

## **\$150,000 Grant for Bordelais Bog :Rare Fern and Frogs Saved**

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The Bordelais bog in Saddlebrook will be spared from the bulldozer and made into St. Lazare's first nature park thanks to a \$150,000 grant from la Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement. The town, is working in partnership with le Comité pour la protection de l'environnement (CPE) and McGill University professor of Biology Martin Lechowicz. A bog is a type of wetland that accumulates acidic peat – a deposit of dead plant material. Moisture is provided entirely by precipitation, and for this reason bog waters are acidic which accounts for their low plant nutrient status. The bog in Saint-Lazare is an ombrotrophic bog which means that it is fed entirely by rain waters.

The Town relies entirely upon underground sources for its water supply. Bogs act as filters reducing impurities in rain and runoff waters which feed underground sources. In addition, wetlands absorb excessive rain and snowmelt waters thus reducing the potential for damaging floods.

The provincial government refused a residential project at this site thus saving the bog from certain damage. Development would have wiped out a rare fern, known as the chain fern, which is on the provincial government's list of plants susceptible of becoming endangered.

According to Green Coalition spokesperson Dave Fletcher, the approximately 5 acre bog is long and narrow. "There were roads built at either end," he said. "Some development was probably in the works." Fletcher said it is important to save wetlands because they are rich in biodiversity.

Bordelais Bog is home to the rhododendron, bog-laurel, sheep-laurel and several species of wild blueberry. It is also home to several species of frogs inhabit the bog. Spotted salamanders and a large unidentified turtle have been seen.

Studies show that the Bordelais Bog has been forming for the last 8000 years!

The first phase of the restoration project is complete. The sand previously dumped in the bog was excavated. A fresh layer of raw peat has been spread onto the area being restored. Phase two included the transplantation of delicate bog plants into the new peat thus colonizing the soil with the appropriate vegetation and to inhibit weedy species.

Next a boardwalk path and nature interpretation stations will be installed.

Until the boardwalks are setup, access to the bog is prohibited. Once finished the bog will serve as a valuable educational tool for schoolchildren and a haven for nature lovers of all ages. Parking space will be available for visitors but the wetland is also accessible on foot. The nature-park is expected to open this Spring.

For more information contact the Green Line at 450 424-8000 ext. 248 or consult the Town of St.Lazare's Web site at [www.ville.saint-lazare.qc.ca](http://www.ville.saint-lazare.qc.ca) or call Sofia Fuge at 450 424-8000, ext. 248.

To know more about the Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement, visit their site at [www.Hydroquebec.com/fondation-environnement/en](http://www.Hydroquebec.com/fondation-environnement/en)