

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL STORY

DANIEL J. ROWE

The Eastern Door

An excellent story about sediment in Recreation Bay that clearly reports on the issue, sets the historical context, points to solutions, and includes a range of community voices. Well done!

LAURENT ROBILLARD-CARDINAL

Bulletin d'Aylmer

An important story to break about Zebra mussels. The second paragraph was a little dense with text about the main source, but the story blossomed from there. Strong explanation drives this story and its quality.

Environment office to deal with sediment in bay

DANIEL J. ROWE
THE EASTERN DOOR

The water line in Recreation Bay is low, sediment levels are high, and the Kahnawake Environment Protection Office (KEPO) wants to stop the trend before the bay becomes a bog.

Before the St. Lawrence Seaway's construction in the 1950s (completed in 1959) water flowed from the St. Lawrence River through the channel and past the island. The seaway changed that. "It's basically an unnatural system because when the seaway was created it cut off that flow, so you have a system that's much wider than what would exist in nature, so it's more like a lake than a river system," said KEPO consultant Patrick Ragaz. "A lake that gets a bunch of sediment and nutrients pumped into it from the Chateaugay River."

Ask any paddler from the Onake Paddling Club and they'll tell you that high sediment levels have become an issue for those on the water.

"The sediment came up quite a few feet, the water was a lot deeper," said Sharon Rice, who has paddled since the late '70s. "We always had weeds in the bay, but usually they only came up at the end of July."

Last weekend, Rice threw buoys into the water as part of the Kahnawake Youth Center's amazing race, and saw first hand the



situation on the bay.

"Even then only being in the water for three hours, when we pulled up the buoys they were just full of gunk," said Rice.

Excess sediment has made Sharon Rice's season much shorter than it was when Rice first paddled - when the club opened. "The bay is great to paddle in, and great to fish in, but come mid-July we won't be able to go even around the island because we might hit a rock," said Rice. "Within the last 10 years it's gotten really bad."

Sediment has built up on the floor of the bay for decades, and the environment office would like to reverse the trend. "We're going to look at the different parameters that can affect the movement of sediment through the bay," said Ragaz. "Everyone's aware that there's a sedimentation problem in the bay. It's slowly filling up with sediment, making it hard to boat and impacting the fish in the bay."

Fisherman Eric "Dirt" McComber said the bay should be dredged immediately to increase the flow of water through the area.

"Just clean it up, and give them the bill," said McComber. "We're not making the new canal here. If you dredge it, there'll be nothing wrong with us. Wildlife, like us, is very adaptable, and that's all it is."

Technicians from Hydrosyst SA are working with the environment office to replicate the current conditions in the bay using a computer model by looking at water flow, wave patterns, and amount of sediment that is being contributed. Equipment will be installed over the month to monitor the situation.

NEWS

KEPO will then look at different options for improving the situation.

"We can look at what would happen if we excavated the sediment in the bay, excavated a channel through the bay, increased the flow somehow," said Ragaz.

Another potential solution could be putting a sediment basin upstream.

KEPO is currently gathering background information to build the model.

"That will help us design an optimal solution for the ultimate remediation of that area," said Ragaz.

Ragaz explained that the sediment has built up over time because the flow through the bay is very low. Nutrient-rich sediment from the agricultural areas upstream in the Chateaugay river basin has settled on the bay's floor and weeds have started to grow.

"If that continues, then eventually you'd basically end up with a stagnant water system rather than the bay that people are used to," said Ragaz.

In the fall, KEPO will again monitor flows to test those numbers. The modeling should be finished by December, so KEPO will have a good idea of the situation and be able to plan to repair the area.

"Once we have a model, we can test different options," said Ragaz. "There's different strate-

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Bulletin d'AYLMER

Vol. 34 No. 20
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Wednesday May 20, 2015 Vol. 34 No. 20 Vivre en harmonie~Together in harmony Le mercredi 20 mai 2015

C'est confirmé! Moules zébrées indentifiées à la marina d'Aylmer



Laurent Robillard-Cardinal
Le 8 mai, un biologiste de la vie marine a confirmé la présence de moules zébrées dans le lac Deschênes à Aylmer.

nature, a découvert des moules zébrées sur la coque de quatre bateaux alors qu'il inspectait les orins de bouées, les ancrés ainsi que des voiliers encore au sec dans le site de remisage de la marina d'Aylmer. Consultez le Bulletin de la semaine prochaine pour en savoir plus. (Trad. CB)

Avec deux collègues de l'Agence de bassin versant des 7 (ABV des 7), André L. Martel, Ph.D., malacologue et scaphandrier pour la section zoologie du Musée canadien de la

André L. Martel, Ph.D. pictured here uncovered the invasive zebra mussels in Deschênes Lake.

Confirmed! Zebra mussels identified at Aylmer Marina

Laurent Robillard-Cardinal
A marine biologist confirmed the presence of Zebra mussels in Aylmer's Deschênes Lake on May 8.

Along with two colleagues from the Agence de bassin versant des 7 (ABV des 7), André L. Martel, Ph.D., malacologist and SCUBA diver from the Zoology Section of the Canadian Museum of Nature, found Zebra

mussels on four boat hulls while inspecting buoy lines, anchors, and sailboats still high and dry on the winter storage lot at the Aylmer Marina. "Our survey indicates the

invasion is just beginning, with numbers of mussels being still on the low side: 30 to slightly over 100 mussels per hull.

PHOTO: COURTESY

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BETHANN GARRAMON MERKLE

Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph

A very fun story with an important environmental message about eels. Excellent use of science, clear writing, and a good illustration. Improved placement of quotes would have driven this story to the top.

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RAWN TO QUEBEC
An eel is an eel is an eel, or is it?

Illustration by Bethann G. Merkle

hope eels will be. Churling Pavey added, "After each dip, you have to look really carefully for something that's more or less invisible."

Recent research by Pavey's colleagues focused on differences between eels that migrate from the Sargasso Sea all the way to Lake Ontario and eels that have been transplanted into that lake from Nova Scotia.

Transplanted eels grow very differently from "native" eels. Upper St. Lawrence/Lake Ontario (USLLO) eels were found to be large, slow-growing, and predominantly female. The transplants grew much faster, matured within a few years, and included more males.

These findings led Pavey's supervisor, Louis Bernatchez, to challenge a widely held assumption among eel researchers. Because all American eels breed together, they were long thought to be genetically interchangeable. Bernatchez's team tapped into an extensive network of academic and commercial