

Landscape Environment Rehabilitation Program

2026-2030

1. PURPOSE

The objective of the landscape preservation program is to foster the restoration of the Memphremagog MRC’s distinctive landscape environment by encouraging residents to engage in the protection and enrichment of the landscapes, good farming and forestry practices, and the enhancement of biodiversity.

2. A FEW DEFINIITIONS

In the context of this program, the following words and expressions have the meaning and application attributed to them by their definition:

<i>Closed visual field:</i>	A visual field is said to be closed when elements in the foreground completely block the observer’s view of <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements.
<i>Cover cropping:</i>	The sowing of herbaceous plants chosen from those listed in Annex B, to create or preserve an open or filtered visual field, enhance soil fertility and structure, increase biodiversity, control undesirable species and stimulate soil conservation.
<i>Filtered visual field:</i>	A visual field is said to be filtered when <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements located in the background are partially visible through gaps or interruptions of the elements in the foreground.
<i>Flowering strip:</i>	Establishing, in a field or meadow bordering a scenic and panoramic road, a mix of grasses and native herbaceous flowering plants adapted to the Quebec climate, with the exception of the invasive alien species listed in Annex A. For the purpose of this program, a strip is a piece of land bordering a scenic and panoramic road where a flowering meadow can be established.
<i>Hay cultivation:</i>	Preparing the ground, sowing hay and cutting it at maturity to improve soil health and conservation, provide stabilization against erosion, increase biodiversity, reduce the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and control undesirable species.
<i>Heritage buildings:</i>	One or several buildings forming a heritage site, a territory of heritage interest, a territory of aesthetic interest or rural landscape specified in the SADD, a wooden farm building, or any other building that is listed or to be listed in the inventory of heritage buildings to be adopted by the MRC in accordance with the <i>Cultural Heritage Act</i> .

<i>Landscape mowing:</i>	Cutting vegetation in order to preserve a view by keeping it at an herbaceous height to prevent scrub encroachment, thereby maintaining an open or filtered visual field.
<i>Open visual field:</i>	An open visual field is characterised by the absence of obstructions, allowing for a clear view of several <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements. It offers a clear and extensive perception of the space, highlighting distinctive elements at different depths.
<i>Program:</i>	The Landscape Environment Rehabilitation Program.
<i>Property:</i>	A real estate property comprised of the land and any buildings or permanent improvements attached to it. It is considered to be immovable and constitutes a single unit on the property assessment roll.
<i>Pruning:</i>	Cutting branches from one or several trees to guide or limit the development of vegetation that could potentially obstruct a visual field, thereby maintaining or partially opening such a visual field while preserving the trees. This program excludes the pruning of trees forming part of a tree tunnel specified in the SADD.
<i>Relief:</i>	Refers to all the topographical variations of a territory, including the shapes of the land (mountains, hills, valleys, plateaus, plains) listed as a named site by the Commission de toponymie du Québec , that are observable from a scenic and panoramic road. They are listed in Annex D to this Guide.
<i>Rural landscape:</i>	A rural landscape specified in the SADD, as well as any cultivated field or pasture with frontage alongside a scenic and panoramic road.
<i>SADD:</i>	The Memphremagog MRC's <i>Schéma d'aménagement et de développement durable</i> (Regional Land Use and Sustainable Development Plan).
<i>Scenic and panoramic road:</i>	The scenic and panoramic roads specified in the SADD.
<i>Selective cutting:</i>	Removing vegetation with a diameter of less than 10 cm at chest height (CH) that has grown spontaneously and obstructs the view from a scenic and panoramic road, to reopen a visual field.
<i>Signature Memphré elements :</i>	Refer to the village cores or heritage buildings, rural landscapes, bodies of water, wetlands and the relief.
<i>View:</i>	The panoramic views specified in the SADD, or an open or filtered visual field observable from a scenic and panoramic road and containing at least two (2) <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements.
<i>Village core:</i>	An urban area specified in the SADD.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The MRC provides financial assistance in the form of a grant to the owner of any qualified property upon which admissible work is performed in accordance with the Program and the following requirements :

- a) To qualify, the property must border a [scenic and panoramic road](#) in one of the eight (8) municipalities taking part in the Program. They are: Austin, Bolton-Est, Canton de Hatley, Canton de Potton, Hatley, Ogden, Magog and Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley.
- b) The proposed work must cover a distance in frontage such that it will result, minimally, in a 50-metre [open visual field](#) or [filtered visual field](#) alongside a road where the maximum speed is below 70 km/hr, or on a minimum distance of 250 metres in frontage alongside a road where the maximum speed is 70 km/hr or more.
- c) The work enables the preservation or the creation of an [open visual field](#) or a [filtered visual field](#) on at least two (2) [Memphré Signature elements](#). When only two *Signature Memphré* elements compose the [view](#) observable from the [scenic and panoramic road](#) (see [the SADD, map 12](#)), one of these two elements must be a qualified [body of water or wetland](#) or a [relief](#) (see Annex D). Otherwise, the work is not admissible and the owner of the property is not qualified to receive any financial assistance.
- d) The work is executed in accordance with all Program requirements.
- e) The work is executed in compliance with current laws and municipal by-laws.
- f) All existing buildings on the property for which the application is made as well as all uses of the property are compliant with municipal regulations or are protected by an acquired right.
- g) There are no municipal taxes in arrears or unpaid taxes of any kind due on the property and/or by the owner of the property.
- h) The application is filed by the owner of the property on the prescribed MRC form, along with all required documents.
- i) A property owner cannot file more than one (1) application for financial assistance per property.

4. ADMISSIBLE WORK AND REQUIREMENTS

There are six (6) types of work admissible under this program: pruning, selective cutting, landscape mowing, cover cropping, the establishment of a flowering band, and hay cultivation. To be admissible, the work must restore or preserve an open or filtered visual field on at least two of the four *Signature Memphré* elements observable from a scenic and panoramic road.

Landscape mowing, cover cropping and hay cultivation that are actively conducted on a farm on the date on which the Program takes effect are not admissible.

4.1 PRUNING

In the context of this program, [pruning](#) involves cutting certain branches in a line of trees to guide or limit the development of vegetation that could potentially block a visual field, for the purpose of creating a [filtered visual field](#) while preserving the existing trees. The program excludes the pruning of trees forming part of a tree tunnel specified in the [SADD](#). To qualify, the pruning work:

- a) must be carried out in the year following the filing of a compliant application;
- b) must be performed by an experienced company;
- c) is limited to less than 20% of the pruned tree's foliar mass.

To be admissible under this program, only branches within the first two (2) metres from the base of the trunk may be pruned, and only on trees located within 15 metres of the road.

If pruning is done above the aforementioned two (2) metres, the applicant must provide separate, detailed documentation so that the admissible work may be easily determined.

Illustration: Example of pruning (enhancement) to create a filtered visual feel. Source : Coop Picbois (2024).



4.2 SELECTIVE CUTTING

Under this program, [selective cutting](#) is defined as the act of removing vegetation with a diameter of less than 10 centimetres at chest height (CH) and which is obstructing the view from a [scenic and panoramic road](#), to create an [open visual field](#) or a [filtered visual field](#). To qualify, selective cutting:

- a) must be carried out in the year following the filing of a compliant application;
- b) must be performed by an experienced company (submit a price proposal with the application);
- c) must target trees and shrubs located within 15 metres from the roadway; their diameter at CH must be less than 10 centimetres or their height less than 1.3 metres;
- d) must be authorised by municipal regulations and a permit must be obtained, when required.

Expenses incurred for selective cutting are admissible under this program.

4.3 LANDSCAPE MOWING

[Landscape mowing](#) refers to the cutting of vegetation to preserve a [view](#) by keeping it at an herbaceous height and to prevent progressive scrub encroachment. The aim under this program is to maintain a view without relinquishing farmland. To this end, a prior analysis conducted by an agronomist is required.

To be admissible, landscape mowing:

- a) must be approved beforehand by an agronomist (submit the analysis prepared by the agronomist);
- b) must be conducted annually, after September 15th of every year and for a minimum period of three (3) consecutive years (submit a price proposal from the company that is to perform the work);
- c) must be done at a height of 10 to 12 centimetres from the ground.

Expenses incurred for mowing and for professional fees are covered by the program.



4.4 COVER CROP

When arable land has not been maintained for many years, a degradation in soil fertility occurs. To cultivate it anew, one may use a soil-nourishing approach, that is, the sowing of a cover crop or a series of cover crops, also called “green manure”, that are worked into the soil at maturity. This step must be preceded by a site analysis conducted by an agronomist (submit the report) of the necessary liming, fertilizing and ploughing to be done.

Cover cropping involves the sowing, in a field bordering a scenic and panoramic road, of herbaceous plants chosen amongst those listed in Annex B, to improve soil fertility and structure, increase biodiversity, control undesirable species and stimulate soil conservation, thereby facilitating a return to farmable land.

To qualify, cover cropping :

- a) must be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of an agronomist. The agronomist's report on soil, liming, fertilization and cover crop analysis must be submitted with the application for financial assistance;
- b) must involve the cultivation of one or several species chosen amongst those listed in Annex B of the program;
- c) must be conducted over a maximum of two (2) growing seasons (submit a price proposal for the agricultural work).

Expenses incurred for soil analysis, agronomist professional fees, seeds and field work are admissible under this program.



4.5 FLOWERING STRIP

A flowering strip involves the establishment, in a field bordering a scenic and panoramic road, of a mix of grasses and native herbaceous flowering plants adapted to the Quebec climate, with the exception of the invasive alien species listed in Annex A.

To be admissible :

- a) The work involved in establishing a flowering strip must be compliant with the recommendations of an agronomist. The agronomist's report on soil, liming, fertilization and ground preparation must be submitted with the application for financial assistance.
- b) The flowering strip must border a scenic and panoramic road.
- c) The strip must be seeded and/or planted, preferably in the fall to ensure a better rate of success.
- d) The strip must cover a minimum area of 2000 m² and a maximum area of 5000 m².

Under this program, expenses incurred for seeds, professional fees and labour costs for ploughing and soil preparation (e.g., liming, fertilizing) over a maximum area of 0.5 hectare are admissible. If the work is carried out over an area greater than 0.5 hectare, the applicant must provide separate, detailed documentation so the admissible work may be readily determined for the area permitted under the program.



4.6 HAY CULTIVATION

The establishment of a hay crop palatable to ruminants involves soil preparation (including weed control), seeding and mowing at maturity to improve soil health and conservation, stabilize it to prevent erosion, increase biodiversity, reduce the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and control undesirable species.

To be admissible :

- a) The work must be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of an agronomist. The agronomist's report on soil analysis and soil preparation must be submitted with the application for financial assistance.
- b) The hay must consist of a mix of the species listed in Annex C.
- c) Soil preparation and establishment must be carried out over a maximum of two (2) growing seasons (submit a price proposal for the agricultural work).

Under this program, expenses incurred for soil analysis, the agronomist's professional fees, seeds, and field work for a maximum of two (2) growing seasons are admissible.



5. APPLICATION

The *Landscape Environment Rehabilitation Program* pertains only to applications filed after the the Program comes into effect.

The application must be submitted on the form prescribed by the MRC and must be supported by the following documents and information:

- a) A picture of the property and of the site for which the application is made, of the view to be restored or maintained by the work, and of the [Signature Memphré elements](#) comprised in this [view](#).
- b) A detailed description of the proposed work including, for a cover crop or flowering strip, a calendar of the proposed work.
- c) The price proposal submitted by the company selected to carry out the agricultural and/or forestry work.
- d) For [landscape mowing](#), [cover cropping](#), [flowering strip](#) and [hay cultivation](#) work, the report and recommendations of an agronomist.
- e) A copy of the latest tax bill and a statement of account showing there are no taxes in arrears for the property or properties for which the application is made.
- f) A commitment to respect all applicable program conditions.

The request for payment must be filed at latest on November 25th of the year during which the work has been carried out. It must include all invoices and supporting documents establishing actual costs incurred, as well as pictures of the view(s) after the work has been completed.

When the admissible work is carried out over several years, a distinct request for payment, with supporting documents, must be submitted annually within the same timeframe, for each year during which the admissible work has been carried out.

6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The financial assistance granted is calculated in the manner specified herein, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per beneficiary. For any given qualifying application, the amount granted cannot exceed the actual costs incurred for admissible work.

The amount of financial assistance granted by the MRC corresponds to a percentage of actual costs incurred for the work. This percentage is determined according to the number of [Signature Memphré elements](#) comprised in the view observable from the scenic and panoramic road, as restored or preserved by the work:

Number of <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements in the restored or preserved view	Financial assistance
4 elements	80 % of actual costs
3 elements	70 % of actual costs
2 elements	60 % of actual costs

When only two *Signature Memphré* elements are comprised in the view observable from the scenic and panoramic road, one of these two elements must be a body of water or wetland, or an admissible relief. Otherwise, the work is not admissible and no financial assistance shall be granted to the property owner.

The grant is payable annually to the owner of the property, in one installment to be disbursed on the fourth Wednesday of November each year, provided that all conditions of the program have been met.

Should the property owner fail to meet any of the program's requirements, most notably by neglecting to perform work which is to be carried out over several years or by becoming bankrupt or insolvent, the MRC shall stop paying out the financial assistance without any prior notice.

The MRC may demand repayment of the financial assistance paid out to a beneficiary of the program if a condition for admissibility or the commitment of the beneficiary is no longer respected.

The MRC receives a request for payment and processes it within forty-five (45) days of receipt, provided the request has been tendered on the duly completed form and is supported by all required documentation, namely, invoices establishing the actual cost of the work and pictures of the site, of the restored or preserved view after the work has been carried out, and of the *Signature Memphré* elements comprised in this view.

The financial assistance is released by means of a cheque payable to the property owner, after proof of the work having been carried out has been received.

The MRC will not accept any request for payment filed after November 25th of the year during which the admissible work has been carried out. A property owner who fails to execute the work or, if the work has been carried out, to present a payment request with all supporting documents, loses the right for financial compensation.

The financial assistance is granted to the extent that funds are made available, by decision of the MRC Council.

7. DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

The program is established by By-law no. 16-23; it comes into force on June 15th 2026 for a duration of five (5) years. The program is administered on a first come, first served basis.

8. DOCUMENTS TO INCLUDE IN THE FILING

Here is a summary list of the documents to be included in the application:

☐ Application form
☐ Price proposal(s) from the company or companies who are to carry out the work
☐ Pictures of the site for which the application is made, of the view that is to be preserved or restored by the work, and of the visible <i>Signature Memphré</i> elements
☐ Report from an agronomist or professionnel (if the work involves landscape mowing , cover cropping , flowering strip and/or hay cultivation)
☐ Pictures of site characteristics, taken by the agronomist or professionnel
☐ A copy of the tax bill and a statement of account showing there are no taxes in arrears for the property or properties for which the application is made

10. TRANSMISSION OF THE APPLICATION

The application must be sent to : l.desnoyers@mrcmemphremagog.com

Annex A. List of invasive alien species that cannot be sowed or planted

Black dog-strangling vine (or black swallow-wort) (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*)
Blue lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)
Bohemian knotweed (*Reynoutria ×bohemica*)
Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*)
Common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)
Common reed (*Phragmites australis* subsp. *Australis*)
Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
Dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*)
Fuki (or giant butterbur) (*Petasites japonicus*)
Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
Giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*)
Great yellow-cress (*Rorippa amphibia*)
Ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*)
Hedge bedstraw (or false baby's breath) (*Galium mollugo*)
Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
Hogweed (or common hogweed) (*Heracleum sphondylium*)
Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)
Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)
Lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*)
Lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
Silvergrass (*Miscanthus* sp)
Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)
Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*)

Annex B. List of species for cover cropping

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)
Alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*)
Balansa clover (*Trifolium michelianum*)
Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
Broad bean (*Vicia faba*)
Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*)
Camelina (*Camelina sativa*)
Common barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)
Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
Common vetch (*Vicia sativa*)
Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*)
Crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*)
Cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)
Egyptian clover (*Trifolium alexandrinum*)
Ethiopian mustard (*Brassica carinata*)
Festulolium (*Festulolium*)
Field pea (*Pisum sativum arvense*)
Fodder radish (*Raphanus sativus* var. *oleiformis*)
Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*)
Garden pea (*Pisum sativum*)
Garden radish (*Raphanus sativus*)
Hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa*)
Japanese millet (*Echinochloa frumentacea*)
Lacy phacelia (*Phacelia*)
Lentil (*Lens culinaris*)
Pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*)
Rapeseed (*Brassica napus*)
Rattlepods (*Crotalaria*)
Red feather clover (*Trifolium rubens*)
Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*)
Sorghum-sudangrass (*Sorghum bicolor* X *Sorghum sudanense*)
Spring oat (*Avena sativa*)
Spring or winter rye (*Secale cereale*)
Spring wheat or winter wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)
Subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*)
Sudangrass (*Sorghum sudanense* X *Sorghum sudanense*)
Triticale (×*Triticosecale* Wittm. ex A. Camus)
White clover (*Trifolium repens*)
White mustard (*Sinapis alba*)
White sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*)
Wild cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*)
Yellow sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*)

Annex C. List of species for hay cultivation

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)
Alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*)
Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
Common oat (*Avena sativa*)
Crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*)
Festulolium (*Festulolium*)
Hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa*)
Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)
Meadow fescue (*Festuca pratensis*)
Orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*)
Red feather clover (*Trifolium rubens*)
Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne* ou *multiflorum*)
Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis* Leyss.)
Sudangrass (*Sorghum sudanense* X *Sorghum sudanense*)
Tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*)
Timothy grass (*Phleum pratense* L.
Upright brome (*Bromopsis erecta* (Huds.) Fourr.
White clover (*Trifolium repens*)

Annex D – Regional visible reliefs

Colline aux Adrets
Colline Clark
Colline Haskell
Colline Miller
Colline du Porc-Épic
Colline Pinkham
Colline des Pins
Colline de la Serpentine
Colline des Sorbiers
Mont Alfred-DesRochers
Mont Bear
Mont Brome
Mont Becky
Mont Chagnon
Mont Chauve
Massif des Chênes
Mont Éléphant
Mont Orford
Mont Foster
Mont Gauvin
Mont Giroux
Mont Hawk
Mont Glen
Mont Hog's Back
Mont Jay Peak
Mont Lily-Butters
Mont Mimi
Mont des Trois Lacs
Mont Owl's Head
Mont Peavey
Mont Place
Mont St-Étienne
Mont Signer
Mont Sugar Loaf
Mont Sylvio-Lacharité