

Friends of Chats Falls

Message from the Board of Directors

With our Founding Meeting (*see story below*) on August 9, 2017 the Friends of Chats Falls became a reality! A board of directors was elected and we are moving ahead and starting to plan activities to meet our mission and objectives. We currently have 50 active members.



Chats Falls rapids at the Merrill sluice

The members of the Board of Directors are:

Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert,
Président

(maudeemmanuelle.lambert@gmail.com)

Michael McBane, Vice-President

(michael@mcbane.ca)

Barbara Haughton, Treasurer

(baiehaughton@rogers.com)

Robert Baser, Secretary

(rbaser@rogers.com)

Deborah Powell, board member

(debp@storm.ca)

We welcome your input for forwarding the goals of FCF. Contact any one of us or info@saultdeschats.ca and share your thoughts anytime!

In this newsletter, you will find stories and information about meetings, outings and upcoming activities such as our series of Chats Falls winter talks (*see "Upcoming Events"*). During our October 29 Forum (*see story pp. 2*), many mentioned an interest in keeping informed about events and progress in promoting the cultural and natural heritage of the Chats. We hope this is what you want too! If you have any ideas or stories about the area to share with other members, please feel free to send them to us.

The FCF board of directors numbers only 5 individuals in total. We do not have the tal-

ent nor the time to do everything. In the coming weeks, we hope to set up committees and are looking for members to help with the planning of:

- 1) events and activities (outings, annual forum, conference, etc.);
- 2) communications (website, newsletter, etc.);
- 3) interpretation and field work (trails, interpretative panels, etc.);
- 4) applying for grants and fund raising.

If you would like to join one of these committees or share your talents and expertise in any way (writing, guiding, programming, fundraising, etc.), please send us an email. We would appreciate your help!

The Friends of Chats Falls Founding General Meeting

The Friends of Chats Falls (FCF)/ Les Amis du Sault-des Chats had its founding meeting in Quyon on August 9 with more than 40 people attending.

The mission of FCF is to "promote the cultural, historical and natural wealth of the Chats Falls region of the Ottawa River watershed through interpretative programs and sustainable recreational activities respectful of the area's exceptional native biodiversity". The area has long been recognized as having potential for tourism development but nothing has ever come of the many studies and plans made in the past. "A lot of the groundwork has already been done", said board member Barbara

Haughton. "With community involvement, we can adapt some of those plans and make them a reality." Michael McBane and Pavel Khol described some of the areas where recreational and interpretative trails could be located, and talked about the potential of the Quyon Mill as a FCF visitor/cultural centre.

Objectives of FCF

- Conserve and highlight the cultural and historical heritage;
- Promote the conservation of the area's exceptional native biodiversity;

- Raise public awareness of the cultural, historical and natural wealth;
- Promote the organization of recreational and educational activities respectful of the area's exceptional native biodiversity;
- Encourage the development of sustainable tourism and the creation of local employment.



The rare Blandings turtle

2nd Annual Friends of Chats Falls Forum

Over 40 people participated in the Friends of Chats Falls Forum held Sunday October 29 at the Camp des Voyageurs Tim Horton near Quyon. They were motivated by their passion and pre-



Armand Ducharme, inspiration behind the creation of FCF

occupation with the area, and they represented a broad range of interests and backgrounds. A few even arrived by canoe!

One purpose of the forum was to provide an update on the activities and progress made by the new

non-profit organisation, the Friends of Chats Falls (FCF). Founded in August 2017, the Friends will promote the area, carrying on in a more grassroots fashion

from the groundwork laid by the MRC Pontiac and the MRC des Collines and honouring Armand Ducharme's original idea for the "Kingdom of the Chats".

Barbara Haughton, FCF board member, opened the morning with a presentation about the Friends of Chats Falls and then all participants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves. President Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert gave an overview of the rich cultural heritage of the area and Milaine Saumur from the Nature Conservancy of Canada provided highlights of the area's exceptional biodiversity.

Michael McBane, FCF vice-president, spoke to the three-year plan proposed by the Friends that includes trail and related infrastructure development, a feasibility study for the use of the railway bridge, and work on plans for a visitor centre, possibly located in the Quyon Mill.



Mohr's Chute and Horseshoe Chute prior to the construction of Chats Generating Station

Application has been made to the Support Fund for the Development of Regions (FARR) for financial help to carry out the plans.

Small groups discussions followed and all had the opportunity to respond to questions concerning the kinds of activities they would like to do and/or infrastructure they would like to see at Chats

Upcoming Events

Chats Falls Winter Talk – Sunday, January 21, 2018, 1:30 pm

Michael McBane on John Egan, MPP for Pontiac, lumber baron, steamboat & horse railway entrepreneur, & promoter of the Georgian Bay Shipping Canal

Quyon Women's Institute (Bert Kennedy Centre)

885, rue Clarendon, Quyon

Info (Barbara Haughton): baichaughton@rogers.com



Preparing for a portage at the Georgian Bay Shipping Canal

Falls; their preoccupations regarding plans for the area; best ways to promote and increase awareness of the project and suggestions of other groups and individuals who should be involved.

"The process really worked because it involved everyone. I really was impressed with the spirit and good will in the room", said McBane.

You could feel the participant's passion for this project and many underlined environmental protection as a priority consideration. The biodiversity of the Bristol Marsh is unique and the protection of the habitats of species at risk is essential to maintaining ecosystem balance. Public education through interpretive activities and other means is the best way to protect the natural wealth of the area", said Saumur.

And while the weather did not cooperate to allow a planned ca-



Ann Sisson moored at the Quyon Wharf in Pontiac Bay

noe outing in the afternoon, costumes and a canoe stage prop provided by the Haughtons, with the backdrop of the mural at the Tim Horton Camp and the "photo booth" equipment and expertise provided by Glen Hartle, permitted participants to dress up and pose for pictures.

The mission of the Friends of Chats Falls is to "promote the cultural, historical and natural wealth of the Chats Falls region of the Ottawa River watershed through interpretative programs and sustainable recreational activities respectful of the area's exceptional native biodiversity".

Work is also underway to update the website left over from the park project, promoted by the MRC Pontiac beginning in 2012.

FCF first event June 2017

Samuel de Champlain (a.k.a. Pavel Khol) and historian Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert welcomed participants at the Domaine du Pontiac Village for the start of the first outing organized by the Friends of Chats Falls), June 23, 2017.

"Sam" shared his memories of the falls and rapids from his first visit in 1613 and Lambert showed a site map pointing out the highlights of the region. Participants then set off on bikes to the first stop at the Old Pontiac Village cemetery on the chemin du Canal where Michael McBane filled them in on the families (including his own) who had plots there and their significance to the history of the area.

The tour continued to the remains of the Draper house at the edge of the Camp des Voyageurs Tim Horton and guides Lambert, McBane, Katharine Fletcher, Peter and Barbara Haughton had more stories to tell of the past activities and people who lived there.

The tour went on to the head of the never finished canal that was to provide easy passage for shipping to the Great Lakes. Bob Baser welcomed participants onto his property, showing them a diagram of the proposed lock system as well as various artifacts. The tour ended up back at the domaine for some good cheer and refreshments.

Panels highlighting the historical and natural wealth of the area are still on display at the Domaine de Pontiac Village Museum (1259, chemin du Cimetière, Pontiac). During the winter months, please phone or write prior to your visit (Tel.: 819-458-3628 or info@domainepontiac.com).



Board Directors (left to right): Deborah Powell, Michael McBane, Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert, Robert Baser, Barbara Haughton