LEFEUVE

St. Lawrence Action Plan Newsletter

Volume 1, nº 4, September 1990

Year II Report

The Action Plan Is Getting Results

ear II of the St. Lawrence Action Plan, which actually corresponds to the first full year of activities, was outstanding from the standpoint of both the effectiveness of the efforts of a host of individuals and organizations and the scope of the progress made. This is the overriding message of the 1989-1990 annual report on the St. Lawrence Action Plan, which will be released on October 9.

According to Albin Tremblay of Environment Canada, the annual report reflects the Plan's dynamic beginnings, which are now starting to get concrete results. As emphasized by Tremblay, «Coorand close dinated activities collaboration between both levels of government are becoming factors in establishing the Action Plan as a model for government intervention targeting specific environmental problems.»

Definite milestones mark the second year of the Action Plan, in particular, the June 8, 1989 signing of a cooperation agreement by Environment Canada, the Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec and the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de



Conservation: Year III's Priority.

la Pêche du Québec. This is an excellent initiative that will ensure more effective action.

One of the most important elements was the signing of a specific agreement to create a marine park at the mouth of the Saguenay River. The formula proposed for this park is the first of its kind in Canada.

A Year Rich in Progress in All Areas

Major progress was made in all four components of the Plan during Year II. In the "Protection" component, the profile of the 50 priority industrial plants was completed. A summary of the information gathered on each of the 50 establishments is now available. The work, which is progressing at a good rate, is the first essential step in the development of remedial plans and the negotiation of clean-up agreements with the plants. It represents one of the many contributions by the Canada-Québec action group, composed specialists from the federal and provincial environment departments.

As concerns the «Environmental Technologies» component, consultation with the heads of these 50 industrial plants led, among other things, to identification of development needs and priorities for such technologies. Characterization of sediments in the ports of Montréal, Trois-Rivières and Québec City was

completed in 1989-1990, marking the highlight of the Plan's «Restoration» component. An overview of the contamination level of these sites is now available.

With the signing of the federal-provincial agreement to create the Saguenay National Marine Park, the two governments joined their environment conservation efforts. Québec accorded protected status to its lands while Canada concentrated on resource and activity management based on major conservation principles.

Moreover, considerable effort was devoted to preparing for the application of the Act respecting threatened or endangered species, adopted by the Québec National Assembly in June 1989. Finally, in fall 1989, the Canadian Wildlife Service announced its Habitat Management and Acquisition Assistance Program aimed at providing financial and technical support for nongovernmental organizations working to protect wildlife habitats in Québec.

Conservation: The Priority for Year III

As reiterated in the 1989-1990 annual report, the ultimate objective of all Action Plan efforts consists in preserving the St. Lawrence as a life-sustaining environment. The activities connected with the «Conservation» component are therefore crucial, prompting Action Plan administrators to establish conservation as the main theme for 1990-1991. Finally, the interdepartmental plan to ensure the survival of the St. Lawrence beluga

whale will continue for a third year. Dynamics of whale population will be determined and limiting factors will be identified.

In Year III, significant developments should occur in the program to create the Saguenay marine park through the agreement in principle concluded between the federal and provincial governments. This park will enable wildlife and plant resources that are unique in the world to be protected and conserved.

Under the endangered species preservation program, repopulation plans and national strategies will be formulated for Québec's priority endangered bird species. In addition, the reproduction of endangered species such as the loggerhead shrike and the piping plover will be assessed and the quality of their habitats evaluated. The national five-year inventory of the peregrine falcon will also be carried out in Year III. As regards aquatic wildlife, a study will be conducted to determine the feasibility of restoring the rock fish and lake smelt populations.

The high point of the habitat preservation program should be the signing of an agreement between Environment Canada and Transport Canada to protect 500 additional hectares of wildlife habitats. During the next three years of the Action Plan, measures will be taken to preserve some 3500 hectares of habitats critical to the survival of endangered wildlife and plant species.

Affirms Albin Tremblay, «Year III has been heralded with confidence and optimism and should yield many concrete results.»



LA SOCIÉTÉ LINNÉENNE DU QUÉBEC

A non-profit provincial organization founded in 1929, the Société linnéenne du Québec now has close to 900 members. Recognized today as an important educational foundation, it provides interpretation programs at several natural sites, informing more than 300 000 visitors a year of the importance of protecting and actively safeguarding our natural heritage. Its concrete contributions to the realization of SLAP objectives make the Société one of our distinguished partners.

The Société linnéenne is actively involved in environmental protection along the entire St. Lawrence. At the Pointe-Noire Coastal Station, Société naturalists offer various activities and exhibitions to educate the public and increase concern about marine mammals, especially belugas and their habitat. The coastal station, located at the heart of the Saguenay National Marine Park and belonging to the Canadian Parks Service, is set aside for the sole purpose of informing the public about the precarious situation of the St. Lawrence belugas and about the importance of the marine park.

The Société linnéenne is also involved at the Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area where Greater Snow Geese gather every spring and fall during their annual migration. Some 850 bird species have been counted in the wide expanses of wetlands for which the area is known. Of these, some 100 are nesting birds. The Société linnéenne provides reception and interpretation activities at the site, which is owned and run by the Canadian Wildlife Service. The Domaine Joly de Lotbinière, owned by Québec's Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, also benefits from services provided by the Société.

The Société linnéenne has developed three teaching kits, «Les énigmes du Saint-Laurent,» to help 9- to 12-year-olds understand the importance and environmental sensitivity of the St. Lawrence ecosystem and the need to preserve and protect it.

In addition to maintaining activities forte public, such as the AQUANIM program at the Aquarium du Québec and its interpretation cruises, the Société linnéenne continues to disseminate information about the importance of protecting the St. Lawrence.

Habitats Along the St. Lawrence: a Heritage to Be Enhanced

A VERY SPECIAL CRUISE

he St. Lawrence is a majestic mosaic of natural ecosystems and centres of human activity. Each bend in the river offers a new ecological or sociological phenomenon.

The St. Lawrence is also home to hundreds of species of fish, close to 300 bird species, twenty some types of amphibians and reptiles and a dozen mammals.

The MLCP: Manager of Québec's Wildlife Heritage

Harvesting the river's rich wildlife can generate \$70-million per year in the sport and commercial fishing sectors alone. Therefore, wildlife conservation and protection along the St. Lawrence fall naturally into the «wildlife mission» of the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche (MLCP).

The St. Lawrence Action Plan allows the MLCP to implement concrete measures for the St. Lawrence, become more actively involved in conservation and habitat development issues and ensure the protection of endangered and threatened species. A fishing development plan to be applied throughout the corridor will allow the MLCP to monitor the effects of cleanup activities on the health of aquatic ecosystems.

A Mini-forum for Technical Exchange

Of course, these actions can succeed only in the context of a partnership.



A practical fishing management course on the "Tortue"

Within this spirit of joint action, the MLCP organized a visit to the sites that best illustrate the problems facing St. Lawrence habitats.

On June 19 and 20, MLCP, MENVIQ, Hydro-Québec, Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada representatives, most of whom are members of SLAP's coordination committees, were given a chance to share and exchange ideas, and discover how their actions are interdependent. Even guests from Ontario were invited so that they could learn about problems and strategies for conserving fish species in Québec.

The River Between Two Archipelagos and Two Great Lakes

The group met at Longueuil, located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. MLCP biologists Pierre Dumont and Gilles Ouellette invited us to discover the major wildlife habitats along the St. Lawrence between Lake St. Louis and the Lake St. Pierre archipelago.

The meeting place of brown waters from the Canadian Shield and green waters from the Great Lakes, Lake St. Louis is home to approximately 80 species of fish that attract sport fishermen (609 000 per year) and support at least a dozen commercial fishermen.

The first stop on our river voyage was Pointe du Buisson archaeological park, a major archaeological site along the river corridor. This unique natural habitat includes five homogeneous areas: marshlands, the outcrop of Potsdam sandstone, grasslands, deciduous forest and the river. Rapids and eddies in this part of the St. Lawrence support large populations of many species of fish, ensuring an ecological diversity that attracts 40 species of nesting birds.

Islands Ho!

June 20 was set aside for the exploration of the Lake St. Pierre archipelago. Composed of some 100 islands located 50 kilometres northeast of Montréal, it changes the face of the St. Lawrence at this point, affecting both water flow and quality.

Our first stop was Lavallière Bay. This immense 1000-hectare wetland owned by the MLCP is an area of extreme environmental interest. To entice waterfowl to the area, Ducks Unlimited has implemented water-level controls to develop over 500 hectares of marshlands. This ecosite poses several major problems for fish, especially in the spring when receding flood waters trap many in the marsh after spawning season. The MLCP is working with Ducks Unlimited to find original solutions likely to help waterfowl and fish.

In the spring and fall, islands in the Lake St. Pierre archipelago are invaded by thousands of migrating ducks. Several acquisition and development projects have been or will be introduced on the archipelago by the MLCP, notably on Dupas, Du



A lovely little stream near Montreal, the Rivière-aux-Pins near Boucherville is an ecosite to be protected for the 16 fish species that spawn there.

Milieu and Du Moine islands. These protection measures are designed to preserve aquatic habitats that are as environmentally sensitive as they are unique.

National Wildlife Areas

Exceptional Natural Environments

he first of the eight national wildlife areas along the St. Lawrence River in Québec was created in 1969 primarily to protect migratory bird habitats. Today, these eight truly exceptional natural environments make it possible for the ecological diversity of the St. Lawrence to be preserved and enhanced.

A Network Boasting Wealth and Diversity

As initially planned by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), «each reserve is an essential part of a network,



More than 20 wildfowl species can be found in the Lake St. François National Wildlife Area.

channels, we passed the largest heronry in North America, with almost 900 nests. This short, two-day odyssey into the heart of a few St. Lawrence wildlife habitats revealed the diversity, grandeur and vulnerability

On the return trip through the

of the river system. It showed the partners the need for a common view of the different problems, while stressing coordinated efforts.

The St. Lawrence! Our challenge is to be able to

bathe in it, drink from it, and eat the fish we catch in it. It's up to us!

* This article is based on a text by Clément Gauthier, biologist from the MLCP regional office in Trois-Rivières. representing a specific environment inhabited by different species. The network formed by the eight reserves reflects the wealth and diversity of the St. Lawrence River ecosystem,» notes Yvon Mercier, biologist and head of the CWS's Habitat Conservation Division.

More than twenty species of wildfowl can be observed in the Lac St. François National Wildlife Area, one of the only redhead nesting grounds in the The vast St. Lawrence lowlands. wetlands of the Iles de la Paix National Wildlife Area are a veritable wildlife oasis within close proximity of Montréal. The Îles de Contrecoeur National Wildlife Area boasts gadwall, northern pintail, and a wigeon, while the Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, renowned as a migratory stopover for greater snow geese, welcomes over 400 000 wild geese each year. The Iles de l'Estuaire National Wildlife Area shelters the largest common eider colony of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence Estuary. The intertidal marshes of the Baie de L'Isle-Verte National Wildlife Area are among the

sites most frequented by black duck. Although limited in area, the Pointe-au-Père National Wildlife Area is a sanctuary for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl. Finally, the Pointe de l'Est National Wildlife Area is a major migratory stopover for numerous rare or endangered bird species on the Magdelan Islands, which is the last remaining breeding grounds of the piping plover in Québec.

When Local Organizations Get Involved in Conservation

As well as protecting these sites, the CWS ensures that they contribute to public awareness of conservation issues. «The fact that, in recent years, local residents and agencies spontaneously offered their help in developing the national wildlife areas has provided tremendous encouragement and stimulation,» adds Yvon Mercier. The CWS builds or upgrades infrastructures and offers technical and professional assistance to local agencies that take charge of guided activities in the various regions.

At Cap Tourmente, for example, the Société linnéenne is the CWS's partner; in Baie de L'Isle-Verte, it is the Société de conservation de la baie de L'Isle-Verte, and at Pointe de

l'Est on the Magdelan Islands, it is the Base de plein air Les Iles. In the Estuary, Duvetnor inc. organizes guided daily tours from the Rivière-du-Loup marina to one of the national wildlife area's islands and introduces visitors to its ecological wealth. In Pointe-au-Père, a team from the Musée de la mer is on hand to provide information. The trend is growing and the CWS plans on inviting an increasing number of local agencies to join in implementing regional conservation programs.

As well as ensuring the conservation and development of natural environments, national wildlife areas are sites for scientific research, particularly on migratory birds and their habitats. Research is conducted by the CWS or by authorized universities who have defended their research goals.

Protecting such natural environments is of great importance for the quality of our own lives. «I get strange looks when I say that,» jokes Yvon Mercier, «but, after all, we're just another link in the chain. It's very well to clean up rivers, but we also need an environment that can support plant and animal life. Everything in our ecosystems is interconnected and we must not lose sight of the fact that the wealth of the natural environment is what allows man, as a life form in his own right, to develop fully.



At the Pointe de l'Est National Wildlife Area, the Base de plein air Les Îles and CWS work together to provide nature interpretation and other activities.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE TO CANADIANS IN 1987:

HIGHLIGHTS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY.

F.L. Filion et al., Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, 1989.

In 1987, a major nationwide survey on the importance of wildlife for Canadians was conducted jointly by a federal-provincial task force and Statistics Canada, under the auspices of the Canadian Wildlife Service. The survey polled some 80 000 Canadians aged 15 and over and proved to be a reliable tool for assessing the 1987 participation of Canadians in wildlife conservation activities and comparing the results with a similar study conducted in 1981.

Survey results show that wildlife plays an important role in the life of Canadians. In 1987, 18.3 million Canadians participated in some form of wildlife-related activity and spent a total of 1.2 million days and \$5.1 billion on such past-times. One interesting fact revealed in the survey is that wildlife conservation enjoys tremendous public support: over 8 in 10 Canadians feel it is important to maintain abundant wildlife populations and favour implementing measures to protect endangered species.

The survey also showed that observing, photographing, studying and feeding animals near the home or on outings is a popular form of recreation, since 70% of Canadians spent a total of \$2.7 billion and considerable time on this activity in 1987. Furthermore, most Canadians are in indirect contact with wildlife through TV, wildlife magazines, zoos, aquariums, natural history museums, etc.

Because it provides particularly interesting data, this study may prove very useful to wildlife and habitat conservation managers for the formulation of resource policies, and the planning and evaluation of current programs and services within a context of sustainable development.

The next nationwide survey on the importance of wildlife to Canadians will be conducted in 1991.

To obtain a copy of the survey, contact:
Canadian Wildlife Service
Socio-Economic Division
Environment Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3

No Fauna Without Flora!

ith the Act respecting threatened or endangered species passed in June 1989, the concept of plant habitat officially appeared for the first time in Québec legislation. This Act is one of a series of measures designed to protect Québec's plant and animal species. The Ministère de l'Environnement (MENVIQ) is responsible for enforcing the Act's provisions regarding plants.

According Léopold to Gaudreau, Director of Conservation and the Ecological Heritage at MENVIQ, «in Québec, we tend to think only of wildlife when we refer to habitats. This is because the concept was first developed by wildlife managers. The problem stems from the word 'habitat' itself, which is of American origin, and should probably be replaced in our case by 'ecosystem' or 'ecotope'. Since the concept of 'habitat' is so ingrained in usage, the term 'plant habitat' has been coined in opposition to 'wildlife habitat'.

MENVIQ: Protecting Plant Habitats

MENVIQ's commitment to protecting plants and their habitats is not new. The Act respecting ecological reserves, passed in 1974, allows MENVIQ to acquire natural sites supporting various plant species and to implement any protection measures necessary. To date, four reserves have been created to protect plant species along the St. Lawrence.

The Micocoulier Ecological Reserve, composed of two islands in the Valleyfield archipelago, shelters some 30 rare species, including the only hackberry tree (species related to the elm) timber stand in Québec. The Pointe-Heath Ecological Reserve on Anticosti Island is devoted to the protection of arctic-alpine peaty vegetation usually found farther north. The plant species of the Ile-Brion Ecological Reserve, on the Magdelan



Located near Trois-Rivières, the Îles-aux-Sternes Ecological Reserve is an island built completely of material from dredging activities on the River.

Islands, are similar to what they were when Jacques Cartier first landed there in 1534.

Located near Trois-Rivières, the Ile-aux-Sternes Ecological Reserve is a man-made island built in 1969 using material from dredging activities on the River. Although nothing has ever been planted on the island, 56 plant species were recorded in 1970 and 175 in 1974. Today, clusters of silver maple and various forms of wildlife, including migrating ducks and muskrat, can be found there.

Under the St. Lawrence Action Plan, at least six other ecological reserves could be created primarily to protect plant habitats. Work has already begun to create the Lac Saint-Paul Ecological Reserve in the Trois-Rivières region, where 30 or so rare plant species unique to the St. Lawrence have been inventoried. Additional reserves are planned for the Montréal and Lotbinière regions. In the longer term, the areas between Cornwall and Montréal and Québec City and Anticosti Island will also be designated ecological reserves.

Plant Life: Indicator of the Health of the St. Lawrence

«With the Act respecting threatened or endangered species,» points out Léopold Gaudreau, «MENVIQ will not longer have to automatically purchase sites in order to protect plant habitats.» This means that species designated threatened or endangered in the legislation can be protected merely by prohibiting activities or restricting or setting conditions for the use of the land on which they grow.

«Plant life is an excellent indicator of the health of the St. Lawrence,» adds Mr. Gaudreau. «By protecting wetlands, we can safeguard the plant habitats supporting a host of wildlife species, particularly dragonflies, turtles, salamanders and various amphibians, some of which are endangered or threatened. And that doesn't include the many nature interpretation programs and research activities that continually provide greater knowledge and understanding and allow us to appreciate the diversity of the biological world.»

STOP: 20 Years and Still Going Strong

hen we hear that the fight against pollution requires an allout united effort, or that ordinary citizens like you and I must sit down with governments and industries in order to find solutions, we fully agree. STOP has been recommending this very approach from the beginning.» This is how Bruce Walker, director of research at STOP, describes the citizens' group for environmental protection, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary in September.

Considerable Impact in the Montréal Region

A public education and pressure group for ecological issues, STOP concentrates its efforts in the Greater Montréal region. Through its activities, the organization has had a considerable impact since 1970: by instituting legal proceedings and through various manifestations, STOP has helped further the cause of water quality and directly or indirectly contributed to efforts to clean up the St. Lawrence.

«It was the serious degradation of rivers and streams around Montréal that led to the founding of STOP,» points out Mr. Walker. One memorable case was the fight to protect three riverside properties in Pierrefonds from 1972 to 1974. Waste from the main Pierrefonds sewage plant was polluting a bay in Des Prairies River and affecting the property of local residents. A lawsuit was filed: the municipality was found guilty and had to pay compensation to the property owners.

"This victory was a stepping stone. The elected officials were forced to make a move. Whereas in the early 1970s approximately 99 percent of the MUC's wastewater wasn't treated, less than a year after the Pierrefonds case,



Bruce Walker, Director of Research at STOP inc.

the MUC implemented its program to build wastewater treatment plants,» points out Mr. Walker.

One of STOP's many actions to help clean up the St. Lawrence was taken in 1985, when it published a file showing that, despite major investments to build treatment plants, eastern Montréal's oil refineries regularly exceeded their toxic emission quotas. «If we had conducted a publicity stunt by climbing refinery smokestacks, we would have made bigger headlines,» explains Bruce Walker, «but we believe more in dialogue than in attention-grabbing.»

Citizens Play a Major Role

The members of STOP continue their work unrelentingly on many fronts. For example, STOP is currently trying to convince the MUC to stop adding chlorine to treat wastewater dumped into the river by the treatment plant in eastern Montréal and find another technique. It joins the Ministère de l'Environnement in recommending the use of gentle technologies such as ozone treatment or the use of ultraviolet rays.

STOP believes, above all, in the role of ordinary citizens in the fight against pollution. «Environment-related decisions cannot be made by specialists alone,» concludes Mr. Walker. «The best environmental policies will be those that meet the public's expectations.»



THE ACTION PLAN IS GETTING RESULTS

Albin Tremblay Environment Canada (418) 648-4619

A VERY SPECIAL CRUISE

Clément Gauthier Trois-Rivières regional office MLCP (819) 373-4444

EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Yvon Mercier Section de gestion des habitats SCF (418) 648-3685

NO FAUNA WITHOUT FLORA!

Léopold Gaudreau Direction de la conservation et du patrimoine écologique MENVIQ (418) 644-3378

STOP: 20 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG!

Bruce Walker Director of Research STOP Inc. (514) 932-7267

PARTNERS

Guy Bouchard Coordinator, Financing and Promotion Société linnéenne du Québec (418) 653-8186



St-Lawrence Action Plan Symposium

Organized jointly by Environment Canada, the Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche and the Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec October 9-10, 1990 Grand Hotel, Montréal

Grand Hotel, Montréal Telephone: (514) 283-0198

13Th Wastewater Treatment Symposium Organized jointly by the Association québécoise des techniques de l'eau, the Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec, the Société québécoise d'assainissement des eaux and Environment Canada

November 13-17, 1990 Hotel Meridien, Montréal Telephone: (514) 874-3700 Workshops on Habitat Protection

Organized by the Canadian Wildlife Service October 27-28, 1990

Hotel Val-des-Neiges, Mont Sainte-Anne Open to nongovernmental groups interested in habitat protection

Reservations required:

Francine Hone

Telephone: (418) 648-4554

The International Environment and Ecology Exhibition Crossroads

October 31 - November 6, 1990

Theme:

 Environmental Technology International Conference on the Environment and the Economy Oct. 31, Nov. 1-2, 1990 Place Bonaventure, Montréal

• Exhibition: Nov. 1-6, 1990 Hilton and Queen Elizabeth

Telephone: (514) 922-2545



During the Francophone Summit held in Dakar in 1989, several Canadian projects were submitted and approved; them. the proposed among development of a short river management program for senior officials in French-speaking African nations. This project, promoted by the St. Lawrence Centre, provides for the creation a network of specialists for the management of major rivers.

The project addresses documentation and training needs. The documentation component consists in setting up a bibliographic data bank on rivers and their management, and establishing a network of documentation centres on rivers. The training aspect essentially involves a practicum in river management for senior officials of French-speaking

African nations scheduled for fall 1991. The proposed approach is considered by Jean Burton, project coordinator for the St. Lawrence Centre, to be new, multidisciplinary and different from the traditional approach. The practicum will take place in Africa and is intended for river resource managers. More specifically, it is directed at senior officials of five West African nations: Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Mauritania, countries bordering the Niger and Senegal rivers.

The practicum is preceded by two preparatory stages: an initial consultation session on the overall agenda, which has already taken place, and a second session to elaborate on the contents of the practicum, which will take place in Mali in October.



St. Lawrence Action Plan Newsletter

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