



**Association du lac McGregor  
McGregor Lake Association**

August 8, 2019

Mayor Jacques Laurin  
Municipality of Val-des-Monts Vals-des-Monts, QC  
Via email: [jacqueslaurin@val-des-monts.net](mailto:jacqueslaurin@val-des-monts.net)

Dear Mayor Laurin,

I am writing to follow up on the conversations the McGregor Lake Association (MLA) has had with you and Councillors Gauthier and Bergeron this past Winter and Spring. As discussed, we have been long time advocates for better policing of watercraft on McGregor Lake, particularly on weekends. We were optimistic that this year we would see some boat safety improvements when in November, 2018 you personally assured us you were looking into piloting alternative private security services to patrol the waterways; and again when Councillor Bergeron mentioned at the MLA AGM on June 8, 2019 that the MRC des Collines Police had committed to undertaking 3-4 weekend patrols this summer.

Unfortunately, to date, we have seen very little policing patrols on McGregor Lake, and none during busy summer weekends. The MRC des Collines Police continue to patrol during weekdays when few boats are active. We have noted that non motorized boats such as SUP and kayaks are stopped as they are more active in these times. Unfortunately, this does nothing to address the dangerous behaviour that we too often see on the lake during peak periods such as after 4pm on weekdays and on weekends. This unchecked behaviour has led to reports of injuries and property damage from residents.

A few examples include:

- Boats repeatedly doing U-turns, at speed, near Pélissier beach and close to shore, which resulted in late June in a young girl falling and hitting her head on her family's dock when it became unhooked from the numerous large wakes produced by the boats near to shore.
- Another swimmer, less than 8 meters from her dock, was almost hit by a boat pulling a waterskier, who did not have a spotter on board, and who came much too close to shore. Other residents on the dock had to wave repeatedly to draw the driver's attention to the danger.
- A person who had rented a kayak from Pélissier Boat Launch capsized due to the large wake of a speedboat that had just been put in the water and sped out of the bay at full speed. Being in shock and in distress, residents of the lake had to rescue him and tow the kayak back to Pélissier. You'll also remember that such similar incidents of renters from Pélissier requiring rescue were raised at the June 8 AGM indicating this is an on-going issue.

These serious incidents are just a few examples of dangerous boating behaviour on the lake that have been reported this summer by residents of the lake, particularly on summer weekends.

Public access at the Pélissier Boat Launch has also contributed to increased reports of public nuisance incidents, such as:

- day boaters using private land to picnic or camp and, when told they had to vacate as it was private property, being verbally abusive and leaving garbage,
- boaters relieve themselves on the side of their boats into the lake in plain-sight of small children,
- boaters playing loud music and leaving garbage in the lake, which one resident reported almost harmed a young water skier that skied over a discarded beer can.

During MLA's recent door-to-door campaign to educate about E- Milfoil, residents also complained about big boat and Seadoo access via private entries. Residents reported dangerous and annoying Seadoo behaviors, including high speed racing of SeaDoods on Courville & Cornu Bays, dangerously chasing & jumping waves of other boats and making high pitched noises often from early morning to night.

During the Federation du Lac's July 27, 2019 AGM, the meeting recognized the relationship between unbridled navigation on our lakes and its adverse impact on water quality notably the emergence & worsening of the invasive E - Milfoil in the La Blanche Watershed.

We recognize that any boat safety education efforts and action campaign the municipality should begin at the Pélissier public ramp but must also extend to increased VDM intervention with owners of private boat entries. Otherwise, given the growth of the lake's peripheral residential development with lake access, McGregor will become hostage to increasing number of boaters circumventing the rules and safety rules of Pélissier beach.

Despite our efforts to draw the municipality's attention to the increasing risks to public safety, we have yet to see improvements in safety education or policing enforcement. If enforcement resources are scarce then focus should be on weekend afternoon boating behaviors that risk public safety, such as inappropriate boating and boating too close to other boats, swimmers, the shore and docks, and the requirement to have a spotter on board the boat when towing people on skis, tubes or any other device.

With regard to Pélissier rentals, the Municipality must surely recognize the significant liability risks it is facing should a serious incident happen. There is currently no rescue boat, and no one at the boat ramp instructing inexperienced canoe & kayak renters on how to safely operate their vessel. More also needs to be done to ensure all boaters using the ramp are given instructions on good boating etiquette and boating regulations. The Association is sharing this information via our website (<http://lacmcgregorlake.ca/useful-information/>), in emails to our members and via Facebook, but we are only able to reach our membership, not all residents, and none of the day-boaters who use the ramp.

We are increasingly worried that, unless the Municipality increases its focus on rampant dangerous boating behaviours on weekends at McGregor Lake, a serious incident may occur. I

am sure we can all agree we don't want to wait until there is a death at the lake before more aggressive action is taken to curb these risks.

We are therefore, once again, asking for the following:

- A qualified instructor at the Pélissier boat ramp, available during rental hours, to provide instructions to renters;
- A rescue boat at Pélissier to be able to rescue canoe & kayak renters, should the situation call for it;
- As per MLA's July 11th, 2015 position paper to VDM on public ramp consultation, that the Municipality's Safe Boating Guide be updated to clarify requirements under federal regulations and emphasize good boating etiquette, and that the guide then be handed out to everyone, including residents, using the boat ramp;
- the operator of the Boat Ramp be required to confirm that those putting their motorized boats in the water have their pleasure-craft license, and Pleasure-craft Operator Card (issued by Transport Canada);
- Confirmation that the MRC des Collines Police will patrol McGregor Lake on key weekends such as the Fête nationale (June) long weekend, Canada Day long weekend, August long weekend, and weekends during the 'vacances de la construction' when boating volume is at its busiest and most dangerous; and,
- We request your support for the placement of speed markers in narrow bays and channels to limit the speed of boats.

The Association will be happy to support you in continuing to educate our members on boating safety and etiquette but we urge you to take concrete steps without further delay to address these serious safety risks, made more complex by the public access at Pélissier Boat Launch. We know that like us, you do not want to see serious injuries, or death, result from further delays and inaction on these matters.

Sincerely,



Peter Barton, President  
McGregor Lake Association

cc. Councillor Claude Bergeron  
Councillor Joelle Gauthier  
Honourable Benoit Charette, P.C., M.N.A, Minister of the Environment  
and the Fight Against Climate Change  
Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P. Minister of Transport