



Protection measures for the Lake water intake (COGESAF)

Dear residents and citizens,

Further to the last public consultation on measures to protect the drinking water intake, we are writing to inform you of the measures that Destination Owl's Head has implemented over the past several years. This is to reiterate to you our commitments to the community regarding the protection of both the water intake and the natural environment.

We met with COGESAF and the municipality on July 4th to review their report and their proposals for protection measures following their study. We had already put in place 90% of their recommendations. Unfortunately, the 2 representatives of COGESAF who attended the public consultation were not the same two people we had met prior. As such, they did not have all the information we had given the organisation.

Starting in 2019, we have undertaken major work on the Mountain to rectify a long-standing problem and to protect one of our greatest assets: Lake Memphremagog, notably through:

- Water management
- Soil stabilization.

Water management

We asked a civil engineer specializing in the field to draw up a macro-plan for water management, taking the 100-year flood concept, and applying it to a 25-year timeframe. This study consisted of controlling the speed of the water from the top of the mountain with natural water bars in several places, returning the water to the right watersheds, and increasing the size of the marina outfall. The study was carried out in 2019, and the work was completed in 2022, followed by the implementation of an annual maintenance program.

Soil stabilization

At the time, we noticed that several areas on the mountain were bare and that we needed to act quickly to avoid introducing sediment to the lake. We therefore hired an agronomist to analyze the soil type and provide us with a mix of native seeds to ensure rapid and lasting rooting. This work was carried out in 2019 and 2020. Since then, we have implemented a preservation program.

Since 2019, we've invested \$750,000 in stormwater management, soil stabilization, the construction of retention basins, and the widening of outfall pipes at the marina.

Today, we're in the business of maintenance and verification during heavy rains. The work carried out and subsequent follow-ups meet expectations.



We also have a micro plan attached to our development projects, where each site has or will have its own water management plan that does not affect the drainage bed, through the addition of rain gardens, retention basins, or any other type of means deemed necessary.

It should also be noted that none of our projects should be asphalted other than to manage a problematic situation on a steep slope, and that this method of maintaining gravel driveways consists of managing water by percolation.

Another of the commitments we made to the community was to minimize deforestation, with a maximum rate of 50% in our projects, and to compensate in other areas should certain projects require additional deforestation.

We are one of the only mountains in Quebec to have not only its own runoff management and soil stabilization plan, but also to have implemented it. In fact, DOH is a reference in this field for other mountains in Quebec.

This demonstrates that the concerns that our citizens hold to heart are taken very seriously by Destination Owl's Head, and that we do not take our commitments lightly.

Snowmaking

One of the elements often misunderstood is snowmaking and the spring thaw.

This portion requires clarification for your benefit. Snowmaking and spring melt do not create erosion nor overflow. Rather, it is poor soil stabilization and runoff management that create these problems, as stated in a previous paragraph.

The refurbishment of the pumping station in 2021-2022 was a strategic investment, enabling us to replace an ageing and deteriorating water intake system. This project not only separated the municipal water intake from the one dedicated to our snowmaking, but also improved the protection of our resources by guaranteeing the independence of the two pipes, now of different lengths. Thanks to a deeper intake, we also benefit from access to colder water, thus optimizing our operations. This investment translates into greater efficiency and enhanced sustainability for our infrastructure.

Some people might think that we make more and more snow every year, and that this could cause problems when it melts. That is not the case.

We are not making more snow than we used to. The investments made on the mountain to increase capacity are linked to combating climate change and increasingly short cold spells.

In fact, one of our snow groomers is equipped with a depth gauge giving us real-time snow depth information, thus decreasing overproduction. This groomer is also equipped with a Tier4 engine that reduces GHG emissions by 50%, a \$500,000 investment.

The increased water capacity means that, during cold spells, we can run several more cannons at the same time, helping us to cover our mountain more quickly with the same amount of



snow. We've had more and more temperature variations over the last few winters, and this allows us to offer a quality product and be even more efficient over the course of the season.

It's important to know that 85% of the water used in our snowmaking goes back to the lake, 5% to the golf course, 5% to evaporation and 5% to percolation.

Thus, there is no negative impact associated with snowmaking.

Beach and Marina

Over the past two years, we've added new services at the marina to give us greater control and reduce environmental stress.

Watercraft

Since the installation of the new marina, we have been making sure that boat owners respect all regulations, be they governmental or put in place by Destination Owl's Head.

- We have precise documentation for each boat;
- All craft must have a valid boat wash certificate;
- We do not have a boat ramp;
- We have an employee on site to ensure safe and standard boat mooring.

Gas

For 2 years now, we have offered a gasoline service at the marina for the exclusive use of its members. This practice has enabled us to better control risks associated with fueling.

Prior to the installation of this service, marina members would make use of their own gas cans. We had no control over the quality nor the state of these cans, which could have led to increased spills.

- The tank installed on the site is a new double-walled tank. In fact, the supplier who rents it to us is obliged to comply with strict replacement standards;
- Every month, we inspect the tank;
- A spill cleanup kit and accompanying procedure are located next to the tank, within easy reach of users;
- Boat fueling is done by gasoline can, and not directly from the tank.
 - Gasoline cans are the property of Destination Owl's Head and are regularly inspected;
- Our personnel are trained and must follow a precise procedure.



As suggested by the COGESAF, as of next spring, we will have a hydrophobic buffer kit on site to protect the lake as a further preventive measure.

All the actions that we have taken have always been done, first and foremost, with the protection of sensitive areas in mind, and with respect for the environment.

We hope this answers any questions or concerns you may have. Rest assured that, in addition to working in concert with COGESAF and the municipality, everything we have put in place is monitored on a regular basis.

- Last spring, DOH embarked on a sustainable development process and recently received its *Écoresponsable* certification;
- DOH will be starting a Sustainable Tourism cohort in November with the GreenStep organization;
- DOH works with the Ouranos organization, in collaboration with ASSQ, on climate change actions and trends;
- DOH is cited as an example by our industry for the measures and procedures it has put in place;
- In the spring of 2024, DOH won the OMER award from the Memphrémagog Chamber of Commerce in the "Well-being and sustainable development" category, a valuable recognition.

In light of the preceding paragraphs, we stand out for our actions which, more often than not, go above and beyond in the protection of the environment and respect for the territory. All measures are taken to ensure the protection of the drinking water intake.

We wish you an excellent season.

Yours sincerely