

## Ramsar Secretariat Visit to Canada

From the 2 to the 9 of October the Ramsar Secretariat visited Environment Canada (Ramsar Administrative Authority) visited Mer Blue Ramsar Site and attended to the First Course for Canadian Ramsar sites managers. Report prepared by Maria Rivera.

With Ramsar Administrative Authorities Cynthia Wright (Acting assistant Deputy Minister), Virginia Potter (Director General Canadian Wildlife Service) and Robert Mclean, Executive Director Habitat and Ecosystem Conservation, Environment Canada, the Secretariat discussed different issues related with the implementation of the Convention in Canada as its engage in regional initiatives, case studies of benefits of designation of Ramsar sites.

## Visit to Mer Bleu Conservation Area Ramsar Site

Mer Blue was designated as a Ramsar Site in 1995, it has an extension of 3,447 ha. It is a Provincial Wetland, Area of Scientific Interest. Fifty per cent of Mer Bleu is a raised boreal peat dome - Sphagnum bog, a system typically occurring further north. Hydrological features are unusual with saline groundwater sources and six meter thick peat deposits.



The borders of the bog form a typical environment, much of which has been

transformed into pond and marsh by *Castor canadensis*.



Three vegetation types are present: black spruce forest, low-lying bog vegetation (includes numerous species of orchids) and heath type. A small area inside the site is occupied by the Geomagnetic Laboratory. Land uses include recreation, research. The site's area was extended by 243 ha in May 2001.



Environment Canada staff (Elizabeth Roberts, Erika Van Neste, Pat MacGregor, Robert Hélie), friends of Mer Bleu and Maria Rivera



Eva Katic explains some of the ecological characteristics of Mer Blue



Marie Boulet from the National Capital Commission



Kristopher Raby, fan of Hockey and wetlands too!!!



The friends of Mer Blue *"The friends of Mer Blue are a volunteer group of local community citizens concerned about the natural environment and habitat. We support public education , good management practices and overall environment protection of the Mer Blue and surrounding areas*



Mer Blue National Capital Commission (Marie Boulet, Eva Katic and Steve Blight) with Mer Blue Friends (Ray Vetter and Derek Grant)

We also are committed to preserving the Mer Blue for Future Generations"

## Ramsar site managers Training Course

The first National Training Course for Canadian Ramsar Site Managers was held in Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (British Columbia) from October 5-8 2009.



The course was presented by the Centre for Environmental Stewardship and Conservation (CESC) in cooperation with the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area Ramsar site.



The course was sponsored by the Creston Wildlife Management Authority, Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Brewery, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the Central Kootenay Regional District.

Among the trainers was James McCuaig, past Interim Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, Clayton Rubec, Vice-President of the Centre for Environmental Stewardship and Conservation-CESCDr. Roy Gardner past Chair of the US National Ramsar Committee and Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas



27 delegates from across Canada participated in a variety of presentations, group panels and discussions and hand on exercises.

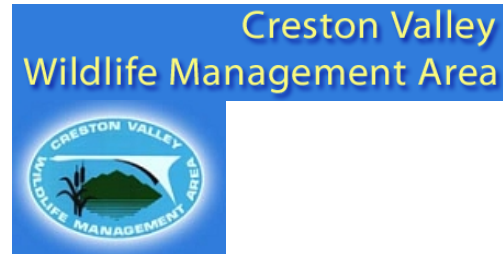


The main topics discussed with the participants were the Ramsar Convention and site managers, Criteria for wetlands of international importance, Ramsar Information Sheets, guidelines for management planning, national wetlands committees and CEPA Program



Participants discussing specific topics about the management of Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area during the field trip





Among the main outcomes of the course are the proposal of the creation of a new national forum tentatively called the Canadian Ramsar Committee and a Canadian Ramsar Site Managers Network. The actions, structure and governance of these groups remains to be discussed in more detail.

For Richard Dalon CEO of CVWMCA *“The CVMWA was pleased to host this Course and welcomes the actions identified in the Course Resolution as we go forward.”*

The Secretariat also had the opportunity to acknowledge the work that Ducks Unlimited is doing in more than 19 Ramsar sites and other wetlands all over Canada.

The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area has an interpretation center that deals with research, education and public awareness (e.g. Newsletter, summer youth programs etc), this center as many others in Ramsar sites in Canada offer a great opportunity to deliver the objectives of the Convention.

2009 Summer naturalists

Another important instrument that Canada has for the implementation of the Convention is the NAWCC/NAWMP and wetlands as well as wetkit.

The Ramsar Secretariat considers that the course has been an important step as a mechanism to promote and implement the Convention’s goals in Canada. We hope that the results of the course have a wide divulgation to all site managers of Ramsar sites in Canada.

We will also support actively Canada authorities and other Ramsar users in the follow up and achievement of the priority issues identified during the visit.

For the Secretariat it is clear that many actions and activities are going on in Canada, so now we are happy to say that Canada is definitely

**!ALIVE!**