

The first storm of winter wreaks havoc along the Coast

GILLES GAGNÉ

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ AND MARIA - On January 10, Gaspé received 40 centimetres of snow in the first snowstorm of the winter. The storm also hit the Bay of Chaleur area hard, with New Carlisle receiving 20 centimetres of snow. Winds and blowing snow hindered traffic, and surges caused huge waves in many places, including Cape Cove, Chandler and Maria.

A wind gust of 107 kilome-

tres per hour was recorded at Cap-d'Espoir. The Haute-Gaspésie area was spared from much of the storm. In Maria, Mayor Jean-Claude Landry points out that the municipal authorities called an emergency situation on the morning of January 10 for the Tournepierre Street area. The Town of Maria and the Department of Civil Security issued an evacuation order for the 48 houses along that street.

"The evacuation was a precautionary measure, but many people didn't want to leave

their homes. There was no real damage as a result of the storm on Tournepierre Street even if it was flooded. The sewerage system was flooded too and we had to close it on Tournepierre and Pluviers streets as well," describes Mayor Landry.

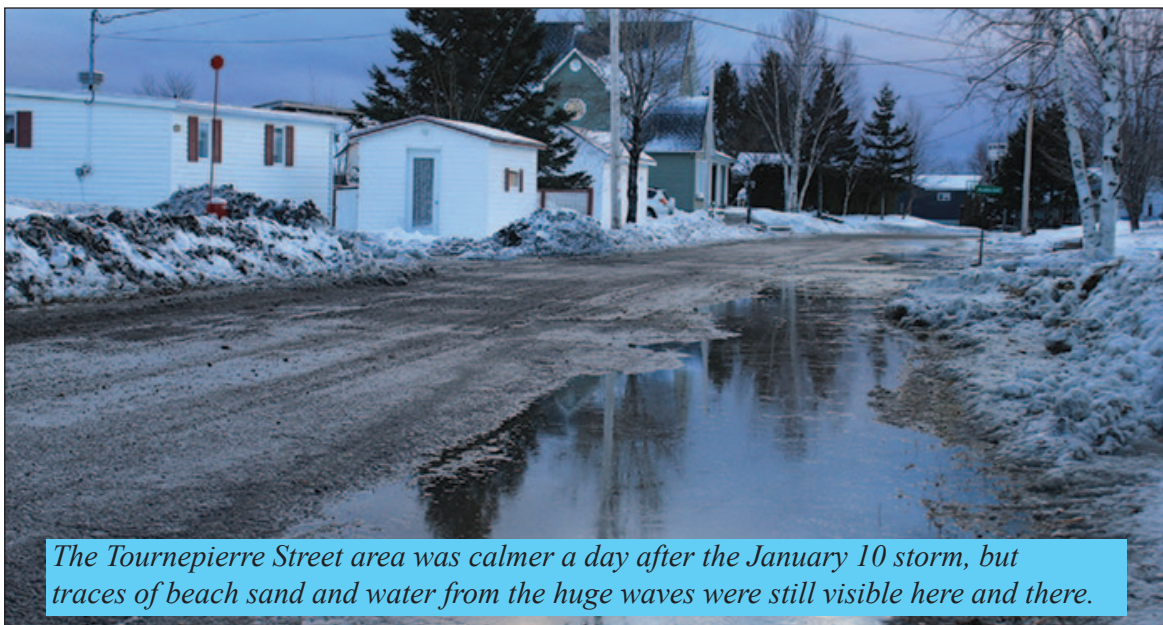
In fact, the residents of only one of the 48 houses respected the evacuation order. "We will have to do something about it. We want to avoid a situation similar to that of Baie-Saint-Paul last spring," adds the mayor.

Two rescuers lost their lives in Baie-Saint-Paul in May while attempting to verify if people who had refused to be evacuated were threatened by a highly inflated river.

On January 10, a few buildings were slightly flooded in

Carleton, as was the barachois in Hopetown. In Chandler, the wharf and De la Plage Street were also flooded by storm surges.

In the Bay of Chaleur area, the snowfall was followed by rain.



The Tournepierre Street area was calmer a day after the January 10 storm, but traces of beach sand and water from the huge waves were still visible here and there.

Photo: G. Gagné



Siblings, Charlotte and Noah Major, were quite excited to finally have a big snow storm.

Photo: Diana Wylie

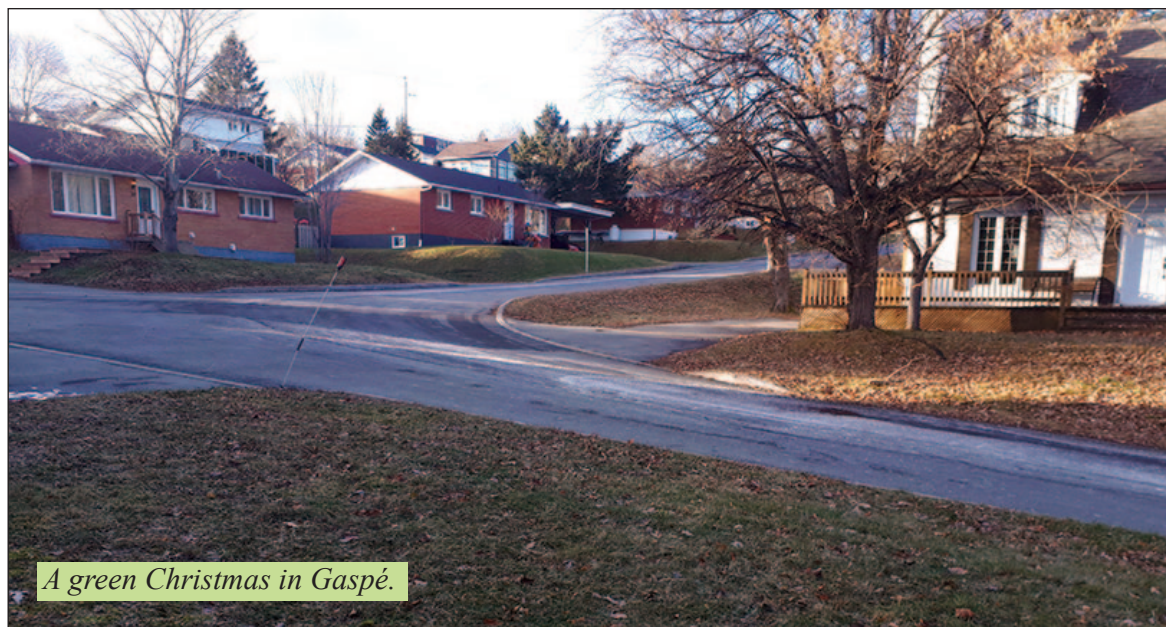
Very little snow fell in December

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - In the region, December was notable for the warmer-than-usual temperature and the lack of snow.

What is really remarkable is that on Christmas morning, there was zero centimetres of snow at daybreak at the Michel-Pouliot airport in Gaspé. Similarly, in New Carlisle, there was less than a centimetre of snow on the ground, according to Environment Canada data from December 25.

It is considered a green Christmas when there is less than two centimetres of snow on the ground on the morning of December 25.



A green Christmas in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

It wasn't until December 30 that there was a measurable accumulation of snow in

Gaspé, with 7.5 centimetres. That amount turned out to be the total quantity of snow re-

ceived in December.

However, this isn't a record breaker, as Gaspé re-

ceived only 6.4 centimetres in December 1952.

On the morning of January 1, there was six centimetres of snow on the ground. The previous record was in 1979 when there was no trace of snow at all in Gaspé.

At this time last year, there was 16 centimetres of snow on the ground.

The precipitation record dates back to just 10 years ago, with 162 centimetres in December 2013, far exceeding the normal amount of 75 centimetres.

Since the start of winter, Gaspé has received only 34 centimetres of snow, compared to the normal amount of

2023 snow crab season marked by low prices and high quotas

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Quebec snow crab landings experienced a growth of 16% in 2023 compared to 2022, thanks to abundant quotas. However, the sharp drop in dockside prices caused a drastic decrease in overall revenues by 61% compared to those of 2022.

The value of landings fell from \$195.5 million to \$77 million between 2022 and 2023. A sum of \$77 million is by far the lowest total of the decade. This is only 52% of the average of the last five years, which stood at \$148 million prior to 2023.

Snow crab has now given its traditional first place to lobster as the most lucrative species in Quebec since 2020 inclusively. While the two crustaceans generated fairly similar revenues in 2020 and 2021, the gap has been widening for two years. In 2023, lobster catches brought in \$232.3 million, three times more than snow crab catches.

An acute drop in price

While there had been a fairly slight drop in the average landed price from \$7.49 to \$6.74 per pound between 2021 and 2022, the drop was significant from 2022 to 2023, when the price plummeted to \$2.29 per pound, a loss of 66%. This is clearly the lowest price since 2015 inclusively, even lower than the \$2.65 per pound in 2015.

“There were unsold stocks and the price decreased,” specifies research analyst, Simon Desrochers, from the federal Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, recalling in particular the difficult negotiations at the start of the season in zone 16, on the North Shore. He also specifies that the current data remains preliminary.

The 15,250 metric tons landed by all Quebec crab fishermen somehow saved the year, as volumes slightly compensated for the absence of a good price. One must go back to the 19,502 metric tonnes of 2017 to see a greater abundance of snow crab landings in Quebec.

A more precise look at the situation in a few fishing zones provides a better overview of the situation.

In zone 12, which covers the south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, an area covering the

bulk of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands crab fishermen, the value of the 2023 catch, at \$44.7 million, is 46% lower than the average of the last five years, which stands at \$82.9 million.

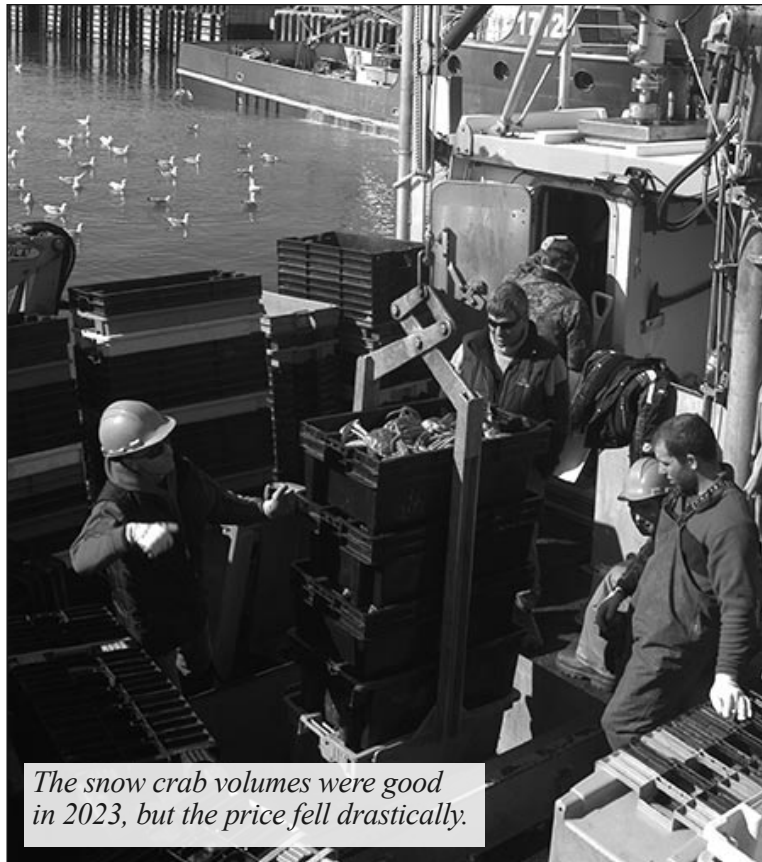
In zone 16, North Shore crab fishermen landed crab worth \$12.9 million, which is 52.6% less than the average of \$27.2 million over the last five years.

Crab fishermen in the third largest Quebec zone, zone 17, straddling the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower Saint Lawrence regions, generated revenues of \$7.7 million in 2023, compared to the \$15.2 million average of the last five-year term, a decline of 47.3%.

“There was an increase in quotas in all sectors. On the other hand, there really was downward pressure on prices,” notes Simon Desrochers.

Thus, even if a couple of geographical particularities could have contributed to supporting the 2022 price, for example, the embargo decreed by the United States on crab from Russia due to the war in Ukraine, and the very low stocks coming from Alaska, once the state supplying the majority of crab to the American market, the factors pushing the price down prevailed.

“American nationalism has become more focused on Maine lobster. This is one of the factors that explains a price of \$2.29 per pound (to Quebec crab fishermen). It is also certain that we had record prices in 2021 and 2022, while the average from 2015 to 2022 is \$5 per pound. Crab is a luxury good in



The snow crab volumes were good in 2023, but the price fell drastically.

Photo: G. Gagné

an inflationary situation. If the consumer has to cut, it will be there,” explains Simon Desrochers.

He also mentions that at the start of the season, there was a high volume of unsold 2022 inventories, a situation which forced processing plants and wholesalers to sell these products at a lower price before the 2023 season.

“All the conditions were met for the price to fall,” adds his economist colleague Alexandre Watier, recalling the sudden drop of one dollar in the price after nine days of capture during the 2022 season, the processing plants’ managers having understood that the price had gone too far.

“There was less supply on a more macroeconomic (broader) scale,” also notes Mr.

Watier, about a factor that could have supported the price, “but the inflationary surge and the need for consumers to refocus on essential products won,” he points out.

Data by region

By maritime sector, Gaspé Peninsula fishermen landed 8,783 metric tons of snow crab in 2023, a volume representing the second highest total of the last eight years, second only to the 10,457 tons of 2017.

However, the \$44 million in total revenue constituted the lowest amount of the last eight years. The year 2016 was also very bad in this regard, with a dockside value of \$46 million. The Gaspé Peninsula snow crab statistics include the part of zone 17 catches made in the

Lower Saint Lawrence. Although Fisheries and Oceans Canada does not differentiate the two regional totals, the relatively modest catches of zone 17 limits the share of the Lower Saint Lawrence fishermen to about 10% of the overall statistics of the Gaspé Peninsula.

During the period 2016-2023, the best catches in the Gaspé Peninsula were made in 2017 with 10,457 metric tons, while the best revenues were also established in 2017, with \$113 million.

The situation in the Magdalen Islands was good in 2023 in terms of catches, with 2,254 metric tons, the highest total since the 2,353 tons in 2019. At \$12 million, Magdalen Islands fishermen’s revenues represented the smallest total since \$10 million in 2016. In the 2016 to 2023 time interval, it was 2019 which generated the highest catches with 2,353 tonnes, but the best revenues for Magdalen Islanders occurred in 2022, with \$34 million.

The year 2023 will also leave a slightly bitter taste on the North Shore. In terms of catches, the situation, thanks to landings of 4,213 metric tons, is better than the annual average of 3,625 tons in 2020, 2021 and 2022. However, the value of these 4,213 tons, at \$21 million, is by far the lowest total since 2016 inclusive.

In the North Shore, the records for the 2016-2023 interval stand at 7,293 metric tons for catches in 2016, and at \$75 million for value, in 2018.

RESPIRATORY VIRUSES: Not as rampant in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Respiratory viruses seem to cause fewer problems in the Gaspé Peninsula than elsewhere in Quebec, according to the findings of the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Regional Public Health Department.

“Objectively, we are doing better. Hospitals are not overloaded. Our emergencies are not blocked by a large influx of people with respiratory problems,” notes the regional director, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger.

The emergency occupancy rate in the Gaspé Peninsula remains among the lowest in Quebec.

However, the specialist remains cautious.

“It happened a few times in recent years when we were the best at this point, but we caught up a little later,” notes the doctor, based in particular on the experience during the pandemic.

Vaccinations remain the best way to avoid complications.

“If you haven’t yet, there is always time to get vaccinated. It’s the best decision to make at the start of the year,”

advises the director.

Without having precise figures on the main viruses, influenza continues to progress. “It’s not an extraordinary climb. This is an increase consistent with what we knew about influenza before COVID,” mentions Dr. Bonnier Viger.

The COVID-19 virus is holding steady, while respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is on the decline.

As of January 7, 19,167 doses of the influenza vaccine have been administered. 22,153 injections were given last year.

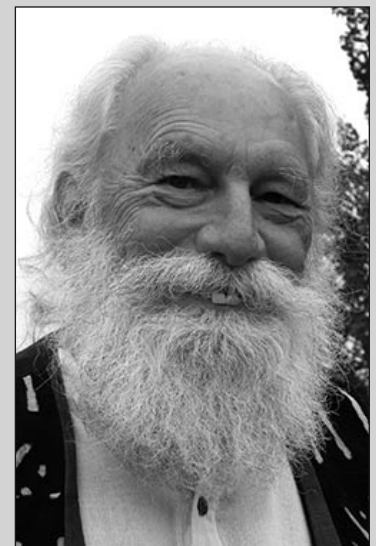


Photo: N. Sergerie

The region is faring well this flu season, according to Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger.

Police report

A tragic head-on collision occurred on January 8 on Highway 132, near its intersection with Grand Pré Street, resulting in the death of a 35-year-old woman from Paspebiac. The accident took place at approximately 4 p.m. "For a reason that remains unexplained as of now, the victim's vehicle deviated from its lane towards the opposite lane. The impact was unavoidable. She was pronounced dead during the evening at the (Maria) hospital," states Stéphane Tremblay, communication officer for the Sûreté du Québec. "The two other occupants were also sent to the hospital but their injuries were not life-threatening. Highway 132 was closed for several hours after the accident. A specialist in accident reconstitution took some photos and measurements at the scene in an attempt to explain what happened," adds Officer Tremblay. The initial theory of the victim attempting to pass another vehicle has been ruled out by the Sûreté du Québec. Highway 132 was reopened to traffic at 8:30 p.m. the same day. The Sûreté du Québec no longer divulges the identity of accident victims, leaving this responsibility to the coroner, who had not yet released that information as SPEC was reaching its deadline.

Simon Dufort Chouinard, 18, from Rivière-au-Renard, who is charged with the premeditated murder of Gabriel Noël, aged 19, and the non-premeditated murder of Dylan Samuel-Francoeur, aged 18, appeared virtually at the Percé courthouse on January 10. The court deliberated on scheduling his preliminary hearing, ultimately deciding to postpone it once again, this time until January 22. Dufort Chouinard is incarcerated at the New Carlisle prison.

The case involves a tragic incident that unfolded in a violent three-vehicle collision, claiming the lives of both victims who were in the same car. Marc-Jules Chouinard, the father of Simon, is also charged with two counts of manslaughter. He was granted bail on November 20. He was already scheduled to appear in court on January 22. He also faces charges of attempted murder and dangerous driving.

Judge Denis Paradis, of the Quebec Court, took under advisement the case of Michel Bourget, aged 71, of Percé, for a sexual assault affair, at the end of his recent trial, he will render his decision on March 25. In September 2021, Mr. Bourget rented out a room to a young woman. After entering the home numerous times, the man managed to convince the victim of his talents as a masseur and lured her to his home. It was there that Mr. Bourget attempted to forcibly remove her pants and she managed to escape. This isn't the first time Mr. Bouget has been involved with the law, he has a history known to the police for various cases. He was previously convicted of sexual assault in the 1980s, leading to a six-year prison sentence.

The preliminary hearing of Douglas Quirion, 63, of Gaspé, is scheduled to commence on January 25. Mr. Quirion faces multiple sexual charges involving four minors and one victim who has reached adulthood. The alleged incidents are said to have occurred between March 1978 and April 2011. In November 2022, Douglas Quirion was released under several conditions. The investigation into this matter has been entrusted to the management structure for serial crime investigations, a provincial coordination that consolidates police resources when an investigation involves more than one victim. This collaborative effort aims to apprehend sexual predators.

Suspected of a violent break-in in Percé, Jonathan Racette, 29, has been released pending further proceedings. The Chandler resident underwent his bail hearing on January 8 at the Percé courthouse, where Quebec Court Judge, Denis Paradis, rendered his decision the following day. Mr. Racette is set to return to court on January 22. He voluntarily surrendered to the police on January 4 after an arrest warrant was issued for him the day prior. In addition to a charge of break and enter, he faces counts of assault causing bodily harm, mischief, wearing a disguise and extortion. Racette and his alleged accomplice, Michael Bourque, 28, who is still on the run, allegedly broke into a residence on Baril Street on December 18, where they reportedly attacked the occupant, who managed to escape with minor injuries. Both suspects are known to Sûreté du Québec police officers.

Convicted of numerous sexual crimes against two minors in Gaspé, Louis-David Côté, 23, has been sentenced to two years less one day under house arrest, in accordance with the suspended sentence principle. During this period, he must adhere to various conditions, provide a DNA sample, and his name will be placed on the sex offender register for 20 years. Additionally, a two-year probationary period will be enforced once his sentence is completed. In January 2022, at the age of 21, Mr. Côté pleaded guilty to charges including computer luring, sexual contact with a teenage girl at the C.-E Pouliot high school, and the distribution of sexually explicit images of a second victim under the age of 18. The criminal prosecutor has not specified if an appeal will be filed.

On January 10, officers from the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC detachment of Sûreté du Québec conducted a successful drug bust in Gaspé prompted by an interception on the road. Kevin Plante, 42, from Gaspé, was arrested and appeared shortly after at the Percé courthouse to face charges of driving under the influence of drugs, breach of probation, and possession of cocaine. He was remanded in custody and was scheduled to return to court on January 16, 2024, as the SPEC was reaching its deadline. The seizure was made in the vehicle used by the suspect. Kevin Plante was already known to the police.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The president and CEO of the CISSS, Martin Pelletier.

A smaller deficit than expected at the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Adjustment for inflation and the payment of other credits from the Quebec government make it possible to reduce the anticipated deficit by \$10 million at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The expected loss drops from \$44 million to \$34 million out of a total budget of \$520 million.

"We are being confirmed budgets that Quebec had not confirmed at the start of the year. What remains for us to do is the whole question of independent labour costs which cause the balance of the deficit. This is why the figures are still high in terms of the deficit," explains CISSS President and CEO, Martin Pelletier.

The CEO is hopeful that the deficit will be filled by the government at the end of the year.

As of 2026, the CISSS will no longer be able to use agency services.

In addition, the organization is looking for a way

to support patients who have make multiple trips within a 200-kilometre distance as part of a treatment plan.

Provincial regulations do not provide for any reimbursement of travel expenses when the distance to travel between the referral hospital and another establishment to receive care is less than 200 kilometres.

For example, residents of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts who must go to Rimouski cannot be reimbursed. Same thing for a person from the Matapédia Plateaux who must receive treatment at the Maria hospital.

"Let's say it takes four trips to add up to 600 kilometres for the same treatment, we want to consider the number of kilometres (in total) minus the 200 kilometres. The user could be compensated, which is not currently the case," explains the president and CEO.

The specifics are under analysis.

This policy could come into force on April 1, and the CISSS would finance this measure from its funds.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Quebec politics will also be interesting to watch!

The political landscape in Quebec promises to be as intriguing as the federal scene in 2024. Fifteen months into his second term, Quebec Premier François Legault faces the challenge of halting the dramatic decline in popularity that has plagued the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) since the spring of 2023.

The abandonment of the Third link project in Quebec City in April, its unexpected return to the government agenda in October after the defeat in the Jean-Talon riding by-election, and poor management performances in health care, education, environment, daycare and housing files accelerated the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) decline.

The strikes that erupted at the end of November were widely supported by a majority of Quebecers, a situation that made Premier Legault realize that the CAQ slide was for real.

The interest expressed by the former mayor of Montreal, Denis Coderre, in the leadership of the Liberal Party of Quebec can only add sparks to the starting year. Officially, Mr. Coderre, a former federal minister as well, is only reflecting on the possibility of a political comeback.

However, he has changed his mind a few times in his career. For example, Mr. Coderre had committed to retiring from politics after his first loss to current Montreal mayor, Valérie Plante, in 2017, but he, nevertheless, made a comeback attempt in 2021, only to lose again.

Stopping the CAQ descent

François Legault had not anticipated his party's descent when he won a second consecutive election in October 2022. It seems odd to sum up the situation like this but he was on a swing provided by the pandemic, during which he was practically alone on the scene, due to media coverage concentrating on the government actions.

In politics, there is a saying stating that the first year of a term, sometimes the second year as well, is the right time to adopt unpopular measures. The CAQ government applied that saying through its April 2023 abandonment stand on Quebec City's Third link original project and it promptly back-fired in the capital area.

Despite the project's unpopularity in other parts of Quebec, Mr. Legault was not able to capitalize on that aspect due to the declining trust of Quebecers in the government's ability to manage other important files.

Despite promises made during the 2022 campaign by Health Minister, Christian Dubé, to the effect that the situation in hospitals would improve, the results are not visible, despite the staff's intense efforts to hold the system together.

Education Minister, Bernard Drainville, doesn't look like the man of the situation. His grasp of the field is poor, his actions fall short and despite being a former television journalist and radio show host, he has so far been a very poor communicator regarding the positions that could lead Quebec towards an improved education system, which is currently marred by defections and mediocre recruitment attempts.

While Economy Minister, Pierre Fitzgibbon, receives high praise from Premier Legault for his

overall performance in attracting investments, the current government's strategy to bring battery producers like Northvolt lacks a realistic and modern vision.

Transportation means will undoubtedly need batteries to increasingly replace hydrocarbons in the future but emphasizing individual cars will not solve the main environmental problem created by the multiplication of cars. This government misses on the development of commuting transport. It demonstrates an outdated environmental policy.

François Legault has been juggling with a dream of winning a third term in 2026 and the possibility of handing on the reins of power to his successor over the fall of 2025. Right now, under the current downward support context, he would probably retire if he listened solely to his feelings.

However, abandoning the ship in the middle of the storm would not leave a fine impression of him, historically, something he cares for. He will try to stabilize the situation and hope for better decision-making over the current year. He didn't ask for a compass as a Christmas present for nothing before the holiday season!

One of François Legault's main missions in 2024 will be to keep his caucus happy, which is not an easy task in the current context of unhappiness. He will want to avoid defections that could lead to dismal by-election results, like what happened in Jean-Talon.

The Denis Coderre case

Denis Coderre a seasoned politician, experienced significant political shifts since his loss in the 2017 Montreal mayoral election. He was elected to the House of Commons for the first time in 1997, at age 34, succeeding after three previous defeats.

He maintained close links with some of the people implicated in the sponsorship scandal, a controversy that significantly impacted the Liberal Party of Canada from 2004 to 2015. For years, he resided at Claude Boulay's residence, with Boulay being one of the main beneficiaries of the money spent during what was later called the sponsorship scandal. This scandal involved promoting federalism during and after the 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum. Over time, it became evident that these expenditures served as a means to finance the Liberal Party of Canada and make Liberal friends rich.

Back then, Denis Coderre blatantly lied about

his closeness to Claude Boulay. Additionally, during his mayoral years, he also displayed bully-like methods that would not be accepted in today's Quebec politics. He also hid details about the management of the Formula E electric car race prior to his first defeat against Valérie Plante. Furthermore, he obscured his professional whereabouts between 2017 and 2021 during the campaign that led to his second defeat.

Has Denis Coderre changed since 2021? It is permitted to doubt it. Does the Liberal Party of Quebec, which is still paying the political toll left behind by the Jean Charest era, need a man like him? Can he embody the renewal the party needs? Can he figure out a way to get support outside Montreal, as the rest of Quebec literally boycotted the Liberal Party over the last two electoral campaigns?

The debate is ongoing. The Liberal Party has been looking for a way to get positive attention since the defeat of Philippe Couillard in 2018.

People supporting Denis Coderre will be glad to see the party get some attention, any kind of attention. However, people within the party wishing a true renewal will easily find allies in other parties to bring his shady affairs back to the surface. The torpedoing of his leadership candidacy will perhaps come from within the Liberal Party ranks.

Some needed quietness for the other parties

Meanwhile the Parti québécois (PQ) of Paul Saint-Pierre Plamondon might benefit from the controversy arising from Denis Coderre's ambition. The PQ must strengthen its position and recruit new candidates. Despite leading in recent polls, the party remains far from a real contender as of now. A protest vote does not equate to allegiance, no matter how sound Mr. Saint-Pierre Plamondon's strategy has been working since his arrival.

Québec solidaire might benefit from a bit of quietness in 2024 to review some parts of its political program. Although Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois is a fierce and feared debater, his party stagnates with a 15 to 17% rate of support in surveys and polls, and its brass must find means to reach a broader cross-section of the electorate.

As for the Conservative Party, its leader Éric Duhaime must develop a program that extends beyond citizens disgruntled with COVID's sanitary measures. Some reflection time away from the limelight may be necessary to achieve that goal.



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Gaspé MNA summarizes the fall session

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Gaspé Member of Parliament, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, highlights the latest announcements from the Legault government regarding the rehabilitation of the rail to Gaspé as the main point, in his assessment of the fall legislative session at the National Assembly.

"There is a lot of good news for the entire MRC, but I will admit that I particularly like the development of the railway issue in the Gaspésie. We delivered. We remember the announcement by the Minister of Transport in June in Gaspé, and we see the progress of the work on the section, most recently on section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé. Very proud of the evolution of the file," says Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

On November 17, Premier François Legault launched the first in a series of calls for tenders for the rehabilitation of section three.

Section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé will need \$517.6 million by 2026, aiming to be ready in the fall of 2026 for entry into service in December 2026.

"There are monumental works. Can we move forward the deadline? Our objective is to deliver in 2026, and in all likelihood, and the information we receive, we will be there in 2026 to inaugurate the line from the very end," says Mr. Sainte-Croix, even though the calendar would fall at the electoral deadline of October

2026.

"It's not a film, but things being what they are, we will deliver as soon as possible and that has been the objective of the professionals since day one," declares the MNA.

On wind power, Mr. Sainte-Croix notes that the government and Hydro-Québec are working firmly to unblock the bottleneck in Rivière-du-Loup, which does not allow the energy produced by the establishment of new wind farms in the Gaspé Peninsula to be transported

"This file was addressed in a very specific manner to the entire government apparatus. This file is progressing through the authorities, and all stakeholders understand that for the contribution of wind energy to Gaspésie, the region is in an interesting position for the wind source and the industrial sector. For the future, it is planned by Michael Sabia's (president and CEO of Hydro-Québec) that there will be investments in transmission lines and the Gaspésie will position itself in these investments to develop wind potential," supports the MNA.

The Climate Change Project Office was announced in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts during the last session.

Colossal work must be done to protect the coastline, especially with the December storms which once again showed the region's vulnerability to coastal erosion.

"This is a big step in creating the office and the team still needs to be completed to analyze these projects. We are hopeful in the coming months



Photo: N. Sergerie

The railway played an important role in the fall session according to the Gaspé MNA.

to tackle complex issues in a structuring way," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

The coastal erosion situations in Maria and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts are known.

Work was done this fall in Percé and a complete beach recharge will be done in 2024. The MNA also targets several other sectors.

"We have a worrisome issue in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé where it affects a residential part and a major provider of jobs in the municipality, (and) the Anse-à-Val-leau sector affected by erosion. Honestly, there is work on the table and we will tackle it over the coming months," says the elected official.

The Member of Parliament and federal Minister of Fisheries, Diane Lebouthillier, spoke about the opening of the redfish fishery for 2024, a decision awaited by both fishermen and processing plants.

Once the information is

confirmed, Quebec will get to work.

"That means supporting our fishermen, supporting our processors at the equipment level to ensure adequate processing and marketing of the resource, which must be supported. I am well informed and my job will be to support innovative and structuring projects. Processors will be able to count on our help," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

When the decision is announced, the elements will fall into place.

"We will have to get active on the roadmap. Our people will have to get their hands dirty. This is already the case in our discussions. Our leaders will work hard, and we will do everything to support them when the activities begin," he says.

The Blue Zone, which is considered a complex file still has not been announced, notes the MNA. "There are still a

few strings to tie. We should announce it in 2024," he adds.

Among the other elements that marked the MNA's parliamentary session is the creation of the DÉPART program, which replaces FAIR, a much-awaited gesture in the Gaspésie. The establishment of a Police techniques program at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, Gaspé campus, also played a significant role, along with the presence of several ministers and Premier François Legault.

"The ministerial presence in our region was very important this fall. We strive to ensure that ministers can be present throughout the riding, in each of our MRCs. In addition, we had the honour of receiving the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, to inaugurate the Maison des aînés (seniors) et alternatives de Rivière-au-Renard and launch the first calls for tenders for the work on the section of the railway to Gaspé, in addition to meeting our local elected officials. This representation work is essential to raise awareness of our specific issues," mentions Mr. Sainte-Croix.

The electoral map issue is a subject which has provoked strong reactions.

"The mobilization of the region was exemplary in making the commissioners understand that the proposed scenario was incompatible with the realities of the region," suggests the MNA, who hopes that the arguments presented will give all the necessary latitude to reconsider their initial proposal.

Opération Nez rouge - a big success in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - As the 32nd edition of Opération Nez Rouge in Gaspé came to an end on December 27, more than \$4,700 was raised over the eight evenings that the service was available.

December 22 was the busiest evening of the operation with 49 rides provided and \$919.70 in donations. Thirty volunteers were on duty to support the organization. The day before, 19 volunteers provided 22 rides for a total of \$318 collected in donations.

In total, 258 rides were carried out over the 2023 holidays, raising \$4,715 for the

Gaspé Maison des jeunes.

"We obviously saw a drop in the results compared to 2019, partly because there were eight evenings of operation instead of 10 and certainly because people had lost the habit (of calling Nez rouge) after three years of absence," says the coordinator of the Gaspé Maison des jeunes and responsible for the Opération Nez rouge in collaboration with that of Rivière-au-Renard, Sabrina Fortin.

In 2019, the last time Nez rouge was offered in Gaspé, \$9,132 was collected in donations with 645 people using the service.

"We are satisfied, it was a very good edition and we will



Photo: Maison des jeunesse de Gaspé Facebook page

do it again next year," confirms Ms. Fortin.

Nearly \$175,000 was

raised by Opération Nez Rouge Gaspé over its 32 editions.

Photo: Volunteer drivers assisted 258 people during December 2023.

Bonaventure riding's Catherine Blouin says the session was very busy

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Catherine Blouin, the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, feels that the fall session has been very busy. Key highlights include the modernization of Maria hospital's emergency and intensive care unit and the reorganization of the electoral map taking up a great deal of time.

Ms. Blouin summarized the fall session in a detailed interview with SPEC.

Concerning the Maria hospital file, the MNA, who has been in office since October 2022, is delighted to see that the premier committed in November to include the Maria Hospital file in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI) in the upcoming provincial budget next spring.

The PQI outlines investments for the next 10 years, but Ms. Blouin believes the project won't take that long.

"This type of project normally lasts 10 to 15 years. It can be quite long. There are steps that have been carried out, particularly by the CISSS de la Gaspésie. Where we are is the study (phase). This is the next step. When we enter the PQI, we will know how much it will cost. We are not able to do it until we have this study, which will come when we are at the PQI in 2024," specifies Ms. Blouin.

Being a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, the MNA assures that, contrary to what political analysts mention, Bill 15 will decentralize the management of the network.

"I would like to correct this information. This bill aims to add managers on the ground. We want decision-making to be as close as possible to the patient and to avoid all the administrative steps that sometimes take us to the CEOs who have to approve almost everything. Managers will be on the ground and accountable. It will be up to them to make the decisions that are adequate and adapted to their realities. Gaspésie will be a winner," says the MNA.

Catherine Blouin obtained the mandate to hold special consultations on organ donation.

"As soon as work resumes, we will have a discussion in Quebec on organ donation. We will hear from people, from groups, and we hope that it will eventually lead to a bill. I will

be the government spokesperson to lead these consultations," she says.

The other major issue which occupied the attention of the elected official from Bonaventure is the overhaul of the electoral map, which proposes to eliminate a constituency in the Gaspé Peninsula by merging the ridings of Gaspé and Bonaventure and sending Haute-Gaspésie to the Lower Saint Lawrence constituency of Matane-Matapédia.

"We attacked it head-on. I first had to insist on getting an audience in Bonaventure. We worked very hard to have a large mobilization to send a clear message to the commissioners. We had a record participation," says Ms. Blouin proudly.

A "Save Gaspésie" website, a petition, an open letter, and a memorandum were also set up in the fight to maintain the two Gaspé Peninsula constituencies.

The launch of calls for tenders for section three on the rail between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé with Premier François Legault in November, the launch of the Office on Coastal Erosion, the deployment of specialized courts for sexual and spousal violence, the DÉPART program, which will replace FAIR, and the inauguration of the Matapédia

fire station are also mentioned by the MNA in her summary of the fall session.

Regarding childcare services, Ms. Blouin wants to finish deploying the places already granted over the last few years which have not yet been delivered.

To complete the childcare network, Quebec seems to have hesitated, having launched a concept of prefabricated daycare centre, which was put on the back burner because of costs but has recently come back to the forefront. The objective remains "one child, one place".

"The idea is to be efficient. There is expertise that is gained when there are teams that do several CPEs (daycares); it can go faster versus a company that is going to do a CPE (Centre Petit Enfance) for the first time with all the measures and security elements; it can go wrong and trigger back and forth exchanges with the ministry. It should be more efficient, and that's what we want," outlines the MNA.

On wind power, the MNA emphasizes that work continues to resolve the bottleneck in Rivière-du-Loup, which does not allow the additional energy that could be produced by possible new windfarms in the region to reach markets.

Regarding the high prices of



The MNA for Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin.

Photo: N. Sergerie

gasoline, which are denounced in all directions by citizens, the MNA hopes to be able to find a solution.

"We cannot promise that this will be resolved in 2024. But it is not normal for Gaspésians to pay more for their gasoline. We made representations on the Canadian side, to Minister Fitzgibbon, and we spoke about it with the premier. Is this going to be resolved? I can't promise it, but we are going to work in that direction," says Ms. Blouin.

On the impact of inflation, Ms. Blouin notes that several small measures have been taken, including tax credits for seniors, a reduction in driving license (fees) and other measures. "We will continue to do it to help Quebecers so that they can breathe," says the elected official.

On the renovation of the New Carlisle prison, Ms. Blouin visited the institution in November to see what it is precisely to visualize the needs.

"The feedback is positive. The management team was optimistic about the future. New Carlisle Prison is a priority. I expect good news in early 2024. I compare the New Carlisle detention centre to something where you have to take one bite at a time," notes Ms. Blouin.

Cells were destroyed in 2019, and only two will be repaired in 2024. At this rate, it would take around 30 years to refurbish the prison.

"That's not the goal. We don't want it to take 30 years. Unfortunately, I cannot announce anything today, but I expect good news for 2024," she maintains.

Villa Frederick-James to open its doors in 2024

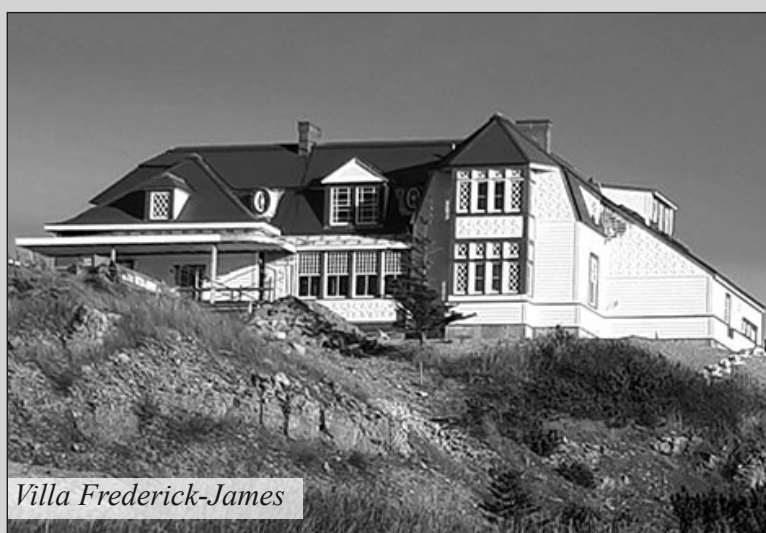
NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - According to the Ministry of Culture, the Villa Frederick-James selected as a Blue Space (Espace bleu) in the Gaspé Peninsula should be ready to greet the public in 2024.

In an email sent out in December, the ministry indicated that the development, rehabilitation and conservation work on the villa is progressing well. The Ministry specifies in the email that "Subject to the progress of the construction site in current conditions, commissioning is currently planned for 2024."

According to the ministry, the project is progressing as planned, with a slight delay in the schedule by a few weeks due to the heritage characteristics of the building.

The majority of the restoration work on the Frederick-James villa will be completed over the winter.



Villa Frederick-James

Photo: N. Sergerie

Moreover, the ministry emphasizes that the public can follow the daily progress of the construction site by viewing images from the camera installed on-site, via the following link: <https://www.devisubox.com/dv/dv.php5?pgl=Project/interface&sRef=2SYHC6K6D>

The initial project, announced in April 2022 by the Minister of Culture at the time, Nathalie Roy, has not been

modified.

The site was chosen in particular for its emblematic architecture, its cultural history, and the heritage value of the Percé landscape.

The Town of Percé is also an important tourist hub in the region, which constitutes a major asset in the choice of this Blue Space.

Since moving the building 19 metres away from the cliff due to the risk of erosion, her-

itage restoration work, basement expansion and upgrading have been carried out, ensuring perfect integration of the elements into the protected landscape of the site and with full respect for the heritage.

The Blue Space will include a new immersive experience, especially in the garden. On the existing floors, there will be a cultural mediation room.

A small café offering a wide range of regional products is also planned. The second floor will be reserved for administration.

Initially, the budget was \$21 million, but was revised to \$25 million along the way.

"For the moment, the budget has not changed," writes the ministry in its email.

Phase 2 of the project provides for the acquisition of land for parking.

Note: The Ministry of Culture took six weeks to answer SPEC's questions.

Kristina Michaud notes a productive, yet chaotic fall parliamentary session

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Kristina Michaud, the Member of Parliament for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia hopes for more flexibility from Ottawa, considering the difficulties experienced by both businesses and citizens who are struggling to cope with inflation.

In her parliamentary session report, Ms. Michaud describes the last session as chaotic but productive.

"It was an emotional year. We were affected by international conflicts that had a major impact on the House of Commons. I'd say it was a busy one," says Ms. Michaud, summing up the last parliamentary session in Ottawa.

Ms. Michaud also outlines the lack of progress made by the Trudeau government. "Quietly, the government is starting to hear the message - the priorities of Quebecers: the housing crisis, the rising cost of living but it has a long way to go before delivering the goods," she says.

Expressing impatience, she notes the slow pace in concluding the \$1.8 billion Ot-



Photo: N. Sergerie

tawa-Quebec agreement for housing and food insecurity.

She hopes that the money will be released quickly. "We need this money, and the federal government just has to transfer the money. But it always takes a long time to deliver these promises," continues Ms. Michaud.

The application for housing assistance must be flexible, especially when this sector is being hit quite hard by inflation.

"This is where we need flexibility. Programs can be very rigid, and projects cannot move forward because they no

longer meet the criteria. I hope that the government will be understanding," says the MP.

She stresses the need for Ottawa to adopt a long-term vision to support citizens in dealing with the effects of inflation.

"I am not able to point out a major measure that the government has put in place to address the cost of living. We were not asking for one-time cheques sent to people because that is not what makes the difference in the long term. In the long term, we have not had any measures from the government," explains Ms. Michaud.

She provides, as an example, the financial assistance for small and medium-sized businesses during COVID, a loan of \$60,000 where entrepreneurs were only required to pay back \$40,000 if the capital was paid before January. However, in light of the economic situation, Ottawa is still refusing to grant extensions.

Regarding fisheries, the MP hopes that Ottawa will quickly come up with a game plan, since the federal Deputy Minister of Fisheries (Diane Lebouthillier) has said that she wants to open the redfish fishery in 2024.

"All the better! But at the same time, we have no details. Will there be any aid measures for shrimp fishermen affected by the drop in quotas? Will there be help for processors who, overnight, cannot start processing redfish? It requires special facilities. Will the government be there?" questions Ms. Michaud.

Expressing disappointment in the absence of announcements regarding Employment Insurance reform, Ms. Michaud says that the government should deliver on its promises.

"If ministers like Ms. Lebouthillier want to keep their seats, this would be a good time to deliver on a promise like employment insurance. Sometimes, when there is fear, the government acts in this way. It would be the right political gesture for once," says the Bloc Québécois MP.

With a federal election that could come at any time between now and October 2026, she refrains from commenting on whether it would be easier to work with a possible Conservative government instead of the Liberals.

"I think we need to work on our priorities and remind the government of this, regardless of its colour. I think that next year will be an opportunity for them to show their colours. I sometimes have trouble telling the difference between one and the other. For example, when it comes to climate change, I don't see more ambition on one side or the other. Same thing for the protection of the French language. On several issues, we can say that it is the same thing. We will have to prepare to work with one or the other by recalling the priorities of Quebecers," says Ms. Michaud.

Kristina Michaud deplores federal government lack of support for VIA Rail's regional services

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - In her 2023 wrap up, Member of Parliament for the Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia riding, Kristina Michaud, highlights the federal government's apparent apathy in the problems plaguing national transporter VIA Rail, especially regarding its regional services.

In addition to departure and arrival delays that have now become the rule instead of the exception, the shortage of rolling stock material and trained employees are issues mentioned by VIA Rail's new president, Mario Pélouquin. These issues could potentially impact the eventual return of the Montreal-Gaspé train, whether it occurs in 2024, 2025, or 2026.

"I am glad that he will meet with the Coalition (of Gaspésians for the return of VIA Rail's passenger train) in



Photo: G. Gagné

The Montreal-Gaspé train saw good attendance not only in the summer but also in the winter, as it represented a safe transportation option during more difficult driving conditions.

January. There is obviously a mentality switch at the helm of the transporter. Our last meeting at VIA Rail was not providing us with much hope of getting the regional preoccupations listened to," says Ms. Michaud.

She is referring to a meeting initiated by her staff in 2022, in which VIA Rail's representatives quickly ruled

out any possibility of service resumption to the Gaspé Peninsula before the refurbishment of the line as far east as Gaspé. Mario Pélouquin expressed more openness to the Coalition's members during a November 1, 2023 meeting, though he admitted that the availability of rolling material and trained employees are areas of concern.

Kristina Michaud is ready to give Mr. Pélouquin a chance to prove his good faith, but overall, she is worried about the lack of action from both the provincial and federal governments in transportation files.

Transportation generates 22% of all the greenhouse gas emissions in the world, and the figure is even higher in Canada.

"We are clearly not doing enough to reduce our gas emissions in the country. You don't need to travel for a long time before understanding the reality lag in Canada and Quebec compared to similar countries. (...) In our region, it is still impossible to count on a reliable system for people, whether we talk about the railway or aerial services," she deplores.

"It is difficult to determine the federal government's share of fault. Regarding the VIA Rail service problem, one can wonder why it takes so

long for the Quebec government to put the (Matapédia-Gaspé) network back in a good state and why the federal government doesn't give VIA Rail the means to come back to the region as soon as possible. There are economic repercussions stemming from that context at the end of the day," underlines Ms. Michaud.

After the major budgetary cuts on January 15, 1990, VIA Rail continued to carry between 25,000 and 29,000 people yearly with its Montreal to Gaspé train while it served the entire stretch between Matapédia and Gaspé, so until the end of 2011. The service between New Carlisle and Gaspé was suspended in December 2011 due to the condition of a bridge located in Chandler, and the rest of the service was halted in August 2013 with the VIA train and in September of the same year with the bus leased by VIA, due to the overall state of the line

Coalition calls for an end to altitude logging in the Chic-Chocs

GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE - A coalition of environmental groups made up of Environnement Vert Plus, the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee, the Société de Conservation ZICO of the Gaspé Bay, Action Boréale and Nature Québec are calling for an end to logging in areas located at an altitude of more than 600 metres.

According to the information received by the environmental groups, the Ministry of Forests allowed Groupe Lebel, a lumber producer, to cut century-old fir forests in the summer of 2023. These fir forests were the subject of a plan, which is called the Special Development Plan 2022-2033, to recover wood affected by the spruce budworm.

A satellite image shows the areas where Groupe Lebel has authorization for total cutting in the Matane Wildlife Reserve. Some areas were removed from the 2022-2023 plan following pressure from the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee

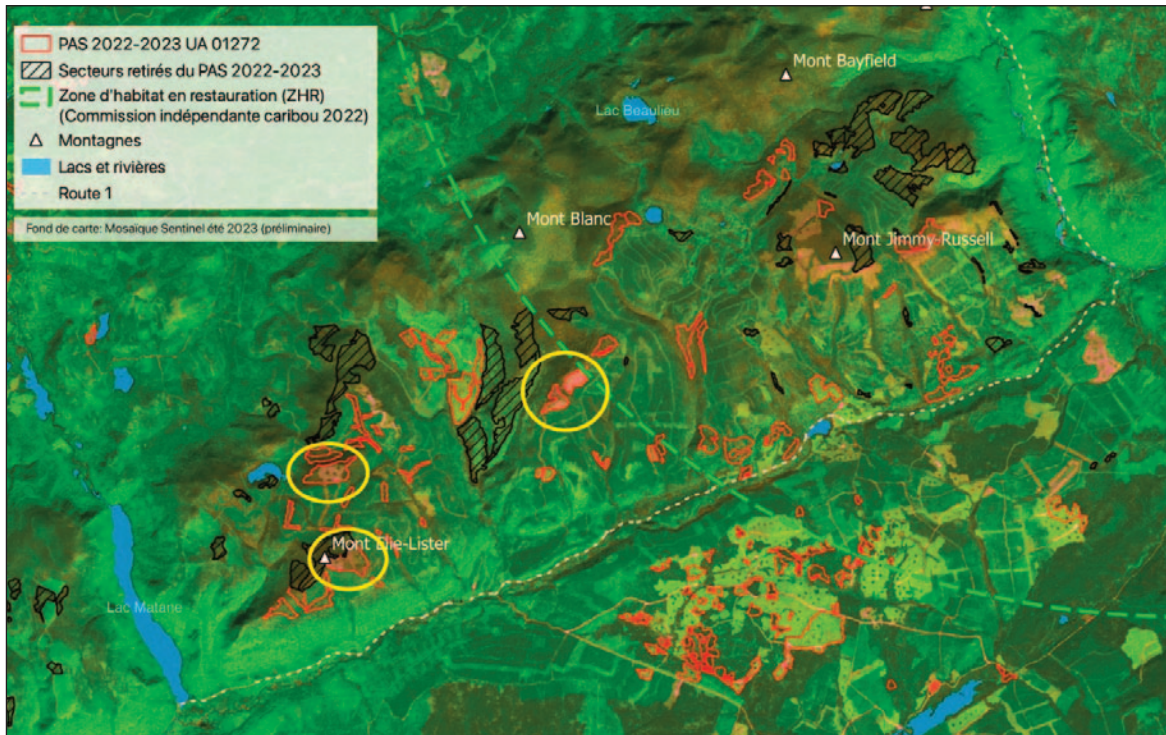


Photo: Made available by Environnement Vert-plus

The satellite image shows, in red, the areas where Groupe Lebel has authorization to clear-cut in the Matane Wildlife Reserve. The areas in black were removed from the harvest plan following pressure from the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee and negotiations within the resource management table. The areas circled in yellow are areas where Groupe Lebel has clear-cut.

and negotiations within the forestry management consultation table.

The same satellite image shows the areas where cuts were carried out by Groupe Lebel last summer. These cuts took place between 720 and 850 metres in altitude.

They came after other already heavily-criticized clear-cuts were made along the slopes of Mount Hélène and Mount Jimmy Russell in the summer of 2022. Mount Jimmy-Russell is located in the backcountry of Cap-Chat and is encompassed in the caribou habitat zone under restoration.

“The century-old fir forests at altitude in the Chic-Chocs are very resilient ecosystems which have suffered several episodes of spruce budworm. They resisted it and survived. The age diversity of these populations is a key to their resistance to environmental hazards, and now we have reset the counter to zero,” says Judes Côté of the Chic-Chocs Mountains Protection Committee.

“These old fir forests are uneven-aged forests, which means forests where the age of the trees varies greatly. Forests like this do not return to their initial state after clear-cutting at this altitude. Left to their own fate, old

dead trees provide protection to younger trees against particularly harsh winter weather. Total cutting at altitude prevents forest renewal, which makes these surfaces carbon emitters,” explains Pascal Bergeron of Environnement Vert Plus.

Opacity at the Ministry of Forests

Mr. Bergeron has been trying to get information about the volume of wood harvested in the backcountry of Cap-Chat.

“The Ministry of Forests keeps it secret when it is wood recuperated from a surface affected by the budworm, without saying why. Information is very hard to get regarding this type of harvest operation. It is not normal. We have made requests to get more details. The waiting time is considerable before getting an answer,” points out Mr. Bergeron.

The wood is processed in Price, near Mont-Joli, where Groupe Lebel’s nearest

sawmill is situated. The company used to own a sawmill in Cap-Chat but sold it a few years ago.

“Harvesting wood at this altitude causes harm to the environment. The wood is often of poor quality, and I am pretty sure that a high proportion of it is sent to the chipper and used to make wood pellets at the Groupe Lebel plant in Gros-Cacouna. The benefits of that wood would be greater if it were left in the forest,” adds the Environnement Vert-plus spokesperson.

“I will try to get the amount of royalties paid by Groupe Lebel for that wood harvest. That might give us an idea about the volume cut. Royalties are very low for wood affected by the budworm,” concludes Mr. Bergeron.

Clear-cuts in altitude also trigger detrimental effects on some bird species.

“The Bicknell’s thrush nests in these old, uneven-aged fir forests at altitude is threatened due to the disappearance of this habitat. The situation is all the more unfortunate as the Ministry of Forests will not replant these plots with fir; it will only plant spruce so we will have replaced a habitat suitable for a threatened species with a habitat which will no longer be the preferred habitat it is looking for,” stresses Margret Grenier of the Société de conservation ZICO of the Gaspé Bay.

The signatory groups condemn these cuts and are asking Groupe Lebel and the ministry which authorized them to cease all cuts in the Matane wildlife reserve, regardless of the reason, when the altitude slated for a cut is above 600 metres, in the habitat zone under restoration identified in the scenario for the Caribou Strategy or in Bicknell’s Thrush habitat.



Photo: G. Gagné

Environnement Vert-plus spokesperson, Pascal Bergeron, wants to know the volume of wood harvested at altitude in the backcountry of Cap-Chat.



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**Cégep de la Gaspésie
et des Îles**

Forillon Park maintained attendance in 2023

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Nearly 162,000 visitors entered Forillon Park in 2023, just 2,000 fewer than in 2022. Camping accommodation nights remained the same at 24,000.

"We had a good year, comparable in terms of visitor numbers. Despite the somewhat rainy season, the camping statistics are comparable within a few nights," explains the interim director of the Forillon Park, Mathieu Côté.

The less than ideal summer weather impacted the behaviour of visitors, who took advantage of the opportunity to visit historic buildings.

"The effect has been to increase the number of visitors to our heritage buildings in the Grande Grave sector. We've seen a 25% increase in visitor numbers," notes Mr. Côté.

The Hyman & Sons general store, Maison Blanchette and Maison Dolbel-Roberts welcomed more than 36,700 visitors.

There was good attendance growth in September and October, of around 15 to 20%.

"We are working hard to stretch the seasons outside the heart of the tourist season, which is July and August. We

are making a lot of effort with the regional tourism industry, and it is indeed paying off," says the interim director.

Several resource conservation projects have been carried out, particularly to understand the biodiversity of insects.

"It's a project that we did in 2013 and that we are doing again this year in collaboration with the Canadian Forest Service and ten other parks in Eastern Canada, and the idea is to see the evolution of insects and biodiversity. The results will come later," explains Mr. Côté.

"In 2013, we had a biodiversity of species found in certain tropical countries. We can't wait to see the results 10 years later," he says.

The moose management plan was published this year, and two students from the Gaspé region are working on this file.

"Mikael Ouellet from Rivière-au-Renard is working on the fertility of female moose and the survival of calves. Marguerite Morissette, originally from Anse-au-Griffon, is doing a doctorate to study forest gaps, to see how the dynamics of the weather and moose grazing ensure that forest gaps are maintained or not in the park," explains Mr. Côté.



Photo: Forillon Park

Approximately 162,000 people visited Forillon Park in 2023, participating in a variety of activities including interpretations.

Forillon National Park also contributed to national forest firefighting efforts by sending two specialized fire management resources to assist Wood Buffalo National Park, located on the border between Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Pierre Paradis, natural resources management agent, and Jean David Dupuis, geomatics technician, provided a very useful helping hand in planning operations in Fort

Smith.

"They went for a few weeks to lend a hand to the national effort," says Mr. Côté.

During the last tourist season, efforts continued to diversify, including offering visitors cultural and sporting events, notably the Festival musique du bout du monde's sunrise show with Klô Pelgag, and the Mawiomi, the traditional gathering of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, are among the highlights of this season.

Work is underway on a project which was launched last summer to rehabilitate historic houses in Grande Grave.

"We are still in the plan-

ning phase, but there is work on the ground, notably the access road to the houses, and we also have our internal employees who are doing window restoration work in these houses to improve and rework them," explains the interim director.

Last summer, around a hundred people, mainly descendants of those expropriated from Forillon Park, participated in the implementation of the Grande-Grave heritage accommodation project, announced in November 2022.

Ottawa is investing \$9.8 million for the conservation and enhancement of the heritage of the expropriated families of Grande Grave.

WEATHER:

Cont'd from cover

115 centimetres.

December experienced unusually high temperatures across the region.

Records were broken on December 18 with the temperature in Cap-Chat reaching 17.4°C, surpassing the 14.3°C record set in 2000.

Carleton-sur-Mer closely followed with 17.2°C, beating the 8.2°C recorded in 2000.

The mercury rose to 15.1°C in Cap-Madeleine

in the municipality of Sainte-Madeleine-de-la-Rivière-Madeleine, breaking the previous record of 11.7°C in 1973.

Gaspé reached 14.8°C, breaking the former record of 12.5°C from 2000.

Cap-d'Espoir also set a record with 8.2°C, compared to 6.8°C in 2000.

The average temperature in December at Michel-Pouliot Airport was set at -2.3°C, significantly deviating from the normal being -6.9°C, by 4.6°C.

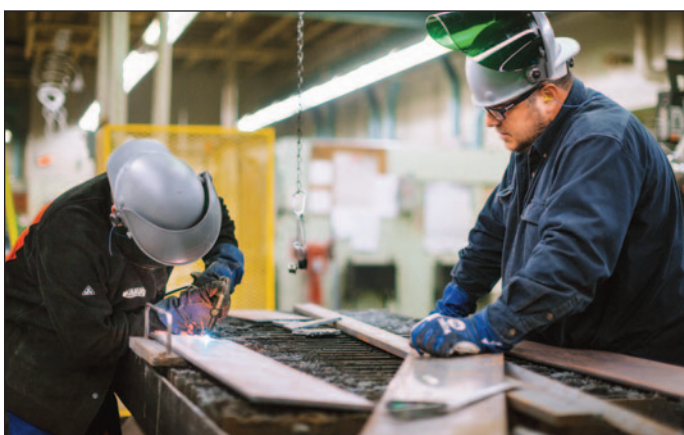
Any deviation greater than two degrees is considered significant by Environment

Canada.

At least 18 days saw temperatures above the freezing point over the past month.

This warm weather brought a considerable amount of rain: 115 millimetres were measured in Gaspé during two events: 70 millimetres on December 11 and 36.1 millimetres on December 18, surpassing the 28.8 millimetres recorded on December 18, 2003.

Despite this, the total rainfall remains far from the 359.6 millimetres of December 2010.



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The next few months will be crucial for the fishing sector, according to Lebouthillier

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The next six months will be crucial for the future of fisheries, according to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Diane Lebouthillier.

"2024 will be a year of transition in the fisheries sector. The next six months will be more than decisive for the future, and that is why it will be more important than ever to collectively put ourselves in solution mode in order to get through it," mentioned the elected official in a press briefing on January 8, discussing the highlights of the year 2023 and setting out the outlook for the year 2024.

"We can win together, but we can also lose together. But know that I have the firm intention that we all win together. The future of the region and the fishing sector is at stake," she notes.

Ms. Lebouthillier mentioned again that she will announce the government's intentions for shrimp quotas and the resumption of redfish

fishing by the end of the month, as discussed for several weeks.

"With climate change, things are not going well in the fisheries sector for different species. In the tours I have done since the fall, even in the fisheries which are going well, there is concern. The Gulf has never been warmer. More than ever, we need science," explains the Member of Parliament (MP).

While the Mi'gmaq community of Listuguj is calling for a moratorium on shrimp fishing, the minister is clearly not moving in that direction.

"I won't relive what happened with the cod. We will make responsible and reasonable decisions. We are in a period of transition. The future of fisheries depends on it. We saw it with cod, and it's the same thing with redfish because there was overfishing. We have experience with what happened, and we will make reasonable and responsible decisions," says Ms. Lebouthillier.

Several criticisms have been made of the way Fisheries and Oceans Canada assesses stocks in recent weeks.

The minister is aware of the issues raised.

"I had discussions with the



Diane Lebouthillier during the announcement of the Fisheries Fund in Newport last November

Photo: N. Sergerie

science sector with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to also say that we had a problem with the fishing community which experiences fishing on a daily basis. We must reconcile the two sectors. I need both and science needs the capture sector. We must work together and strengthen the bond of trust," underlines Ms. Lebouthillier.

This is why, in specific files, Canada's chief scientist will support the work of DFO staff.

Ms. Lebouthillier has three priorities over the coming

months: small craft harbours, seals and aquaculture.

"Small craft harbours are a priority with climate change when oceans continue to rise. We want to move towards fleets with hybrid boats. When we look at our docks, it's difficult to have hybrid boats. This brings particular challenges. We will work with the port associations, the fisherman and the boat builders," notes the minister.

Approximately \$14 million remains in the Quebec Fish-

eries Fund, a joint federal-provincial program dedicated, in particular, to innovation.

This program, with an initial budget of \$42 million, is expected to end on March 31.

Ms. Lebouthillier has not progressed on Quebec's request for several months to extend it until 2026 to use all available credits.

"It is a tool that has been very appreciated. We will make announcements in due course, but I have asked the capture industry to continue working on their projects," says the minister.

Among her autumn highlights, the MP mentions the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse, where work is underway to reopen it for the next tourist season.

However, she deflects the question when it comes to the overall refurbishment of this heritage jewel.

Ms. Lebouthillier also highlights the \$56 million contract at the Forillon shipyard in Gaspé for the construction of a hybrid vessel for the Coast Guard, the \$6 million allocated from the Fisheries Fund, and the launch of reconstruction work on the Newport wharf last autumn.

A new location for the Équipage social pediatrics centre

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Community Social Pediatrics Centre of Côte-de-Gaspé l'Équipage is opening a new annex in the presbytery of the Gaspé Cathedral.

For the organization, this is an important step, as this installation will make it possible to provide more services for young people struggling with a variety of issues, thanks to a multidisciplinary team dedicated to finding solutions for them.

Having operated for five years in Rivière-au-Renard, the centre was in search for a more centralized base. The new location is set to open on February 1.

"It will add proximity to children and families in Gaspé itself. This will add to the number of children that we will be able to see in the clinic. We were at half a day in Gaspé and we will move to one day per week just like in Rivière-au-Renard, which represents two

clinical days per week. That represents 12 children that we can see individually per week with their families and partners who are involved in the child's life," explains the director, Mona Sirois.

Developed by Dr. Gilles Julien, a community social pediatrics centre follows a model of integrated social medicine, centered on the needs of the child, emphasizing the strengths of the child, extended family and the community.

It combines expertise in medicine, law and social sciences, to detect, reduce, or eliminate sources of toxic stress or risk factors affecting the development and well-being of children in vulnerable situations.

"It's an expansion of service, with a local worker being added and a social worker arriving in January. We are developing, as the needs are growing. We are expected in Gaspé. Requests come in and the phone rings. The needs are there," says Ms. Sirois.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The Bishop of Gaspé, Mgr Claude Lamoureux; the director of the centre, Mona Sirois; and the vice-president of the Fabrique, Yvan Landry.

The presbytery was vacant, with the parish priest having his own residence in Gaspé. This created an opportunity for the fabrique to rent it out.

For the Bishop of Gaspé, it represents a logical continuation of the diocese's founder, Mgr François-Xavier Ross.

"Bishop Ross is a great

community builder, and he was very concerned about the needs that were being felt in the community. The Équipage project addresses a real need. When we look at our reality as a Church, we perhaps didn't need this large space in the presbytery of the Cathedral as much as we do now. We thought it

would be in line with Mgr Ross's primary concern to respond to the most pressing needs with a more social touch, and at the same time, one that is connected to the Gospel. Whatever you do for the least of my people, you do for me. That's what it's all about," says Mgr Claude Lamoureux.

Finances are improving at the Percé Geopark

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - The Percé Geopark is regaining control of its finances as it grapples with an accumulated deficit of nearly \$500,000. Although not completely out of trouble, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

"I can't say that we are out of the storm, but the dangers that we saw for the immediate operation at the Geopark are a little behind us," notes Daniel Leboeuf, who assumed the presidency of the Geopark in September and is one of the founders of the corporation.

The operations for 2024 are consolidated. "And our budget forecasts say that we will come out of the red in 2025," adds Mr. Leboeuf.

The deficit was compounded in 2021 and 2022, during the pandemic.

"We still have to attach the development. We need to re-vamp the Geopark experience after seven years of operation. We have to provide something new. Renovate certain parts.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The Percé Geopark believes it can eliminate its deficit in 2025.

We are looking at projects to renew the multimedia experience," mentions the president, giving the example of the Bourg de Pabos in Chandler, which announced at the end of the summer that it was putting an end to the Nova Lumina experience after eight years of operation to present something new next year.

"We are no different from anyone else. We must renew ourselves. This is the second part of the task, development," he says.

The big priority is to renew the UNESCO accreditation for the Geopark.

"We are going to focus on the revalidation of UNESCO this year. We will have the right

arguments to present to the Geopark inspectors," explains Mr. Leboeuf.

A crowdfunding campaign will be launched to raise funds to meet the ambitious mobilization plan.

"This is part of the second stage. It's not just recovery. This is development. We are in the process of developing a

medium-term recovery plan, lasting three or four years," says the president.

At the December municipal council meeting, Percé residents expressed concern that the town would have to pay the \$2 million guarantee given to the Geopark.

"We have renewed our agreements which bind us to the Entreprises Desjardins and in the short term there is no worry that the municipality will be stuck with the reimbursement of the deposit granted at the start. We are no longer worried," states Mr. Leboeuf. He adds that the crowdfunding campaign aims to help meet the demands of UNESCO and improvements to the site's attractions.

The Rocher-Percé MRC, the SADC, Canada Economic Development, and the Ministry of Tourism continue to support the Geopark.

"Everyone recognizes the need for support at this stage, and we have a good financing plan for the next stages," says Mr. Leboeuf.

RÉGÎM calls for doubling the tax on gasoline

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Motorists in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands may face an increase in gasoline taxes in 2024.

The Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RÉGÎM), responsible for managing public transportation in the region, has filed a request to the Quebec government to increase the gas tax from one to two cents to finance its operation.

The one-cent tax has been in place since 2012, following the request of municipalities, and acceptance by the Quebec government.

Almost 12 years later, the RÉGÎM needs this additional amount.

The slow electrification of transport has impacted RÉGÎM's revenue.

"We need additional income to take on new challenges at RÉGÎM. We also see that the money we collect from the gas tax has been decreasing in recent years and will continue to decrease thanks to the electrification of transportation. This undermines our efforts to develop public transport," explains the president of RÉGÎM, Daniel Côté.

"We do not want to reach the same level as Montreal, which collects more than \$0.03 per litre. We are currently at \$0.01. We want to see it increase to continue to develop the public transportation service in the region," specifies the president.

RÉGÎM currently receives between \$1.3 and \$1.5 million per year from the tax and its annual grant.

According to Mr. Côté, the increase would bring in an additional influx of \$1 million in funds to reach a total of approximately \$2.5 million.

"We could create a little cushion to face the challenges of the future, knowing that this income will soon be less present," he says.

RÉGÎM is following the example of Lower Saint Lawrence, which is implementing a similar service and is asking the Quebec government for a tax of \$0.02 per litre.

According to the RÉGÎM president, Quebec was initially reluctant, but the desire to support regional transportation could lead to a positive response fairly quickly.

The decision comes as a surprise as the region battles high gas prices.



Photo: Courtesy of RÉGÎM

Gasoline could cost more in the Gaspé Peninsula if the Quebec government accedes to RÉGÎM's request.

However, Daniel Côté, puts things into perspective saying, "What we see is that the differences are much more than a penny per litre. It's often eight, 10 or 15 cents per litre more than elsewhere in Quebec. In certain regions of Quebec, there are taxes on gasoline, particularly in the Montreal region, and in general, it is much cheaper there than here in general even if they charge a lot more taxes for public transportation," explains the president.

The Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie supports the request. "The needs are increasing. We have it with the latest contracts in public transportation, we have more than doubled the contracts," mentions its president, Mathieu Lapointe.

"To deal with this increase, we want to improve the measure which has not been adjusted since it was put in place," he continues.

Municipalities and MRCs recently gained taxation power,

allowing them to collect a tax on registrations, as in the Montreal region.

"We have not yet analyzed this measure, but it is something that we will do quickly," he adds.

For example, in the greater Montreal area, a vehicle registration tax of \$89 will be added, while it is \$30 in the Quebec region.

In September, the RÉGÎM adopted a budget that will increase by \$600,000 or 11%, reaching \$5 million in 2024.

Population in larger towns on the Coast is decreasing

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - According to the latest demographic report concerning the population for Quebec, Gaspé remains the most populous town in the Gaspé Peninsula with 15,137 citizens. However, this is a decrease compared to 15,260 inhabitants in 2023.

It should be noted that four of the five largest towns in the region are experiencing a population decline.

This is the case in Carleton-sur-Mer which sees its population decrease from 4,190 in 2023 to 4140 in 2024.

New Richmond has 3,806 citizens compared to 3,873 in 2023.

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts experienced a loss of 269 citizens over the past year to stand at 6,090, a drop of



Murdochville gained five new citizens over the last year. Outdoor activities might be a contributing factor.

4.3% from 2023.

However, the largest town in the Rocher-Percé MRC goes against this trend. Chandler experienced a slight growth, increasing from

7,405 to 7,419.

In order, Gaspé, Chandler, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Carleton-sur-Mer and New Richmond are the five most populous municipalities in

the territory.

Among the main growing municipalities in the Gaspé Peninsula, we note Maria with 2,728 citizens (+55); Percé has a total of 3,126 res-

idents (+23); Port-Daniel-Gascons with 2,300 (+19); Bonaventure has 2,746 citizens (+7) and Murdochville now has 613 residents (+5).

On the other hand, some areas are experiencing a marked decrease in population.

In Paspébiac, there are 119 citizens less bringing the total population down to 3,079, while Pointe-à-la-Croix experienced a loss of 26 residents, for a total of 1,316.

The most significant drop among the municipalities analyzed is in Matapédia, where the number of citizens decreased from 618 to 561, resulting in a loss of 57 residents or 9.22%.

The mayor of Matapédia, Nicole Lagacé, is unable to clarify the reason for this decline and intends to delve deeper into understanding it.

How do you mind your Ps and Qs?

New study of Canadian English after 52 years

CYNTHIA DOW

NEW RICHMOND: - "How is Canadian English changing? How does it vary from place to place?" These are some of the questions which Linguistics professor, Charles Boberg, hopes to answer through an online survey of Canadian English-speakers from coast to coast. The survey was developed by Professor Boberg's department at McGill University in Montreal and is being promoted by other universities and social media groups throughout the country.

Some SPEC readers may remember Professor Boberg's name, as he helped student Jenna Hotton prepare what was likely the first-ever study of Gaspesian English in 2014. The study results were published in the English World-Wide journal in 2015. One of the interesting aspects of the study was that English-speaking Gaspesians are more likely to adopt French words, such as "dépanneur", "chômage", and "guichet", than anglophones living in Montreal.

Ms Hotton's study also showed that Gaspesian English is somewhat influenced by Maritime forms, with use of such words as "scribbler" to describe booklets used by stu-



Photo: Courtesy of Charles Boberg

Charles Boberg is a professor in the Linguistics Department at McGill University.

dents to keep their notes, and "sneakers" for athletic footwear.

"Our team has developed a New Survey of Canadian English, to follow up on the original survey of 1972, asking the same questions five decades later and adding some new

ones," Professor Boberg told SPEC. "A comparison of the two surveys will reveal how Canadian English has changed over 50 years and how it still varies today, among regions and between generations."

The original survey was carried out by Victoria Uni-

versity with grade nine students and their parents from across the country. This time the survey will be much more community-based. "We are keen to make sure to get a broad spectrum of participants," the professor explained. "This tends to be a very appealing subject for people."

Of course, no research project would be complete without several hypotheses. Professor Boberg suggests that Canadian English may be moving away from its British influences to become more like American English. However, he notes that some Canadian forms appear to be very stubborn, such as the use of the word "icing" rather than "frosting" to describe cake toppings, as well as the use of the term "cutlery" rather than "silverware" for forks, knives and spoons.

"There might also be less regional variation, due to increased use of media of all kinds. We certainly hope to get enough input from Quebec's regions to be able to look at language use in the Gaspé Peninsula, the North Shore, the Eastern Townships, and so on," Professor Boberg noted. "The more responses the better."

Answering the survey questionnaire takes about 25

minutes and is fun and easy: there are no wrong answers! Questions cover four different aspects of language use: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and spelling. Participants should be 14 years of age and older.

"All responses are welcome, but we particularly value those from native speakers of English who are good representatives of the region where they grew up," Professor Boberg said.

The research has been approved by McGill University's Research Ethics Board and is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Visit the following link to complete the survey:
<https://surveys.mcgill.ca/ls3/414379?lang=en>
or
simply google: **McGill Canadian English.**



Coyotes: Cunning members of the dog family

DIANE SKINNER

The haunting yip-yip and lone-some howls of the coyote bring shivers to us. At night, particularly after a successful hunt, the coyote will howl and that sound carries over a long distance. The sounds are amplified, and what sounds like a large pack of coyotes may be just a couple. This howling keeps other predators away who may want to share their bounty. Coyotes howl to announce their territory to other coyotes and when they reunite with pack members.

The howls are their means of defending their successful hunting territory. In fact, coyotes have about 11 different calls, which is a lot more than wolves have. A coyote will often start by barking, then howling and then finish with more barks.

Amir, a coyote who was born at the Bioparc in Bonaventure, is fed mostly horse meat and dog food. Coyotes in the wild live for about six to eight years, and those in captivity live for about 20 years.

Coyotes are found only in North America and some areas of Central America. They live all over Canada, except for the northernmost parts. Normally they live in dens that are about 1.2 metres tall and 1.83 metres wide. They dig a tunnel where they can enter their den and



Coyotes exhibit crafty behaviours such as tracing trails in their habitat area to make sure no intruders interlope into their territory.

then dig out a larger area at the end of the tunnel. Often the dens have a second exit that is hidden. Sometimes they will dig a second den in case a predator finds their original home. This is where they sleep and have their babies, called pups or whelps. They have up to two to six pups at a time.

They are omnivores and will eat rabbits, mice, shrews, voles, birds, snakes and deer. Coyotes will also eat fruit, grass and vegetables. They can sometimes be seen digging up gardens or foraging in garbage cans. If they find carrion (dead animals), they will consume that.

Their fur is greyish-brown to a yellowish-grey. The throat and underside are lighter, al-

most white in colour. The front of the legs, sides of the head, muzzle and feet are reddish brown. The tail is bushy like a fox's tail with a black tip. The adult coyote is about the size of a medium dog, weighing approximately 20 pounds. They have yellow eyes and smallish feet.

Coyotes will usually stay away from humans. Do not put your dog's food outside because it could attract coyotes. If you have a small dog, be aware that they will attack, and they are skilled hunters that will snatch the dog or a cat quickly. Coyotes are wild animals, and if you encounter one, take no chances. Yell, wave your arms above your head, and back away slowly.

New Year's resolutions for your social life

New Year's resolutions tend to focus heavily on healthy aspirations. Each January, people from all walks of life express a desire to lose weight, exercise more, quit smoking, or get more sleep. However, that doesn't mean that resolutions cannot involve fun with friends.

Resolutions that focus on improving social connections might be something to consider this year. Expanding your social life can prove beneficial, as strong social connections are important to maintaining cognitive health and emotional well-being. The following are some socially-minded resolutions.

- Volunteer. One of the best ways to meet new people is to engage in activities that attract like-minded individuals. Volunteer activities are one avenue to explore. Volunteerism can start in schools, community centers, houses of worship, and elsewhere through the community.
- Change your internal narrative. Sometimes people have a hard time making friends simply because they have preconceived notions or place judgments on those around them. Judging others can be detrimental to establishing relationships. Changing how you view others can help.
- Join a social app. Whether it is to meet new friends or potential romantic partners, now may be the time to put yourself out there. Apps that promote personal relationships help people vet individuals so they're not walking into situations completely unaware. Pew Research says 53 percent of people under the age of 30 report having used a dating site or app, and the popular app Meetchup boasts 60 million members.
- Try new activities. If you've been meaning to learn how to brew your own beer or create acrylic art craft projects, now is the time to dive in. Engaging in new hobbies and activities puts you in touch with other people, which can help foster new friendships.
- Practice active listening. Resolving to make established relationships more secure may come down to listening better. Too often people are harried and rushed and may miss key signals a partner or friend is giving them. By slowing down and listening, while also trying to see the situation through another's eyes, you can strengthen connections.
- Host a gathering. Make time on the calendar to hang out with others. If you don't make an effort to get together, you can't expect others to want to do the same. Sometimes you have to take the lead to create social situations and gatherings.

Resolutions to revitalize your social life can make for a great start to a new year.

Reflections

by
Diane Skinner Flowers



It can kill you...

Molasses: Liquid gold

Memories of molasses, thick and dark, and poured onto a plate waiting to be sopped up with a piece of homemade bread. This scene is so vivid to me, sitting at my grandmother's large kitchen table so many years ago. At breakfast, or after any meal, my grandmother would bring out that familiar container of Crosby's molasses as the perfect sweet ending to her home-cooked suppers. There was always room for a bit of molasses! In the winter, the cold pantry made the cool molasses pour ever so slowly onto the plate. Anticipation makes everything taste better!

Molasses, known as treacle in the United Kingdom, is a thick, sticky syrup that is derived from boiled-down sugar cane or sugar beets. The sugar cane is mashed to make the juice and then reduced to make a liquid containing crystals. The crystals are removed, and a high-grade light molasses is left. The molasses will be boiled down two or three times, and each time it becomes darker and spicier. Sugar beet molasses is also pressed to make juice and must be reduced a couple of times to make molasses.

Blackstrap molasses, made from boiling the sugar cane three times, is more bitter but is healthier for you. Besides tasting delicious, blackstrap molasses is high in iron, magnesium, vitamin B6 and calcium. It also has the lowest sugar content of any sugar cane product. People who are low in iron can get 20% of their daily iron needs from one tablespoon of molasses. On the other hand, refined sugar has little to no nutritional benefits.

Molasses has more uses than being served on a plate. It is the principal ingredient in rum, is used in baking (including Gaspesian favourites like ginger snaps), barbecue sauce, baked beans and in some types of beer. Molasses was, and is, still a part of Gaspesian cuisine. Many old-time recipes for soft molasses cookies and ginger snaps have been handed down from our grandmothers. Besides being used as a food or an ingredient in baking, molasses is used in animal feed.

Molasses can kill you. Molasses once killed over 20 residents of Boston and injured 150 more in 1919. It was known as "The Great Molasses Flood." A huge steel tank full of boiling hot molasses burst and a wave of hot stickiness, over 2 million gallons, poured onto the surrounding streets. It was not "slow as molasses in January" that day. The deadly mess poured out at a rate of almost 60 km/h. Many of the people who died could not outrun the boiling hot flow.

Crosby's, located in Saint John, New Brunswick since 1879, transported wood and fish to the West Indies and brought back casks full of what they called liquid gold. Still today, the Crosby Company produces molasses for sale in Canada and beyond.

Molasses is part of our Gaspesian food history. Those memories are sweet in both ways – both the flavour and the old recipes and ways in which we can connect with our collective Gaspesian past with food. One thing I do recall is that no matter how careful you are, that familiar molasses container always had a bit of sticky molasses on the sides!

An old Crosby's Molasses can, pre-1970 or older. We know this because the can uses Imperial measurement (in ounces), and Canada switched from Imperial to Metric measurement in 1970, 54 years ago! Notice that it contains 212 ounces of molasses, enough for the entire winter.

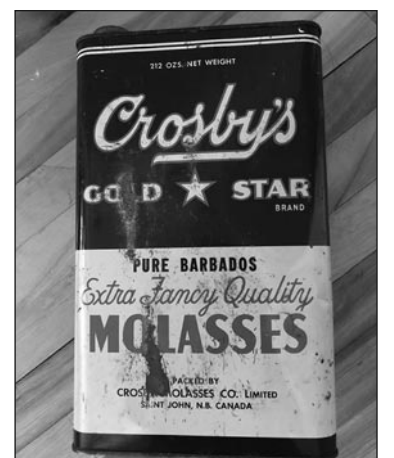


Photo: D. Skinner

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
 Aries, if resolutions seem slow-going, give it time to get into a groove and become part of your routine. You can handle anything when you put your mind to it.
 TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
 Taurus, there is a lot going on in your life at the moment, and you may need to accept that you can't do it all alone. Start farming out tasks to people you trust.
 GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
 How will you know if you can do something unless you give it a try, Gemini? Be adventurous this week, whether it is enjoying a new ethnic cuisine or trying a new activity.
 CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
 Cancer, you may have a few plans on the horizon but aren't sure how to get started. Just like walking, take it one step at a time and soon you'll find that you're on your way.
 LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
 Leo, you may think you're being humble and putting others' needs before your own this week. But if you look a little deeper, you may discover you have room to improve.
 VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22



Virgo, if you commit to something, follow through this week. Others are counting on you for your portion of the work and letting them down now is not an option.
 LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
 Health issues may have you taking inventory of your habits, Libra. It's a new year and the perfect time to start to make changes for the better. Ask for help if you need guidance.
 SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
 You're not one for being bashful about things, Scorpio. But something could occur this week that leaves you a little red in the face and perhaps wanting to hide in the shadows.
 SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
 Someone new in your life is causing all types of changes to your schedule, Sagittarius. You're not quite sure if you enjoy it or not right now.


Stay the course and wait to see.
 CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
 Capricorn, you will not make inroads with family or friends if you continue to play the victim. You must own up to any mistakes you've made and start making amends this week.
 AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
 Sometimes the best defense is remaining quiet and letting others dig themselves into a deeper hole, Aquarius. Others will see your positive efforts for all they are.
 PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
 Think about planning a getaway in the next month or so, Pisces. It doesn't have to be a grand voyage. Even a weekend retreat can be a way to rest and recharge right now.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JANUARY 14: LL Cool J, Rapper (56)**
- JANUARY 15: Dove Cameron, Actress (28)**
- JANUARY 16: Kate Moss, Model (50)**
- JANUARY 17: Jake Paul, YouTube Star (27)**
- JANUARY 18: Karan Brar, Reality Star (25)**
- JANUARY 19: Dolly Parton, Singer (78)**
- JANUARY 20: Skeet Ulrich, Actor (54)**

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Announcements



In Memory

FLOWERS: Doris Eveline (Gallon)

In loving memory of a precious mother who passed away January 5, 2023.

Mom – It's been one year since you left this earth.

Sad are the hearts that love you,

Silent are the tears that fall;

Living here without you,

Is the hardest part of all.

You did so many things for us,

Your heart was kind and true;

And when we needed someone,

We could always count on you.

Those special years will not return,

When we were all together;

But with the love in our hearts,

You will walk with us forever.

With all our love, daughters Carol and Dar-

lene and sons-in-law Richard and Denis.

WYLIE: Arnold

In loving memory of our dear Dad.

You are too precious to be forgotten,

And too priceless to ever be replaced.

You were one in a million,

And you'll always be the precious,

And unique Dad we cared for so dearly.

We could write many pages,

But still be unable to say,

Just how much we love and miss you,

With each passing day.

Though you are no longer here,

Your love and light continue,

To shine bright in our hearts.

Goodbyes are not forever,

Goodbyes are not the end,

They simply mean we'll miss you.

Until we meet again.

Love you forever Daddy, from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel Meetings

Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking

of Bread for believers. 2 p.m. Gospel meeting and Sunday School.

Thursdays: 7 p.m. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW CARLISLE:

**Royal Canadian Legion
Branch #64**

Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome.

February 6: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

Book Room

Please be advised that the book room is now open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

50+ Club

Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 7 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, January 21

2 p.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, January 21

10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN

CHURCH

OF CANADA

Sunday, January 21

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11 a.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols

SHIGAWAKE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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