

WATER QUALITY TESTING IN WEST BOLTON

In response to questions about West Bolton's decision to commission its own water study rather than fund Renaissance Lac Brome (RLB).

RLB performs a valuable service, but its mission is the protection of Brome Lake. So it only samples the streams that feed into Brome Lake. However, West Bolton is the source of a number of streams that flow in different directions to several municipalities.

For example, it shelters the headwaters of at least one tributary of the Yamaska River, which bypasses Brome Lake completely, but supplies drinking water to Cowansville.

Meanwhile, as you can see from the watershed maps on the websites of the Yamaska and Missisquoi watershed associations, about 20% of West Bolton actually feeds the Missisquoi River, which flows south to Vermont and eventually reaches St. Armand on Missisquoi Bay, at the other end of our own MRC.

As a point of interest, these same maps indicate that most rain landing on the controversial Mount Foster development flows into the Missisquoi watershed, and not to Knowlton or Brome Lake. RLB's water tests tell us nothing about this water, and yet we need to understand it.

These are just two examples of why West Bolton Council decided to commission its own study. Bluntly put, we have a responsibility to many neighbours, not just the ones on Brome Lake. Our initiative fits in with the MRC's water management planning. We need a clearer picture of the amount of flow and the water quality in all our streams, including, of course, the water coming from the Mount Foster development. A comprehensive picture will guide us in planning decisions for the benefit not just of our own citizens, but all our neighbours in other municipalities.

Obviously, a study of this range is more costly. Our Council has budgeted an amount of \$10,000 for 2013, and has applied to the Rural Pact of the MRC Brome-Missisquoi for half of this amount. We plan to hire the best scientific expertise we can, and work in close collaboration with the watershed associations. This additional data will be submitted to the database of the Ministère de Développement durable, Environnement, Faunes et Parcs (MDDEFP) and so be available to RLB and all other interested parties.

In this context, it is in the interest of our taxpayers to continue to be proactive in managing all the water in West Bolton, and Renaissance Lac Brome's data, however useful, was not tailored to this end.

Don Badger, Mayor

West Bolton

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