



Appalachian Corridor Appalachiien

ACA

Appalachian Corridor News

Summer 2009

Appalachian Corridor (ACA)
277, Knowlton Road
Lac-Brome (Quebec) J0E 1V0
(450) 242-1125 • info@apcor.ca
www.apcor.ca

ISSN 1708-1645 • Legal deposit :
Library & Archives Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

A transborder conservation strategy

Appalachian Corridor (ACA) is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is the protection of the natural areas of the Appalachians.

Through the implementation of a transborder conservation strategy, Appalachian Corridor provides local communities with the means to maintain and restore a way of life that respects the ecology of the region in a perspective of sustainable development. Appalachian Corridor offers technical assistance, advice and expertise to conservation organizations and other contributors who share its vision. In addition, ACA organizes various conservation awareness activities for landowners, conservation groups and the general public.

IMPORTANT NOTICE – WE ARE REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PAPER COPIES!

For both environmental and economic reasons, the number of printed copies of future issues of *Appalachian Corridor News* will be reduced. It will no longer be mailed to the following places: apartment buildings, Orford township, the village cores of Knowlton, Sutton and Eastman. You may still continue to read our electronic version by letting us know your address. Please contact: info@apcor.ca.

SPECIAL SECTION: RÉSERVE NATURELLE DES MONTAGNES-VERTES!

Inauguration of the project



RÉSERVE NATURELLE
**MONTAGNES
VERTES**

On June 15, 2009, in an atmosphere of eager anticipation, Appalachian Corridor (ACA) inaugurated the réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes, on which the team has been working

hard for the last two years. A press conference was held, in the presence of Pierre Paradis, provincial MNA for Brome-Missisquoi, followed by a hike on the new reserve trails. The event drew some sixty people, and produced excellent media coverage as well as many favourable comments. Our thanks to all who took part and who helped make this a success!



© M. Roy, ACA

Pierre Paradis, Marie-José Auclair (ACA),
Mélanie Lelièvre (ACA), Nathalie Zinger (NCC),
Agathe Simard (FHQE).

The reserve, situated in the Sutton Mountain range, is now accessible by a network of some 100 kilometres of trails. In the Singer sector, in Mansonville, 15 km of new, free trails, about 90% of which are on old logging roads, have been developed. The *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, which belongs to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), is one of the last wild, unfragmented areas in southern Quebec. It provides habitat for several hundred plant and animal species, some of which are considered to be at risk.

We invite you to discover this natural heritage treasure! You can reach it from Mansonville and Sutton. Maps of the trails are available in the tourism offices of these municipalities and at the Appalachian Corridor's office in Knowlton. You can also download them on the reserve's website: www.rnmv.ca.

Why open to all an area that has been protected?

One reason is that **visitors will help with management of the reserve**. Appalachian Corridor has come up with a management strategy for the area that respects the conservation objectives and involves the community. Because they will have the right to go on the protected area for low-impact activities, local communities will be more inclined to support and take ownership of the project. ACA hopes that citizens will come to feel that this is their project and will volunteer, maintain trails, etc, and that nature lovers will provide monitoring and oversight



© C. Rioux, ACA

when they use the trails. There are already several volunteer patrollers who are doing excellent work for Appalachian Corridor, but the territory is huge, extending over more than 50 km² of private land! We are therefore counting on your support: make people aware of the importance of respecting the regulations on the reserve and speak up about any behaviour that is not in line with its protected status.



© C. Rioux, ACA

The other reason is that Appalachian Corridor has seen in this project a great opportunity to **generate social and economic spinoffs in the region**. The municipalities of Potton and Sutton and representatives of various local groups have proudly offered their support for the project, which will certainly benefit local eco-tourism. Let us hope that the *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* becomes a point of reference in the region and that other eco-tourism projects join this exciting project!

Can we reconcile “access” and “conservation”?

It is possible with the support of all citizens. We are counting on you to respect the provisions regarding banned land uses and the ecological integrity of the site. Nothing may be picked or gathered; you must remain on the trails at all times and bring out your garbage with you. In three short words: leave no trace!



Motorized vehicles and bicycles are banned throughout the area, and so are dogs, even leashed. You are asked to pay particular attention in the Round Top sector because it is habitat to the Bicknell's Thrush, a species of Special Concern in Canada. This small bird seeks the highest zones in the mountains for its habitat and relies on peace and quiet to raise its young. In the Sutton Mountains there are only about ten individuals of this species!

For more information, visit www.rnmv.ca or Appalachian Corridor's website, seeing as we are project managers: www.apcor.ca. Thanks to all our collaborators, conservation groups, donors, patrollers, volunteers and private and public partners, especially the *Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement* (FHQE), our main donor towards this project, all of which have contributed to this major achievement!

ERRATUM

In the last issue of *Appalachian Corridor News*, in the article entitled “Nature protected for future generations”, we mistakenly wrote the name “Carole” and not “Nicole” Serjeantson. Carole and John Serjeantson generously donated 10 acres of land in East Bolton to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Our sincere apologies to Mrs. Serjeantson.

CALENDAR

The Potton Multi-cultural Festival, August 7th (evening) and 8th, 2009, at Manson Square, Mansonville – On August 8th, ACA will be present and have an information booth about the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes. For more information, visit Potton Township's website: <http://www.potton.ca/main.cfm>.

Benefit concerts, Saturdays, August 8th and September 12th, 2009, 5 pm, Anglican Church, Frelighsburg. \$20/concert – All profits will go to the Pinnacle Mountain Land Trust. Come in large numbers, and please invite others to attend. For more information or for online ticket purchase, visit: <http://www.concerts-frelighsburg.com/>.

NATURE PROTECTED FOR EVER

Once again, these last few months have been very fruitful in terms of conservation projects on the territory of the Appalachian Corridor. THANKS to the landowners and generous donors who have helped to preserve these natural treasures! Here are three of these projects.



© C. Daguét, ACA
Stansje Plantenga

The 3rd donation for Stansje Plantenga!

Ms Stansje Plantenga has made another land donation to the Ruiter Valley Land Trust (RVLT)! Serving as both co-founder and President of the RVLT, this true conservation pioneer of privately held land has now made her 3rd donation to the organization!

This time, 12 hectares will be protected in perpetuity on the eastern side of the Sutton Mountain range, in the Ruiter Brook watershed.

Stansje made a commitment to give this property to the Land Trust, several years ago. "With the development of the new trail network that links our village (Mansonville) to

the *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, it appeared to be the perfect timing" she explained. "One of these trails will run across an area of the property that is not ecologically sensitive. This is an ideal scenario for me as both nature and my community will benefit."

The biologists of Appalachian Corridor have observed a rich biodiversity on this property. Three plant species at risk and one listed animal species were found; the Butternut (Endangered in Canada), Large-flowered Bellwort, Canadian or Common Maidenhair (both Vulnerable in Quebec) and the Northern Dusky Salamander (likely to be designated Vulnerable or Threatened in Quebec). This small amphibian, which is sensitive to stream desiccation, is very vulnerable to the opening of the forest canopy. Fortunately, the many small streams found on Stansje's property will now be protected in perpetuity, thus ensuring the survival of the salamander as well as that of this ideal habitat.

An idealistic...and practical motivation

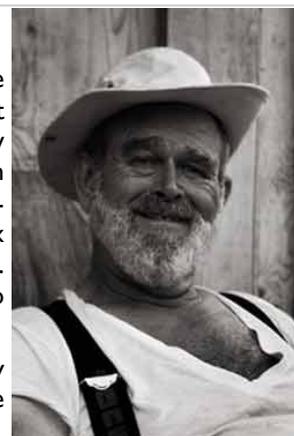
Last March, the Pinnacle Mountain Land Trust received from Mr. August Wintels a conservation servitude of some 33.7 acres, located at the base of the mountain.

This parcel of land is part of Mr. Wintel's family history, dating back to the 1950s. Several relatives have lived on this property in the past, or come back to renew old family ties and appreciate the natural setting. Last July, Mr. Wintels transferred this land to his son, Werner Wintels and his wife, Lisa Kruger who now call it their permanent home. Both enthusiastically supported August in signing on to a conservation servitude.

"Our motivation was both idealistic and financial" the three of them recently explained. The servitude protects the most sensitive parts of the property, which features several wetlands and watercourses, which are natural habitats for salamanders, including the Northern Dusky Salamander. The property also includes century-old sugar maples and a bird of prey nest.

"The servitude also helps financially." The transfer of the property title from August Wintels to his son and daughter-in-law leaves August with a substantial capital gain and a hefty hike in income tax. The servitude reduces his capital gain and offers tax credits that reduce his remaining taxes. "The tax benefits helped convince us to do it", commented the owners.

Mrs. Kruger and Mr. Wintels are very happy with this decision. "This land is more ecologically sensitive than we first realized. We all feel very privileged to be the custodians of this land. In addition, August is proud to have left this heritage, not only to his family, but also to the ecology of the area."



August Wintels

A piece furthermore in the puzzle

In July of this year, Lydia Gagnon, Charles Weldon, Brian Herman and Steven Padner signed a conservation servitude on their 38-hectare property in favour of Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA), working in close collaboration with Appalachian Corridor and using financing help from Quebec's MDDEP* as part of its *Partenaires pour la Nature* program. This land is located at the base of Mount Singer.

These owners, all members of MECA, acquired the property in 2006. The primary goal of the purchase? Conserving the land! "We had been coveting it for at least two years prior to purchase because of its strategic location", they explained.

In fact, the property is surrounded by other lands protected by Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC). "We wanted to add another piece to this enormous puzzle and are proud to have contributed in some way to the greater Green Mountains conservation plan. It is even more gratifying because of the fact that this land is zoned "White" and thereby susceptible to a potential future development threat."



Photo : US Fish and Wildlife Service

This vast protected land surface, combined with existing NCC holdings, is especially profitable to wide-ranging mammals such as Moose and Black Bear.

The presence of several species at risk, including the Northern Dusky Salamander, and the unfragmented nature of the forest add to the high ecological value of this land. It is also important to note the presence of the Butternut, which is in Endangered in Canada. This tree is seriously threatened across North America by an invasive disease known as *Butternut Canker*. This canker, caused by a mushroom, present in Quebec since 1990, has already killed some 80% of all Butternuts in Ontario.

The former landowner, Mr. Mario Blais, was also aware of the importance of protecting this land. "We would like to sincerely thank him for his spirit of generosity in transferring the property to us at a reasonable price for conservation purposes."

The wish now expressed by the landowners for the future: "that people realize just how gratifying it is when someone makes a permanent heritage gift that meets one's values at the same time."

PORTRAIT OF A SPECIES IN PERIL

You have seen a Barn Owl!? Let us know!

The Barn Owl is an average size owl species – measuring 33 to 53 cm in length – designated as Endangered in Canada. It is also very rare in Quebec, because the province is situated at the extreme north of its area of occurrence. While it has not been confirmed that the Barn Owl can be found anywhere on Appalachian Corridor territory, a recent sighting showed it to be in close proximity.

Discreet and nocturnal by nature, this bird of prey usually seeks out its habitat in abandoned older structures (barns, silos, church steeples, etc.) or sometimes natural cavities, which can be found in tree trunks or walls, to raise its young.

It can be seen flying silently at low altitudes over agricultural land in search of small rodents. It is distinguished by its large, round tuftless head and its heart-shaped white face. Its body is mostly golden brown, with black markings on its back and the back of its head. Its wings and stomach are whitish.

The decline of this species is mainly due to the disappearance of its preferred habitats and those of its prey. Many types of pesticides and chemical products can also kill it or cause it reproductive problems. Unfortunately, these reasons for its decline mean that many adults never get beyond the age of two.

As part of its tracking program for species at risk, the *Regroupement QuébecOiseaux*, in collaboration with the *Club des ornithologues de Brome-Missisquoi*, invites you to report any sightings of the Barn Owl. To call in about any observations, please contact the organization at: 1-888-OISEAUX (647-3289) or send an email to: info@quebecoiseaux.org.



© Francis Bossé/www.exonet.qc.ca

Many thanks to Gary and Christina Richards for their precious help with the translation of this newsletter!

* ACA benefits from the financial support of the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk of the Canadian Government, the ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP), the Fondation de la faune du Québec, the Programme de mise en valeur des ressources du milieu forestier (Volet II) of the ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, the Agence forestière de la Montérégie, the Table des MRC de l'Estrie, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the EJLB Foundation and an other private foundation.