

August 2, 2007

Gatineau River water testing results for July 30th 2007

Friends of the Gatineau river (FOG) – Amis de la rivière Gatineau (ARG) is a non-profit volunteer organization that is committed to the preservation of the Gatineau River watershed. FOG conducts water quality tests of the Gatineau River as a public service with support from the municipalities of La Pêche, Cantley and Chelsea and clubs and associations that use the river for recreational purposes.

The second of three days of water testing for the 2007 summer season was conducted on Monday, July 30nd. This series of test results, based on over 85 samples from Farrellton to the Farmers Dam indicated that the Gatineau River is excellent quality recreational water. We were also fortunate to have spotted a river otter during our testing.

In undertaking the tests, FOG respects the standards established by the Québec Ministry of the Environment . An “A” rating – excellent for recreational purposes, is between 0 and 20 coliforms per 100ml, “B” – good is between 20 and 100 coliforms per 100ml, “C” – acceptable is between 100 and 199 coliforms per 100 ml and “D” – not recommended above 200 coliforms per 100ml. Analysis is done by MicroB, a Québec government certified laboratory.

For Lapêche, the waters at the Farrellton Bridge rated excellent, “A”. On the basis of a few samples, the Wakefield Covered Bridge also rated “A”. The test of the mouth of the Lapêche River indicated a “C” rating, which was higher than other sites on the Gatineau River. The Wakefield public dock also indicated “A” on the basis of a few samples.

In Chelsea, the water quality at the Farm Point Community public dock showed an “A” rating as did the Cascades Club water front, and the Burnet Rd. access point. Tests at the Gatineau River Yacht Club indicated a strong “A” rating as did the water at the Tenaga Property Owners’ Association Beach.

In Cantley, the Mary Anne Phillips Park beach showed an excellent “A” rating, as did the outflow near Romaniuk Rd. It is notable that Blackburn Creek mouth tested at an “B” rating for fecal coliform.

In addition to the E Coli testing FOG has, with the assistance of the Chelsea H2O program, expanded the range of tests being performed to include a series of other factors including water temperature. Average water temperature on July 6th in the lower Gatineau was 22.6 Celsius We also test strategic points for nutrients to create a baseline of data for future comparisons.

During our testing we did not visually identify any evidence of blue-green algae blooms on the Gatineau. This is probably due to the continual flow of the water in the Gatineau.. For more information on cyanobacteria consult the reference document provided by the Ministère du Développement durable de l'Environnement et des Parcs which can be found at: http://www.chelsea.ca/_files/guide_000.pdf (French) or www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/drink-potab/cyanobacteria-cyanobacteries_e.html (French and English).

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