



A Word from the President

Already autumn and the end of our sixth cleanup season. Taking into account the number of volunteers implicated in the cleanups, the work atmosphere, and the commitment of our members we can say that A.S.F. is in excellent health. However, we won't be resting on our laurels, there remains a lot of work to do. As our comrade Mansoor says, it is always satisfying to perform good deeds. "Though this season has ended don't hesitate to volunteer for next years."

Serge Nielly, our excellent co-ordinator since spring 1997, is no longer with us. The subsidy enabling us to hire him was not renewed. The Board members and a few volunteers will continue to carry out the tasks so ably performed by him. As always we count on the involvement and support of our members to help the organization to pass through this difficult period. If you would like to participate in the office please contact us.

As well as continuing to pursue its cleanup program ASF hopes to undertake a stream bank re-vegetation, erosion control project (s) next summer. See the article on the subject in this issue.

As usual, anyone interested in writing for the newsletter is certainly welcome to send in their word. It is understood, of course, that points of view expressed in the newsletter articles are those of the author.

I hope you find this issue interesting and informative. Have a good read.

We hope to see you at the next Annual General Meeting (April 1999). Our spring issue will contain the agenda, date and place of the meeting.

By the way we now have an electronic address: asf@qc.aira.com.

SUMMARY

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The 1998 cleaning season: a review

Between May 9th and September 12th, more than one hundred people participated in 34 clean up operations on 12 streams of the St-Francis river watershed. The following chart summarizes the results of those operations.

Waterway	Location	Metal (kg)	Glass and plastic (kg)	Tiles (kg)	Trash (kg)	Total (kg)
Marais Riv.-aux-Cerises	Canton de Magog	25136		2400	1554	26690
Fontaine	Rock Forest	649	40		273	962
Capel	Canton de Hatley	546			682	1228
Galvin *	Sherbr. et Fleurimont	1749		192	5525	7466
Stacey	Ascot Corner	291		168	2644	3103
Jack	Canton de Hatley				50	50
Dunant *	Canton de Hatley	216	20	24	147	407
Des Vignobles	Rock Forest	211		96	203	510
McFarland *	Canton de Hatley	1163			264	1427
Saint-François	C. de Brompton	1718		48	1616	3382
La Principale *	Ascot Corner	327		180	792	1299
Gordon *	Rock Forest	2591		60	313	2964
Eustis	Canton de Hatley					
TOTAL:		34597	60	3168	14063	51 888
Number of streams	13					
Salvaged material	71 %					
Sent to landfill	29 %					

Data from May to
Septembre 1998

* : Temporary name

Now, here's a word from one of our volunteers, Francine Teasdale.

The cleaning of a stream: what was a daydream not long ago is now an act of faith.

Last August 13th, Mansoor, Guillaume, Paul, Laurier, Nicole and I, Francine, were working on Galvin stream located near Corbeil Street. We found ourselves at the bottom of a 10 meter deep ravine. We took out

about 30 old wooden boards, rotten and studded beams as well as doors and panels. We tied them together and pulled them up with a cable. We also extracted pieces of rusted metal, a cracked pail full of cement, a heavy car battery, parts of a bed, bits of styrofoam. We also came across a 1938 licence plate and a 1998 Molson beer can.

We worked with a trash can on wheels, and, using a rope tied to the can two men

pulled everything uphill. We also used the same technique with a big piece of plastic. We wore work gloves because it's very important to be careful and to protect ourselves.

Guillaume and Laurier loaded all the junk in the truck and trailer. The old metal goes to the scrap yard while, unfortunately, all the other trash is sent to the landfill site. We dream that no more unrecyclable trash will be generated in a near future.

Mansoor gathers his volunteers around. He offers us water... clear water. Everything comes clear in my mind: it is never too late to start doing the right thing. Yes Mansoor, give me some of that water so that I can drink to the health of the streams, as well as to our own.



A word from our co-ordinator

Ouf, what a summer !

Congratulations everyone. We now have almost 800 members. The door-to-door fund raising campaign continues, the money raised covers our fixed expenses e.g. rent, hydro, telephone, insurance...

Serge Nielly

Subsidy wise, Environment Canada, in early spring, gave us 23 500 \$ to hire a clean up co-ordinator (Mansoor Danis), who, by the way, did an excellent job. Also in the spring SACA (Québec) provided us with 20 000 \$ enabling yours truly to continue as General Co-ordinator.

The federal government, through the HRDC programs subsidized two employees from May to early November. Also, we received 3 600 \$ allowing us to hire two students for eight weeks each during the summer.

The annual garage sale was held in mid July and earned 660 \$. Many thanks to the members and others for their generous contributions. Thanks also to the parish of Notre Dame de Perpetuel Secours for the use of their parking lot. A very special thanks and congratulations to Michel Boucher who co-ordinated the event.



Jean-Marc, Jean-François, Mansoor, Jean et Marc-André (from left to right) with a load of metal for the scrap yard. Saint-François stream last august 22.

Annie Simard and Jean-Francois Dubois worked together from May to November exploring the waterways of the region expanding our inventory of cleanup sites. Walking about 400 kms they inventoried over 250 streams finding 14 major sites and 22 smaller ones. There is no lack of work for next season. So far we have covered about 15 % of the watershed.

Pierre Dansereau spent a good part of the summer and fall researching and developing a program concerned with stream bank stabilization (erosion control). We are

on the threshold of implementing another aspect of our mandate. See his excellent article, p. 4.

For now (mid Dec.) and for the next few weeks things will remain relatively quiet. The activities, mainly administrative, are carried out entirely by volunteers and Board members.

In closing I would like to say that we had a very successful and satisfying year. Many thanks to all the members and others for your support and see you again soon.



A difficult but necessary program

Ecological management of riverbanks

Like many of us, I have become aware in recent years of the ecological importance of riverside vegetation, especially for the stabilization of soil and the preservation of land and water bio-diversity.

Pierre Dansereau
Responsible: riverbank
re-vegetation file

That is why I agreed enthusiastically to prepare a summer course on the re-vegetation of the St. Francis riverbanks. Well aware of the energy of our volunteer clean-up teams, with whom I have worked on occasion, I undertook the task confident of the future applications of the program. I even thought that we could organize planting teams starting this past summer.

My enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when I visited certain sites which had suffered from heavy erosion and noticed the extent of the work required for planting and stabilizing the riverbanks. Inspection of the terrain, together with my reading and my consultations, helped me to understand the importance and complexity of the erosion phenomenon, which is responsible for the loss of 3 million kilos of fertile soil each year in Québec alone. We are faced with a major environmental problem, one which is little understood or publicized.

Widespread drainage of agricultural land, de-forestation, and the straightening of water courses (i.e. the redirection of a stream as a straight line cutting across its meanders) have caused currents to accelerate and levels to rise during seasonal run-offs. Natural erosion of riverbanks is then increased ten-fold, to the point where vegetation is torn out and soil is carried off in phenomenal quantities. The result is the

degradation of water quality and the silting up of streams, rivers and lakes. This is a global process which cannot be stopped without a wide range of corrective measures, inclu-

ground by Action St-François. In this regard, developments in re-vegetation engineering provide certain solutions which are demanding in terms of labour but relatively inexpensive in terms of material. Their implementation, however, requires an understanding of river dynamics and a mastery of planting techniques. However, aside from a



Severe erosion on agricultural land. Three million kilograms of fertile soil are lost each year in Québec through the erosion of riverbanks. This has led to serious water pollution problems caused by sediment filled with pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

ding the adoption of better ecological practices in farming and forestry. Needless to say, the long term economic losses far surpass the investments required to correct the situation.

This report on the extent of the overall problem should not prevent us from planning certain concrete actions at the local level, indispensable prerequisites for education and mobilization. This is why, apart from the understanding of the phenomenon of erosion and its causes, the principal challenge of my work consists of defining the actions which can be undertaken on the

few experts very much in demand and seldom available, few people in Québec possess this expertise at the present time.

This is why I concentrated a substantial part of my energies this summer on establishing contact with individuals who have employed the techniques of vegetation engineering on projects with citizen groups. The most interesting activities have taken place in the region of Québec within the Boyer River basin where I was able to observe the spectacular success of a re-vegetation at Saint-Charles-de-Belle-



The re-vegetation of an agricultural stream as part of a restoration program for the Boyer River. To hinder further erosion, the planting of vegetation restores the riverbanks to their natural state thus allowing the return of numerous bird and small animal species.

chasse on the banks of a stream running through agricultural land.

The clean-up and restoration of the banks and basin of Boyer River constitute an important facet of our awareness of the erosion problem. In order to counter the causes of the phenomenon, we must encourage the people concerned to change their practices. For example, agreements have been reached with agricultural producers for the installation of watering sites and enclosures to prevent livestock from trampling riverbanks and tearing up new vegetation. The success of this project was made possible by the commitment of many municipal

agencies, the MRC, and the ministries concerned (the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Ministry of Wildlife and the Environment) as well as by the involvement of citizens who volunteered to work, or to help in awareness and financing campaigns.

The Boyer River model naturally led me to consider possible joint research within the project framework for the restoration of a river basin or of a stream which forms part of the Saint Francis watershed.

My interest turned first to the Nick stream in Rock Forest where we had noticed serious erosion pro-

blems during our clean-up operations in 1996. Officials of the Ministry of the Environment also confirmed the worrisome degradation of the banks of this tributary of the Magog River and the damage caused by the bad management of the sand quarries located near its mouth. Since government regulation has been largely ineffective, it is necessary to count on the political will of the municipality and the cooperation of the owners to remedy the current situation. Will it be necessary for the Rock Forest municipality to send a mechanical shovel into the Magog River to remove the surplus sand and sediment deposited by the current? One hopes not. One also hopes that Action Saint-François could eventually participate in the restoration of the Nick.

I also established contacts with one of our members, Francois Thomas, environmental manager for the Coaticook MRC. We have discussed a possible partnership for a pilot project in the region. Erosion problems on the Ascot River (rivière-aux saumons) upstream from Martinville have been the object of recent detailed studies (1993 and 1995), and we have envisaged the possibility of collaboration with this municipality as well as of research into possible intervention on sites within the region.

The re-vegetation and riverbank stabilization file evolves from week to week and new projects will most certainly see the light of day for the summer of 1999. Don't hesitate to get in touch with me for further information, to offer your comments and advice, or to volunteer your participation.

Ecologically yours.



At the heart of ecology: ecoresponsibility

The Earth is a living being, wrote James Lovelock in 1979. This affirmation, also called the Gaia hypothesis, illustrates the evolution of ecological inquiry over the second half of the 20th century. Indeed, on a planetary scale, there has emerged a new consciousness radically different from the classic conceptions of knowledge: the planet is a whole and must be treated and analysed as such. In other words, we now represent our habitat, Earth, with one global image: that of a vast system or an immense community composed of elements in constant interrelations from microorganisms, minerals, plants, animals (including humans) to the life supporting elements such as earth, air and water. This image of oneness can only transform the manner in which we perceive the relations between man and nature.

France Jutras

For a long time, our culture has defined ecology as being the systematic study of living beings and their relationship with the environment. This notion, living being can be applied to a unicellular entity as well as the planet itself. The natural sciences play a large role in the study of the living and their biophysical characteristics; the cultural sciences aim to underscore the social and cultural structuring of the relations between living beings and their environments.

What ASF accomplishes is a good example of the broadening of the meaning of ecology: the search for solutions to environmental problems in a given milieu demands not only the management of a pollutant, but also influencing individuals in today's social reality.

This transformation in the domain of ideas and social practices allowed for the emergence of a problematic both profound and fundamental. Profound because societies recognize the urgency of the problems e.g. the speed at which we can destroy the planet. Fundamental because it makes us reexamine our life as human beings: how to live on this planet as ecoresponsible and interdependent citizens.

In industrialized countries in the 20th century one of the great goals in the apprenticeship of societal life has been to become a responsible citizen of a nation state. Today this objective is no longer sufficient. Now, at the end of the 20th century, we must enlarge our goal from the nation state to the planet as a whole. This idea is best expressed by the well known slogan: *think globally, act locally*. So our

responsibility as citizens is not limited to taking care of our personal space, our little corner of the world, but to perceiving them and ourselves as parts of the global ecosystem that is the planet Earth. This is the heart of ecoresponsibility.

Summing up, ecoresponsibility rests on a broadened concept of ecology that comprises the *bios*, the living in the ecosystem, the *eidos*, aspects of culture and the world in which we cohabit and the *autos*, the individual who interprets, organizes and cares for the world. In this context, we can no longer consider ourselves as independent of the life processes on the planet, we are a part of them. This involves a complete change of perspective. Instead of believing or feeling that we are separated or dissociated from our environment we perceive a personal and unavoidable connection with our milieu which is in fact the planet.

Reference : Bertrand, Y., P. Valois et F. Jutras (1997). *L'écologie à l'école : inventer un avenir pour la Planète*. PUF, Paris.



Why should we be consumption wise ?

Recent data on the very low water level in the different Hydro-Québec reservoirs, the 1996 flood in the Saguenay region and last winter's ice storm remind us harshly of how dependent we are on water and electricity. Yet, we are still using these precious resources excessively. Why? It seems that the apparent unlimited availability of them seems to lure everyone.

Stéphane Bilodeau, ing., M.Sc.A.

Water is our ally in many ways. Besides being essential to our survival, water is a major factor in enhancing our quality of life. Since the dawn of time, man has tried different ways to use water for his own benefit. Our ancestors were using irrigation techniques for their crops before 5 000 B.C. Closer to our time, since the beginning of the industrial era, hydraulic energy supplies the major part of our electricity in Québec. However, most of the water usage consumes some part of the water meaning that the amount of water returned to the source is less in quantity (and often in quality) than that used initially. The ability of our lakes and water ways, even our oceans, to clean all the waste (used water, pesticides, etc.) that we throw in and our ability to manage the modifications made to streams (hydroelectric dams) is more limited than we used to think. Thus, the over consumption of water and electricity has a negative impact on the environment as well as on our quality of life.

It is necessary to treat our waters: our drinking water as well that used to produce electricity. The water used to produce power is heavily polluted, which translates into higher treatment costs, especially due to the clogging of the equipment.

One has to remember that there is a cost attached to water treatment: it will translate into billions of dollars that the executives of our enterprises, as well as the heads of governments, will pick right out of the pockets of taxpayers and consumers.

Water is not a free resource. Even though it costs us less than in most countries to bring water to our kitchen or bathroom faucets, our consumption per inhabitant is higher than in most of these same countries. The bottom line is that we are paying less for

water than the actual cost of treatment and distribution demands. In Québec, the actual cost billed for domestic water (yes, for our usage) is less than one tenth of the actual cost for that service. The same story goes for electricity, which is not the true reflection of the actual cost of the damage done to society and the impacts on the environment. Let's not forget that this electrical energy relies in great part on our fundamental resource: water.

In Canada, as well as in Québec, water and power consumption are closely linked. We have the habit of wasting hydroelectric resources. In Québec, water and electricity are directly related. The more electricity we use, the lower the water levels of the great reservoirs (Manic, James Bay). A severe drop in water level translates into a reduction of the water supply to areas downstream (and here, we are dealing with very large areas), furthermore, all the polluting agents, for example the very toxic mercury, piling up in the bottom of those watersheds have a tendency to float up to the surface of the water in very important amounts. The bottom line is additional water cleaning costs. All this pollution does not come only from major industries, but from us also, being great consumers of pollutants.

When the production capacity does not meet the demand (our demand), we have to find another way to produce electricity. For example, last summer, Hydro-Québec reopened the power plant in Tracy, fossil fuel powered, because of an important drop in the water level in its reservoirs (at a third of their capacity). During its operation, the Tracy plant uses water from the Saint-Lawrence river, exactly where the St-Francis river flows in. This power station uses about 140 litres of treat-

ed water to produce one Kwh of electricity.

If the problem intensifies, Hydro-Québec can also rely on the nuclear power plant in Bécancour which is even more polluting and needs 205 litres of water to produce one Kwh of electricity. Just to give you a hint, your clothes dryer consumes from two to five Kwh of electricity per hour and a washing load in hot water will use up to eight Kwh (in cold water, only one Kwh).

By over consuming water and electricity we play the game of the different producers, by furnishing them with reasons to justify their use of polluting power stations or the building of additional dams, which have unknown effects on the environment.

So what's to be done? Firstly, we should determine where we use water and electricity in our own home. We should then decide what to do to reduce the quantity of power used, either by eliminating wasteful practices or by improving the power consumption effectiveness of our appliances. So, to recap, which will you choose? Washing your clothes in hot or cold water? Will you leave your computer on all day long, even if it uses 0,4 Kwh every hour?

Good power management starts at home, by looking into our habits of consuming. It would be easy to minimize the loss. Conserving water doesn't mean downgrading our way of life. All we have to do is simply reduce the waste, especially the water we don't really need. Don't forget that water is not only used, it is reused. Just think of our municipal water system. Think about this the next time you flush your toilet, or brush your teeth or drink a glass of water.

There are other means also: use the new energy sources, like solar energy or be more energy efficient. I shall talk about that some other time. I don't want to leave you gasping but I'd rather whet your appetite for the next issue. Until then, don't wait for sanctions and taxes to be legislated, assume responsibility now.



The 224 new members of Action Saint-François from march 15, to september 15, 1998

BROMPTONVILLE

SUZANNE BROUILLETTE
GILLES TREMBLAY

CANTON DE MAGOG

MONIQUE ALLARD
SUZELLE BEAUDOIN
CATHERINE GUAY
ROBERT NADEAU
ROBERT PARENTEAU

FLEURIMONT

STÉPHANE BARIL
LUC BERTRAND
MICHELINE BOIVERTK
ELYSE BOUDREAU
FRÉDÉRIK CLARK
SUZANNE COUTURE
ROBIN CYR
CLAUDE DION
JACQUES DUCHESNEAU
GABRIEL DUCLOS
JEAN-FRANÇOIS DUMOULIN
HUGUETTE GAGNON
LUCILLE GAUTHIER
YVES GUAY
MICHEL HAMEL
GILLES HENRI
PIERRE LACROIX
PIERRE LAFLEUR
CLAUDE LAMIRANDES
ROBERT MILOT
DENISE PELLETIER
SYLVAIN RAJOTTE
ANDRÉ ROBERGE
BERTRAND ROY
PIERRETTE ROY

HATLEY OUEST

MARIA BANDRAUK

MAGOG

JOSÉE CHOUINARD

NORTH HATLEY

FRÉDÉRIC ALAIN
MARTIN BERNIER
CLAUDE BOURGET
JOSÉE CROTEAU
ALICE DELORME
STERLING GALVIN
DOUGLAS GRANT
DORA LAPRISE
GUY LARENTE
MARY LEVASSEUR
GIZELLE MORGAN
MURIELLE PELLETIER
COLETTE PENHALE
WK PERRY-GORE
CLAUDE QUINTIN
RIET
BILL ROBSON

MICHAEL ROCHETTE

JAMES ROSS
PHILIP SCOWEN
NATHAN SMITH
DANIELLE VALÇKE
PAULINE VALLÉE
LYNN WOLF

ROCK FOREST

YVES BARTHES
MARIE-CLAUDE BEAUCAGE
CHANTAL CHARRON
OLIVIER GAGNON
BRUNO LACASSE
SERGE MASSICOTTE
JAMES MC MAHON
LUC RIENDEAU
YVES VALLÉE

SHERBROOKE

CHRYSTINE ADAM
LUC ARSENAULT
RACHEL BABIN
DENIS BEAUCHEMIN
STÉPHANE BEAUCHESNE
MICHEL BÉLANGER
PIERRE BÉLANGER
JEANNETTE BERGERON
LAVAL BERGERON
RICHARD BERGERON
LUCIEN BERNIER
YVES BIEN
YVAVHOE BILODEAU
PIERRE BOLJUC
DANIEL BOUCHARD
GILLES BOUCHARD
CHARLES BRUGGER
LOUISE CANTIN
GINETTE CARDINAL
JOSÉE CARON
GILLES CHAMPAGNE
AMÉLIE CHANEZ
RICHARD CHARTIER
PIERRE-YVES CLERSON
FRANÇOIS COTÉ
SYLVIÉ CÔTÉ
EDITH COURCY
PIERRE COURNOYER
JEANNINE DANIS
JEAN DELISLE
ÉRIC DÉZIEL
AGATHE DION
CHANTAL DION
GUY DOYON
RÉAL DROUIN
JEAN-MARIE DUBOIS
DANIEL DUMAS
STEPHAN ELKAS
JEAN FRÉCHETTE
DANIEL GAUCHER
PIERRE GAUTHIER
MARIE-CLAUDE GEOFFRION

JEAN-PAUL GINGRAS

MARCEL GOBEIL
MARIO GRÉGOIRE
PAUL-ÉMILE GUILLEMETTE
DANIEL HADE
STEVE HÉBERT
STEPHEN KOURI
ERIC LACHANCE
FRANÇOISE LAFOND
SUZANNE LAFONTAINE
BRUNO LANDRY
NATHALIE LANGLOIS
CHRISTIAN LAPORTE
PIERRE LAPORTE
KERWIN LARKIN
GAÉTAN LAROUCHE
LOUISE LAVERDIÈRE
BRUNO LECORFF
CÉLINE LEMAY
YVON LEMAY
ANITA LEMIEUX
ANTONIO LÉTOURNEAU
ÉRIC MALENFANT
RENÉ MARCHAND
ROGER MARTIN
YVES MARTIN
MARGRIT-REGULA MEIER
CAROLE MELANÇON
BENOIT MERCIER
SUZIE MOREAU
FRANCE NADEAU
THÉRÈSE OCTEAU-HANDING
LUC OUELLETTE
ROBERT P. PERRAULT
YVES PARENTEAU
MAUDE PAYER
MARTIN PELLETIER
MARJOLAINE PERRAULT
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STEVE BERGERON
SYLVAIN BISAILLON
DENIS BOILARD
SERGE BOISVERT
ANNIE BOLJUC
GERARD BOLJUC
GERMAIN CADOTTE
SERGE CHAMPAGNE
CAMILLE DUBUC
JEAN-GUY DUPUIS
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JEAN-PIERRE THIBODEAU
LINDA TREMBLAY
LOUISE TURGEON
DANIEL VERPAELST
LOUIS VOYER

STE-CATHERINE-DE-HATLEY

ALAIN LALUMIÈRE
GERVAIS MORIN

People renewed their membership.
We now number 765 members in good standing.



**ACTION
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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.