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Appalachian Corridor is proud to celebrate 2011,
the International Year of Forests.



NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER

The protection of East-Bolton's heritage; a collective effort

In 1949, a page of our region's history was being written on the property now owned by Mr. Éric Favreau: "Young Michel", age 6, went out to gather cows and never came back. It is told that, over a period of two weeks, 10 000 people came to look for him. In the midst of this event, the community realized the poverty in which the family was living; they joined efforts to find materials and money to build them a new home. This house now hosts the Favreau family, who, like the community back then, participated in an equally inspiring collective effort: the conservation of our region's rich ecological heritage.

Indeed, Mr. Favreau, in collaboration with *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine* (CVS), established a conservation servitude (Quebec's equivalent of an easement) on about 50% of his property. This initiative contributes to protect a further 34,6 acres (~14ha) in the strategic zone connecting the Sutton mountains to mount Orford.

"I arrived here when I was eight; I learned to appreciate a wild and sparsely populated land. I have seen this region change and more and more people

settle. It is during a flight over the area that I realised the extent of real-estate development. It is a few acres from our doorstep!"

The Serpentine stream, which hosts Wood Turtles, meanders on the property, alongside wetlands and rich soils where Two-eaved Toothwort and Ostrich Fern grow, two species designated Vulnerable in Quebec. Moreover, this site is only a few hundred meters from two other properties protected by CVS, and thus consolidates the important ecological links in this sector.

"During our first neighbourhood meetings, before CVS's creation, we realised that our properties occupied about 20% of what we wanted to be our territory of action. This recognition reinforced our desire to preach by example and protect in perpetuity our own lands first" recalls Mr. Favreau, who sat on CVS's Board for two years. Like the people in 1949 who built a home which still protects its inhabitants, Mr. Favreau and the members of CVS joined efforts and now protect, in perpetuity, a greater territory.



Françoise Bricault (CVS),
Éric Favreau, Mélanie
Lelièvre (ACA) and Mtre
Sylvain Lavallée

A gem in the Green Mountains



American Beech

The vast protected private territory in the Sutton Mountains has recently been increased thanks to a land acquisition by Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) of about 47,6 acres (19,28 hectares).

The new property is contiguous with what we now know as the *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, which is part of the largest conservation core identified on Appalachian Corridor's territory (15 000 ha).

This property is of high ecological value considering the presence of a species at risk, of waterways and of wetlands. Also of great importance are the facts that the property's forest cover is non-fragmented and that it is located between protected areas, thus ensuring a perennial "forested

connection" between these territories. The protection of this rich heritage was of utmost importance considering that it was zoned white and was facing the threat of real estate development.

During a visit on the property, the presence of moose, deer and black bear was confirmed, as well as the presence of the Northern Dusky Salamander and of the Eastern Redback Salamander. It is important to mention that the Northern Dusky Salamander is susceptible of being designated threatened or vulnerable by the *ministère des Ressources Naturelles et de la Faune du Québec* (MRNF, 2009). Other species, like the Northern Spring Peeper and the Tetraploid Gray Treefrog, are also probably present on the property.

Nature Conservancy Canada wishes to highlight the collaboration and support of Mr. Breuleux, the previous landowner, in the conclusion of this transaction. The acquisition of this piece of land consolidates the network of protected areas in the Green Mountains, a gem unique to our region.

An attachment to the Pinnacle –Mrs Michèle Bernier tells her story

When, at the start of the seventies, my father sold the orchard and land he owned on mount Pinnacle's west slope, I asked him to keep a lot of about 20 acres located alongside Smith road. This request was nothing rational or mercantile; we had no project of building or exploiting on that lot. It rather came from a kind of attachment to the morphology of the land, which features a lovely plateau between a reasonably steep slope and the low part of the field where meanders a small creek. Moreover, there was the legend of old man Brasseur, a solitary lumberjack who, well before I was born, had built a shack from which only remained a few old planks and rusted stove pipes. In brief, my wish was of sentimental nature and my father, who was a lover of the Pinnacle, did not need any coaxing to keep that piece of land.

Time went by, I left to study abroad, my father passed away and I rediscovered the land while horseback riding. My mother, who knew how precious this part of the property was to me, agreed to give it as an inheritance before due time. I still had no projects in mind for "my land", until Hélène Leduc approached me with the suggestion of a conservation servitude towards Mount Pinnacle Land Trust (MPLT). I was at first a little bit reluctant, considering that the word "servitude" triggers the fear of being dispossessed of a belonging forever and ever. However, Hélène clearly explained that I would remain owner of the land, although, of course, I would have to accept certain restrictions relating to the use of the prop-

erty. I then authorised Appalachian Corridor to visit and to complete the inventories necessary to the elaboration of a conservation plan, especially since my friends and next door neighbours, the Lanctôt family, had already given a great part of their land to the Trust.

I remained literally astonished by the conservation plan handed to me; a detailed study, sound, well written and illustrated with pictures and maps.

It is an experts' work in which you can still feel the deep interest, if not to say the affection that specialists devote to the forest. I discovered that my land, which hosts many different natural habitats, is part of an exceptional forest ecosystem; a refuge for species Threatened or Vulnerable. This wealth had to be protected forever and this is how I decided to concede the greatest part of the land as a servitude towards Mount Pinnacle Land Trust; 24.2 acres (9.8 hectares) which contribute to increase the Trust's area of protected land to 675 acres (274 hectares). Even if I have to respect certain constraints regarding the use of the land, I have nonetheless kept a few benefits, like horseback riding in the existing trails. Northern Dusky Salamanders and Pickerel Frogs are welcome on my property, and I know that my father would be proud and moved by this gesture; one that I made in order to protect "his" Pinnacle.

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Michèle Bernier, Danielle Dansereau
(MPLT) and Mélanie Lelièvre (ACA)



CALENDAR (to be continued on page 2)

2 oct. 2011 MOUNT PINNACLE LAND TRUST (MPLT) AND APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Nature walk to celebrate MPLT's 20th anniversary, 10:00 am, Frelighsburg, (450) 242-1125

5 oct. 2011 APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Workshop on conciliation between forestry and conservation (in French) at the event *Carrefour Forêt Innovations* (Quebec City, Oct. 4-6), www.apcor.ca (450) 242-1125

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Natural corridors; critical links

Natural corridors allow wide-ranging mammals (such as Moose, Black Bear, Fisher and Bobcat) to move from one conservation core to another. In doing so, they gain access to vast areas essential to the survival of their populations (for feeding, reproduction, protection, etc.). Traveling between conservation cores fosters exchanges that maintain the genetic diversity of both plants and wildlife species. Natural corridors are one of



Geneviève Bouthot (ACA) and many of the volunteers having participated in the validation of natural corridors

the key elements taken into account in **Appalachian Corridor's conservation strategy.**

In order to determine where natural corridors are located on its territory, ACA initially identified them theoretically. Thanks to geographic information and aerial photography, various features have been highlighted: wetlands, waterways, bodies of water, slopes, ridges, forest cover, elements of frag-

mentation (inhabited areas, roads), etc. These characteristics led to the **identification of "routes" which offered the best habitats and were devoid of constraints that could hinder species' movements.**

The theoretical selection of potential corridors was followed by ground truthing of their physical features in order to ensure that no obstacles were found, like a cliff, a fence or other types of infrastructures. The validation of quality habitats for plants and wildlife also included a characterization of the biological elements of these corridors: forest stands, density of vegetation, habitat types, etc.

The next step was to validate whether the selected corridors were well and truly used by wildlife! To do so, a Technician in Bioecology, generously helped by various volunteers, recorded wildlife tracks and signs along the roads crossing these corridors. Tracking sessions took place last

winter, about 12 to 48 hours after a snowfall and in suitable weather. Every mammal track or sign was identified, photographed and its geographical location was recorded. A long and fastidious work!

During this validation, almost 1,900 tracks and signs were recorded. Tracks of wide-ranging mammals targeted by this project were confirmed, including Coyote, River Otter, Fisher, Moose and American Mink. Tracks of other species were confirmed as well (White-tailed Deer, Red Fox, Snowshoe Hare, etc.).

Results are encouraging; they confirm, scientifically, the presence of natural corridors in key locations throughout the territory.

These corridors are essential to maintain our ecosystems' biodiversity. Their validation and protection is part of a strategy aiming at a wider mobilisation. **Indeed, the confirmation of natural corridors' locations could allow their integration to regional and municipal planning.** For example, these corridors could become areas compatible with the development of **ecotourism initiatives ("green corridors").** **The next step may also be the development of a pilot project with the *ministère des Transports du Québec* (MTQ) in order to evaluate the barrier effect that a number of road infrastructures represent on the territory.**

Last May, the symposium "Roads and terrestrial fauna: from science to solutions" was held in Québec, coordinated by the MTQ, Québec's *ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune* and the *Université du Québec à Rimouski*. ACA stood out as the first to validate natural corridors on the ground. This project therefore addresses current concerns and will certainly instigate change.

Appalachian Corridor wishes to thank its main financial partner for this project, the *Fonds pour le développement régional des ressources naturelles du territoire de la Montérégie Est* as well as the volunteers who participated.

FOCUS ON A SPECIES AT RISK: Channel Darter

Channel Darter confirmed on our territory!

This small fish of about 1.5 to 2.5 inches, of "sand" or "olive" color, is aptly named Channel Darter as it rummages through sand banks covered in gravel and rocks to find food. It lives in clean rivers and small waterways, located along forested banks or agricultural fields. Channel Darters are very sensitive to pollution; their presence is a good indicator of water quality. Their populations have seen a dramatic decline over the last few decades, **unfortunately leading to the addition of the Channel Darter onto Canada's list of Species at Risk**, where it is considered Endangered (COSEWIC, 1993).

In Quebec, the Channel Darter is at the northern limit of its area of distribution. Populations are fragmented, disseminated in a few locations in the tributaries of the St-Lawrence River. Closer to us, in the Yamaska River watershed, the last confirmed captures of Channel Darters dated back from 1969 and 1971. This is why Appalachian Corridor, along with **Québec's *ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la faune* (MRNF)**, carried out new surveys of the species. The aims were to validate its pres-



Channel Darter

ence in our rivers, to improve our knowledge of its habitat and distribution, and to be better equipped to ensure its protection.

Channel Darters surveys, as well as the characterisation of their habitats took place at 51 monitoring stations in

the upper section of the Yamaska River watershed. This watershed faces numerous threats, the main ones being urban sprawl and the intensification of agriculture, especially within the St-Lawrence Lowlands ecoregion. Following fish identification carried out in a laboratory, the presence of the species was confirmed at two of the surveyed sites. Indeed, the Channel Darter was found in Bromont and Farnham (rivers Yamaska and Yamaska Sud-Est). With a clearer concept of what the potential habitats of the species may be, it will be easier to target specific measures to enhance its chances of survival. **Expanding our knowledge of the Channel Darter's habitats will also help target properties on which conservation initiatives can be carried out and thus protect aquatic and terrestrial species altogether.**

GENEROSITY THAT GOES BEYOND by Gary Richards and ACA

Luise Brousseau, who passed away on May 9 at the age of 97, was a good friend of humanity and nature. During the, 60s, 70s and 80s, she welcomed inner city kids from Montreal to her lake for camping. Many spoke glowingly of their experiences at Lake Brousseau at her funeral service.

As the years went by Mrs. Brousseau became increasingly concerned with nature and landscape degradation in general. She kindly donated a piece of land and stream to ACNSS in 2009 to help the association with its first dominant fund, to which she also added a conservation servitude of her own. The Brousseau family went a step further and asked that in lieu of

flowers, anyone wishing to make donations should consider making them to ACNSS, the South Stukely conservation association.

Mrs Brousseau's legacy, a rich and healthy land which is forever protected, is a gift for her family, community, and region and even goes beyond as nature is for all to treasure.



Mrs Luise Brousseau



CALENDAR (Cont'd from page 2)

23 oct. 2011 APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Open house in the *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* (Singer Sector): Free guided nature walks
For more information: (450) 242-1125

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organization 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.apcor.ca

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