



Finding out about the floods at the Grand Lac Rond

by André Patry, Secretary

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The Grand Lac Rond has suffered its worst flood since 1974 and the causes are multiple. As of Wednesday May 29th, 2019 here is the situation. Since May 21, the Mercier dam downstream of the Baskatong reservoir has had to increase the flow so that the level of the Gatineau River has increased. The impact for the Grand Lac Rond is that the water in the Lake is more difficult to spill in the Gatineau River. While the water is difficult to get out of the Lake, it continues to enter via its catchment area of 451 km², in which is the large 31 miles lake (49.7 km²). The water of 31 miles lake is retained by the Hubert Tremblay dam. In times of flooding, the Association du Grand Lac Rond asks that the dam retain the water as much as possible and as long as possible so as not to make the situation worse at Grand Lac Rond. The residents of Grand Lac Rond have previously received from the Centre d'expertise hydrique du Québec (CEHQ), which manages dams in Quebec, the assurance that dam management was done according to the needs of all lakes in the watershed including the Grand Lac Rond. However, the representatives of the Association du Grand Lac Rond, do not understand the decisions that have been taken recently by the Centre d'expertise hydrique du Québec and ask for explanations.

The Mayor of Bouchette was contacted by victims and asked to intervene. He then contacted the civil security and held a conference call to which the public was invited. A newsletter, ruling on the situation and forecasts, was sent on Tuesday afternoon via the municipal website. The Mayor held a telephone session with the CEHQ in order to better understand how the Hubert Tremblay dam is managed. According to the CEHQ, it is in order to ensure the safety of the dam that the level of the dam must be lowered in order to give it a leeway in case of sudden rise of the waters caused by heavy rains. Several questions remain unanswered, however, and the Association du Grand Lac Rond would like the CEHQ to meet the residents of the Grand Lac Rond to answer their questions at its annual meeting to be held on July 14th at 10am at the Salle municipale de Bouchette. The Mayor of Bouchette accepted the Association's request and will therefore proceed via a resolution of his Municipal Council on Monday, June 3, to send an official invitation to CEHQ. The presence and support that the Mayor brings to the victims is highly appreciated.

With respect to the causes of flooding at Grand Lac Rond, it is important to understand that water spilled through the 31 miles lake dam is not the main cause of flooding at Grand Lac Rond. Effective dam management can, however, help to reduce its impact. It is especially in situations, like the one presently, where water is difficult to get out of the Lake that the water received from 31 miles lake amplifies the damage. 31 miles lake has an area 8 times greater than that of Grand Lac Rond or 49.7 km² vs. 5.7 km² for Grand Lac Rond.