

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

La RanDONnée - Conservation moving forward!

Hike with us
SEPTEMBER 2012

An active way



to contribute!

Team up with your friends, family and colleagues to discover the beauty of the Township of Potton. In order to raise funds for the protection of natural habitats, you will be invited to walk from the *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* to the village of Mansonville (a shorter version of the hike is also possible). See our Website



Massawippi Conservation Trust; a new Affiliate Member!



Massawippi Conservation Trust, a newly formed conservation organization, becomes **Appalachian Corridor's fifteenth Affiliate Member**. Mrs Mélanie Lelièvre, Appalachian Corridor Executive Director, mentions that the organization is "happy to count as partners the devoted citizens who created the Trust. Their commitment to the well being of the Massawippi Valley and our passion for Eastern Townships' nature are a guarantee that important conservation projects will arise from this collaboration!"

Massawippi Conservation Trust works toward the conservation of land adjacent to Lake Massawippi and its tributaries and provides stewardship

services in perpetuity. Operating under the auspices of the Fondation Massawippi since April 2011 (a coalition of citizens and funds devoted to supporting community action), the Trust acquires properties, encourages land owners to conserve their property and assists them through the different stages of the process.

"The fact that Appalachian Corridor exists at all and is there to help us in our first steps into the wonderful world of conservation is a great reassurance to the Trust. Its experience and expertise, gives us hope that we will succeed in saving this beautiful corner of the world." explains Mrs Margot Graham Heyerhoff, Chairman of the Foundation.

This partnership consolidates the network of Affiliate Members, which gathers local conservation organisations who contribute to the implementation of Appalachian Corridor's regional conservation strategy. This synergetic collaboration is a driving force for the protection of a significant portion of the Appalachians Mountains.

Turtles need a hand; Appalachian Corridor needs volunteers!

North America is home to about 20% of all known turtle species, and at least three of them are found on Appalachian Corridor's territory of action: the Painted Turtle, Snapping Turtle and Wood Turtle. The latter, the most terrestrial of all eight freshwater turtles species in Quebec, is designated Threatened by the Federal Government. The Snapping Turtle, the biggest freshwater turtle in Canada, lives in and around ponds as well as slow flowing rivers and watercourses. This species is designated as of Special Concern.

Some of the threats turtles face are of natural source, like Raccoon or Striped Skunk predation. However, most of them result from human activity; construction works – houses, bridges, dams, roads or parking lots – modify or destroy turtle habitat. In addition, certain infrastructures fragment their territory and hinder their movements as they travel to feed, reproduce, lay their eggs, hibernate and, in the case of the young, find new grounds to call home. Some of these travels sometimes end in road kills. Female turtles are the most prone to be found along the roads as the gravel shoulders represent an attractive site for laying their eggs.

As cars, VTT and maintenance vehicles drive or park on shoulders, the fragile eggs can be crushed, and when turtles hatch, they too are in great danger.

Conscious of the effect that road kills have on turtle populations in Eastern Townships, Appalachian Corridor is carrying out a project to identify where turtles are more at risk when crossing roads, especially along routes 243 and 245 between Eastman and Mansonville. This projects aims at protecting turtles living along the Missisquoi Nord River, and to do so, volunteers are essential. They will be asked to travel along specific road sections, preferably by bicycle, and to keep track of any turtle sightings, either living or victims of road kills. The data collection will be taking place from the end of May to July 14th 2012. If you cannot participate to this project as a volunteer, you can still share your observations with us by filling in a form available on our website: www.corridorappalachien.ca (to be found on the main page of the French section).

For more information, contact us at 450-242-1125.



Wood Turtle run over by a car

Conservation in the Gagnon-Weldon family: not once but twice!

In December 2011, Mrs Lydia Gagnon and Dr Charles Weldon donated 4ha (c. 10 acres) of land as well as a conservation servitude over an additional 23.7ha (c. 59 acres) to the Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA). Both pieces of land are forested and located on the west side of the Sutton mountain range. These parcels are home to the Spring Salamander (designated Vulnerable in Quebec and Threatened in Canada) and to the Northern Dusky Salamander (likely to be designated Threatened or Vulnerable in Quebec). Wild Leek and other plant species at risk were also found there by Appalachian Corridor's biologists.

Dr Weldon recalls that "the property belonged to Mr Taj Whithall who had inherited from his father, Dr Douglas Whithall. The latter wished for his property to be protected in perpetuity and, with this in mind, agreed to have ecological surveys completed in his beautiful hardwood forest." A conservation project had indeed been initiated on the property in 2005.

After his father passed away, Taj Whithall accepted an offer on this property from the Gagnon-Weldons, who committed to protect the forest almost entirely. The property bound by a conservation servitude will become the "réserve naturelle Douglas Whithall" after Taj's father and the land donated to MECA becomes the "réserve naturelle Thomas Weldon" after Dr Weldon's father.



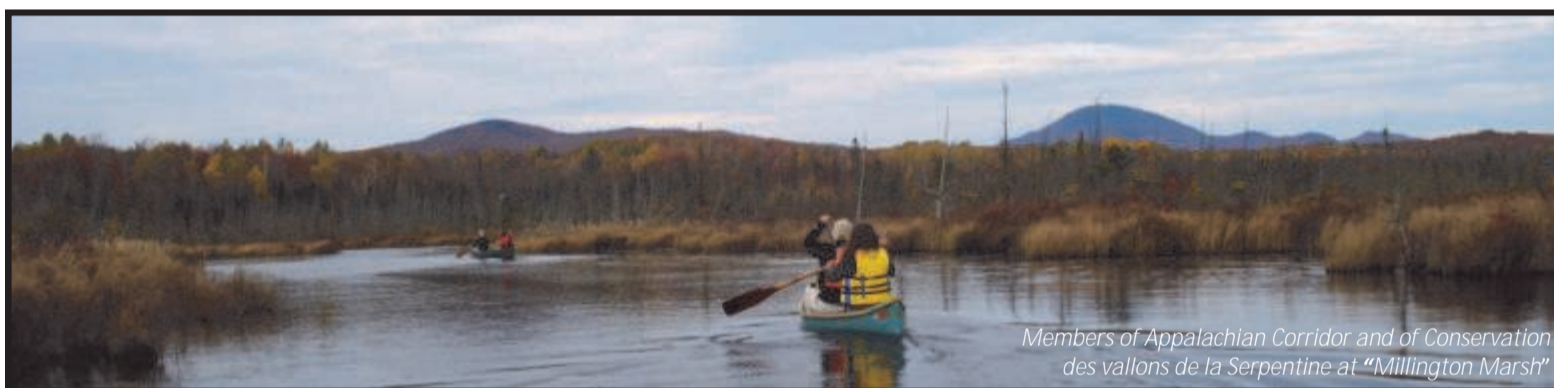
Brian Herman, (MECA), Charles Weldon, Terri Monahan (MECA), Mtre Marie J. Gagné, Lydia Gagnon and Mélanie Lelièvre (Appalachian Corridor)

An important section of the « Millington Marsh » protected

The "Millington Marsh", located in the municipality of Austin, offers habitats of exceptional quality to flora and fauna. This wetland boasts unique and rich ecosystems; this is why *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine* (CVS) and Appalachian Corridor have been working to protect a section of it for almost four years. This collaborative effort recently bore fruit as a land of about 43ha (106 acres), located at the heart of the ecologically sensitive area and in a white zone, became property of CVS. The local organisation thus becomes responsible of ensuring its protection in perpetuity.

As a dominant land, this property will allow CVS to protect additional pieces of land in the surroundings by means of conservation servitudes.

It features a forest which borders the "Millington Marsh" as well as a part of the wetland itself, including a bog within which Appalachian Corridor's biologists discovered rare and beautiful plant species. In fact, in addition to carnivorous plants like the Round-Leaved Sundew and the Purple Pitcher Plant (also called Side-Saddle Flower), the fragile peat moss carpet covering part of the property hosts the Dragon's Mouth Orchid (also called Swamp-Pink), likely to be designated Threatened or Vulnerable in Quebec. The section of the property covered in forest is composed of sugarbush with shade-tolerant hardwoods, of which the rich soil allowed Wild Leek, Canadian Maidenhair, Wild Ginger, Two-leaved Toothwort and Ostrich Fern to grow. Congratulations to *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine* for the completion of this project: a stepping stone for other conservation initiatives in the sector!



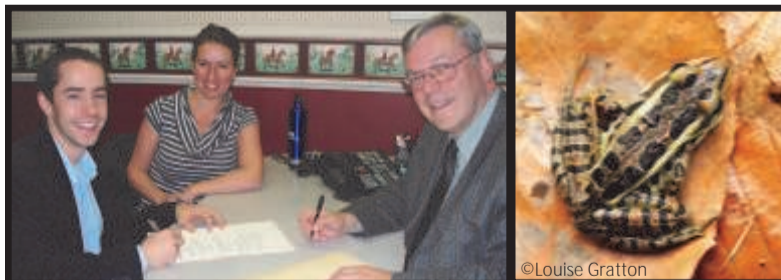
Members of Appalachian Corridor and of Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine at "Millington Marsh"

Five properties receive a Nature Reserve status

In December 2011, Jeffrey McDonald, President of the *Société de conservation du corridor naturel de la rivière au Saumon* (SCCNRS) was delighted to sign the agreement giving Nature Reserve status to five properties owned by the organisation. The *Lac-Bran-de-Scie* Nature Reserve spreads over 19ha (c. 47 acres) in the Township of Orford. It is home to the Northern Dusky Salamander and Pickerel Frog, two species

likely to be designated Threatened or Vulnerable in Quebec. The Madakik Reserve covers almost 7ha (17 acres) in the Township of Melbourne. The Salmon River flows through this property, which is also located in the Saint-François river floodplain and features wetlands frequented by the Wood Turtle. The *Ruisseau-Gulf* and *Lac-Brais* Reserves are located in the municipality of Racine and cover almost 28ha and 102ha (69 and 252 acres). The *Ruisseau-Gulf* Reserve features natural habitats of high ecological value used by a number of species at risk including the Spring Salamander.

This new conservation status provides considerable impetus to the local conservation group -SCCNRS- as it reduces the property tax burden and grants Quebec's *ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs* (MDDEP) the role of keeper of the conservation status.



©Louise Gratton

Left: Jeffrey McDonald (SCCNRS), Mélanie Lelièvre (Appalachian Corridor) and Mtre Denis Tanguay. Right: Pickerel Frog

IN MEMORIAM

In 2004, Mr Richard Sommer and his wife, Mrs Vicky Tansey, protected 50 acres of their property by donating a conservation servitude to Mount Pinnacle Land Trust. Mr Sommer and Mrs Tansey were then among the first to give a conservation servitude on Appalachian Corridor's territory of action. Mr Richard Sommer passed away in



Vicky Tansey and Richard Sommer

Sutton on February 13th 2012, at the age of 77, and we wish to pay tribute to this generous man who, through conservation, gave concrete expression to his interest for the protection of nature. Appalachian Corridor's team wishes to offer his family its most sincere condolences.

A first dominant land for our new Affiliate Members!

Conservation Espace Nature Shefford

In March 2012, Mr Jean-Pierre Rémillard donated 8.4ha (21 acres) of land to *Conservation Espace Nature Shefford* (CENS), which represents the **organisation's first dominant land!** Many thanks to Mr Rémillard for his donation and congratulations to CENS for this decisive step in the fulfilment of their mission.

The day he signed the Act of Donation, Mr Rémillard explained the reason behind his action: "I was so fond of this land that I was keen on giving it to conservation; I wanted to be coherent with my values". Mr Yves Beaulieu, President of CENS, added that: « CENS' team is very happy of this longed-for result. This donation is the wind in our sails and we are extremely thankful to our generous donor for what has also been a rich and complex journey. We are hoping that this crucial step will generate other conservation projects on the Township of Shefford's territory."

The property features a mature sugarbush as well as a Red Oak stand, which is a rather uncommon forest community in the region. The mountain stream

flowing over part of this land is also known as a Spring Salamander habitat, since this species was observed just downstream of the property. It is therefore essential to maintain the water quality and low temperatures typical of this watercourse, including through the protection of forest cover.

This conservation project, as well as the ones described in the three previous articles, has benefited from Quebec's *ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*'s (MDDEP) financial contribution via the *Partenaires pour la nature* program. Its support is essential to the completion of crucial projects like these, and we take this opportunity to thank the Ministry for all its help.



Jean-Pierre Rémillard, Mélanie Lelièvre, Denise Papineau (Shefford) and Gérard Lavoie (CENS)

Massawippi Conservation Trust

The 2.3ha (5.7 acres) property donated by Ms Louise Ransom to the Massawippi Conservation Trust (MCT) last December is located on steep slopes along the shores of Lake Massawippi. This land is covered with mixed forests and rich hardwood stands below which thrive species at risk including the delicate Maidenhair Fern as well as Wild Ginger, both designated Vulnerable in Quebec. Ms Ransom, whose father first came up to North Hatley in 1903, is a benefactor with nature conservation at heart.

Margot Graham Heyerhoff, President of the Fondation **Massawippi Foundation**, said "our first donated property on the west shore of Lake Massawippi is very important and significant. Louise Ransom, our generous donor, bought this piece of land in 1952 and has kept it in its natural state for the past 60 years. She leads the way for us, not only by gifting her property to the Massawippi Conservation Trust, but also by providing the Trust with a cash donation to help with the costs and care of this beautiful and ecologically rich property. Ms Ransom sets a wonderful example for all of us who love the Massawippi Valley."



Lake Massawippi

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FOCUS ON A SPECIES AT RISK : the Bridle Shiner

The Bridle Shiner (*Notropis bifrenatus*) is a small freshwater fish measuring up to 6 cm. Identifying this species can be difficult because it resembles several minnow species. The Bridle Shiner has a straw-coloured back and silvery, iridescent sides. A black lateral band extending from its tail to its snout can either be prominent or less visible.

Bridle Shiners live in areas of streams and lakes where there is plenty of aquatic vegetation. They prefer waterbeds of sand, silt or organic debris, and thrive in water that is relatively warm and clear. In the summer of 2011, a survey commissioned by Brome Lake Land Foundation revealed new occurrences of the Bridle Shiner around Brome Lake, including in the Pearson Brook, Coldbrook and Quilliams Marsh. The species was unknown in the area so it's a great discovery for this globally rare freshwater fish!



Bridle Shiner

The Bridle Shiner is designated as a Species of Special Concern in Canada. It is mostly threatened by human activities likely to result in reduced water quality (sedimentation or use of chemicals), a degradation of aquatic or shoreline vegetation or barriers to the free passage of fish. The use of the Bridle Shiner as a baitfish by recreational fishers can also constitute a direct threat to this species.

You can take part in the recovery effort by preserving natural aquatic and shoreline vegetation, avoiding driving vehicles on streambeds and shorelines as well as preventing from spreading fertilisers or pesticides. Finally, if you practice fishing, learn to identify this species, do not use it as bait and return it to the water immediately if caught by accident.



©Hawkquest.org

Peregrine Falcon

Share your sightings!

You have seen a salamander, a turtle, a rare bird, a mammal you want to identify or an uncommon plant? Let us know! Through your observations, we improve our knowledge of threatened species' distribution on our territory of action. To share your sightings with our biologists, visit Appalachian Corridor's website at www.corridorappalachien.ca. The form you are invited to fill in is available on the website's French section main page. You are welcome to send us pictures to support your information or to get our team to confirm species identification.

Thank you for sharing your discoveries!



Canada Warbler

©Michel Lamarche

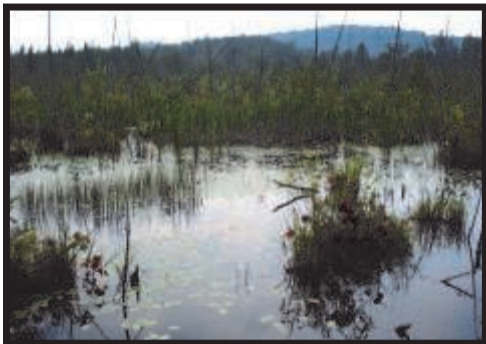
Sutton and South-Stukely: Awards for their efforts towards the protection of species at risk



Left: Jean Lavoie (Arcelor Mittal), Charles Weldon (Sutton), Yves Beaulieu (Contrecoeur). Right: Gérald Allaire (South-Stukely), Caroline Daguet (Appalachian Corridor) and Pierre M. Valiquette (RMN).

On March 23rd 2012, about 60 representatives from municipalities and environmental groups in Quebec gathered for the event *Villes et villages à la rescousse*, which highlights the collaboration between these two sectors when it comes to protecting biodiversity. The town of Sutton won the *Villes et villages Award* for the new orientations of its urban plan adopted in 2010. This plan is the result of almost five years of consultations with the municipality and local organisations, including the *Groupe de réflexion et d'action sur le patrimoine et le paysage*, Appalachian Corridor and Mount Echo Conservation Association. Sutton's new urban plan is innovative in that the new set of rules adopted also proposes tools essential to a development which respects the environment. It includes, among others, rules about high altitude zones and wetlands.

South-Stukely received a *Reconnaissance Award*, in recognition for a project aiming at identifying all wetlands on the municipality's territory. This initiative was carried out in collaboration with the *Association de conservation de la nature de Stukely-Sud* (ACNSS) and Appalachian Corridor, and had as objective the inclusion of identified wetlands within town regulations. "Thanks to this project, more than 1,000ha (2470 acres) of wetlands are now on the map, representing 16% of the municipality's territory. These fragile ecosystems provide essential habitats for the Four-toed Salamander, the Pickerel Frog and Clinton's Wood Fern, all species at risk in Quebec. The wetlands play a crucial role in maintaining water quality as well", specifies Caroline Daguet, Biologist working for Appalachian Corridor.



Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes: new trail sections to discover

The *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* (owned by Nature Conservancy Canada) now boasts new trail sections which enhance hikers' experience by offering a greater proximity with nature. Completed in the fall of 2011, they are part of the reserve's enhancement project, made possible through the financial participation of the main donor, the *Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement*, and through the commitment of Katimavik's volunteers. Moreover, eight new interpretation boards along the trails of the Singer sector present information on the ecological and historical wealth found within and outside the reserve. Have a good hike!

For more information, visit www.rnmv.ca



The construction of a new trail section; Mahican Diamond, Jean Lacasse and Matthew Cleary are at work.

The Caisse populaire Desjardins of Brome-Missisquoi; a partner for conservation

Appalachian Corridor will benefit, for a period of three years (2011 to 2013), from an annual contribution of 10,000\$ from the *Caisse populaire Desjardins* of Brome-Missisquoi. This contribution supports Appalachian Corridor's global mission, and therefore allows us to continue and develop our activities. We wish to thank the *Caisse populaire* for their support and interest in the protection of the region's natural heritage.



Guy Lizotte (Appalachian Corridor), Hélène Sactouris (Desjardins), Marie-José Auclair, Stéphanie Beaudoin, Caroline Daguet and Mélanie Lelièvre (all from Appalachian Corridor)



CALENDAR

July 2012: MOUNT PINNACLE LAND TRUST, Annual Fundraising Breakfast, Frelighsburg. Info: nature@montpinacle.ca

PARC D'ENVIRONNEMENT NATUREL DE SUTTON (info@parcsutton.com):

June 30: *La vie la nuit* (guided walk at night for families).

August 10 and 11: Astronomy Festival for All.

September 9: Mountain search and rescue rehearsal.

September 8 2012 APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, *La RanDONnée—Conservation moving forward*: fundraising hike, Township of Potton (450) 242-1125.

SENTIERS DE L'ESTRIE (marche@lessentiersdelestrie.qc.ca):

May 19: GPS orienteering workshop, Sherbrooke (819)-348-0473.

June 9: Mt Foster, long hike practical workshop (819) 864-6314.

July 18: Hike in the Missisquoi Valley (819) 864-3614.

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organisation working towards the protection of natural habitats and biodiversity in the Appalachians of southern Quebec, in collaboration with private landowners, local conservation groups as well as regional, national and international partners.

Visit our website at www.corridorappalachien.ca

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