

## Summer-Fall 2019 Newsletter



(Eastern Escarpment)

### The Purpose and Vision of the Association

The Mont O'Brien Association is a registered non-profit, charitable organisation, dedicated to protection of this Biodiversity Reserve, and to providing responsible public access, hiking trails, nature activities, & biodiversity education. The Association supports high-quality nature tourism & recreo-tourism to aid the local economy.

### Ross's Creek from snowshoes, March 17, 2018



Photo: Sylvain Masset

Sylvain hiked to the summit on snowshoes in March of 2018. He had found that he could park pulled over at the side of the highway as long as no snow or snowplow was expected that day.

### 2019 AGM: Sunday, June 23, 1 p.m.

You are invited to attend our 2019 AGM, at the Danford Municipal Library, 10 Jondee, 1-2 p.m. on Sunday, June 23. Arrive at 12:30 to take out a 2019-2020 family membership and sign a Membership Form & Responsibility Form (25\$ for self or family), and receive your signed 2019 membership card and your year-2019 gate key (\$10 refundable deposit, or \$5 + your old key.)

The 2018 AGM minutes will be reviewed. Then the Board president & treasurer will present their 2018-2019 Annual Reports and the Mont O'Brien Association "Action Plan for 2019-2020". Two Resolutions will be introduced at the AGM for clarification, consideration and vote by members. Then the election will proceed, with a designated « Secretary & President of Elections ».

### Election of Board members:

The Board meets once per month for 2 hours; an additional  $\frac{1}{2}$ -day per month commitment is often needed during the spring & summer. Board meetings are normally in Danford Lake, but may be held elsewhere if convenient & needed.

Three Board positions are presently open, for 1-year or 2-year terms. For one of these, Sylvain Masset has verified that he can be available to serve another 2-year term by participating electronically from home during some meetings, since he and his wife are expecting their first child any day. According to our by-laws, one other 2-year position and one 1-year position may be filled by the Board during this summer & ratified at the next AGM. However, election at this AGM is preferred, so as to have a full team this summer, for Nature Walks on Sundays, trail; infrastructure improvements & a

new trail; a visit from the Québec Environment ("MELCC") Ministry; and preparation for a very important 2020 BAPE Hearing.

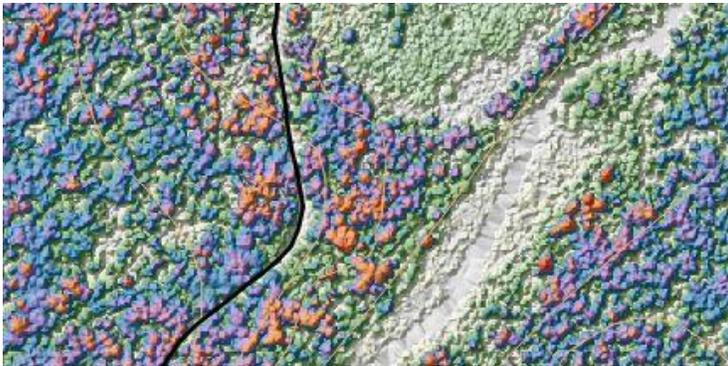
Paula Armstrong & Michael Walker will each continue in the second year of their 2-year terms. A municipal councillor such as Mona Woodstock will continue in the 7<sup>th</sup> Board seat. Jesse Ruppell will continue as Webmaster.

Election Process: 1) President of Elections asks if election of Sylvain Masset to a 2-year term is approved by members; 2) The President of Elections Requests Nominations for the one-year seat; Nominee(s) are asked if they would accept; 3) a vote is held if there is more than one nominated and accepting; 4) The President of Elections Requests Nominations for the 2-year seat; Nominee(s) are asked if they would accept; 5) a vote is held if there is more than one nominated and accepting. (A vote by ballot, not by voice, will be held if there is more than one available member for a seat, if any member prefers that.) 6) The Secretary of Elections records the nominations and results at each of steps 1-5.

### Challenges for the Board in 2019:

During 2019-2020, the Board will prepare for the 2020 BAPE hearing, which is directed by the Québec Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, to prepare to collaborate with the ministry on a Reserve "delimitation" that increases biodiversity protection, increases connectivity of the forest and river environment, continues traditional hunting & fishing, and allows for an increase in healthy recreational activities. Activities and socializing can be accompanied by education re local nature and biodiversity, and at the same time contribute to the local economy.

The Board will prepare for the BAPE Hearing by learning more about the Biodiversity Reserve territory and its surroundings, and using what we know.



We find it encouraging that the Québec MFFP is now sharing more information about public land, such as LiDAR images of tree heights. This helps us to prepare images that the Board can use in conservation efforts, and share with Association members, for example, an image of the Kazabazua River where it is close to Clifford's Road (Orange=tallest trees):

We have our own little collection of aerial photos of Mont O'Brien and the adjoining territory from the 1930s, when beavers were locally extinct, for comparison with present-day images.

Board members are going to be in a privileged position in 2019-2020. They will be able to use their observations on the Reserve (views & special places), along with benefitting from some advanced imaging technologies while working together. Finished images may be shared in collaboration with our regular members. Preparing for a BAPE Hearing and planning a new trail is a special opportunity for all of us, both for learning and for serving our community. The Association is also a member of CDCP ("Corporation de développement communautaire Pontiac").

Some of us may feel very frustrated when we hear warnings about the loss of biodiversity (such as in the announcement this year from U.N. IPBES scientists that the Earth will be losing one million species, if humanity continues on its present path.) We may feel some relief in being "friends" of this particular special large chunk of seminatural, healthy, protected public forest and lakes, and in getting to know it with our companions in the Mont O'Brien Association.

More concrete matters..... The Association is now a member of Rando Quebec (formerly the Fédération des Clubs de Marche du Québec). Along with this membership, the Board has civil insurance for hiking trails at a reasonable rate. Rando Quebec has a website, "Baliseqc.ca", showing about 100 hiking & walking trails across Québec—trails of all sorts, with photos, maps, parking, regulations, facilities, etc. The Board can use the Baliseqc.ca site to promote the Mont O'Brien trails, and to gradually increase our membership & support. Hikers from other regions of Québec may contact the Board, to ask to use our access roads, and trails; they

will need to either take out a family membership in the Association, or arrange with the Board for a group hike, because we do not have the manpower to handle many visitors.

As well, our two trails need more "infrastructure"—several signs, and a few secure steps and hand-holds to make the "Mary Haydon (summit) Trail" safer. Our "Easy Trail", from which 248 mushroom species have been found, crosses a ravine about 2 m across and 2 m deep. For safe hiking, the trail needs either a log like the one that once lay across it, or it needs something like this little bridge (slightly idealized):



In 2018, we submitted an application for funding from the Québec Education Ministry for hiking trails infrastructure, especially for the Easy Trail. The MAO president prepared a letter of support for us. We obtained written estimates from two local small companies, but not in time. This year we are ready to try again. Trails improvement/infrastructure can also help to support local businesses.

"The experience..." The type of partly-independent and more authentic experience that we can offer members and visitors is becoming more popular. We believe that we can use the "cool" factor to promote our purpose and vision of allowing experiences of nature on a biodiversity reserve in a supportive, non-exploitative manner.

## Summer-Fall 2019 Activities

**Sundays July 7, 14, 21, August 4, 11, 18, & Sept. 22 in 2019:**

**Guided Nature Walks** on Mont O'Brien hiking trails ("Easy" or "Mary Haydon", or to Lake O'Brien), with a Biologist-Guide. About 4-5 hours with lunch break. Register each preceding Friday-Saturday using email address: [montobrien@gmail.com](mailto:montobrien@gmail.com). Bring a friend, bring a child. (Cancelled if rain predicted for Chelsea and north on [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca).) Blackberries ripen starting in mid-August, raspberries in late July

**Sunday, August 25**, 9:30 a.m. Special **Mushroom Foray** for Mont O'Brien members with MAO (Les Mycologues amateurs de l'Outaouais) & Dr. Yolande Dalpé. During the past five years with Yolande, we have identified 248 mushroom species on the Reserve. (See list & photos on our website.) Children accompanied by a parent are welcome. Bad knees? You may bring a chair and participate at the identification table without hiking the trails.

Thanksgiving in 2019 will be October 14, so our **Family Thanksgiving Hike** to lookout rocks on Mont O'Brien will be held **Saturday, Oct. 12**. Watch our website ([www.montobrienassociation.org](http://www.montobrienassociation.org)) in September for more information about the Thanksgiving Family Hike on **October 12**, and an Autumn Nature Walk on Sunday, **September 22**.

Below:

**Birding especially for warblers, with a COO expert, May 26, 2019:**



Birders from COO (Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais), with expert Claude Martineau, at the North Branch Brulé & Marsh public land (adjacent to Mont O'Brien in the distance.) The bird species list & photos will be posted on our website.



Reserve, along with hiking trails, rustic camping, and non-motorized boating. Our two Hiking/Nature trails are registered with the Québec Environment Ministry<sup>3</sup>. The Board is presently planning a 3rd hiking trail.

Several years ago, following a public consultation, administrative protection was added to the pink areas on the map on page 4. The Kazabazua River flows east & north along the east side of the present protected delimitation. This historic, pristine bio-diverse "trout river"/"Kaz Creek" deserves to become officially added to the Reserve.



The Reserve protects rare plant species such as Squaw-root, Coral-root and Wild ginger. It was home to an entire moose family in 2012. Many mushrooms and related species have been identified on the Reserve during visits by Dr. Yolande Dalpé with Les Mycologues Amateurs de l'Outaouais (MAO). To date, about 248 species of mushrooms have been identified on Mont O'Brien lower slopes. A list of the species is now posted on our website, along with a few photos and common names. Most of these were identified by Dr. Dalpé herself during four annual forays with our members (returning Aug. 25, 2019)

Many nesting & migrating bird species, especially warblers in their bright spring colours, have been seen and heard on excursions in May with COO<sup>4</sup>. Some of the centre square of the map is occupied by O'Brien Creek and a broad wetland with Eastern white cedar. On Mont O'Brien and its slopes are two enclosed valleys with a large population of a wildflower species: Purple trilliums occupy the forest floor of one valley every May, and Pink lady's-slipper orchids are sprinkled across another in June. This 394-m-elevation "mountain" is full of surprises.



The Association has brought groups for hiking & nature observation in the north part of the Reserve, forwarding a goal of gradually developing ecotourism in this region, to benefit the local economy, physical & mental health, healthy recreation, and nature education. We have invited the Outdoors Class from the Fort Coulonge Secondary School, and will invite the MRC Pontiac Youth Council in the near future. (Yoga headstands near the summit are not mandatory.) In the future, it may be possible to ride horses on the existing old roads, or to make an X-C trail on the old

roads on the Reserve and nearby, even to connect to Gatineau Park some day (about 30 km overland to north border, mostly on public land). Botanical activities, such as pressing, preparing and framing herbarium specimens, with official labels for wall display, will be possible for less athletic members.

### Weekend tent camping:

The Association has built two hemlock tent pads at Lake O` Brien; they now only need their sand filling. Firewood may be cut from a poplar that is about to fall, but it must be split by member-volunteers now. Supplying some firewood will help to keep campers from damaging living trees. The Board encourages members to use the campsite at Lake O` Brien, and simply to let the Board know when they are using it by contacting [montobrien@gmail.com](mailto:montobrien@gmail.com). Please take note of the cautions on page 6 to watch your children. The lake is unsupervised. Mont O'Brien is very quiet, and it is not a park!

Printed **maps** of roads and trails, Association **bylaws**, & the Association's basic **Code of Conduct** for members on the Reserve, as well as "Activities Allowed on Biodiversity Reserves," published by the Ministry, will be available in French & English at the **2019 AGM (12:30 pm. - 2:00 p.m., Sunday, June 23 at Danford Lake Library).**

Membership forms may be downloaded from our website: [www.montobrienassociation.org](http://www.montobrienassociation.org)

The 2019 Annual Family Membership fee includes family members 17 years & younger.

Membership is required for crossing private land; fee collection is needed for maintaining access roads.

Fill out a membership form at the Municipal Office at 10 Jondee in Danford Lake during Office hours, 8 – 4, M-F, or Mail the Membership form, Responsibility form & Annual family membership fee (\$25.00) to:

**Mont O'Brien Association, P.O. Box 904, Danford Lake, QC J0X 1P0**

The deposit for a year-2019 gate key will be \$10.

You will receive a family membership card and information.

Tax receipts are available for donations

<sup>3</sup> [www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca)

<sup>4</sup> Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais. A list of the 37 bird species this year is available on [ebird.ca](http://ebird.ca).

**Volunteers** for easy trail- and road-brushing are needed this summer—no previous experience required!  
Do not hesitate to contact a Board member with a question or information:

The Board Members may be contacted at:

[montobrien@gmail.com](mailto:montobrien@gmail.com).

Paula Armstrong, President

[pauladalgaardarmstrong@gmail.com](mailto:pauladalgaardarmstrong@gmail.com)

Michael Walker, Treasurer

(819) 467-2219

[mhwalker@ca.inter.net](mailto:mhwalker@ca.inter.net)

Sylvain Masset, Vice-president

[massetsylvain@hotmail.com](mailto:massetsylvain@hotmail.com)

Mona Woodstock, Municipal Council Rep.

(819) 467-4077

[Monahope1@hotmail.com](mailto:Monahope1@hotmail.com)

Marie-Thérèse Kazeef, for Memberships on Saturdays

(819) 467-2580

[marie-theresek@sympatico.ca](mailto:marie-theresek@sympatico.ca)

Jesse Ruppell, Webmaster

[jesse@ruppell.com](mailto:jesse@ruppell.com)

***Past Newsletters/Bulletins in colour (some in French translation) may be seen at our website:  
Montobrienassociation.org***

**Easy Trail** (now registered) & **Mary Haydon Trail**. Trailheads for parking are at either end. Topo lines 10-m elevation difference. Please see Association's "Members' Code of Comportment on the Reserve". On a trail, do not allow small children to run ahead alone!

