

RBL announces the restoration of crucial habitats along Quilliams Brook

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Quilliams Brook supplies almost 50% of the water that flows into Brome Lake. A major natural reserve helps filter the water before it reaches the lake. However, just above the natural reserve, an agricultural territory of nearly 100 hectares is in operation and needed to be upgraded to improve a unique habitat restoration project.

In 2015, Renaissance Brome Lake put in place a three-year project to help improve

habitats along the Quilliams. This included limiting erosion and major replanting to diversify the vegetation, especially along the stream banks.

More than 3,400 plants were added to the shoreline, creating a buffer zone some five metres wide and 5.8 kilometres long. To avoid having agricultural machinery pollute the water when crossing over it, an ecological bridge was constructed, creating several technological challenges in the process: the banks needed to be stabilized for some 100 metres, using the best vegetation techniques known including fascines (bundles of brush), willows and anti-erosion mats. Several areas of erosion were also filled.

Measures were also taken to ensure scientific monitoring of the project and evaluate its results: the quality of the water both above and below the site was regularly measured and inventories of birds, amphibians and fish have been taken annually for the last three years.

This innovative project is an eloquent demonstration of the collaboration that can exist between the agricultural and local science community. It brought together three land owners including two active farmers whose activities were coordinated by the agri-environment advisory group, Gestrie-Sol. Thanks to the support of the ministère de l'Agriculture et des pêches du Québec (MAPAQ), via its Prime-Vert program, Environment Canada, via its habitat stewardship program (HSP), as well as contributions from the MRC Brome-Missisquoi, Ville de Lac-Brome, the l'OBV Yamaska and the Fondation de la Faune du Québec, nearly \$150,000 was devoted to this important project.

Renaissance Brome Lake is especially proud of this experiment since it continues its efforts to improve the quality of the water in Brome Lake and its tributaries.