

2013 ELECTIONS

We would like to congratulate the mayor and the four candidates elected without opposition in the 2013 elections.

Two councillor positions remain to be filled.

The candidates are:

Seat no. 3	Seat no. 6
Gaëtan Lalande	Michel Bédard
Claude Pagé	Léonce Lessard

The APLG web site offers a page for each of the four candidates. This makes it possible for them to present themselves and help you make your choice.

The association's board does not consider it necessary to support any specific candidate.

You can exercise your right to vote at the community center in Duhamel on November 3rd, from 10 am to 8 pm. You can vote by mail if you have already so requested but don't forget that your ballot must be received at the Town Hall no later than Friday, November 1st.

2014 BUDGET

Once elected, the new Council will have to prepare the annual budget which is usually tabled in December. The recent introduction of the new assessment roll will have a significant impact on tax bills. This is therefore a good time to examine the issue in light of our members' strong interest in their taxes. The recent dramatic increase in the school taxes has only amplified this concern.

When considering the 2014 budget, you need to make a distinction between the overall level of revenue funded through the tax bill, and how the burden is shared among individual taxpayers.

The current Council has managed to maintain firm control over operating expenses which increased by only 1% per year on average during its term, compared to 12% per year for the previous administration. But revenues grew faster than those expenses, mainly due to substantial subsidies received in the past two years. The Municipality could have reduced taxes in 2013, but chose to virtually freeze them instead, and take the opportunity to further reduce the debt level at the end of 2012 (\$343,000 refund instead the budgeted \$210,000), and also accumulate surpluses. We do not have access to the latest figures, but we are told at Council meetings that finances are in good shape. In the circumstances, it seems appropriate to expect that the next Council could seriously consider a significant reduction of the general property tax.

The new assessment roll reflects changes over the past six years. It seems that the average increase in the value of properties in Duhamel is 40%, but it could be much higher in some areas of Lac Gagnon. Some taxpayers could therefore face substantial tax increases, even if taxes decreased on average in the municipality as a whole. Two measures could offset this impact. First, a shift in the tax burden from the general tax to service taxes, which are fixed for all taxpayers. Secondly, offering taxpayers affected by increases the choice of paying these increases over three years could be considered.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Municipality of Duhamel hired Daniel René as director of operations. Mr. René who started on October 21st was previously in charge of urban affairs for the Town of Thurso . He will be responsible for all non-administration services.
- The Duhamel Municipal Council decided at its October 2, 2013 meeting that garbage will be collected once a week during July and August next year, instead of every two weeks as was the case in 2013. We estimate the additional cost to be about \$20,000 .
- A \$60,000 budget was approved to repair the Iroquois bridge on the Ch. des Lacs. Access to Iroquois, Chevreuil and Lafontaine lakes could be compromised if this work is not carried out. It will be done before winter using the Municipality's own public works force.
- There will also be some roadwork this fall on Ch. du lac Gagnon Est, between Ch. du Milieu and Ch. du Brûlé. The work will be performed by the Duhamel public works force at an approximate cost of \$50,000. Blasting is expected. A guardrail will be installed along a pronounced depression.
- We conducted ten water transparency readings from mid-June to mid-October. The readings are taken in the deepest parts of the lake (Center-east and Baie des Îles). The average reading this season is 6.8 m at each of the two stations. This is slightly less than last year's 7.2 m reading, but it's still too early to identify a long-term trend.



APLG

**Association des propriétaires
du lac Gagnon**

C.P. 354, Duhamel, Québec
J0V 1G0
www.aplg.ca

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Contact: info@aplq.ca

Membership

Thank you to all Lac Gagnon property owners who support the APLG either by paying their annual membership fee or by offering their words of encouragement. We received contributions from 354 members this year, which is slightly more than in previous years, except for 2008, which was an exceptional year. We can be very pleased that members continue their ongoing support of their lake association. This level of membership represents about two-thirds of the owners at Lac Gagnon.

This high rate of participation in the life of the association helps us to represent you and to maintain our activities that are focused on protecting the lake and our members' quality of life.

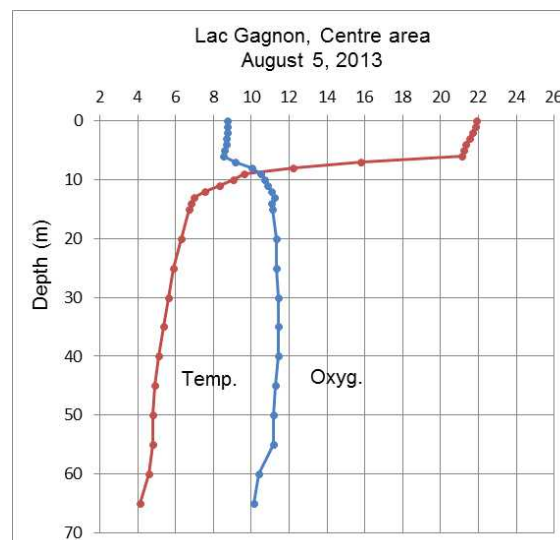
DISSOLVED OXYGEN

The APLG began a program to monitor dissolved oxygen and water temperatures. Readings taken during this first season seem interesting and encouraging.

The dissolved oxygen level at Lac Gagnon is relatively high regardless of the depth. We did not observe any significant loss of oxygen at the bottom of the lake, a phenomenon that was identified in other nearby lakes (Ernest, Robillard, Moufflet, and Hotte) . We hope to do more tests on other lakes next year. There is not much difference in the oxygen and temperature levels from one sector of the lake to another. Shallow areas are considerably different . We also noticed some decrease in dissolved oxygen at the beginning of the summer in the area where the sun's rays penetrate i.e. the top 10 meters. This phenomenon is less pronounced in deep water.

A more complete report will soon be available on our website.

Here is a sample of the results :



URBAN PLAN

Following a public consultation over the summer, the new urban plan and all the changes to various related by-laws were adopted on October 2, 2013.

The subject that seems to have attracted the most attention is the treatment of tourist homes (cottages for rent by the week or month) . The adopted measure is to allow two tourist homes in each zoning area around lakes, located at least 350 m apart. Lac Gagnon is now divided into six of these areas. These residences are limited to four bedrooms.

The APLG had submitted a brief containing more than 25 recommendations. The Municipal Council has implemented 22 of them, the others being of lesser importance. All our recommendations were aimed at either improving the proposed measures or correcting measures that would prove irritating.

It would be good if owners keep photos or other similar kind of evidence to assert their grandfathering rights.

WATER ANALYSIS

Although the sampling is rather limited (16 people) results of drinking water tests in July were very acceptable. Two-thirds are within the standards. The few non-compliant cases were from the Baie des Îles.

The results of the water tests in late July are encouraging. There was a significant improvement compared to last year (see chart). There were no coliform bacteria in more than half of the locations. The water near the island where seagulls nest was also tested and it is still excellent for swimming (7 coliforms). It should be noted however that the seagulls were beginning to leave their nests.

