivers, streams, around lakes and in swamps
- Distribution :** from Yukon and B.C. to Newfoundland and northeastern states. Grows in company of red dogwood, bayberry, willows, black spruce, red maple, black ash, poplar and cedar
- Leaves :** alternate in three rows, toothed (irregularly), elliptical or ovate ; hairy short stalks ; upper surface dull, dark green with sunken parallel veins ; lower surface whitish green, slightly hairy, prominent veins and veinlets arranged in parallel rows. Late in autumn the leaves fall while still green, not changing color, they wither beforehand.
- Flowers :** monoecious, flowers very early in spring before appearance of leaves ; male flowers in long (6 cm), drooping, yellow to brick red catkins; female flowers smaller in cones (6 mm), brilliant red in color.
- Fruit :** very small and flat nutlets with tiny wings ; groups in twos on the cones' scales ; cones are dark brown resembling miniature conifer cones.
- Bark :** olive green to blackish with orange beige lenticels.
- Wood :** reddish, rot resistant in water ; a European species was used for pilings in Venice and Amsterdam.
- Branches :** slender, grayish-brown ; whitish hair on young growth.
- Roots :** orange, coral-like nodules of nitrogen-fixing bacteria grow on the roots ; they allow the plant to colonize poor soil and simultaneously enrich it for other species.

A sun worshipper and altogether indifferent to soil quality the alder readily colonizes disturbed land, such as that resulting from clear cut logging or forest fires, along waterways and in wetlands. With the growth and maturation of bigger and taller species, such as maple and ash around it the alder disappears due to the lack of light.

The lengthening of the catkins officially heralds spring's arrival. Being one of the earliest pollen producer, the alder provides bees with their first spring source of food.

Though having no market value the speckled alder has considerable importance in nature. It is an excellent stabilizer for stream and river banks and provides food and shelter for porcupines, beaver, deer, moose and numerous bird species (woodcock, snipe, red poll, goldfinch and hazel grouse).

It is sometimes used for firewood and the first settlers made a yellow dye from it. Combining different reagents (alum, vitriol, etc.) with different parts of the plant (catkins, bark...) the pioneers were able to produce a variety of colours.

Alder bark contains, as does that of the willows, salicylic acid, a substance which eventually led to aspirin. In the past a decoction of the bark was used to soothe the pains of rheumatism, clean

wounds, reduce swellings and to help control bleeding.

As promised in our last issue, here is the latest news on my experiment to transform the *Onoclea sensibilis* into a luxurious home plant. The latest news is also the last news : the fern passed away during the winter. If you want to try: in late autumn pot the plant in soil in which it naturally grows; keep it at a temperature between 4 to 7 degrees so that it continues in the dormancy already begun outside. That is to say a similar technique as that used in forcing bulbs. The mistake I made was in keeping it warm. After some feeble growth the fern rapidly expired.

If you would like more information call the office and leave your name and number. I will gladly return your call.

Until the next time.

MARIE-JOSÉE LAURIN

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AUGUST 1992 SAW THE BIRTH OF ACTION ST-FRANÇOIS, A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION BRINGING TOGETHER CITIZENS WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE QUALITY OF OUR ENVIRONMENT. THE MAIN GOALS OF OUR ORGANIZATION ARE TWO-FOLD: FIRSTLY, TO REHABILITATE AND RESTORE, TO THEIR NATURAL STATE, THE WATERWAYS, BANKS AND FLOODPLAINS OF THE ST-FRANÇOIS RIVER WATERSHED AND SECONDLY, TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT SAID ECOSYSTEM. WE HAVE BEGUN A STREAM CLEAN-UP PROGRAM AND WILL BE INITIATING A PROGRAM OF EROSION CONTROL. WE WILL ALSO BEGIN TO REPLANT THE BANKS AND FLOODPLAINS WITH INDIGENOUS SPECIES ENCOMPASSING THE RANGE OF PLANT LIFE NATIVE TO THE REGION WHENEVER POSSIBLE. IN THE AREA OF CONSERVATION, OUR GROUP IS HOPING TO MOTIVATE AS MANY RESIDENTS AS POSSIBLE TO TAKE PART IN THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THIS PRECIOUS WATER SYSTEM. OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE IS \$25.00 AND PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CALL US AT (819) 563-5362