



**Memphrémagog
Conservation inc.**

MEMPHRÉMAGOG CONSERVATION INC.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention Publicity directors

MCI-Gordon Kohl commemorative prize awarded to Environmental Engineer

Geogville, July 10: Mr François Bélanger, environmental engineer, specialist in water treatment, received the MCI-Gordon Kohl commemorative prize for his volunteer work, having provided his knowledge and expertise as a volunteer with Memphremagog Conservation Inc. For a number of years, Mr Bélanger has helped to improve our knowledge of the state of Lake Memphremagog, notably through his numerous analyses and conclusions, which have added to our knowledge of the quality of the waters of the lake. In addition, he is MCI's scientific advisor on the Quebec-Vermont Committee.

The MCI-Gordon Kohl commemorative prize was created in 2005 in honour of one of the co-founders of MCI. This prize is awarded to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution, through his or her personal involvement and dedication, to the protection of the environment, for current and future generations.

The prize was presented during the 45th annual general meeting of MCI, Sunday July 8 at Georgeville. The president, Mrs Gisèle Lacasse-Benoit, stated: 'It is thanks to people of this high calibre that MCI is able to make progress on our many complex files. It is with passion that the members of MCI pursue the mission of its founders. MCI is in excellent financial health, and can count on the support of its 1,100 members'. As well as the required reports, a presentation by Mr Bélanger was given on the quality of the water of the lake, integrating water analysis results from 1996 to 2011 produced jointly by MCI and MDDEP, water sampling data from the American tributaries, water sampling data from Canadian tributaries carried out by the MRC, as well as the phosphorus modeling study done by the Quebec-Vermont Committee. The members were stunned to realize the amount of phosphorus entering the lake yearly from the different diffuse sources.

The president also stated: 'It is urgent to continue our efforts to reduce the levels of phosphorus entering the lake in order to preserve the quality of the water of Lake Memphremagog. The residents of the watershed are called upon to do their part, as are the municipalities, who need to tighten existing regulations. The conservation of natural landscapes is also a way to prevent further degradation of the lake's ecosystem.'

MCI also presented a report on its Conservation Program for 2010-2011. Among the results obtained should be mentioned the important contribution of certain property owners in the watershed, who have allowed us to achieve the following:

- A 60 hectare private nature reserve being finalized
- Two conservation servitudes on 500 hectares as well as a donation of 10 hectares on Mount Chagnon, thanks to the participation of Bois Champigny, the Nature Conservancy and ACA – a project involving MCI in its early stages
- A process begun with 2 property owners to preserve 120 hectares.

Within the scope of this program, MCI meets with interested property owners to inform them of the conservation options available to them, the financial and fiscal incentives available, and works with them throughout the process.

MCI has also carried out a study of the areas of ecological interest in the municipality of Austin, as well as mapping the extent of one of the most important wetlands in the watershed. The organization hopes that this initiative will serve as an example to other municipalities in the region and will encourage them to further protect their natural landscapes.

The four patrollers, all biology students, also presented a report of their work on the lake, which they patrol 7 days a week from May to September. They are the eyes and ears of MCI, and report all suspected infractions to the municipal inspectors. As well, they carry out a water sampling program for the MDDEP, water sampling at Magog's beaches for the city of Magog, and, in collaboration with the MRC, water sampling in the tributaries flowing into Fitch Bay.

To conclude, the media are invited to join our patrollers at any time, in order to appreciate this magnificent body of water, and the different problems facing it. The patrollers can be contacted at (819) 620-3939 or (819) 340-8721.

Source: Gisèle Lacasse-Benoit, President

About MCI : **Memphrémagog Conservation inc. (MCI)** is a non profit organisation formed of volunteers, working since 1967 for the protection of the environmental health and natural beauty of Lake Memphremagog and its watershed. With the strength of its membership, it works to ensure that all residents of the region, permanent and seasonal, waterfront or not, can benefit from and enjoy a healthy lake, for today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Source: Memphremagog Conservation Inc. Gisèle Lacasse Benoit, volunteer President (819) 868-1369 or (819) 571-2005