



BEACONSFIELD

Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award

Submission by

The City of Beaconsfield

Attached is a description of Picture Clear Water a partnership between the City of Beaconsfield and grade 5 & 6 students of St. Remi School.

The project involves the students in concrete action to clean up a polluted stream that flows into Lake St. Louis. Pollution from this stream is one of the main reasons Beaconsfield is unable to open it's beach to the public.

If this projects is selected for the award the \$5000 would be applied to the objectives of the project in particular the ongoing lobbying program to correct the root problem of the pollution which originates in a neighbouring city.

Bob Benedetti
Mayor
City of Beaconsfield
303 Beaconsfield Blvd.
Beaconsfield, QC H9W 4A7
(514)428-4410
bob.benedetti@beaconsfield.ca

Ville de Beaconsfield * City of Beaconsfield

303, boulevard Beaconsfield, Beaconsfield (Québec) H9W 4A7

T : (514) 428-4400 F : (514) 428-4424

Picture Clear Water

It began with students of grades 5 and 6 at Saint Remi School questioning the effects of water contamination in their surroundings. In general they were concerned about the condition of nearby Lake St Louis and the St Lawrence River. In particular they wondered why they could not swim safely at the Beaconsfield beach.

The road to the answers to the students' concerns led to the creation of the Picture Clear Water project, a collaboration of Saint Remi School and the City of Beaconsfield designed to awaken the children's interest in the richness of the flora and fauna that inhabit Lake St. Louis and develop awareness of the dangers that threaten it. The project also encourages students to take concrete action to improve the lake environment.

The students participated in a water resources workshop led by Denis Chabot, Director of Urban Planning for the City of Beaconsfield. Then, under the guidance of teacher Carole Flexman and artist Maja Vodanovic the grade 5 and 6 students produced artwork that expresses, in images and in words their concern for the flora and fauna of the Saint Lawrence River.

During the course of the workshop and subsequent research the students came to the realization that pollution in Meadowbrook Stream which empties into Lake St Louis about 500 meters west of the Beaconsfield beach was heavily polluted and impacted heavily on the Lake and the condition of the water at the beach. The main source of the pollution was crossed sewer pipe connections in the neighbouring City of Kirkland exacerbated by fertilizer runoff from homes on the stream's banks in Beaconsfield as well as the use of the stream as a dumping ground by some residents.

The next step was to take their concerns to the local politicians. The 200 students exhibited their artworks at Beaconsfield's Centennial Hall Cultural Centre and participated in a News Conference and Round Table discussion chaired by Beaconsfield Mayor Bob Benedetti accompanied by Francis Scarpeleggia, Federal Member of Parliament and opposition Critic for Water and Geoffrey Kelley, Member of the Quebec National Assembly. This discussion allowed the students to ask government officials about the current situation of Lake St. Louis and actions each level of government is taking to address the issues. They were forceful in their demands that Quebec and Ottawa take steps to make the financial resources available that would enable Kirkland to address the cross connection problem that is polluting Meadowbrook stream. The event received extensive media coverage.

In mid June 2008 in cooperation with the Beaconsfield Urban Planning department the students will visit residents of homes in Beaconsfield bordering Meadowbrook stream to raise awareness and inform them of actions they can take to clean up the stream, the use of phosphate free fertilizers and do not dump yard waste in the stream for example. Under the leadership of the Mayor and Urban Planning

officials the students will then don boots and gloves to clean up the stream and plant native shrubs on the banks.

Finally there will be a continuing partnership between the City and the school to maintain the pressure on senior governments and the City of Kirkland to correct the cross connections that are polluting the stream. The ultimate hope is that Lake St. Louis will be cleaner and it will be possible to open the Beaconsfield Beach to the public.