



NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER

Three new properties protected, adding more than 365 ha to our precious heritage!

Since last spring, Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) has protected over 365 additional hectares in the region. This means that over 9,100 hectares of natural habitats are now protected in perpetuity on private land on Appalachian Corridor territory!

In June 2010, Mrs Annegret Uthhoff and her husband Hans donated a 47-hectare forest located in East-Bolton to NCC. As nature lovers, the couple acquired several properties over the last decades in order to protect the tranquillity of the area and prevent further development thrusts, acting in their way as nature guardians. Following a presentation on nature conservation given in their neighbourhood by Ms Terri Monahan, Mrs and Mr Uthhoff decided to take their commitment one step further. "Our love of nature and our love for our children and grandchildren led us to donate part of our property" explains Mrs Uthhoff.



The Four-toed Salamander is susceptible to be designated Threatened or Vulnerable in Quebec.

As a testimony to the wealth of this natural environment, the presence of several species at risk was confirmed on the property. These include, among others, the Four-toed Salamander, the Northern Dusky Salamander and

the Pickerel Frog, as well as three fern species: Clinton's Woodfern, Ostrich Fern and Maidenhair Fern.

NCC also acquired two other properties, which are now protected in perpetuity. The first, covering 10.5 hectares, is situated on Mount Sugar Loaf. "Although smaller, this property is strategically located from the point of view of conservation because it strengthens the protection of the territory in this sector. Indeed,

253 hectares were already protected, but in two blocks. This new purchase creates a connection between these two protected areas", explains Nathalie Zinger, vice-president of NCC Quebec Region.

Finally, the last acquisition project completed by NCC is a 308-hectare property located in Glen Sutton. This acquisition coincides with the conservation strategy adopted by NCC and Appalachian Corridor. Situated along the US-Canada border, this vast forested area is adjacent to other territories already protected on both sides of the border. Therefore, more than 650 hectares are protected on the Canadian side and are directly connected with a vast network of protected land spreading over several thousand hectares on the American side. This property is also home to several species at risk including Maidenhair Fern, Wild Leek, Wild Ginger, Spring Salamander and Northern Dusky Salamander, as well as several bird species featured on the Canadian Wildlife Service's Priority List.

Major partners

The acquisition of this border property was made possible thanks to the commitment of numerous American partners such as The Nature Conservancy, the Sweet Water Trust, The Open Space Institute and the Partridge Foundation. Jeremy Guth, spokesperson for the latter, explains that "through support of the Transborder Fund, the Partridge Foundation hopes to inspire conservation efforts in the U.S. and Canada. The Trustees champion the simple but profoundly important truth, that if you do the right thing environmentally for Canada, you'll do the right thing environmentally for the United States because both countries are ecologically joined."

Finally, we thank the *Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs du Québec* (MDDEP), Environment Canada (as part of the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and the Natural Areas Conservation Program) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture project, all of which contributed significantly to the conservation projects presented above.

More than 9,100 hectares protected on private land on Appalachian Corridor territory !

With the latest acquisitions by Nature Conservancy Canada (see previous article), more than 9,100 hectares are now protected on the territory of Appalachian Corridor. " These results are extraordinary if we consider that less than 10 years ago, only 400 hectares of private land were protected! ", says Marie-José Auclair, president of Appalachian Corridor, who underlines the exceptional contribution of all partners involved, from private owners to local conservation groups, national conservation charities such as NCC and a whole network of financial partners.

These 9,100 ha, added to the area already protected on public land, represents 5% of the whole territory of Appalachian Corridor. Compared with the 12% objective set by the provincial government, we still have a long way to go! The main challenge in

protecting the last wild territories in Southern Quebec, and particularly in the Eastern Townships located within 100 km of the large urban centres, lies in the increasing pressures of development because there is still such a wealth of wildlife and such a widespread biodiversity in this region. However, the ecologist Louise Gratton, also Secretary and Scientific Consultant for Appalachian Corridor, remains optimistic: "While they used to work in isolation, conservation groups now collaborate with stakeholders outside the world of conservation, such as forest workers and municipalities. These, in turn, become more aware and are now more sensitive to conservation issues, particularly in the context of climate change. More than ever, we are working together to develop new conservation tools and models."

CALENDAR

11th September 2010 PENS, long distance hike (14 km) in Sutton/ Mount Echo, start at 8.30 a.m. at Altitude 520. Access fee + 7.00\$ per pers.

18th September 2010 PENS, 5peaks trail race of 7km, 12km or 21 km. www.5peaks.com

25th September 2010 ACA, Annual General Meeting.

25th and 26th September 2010 *Foire Écosphère* in Brome. www.projetecosphere.org

16th October 2010 PENS, long distance hike (17km) in Sutton/ Glen Sutton, start at 8.30 a.m. at Altitude 520. Access fee + 7.00\$ per pers.

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES (continued)

The new *Montagnes-Vertes* Passport !

A year (almost to the day!) after the official opening of the *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, the board members of Appalachian Corridor, the *Sentiers de l'Estrie* and the *Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton* (PENS) announced, on June 23rd 2010, the harmonization of access rights to their network of trails. With the support of *Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est*, they developed two new tools: a common pricing and the *Montagnes-Vertes* Passport.

For hiking fanatics, the *Montagnes-Vertes* Passport, sold at the annual price of \$90, gives year round access to the 270 km of forest trails marked and maintained by volunteers. Passport holders automatically become members of the three organizations and benefit from the same advantages as regular members, including discounts at a number of stores and access to various activities and guided hikes.

The common pricing enables hikers to walk any trail from the following networks for a day: the Singer sector (Potton) of the *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, the *Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton* and the *Sentiers de l'Estrie*. Hikers are invited to buy their daily ticket at an access point and can then circulate on all three networks without limitation!

Accessibility to the trails is a priority for Sutton and the partnership has been extended to include *Au diable vert*, a mountain resort, and *Arbre Sutton*, both of which give access to the main networks. The *Auberge des Appalaches* and the Sutton ski resort were pioneers, among tourist resorts, in encouraging access to the trails leading to Mount Sutton.

The partnership between trail network managers and private businesses offers an interesting list of long and short hikes in the region, giving visitors more than 270 km of trails to choose from and which can be reached via 37 different access points.

More than a simple commercial association, this partnership also shares the same philosophy and the same hiker ethics. Indeed, hiking and operating a trail network are both conditional to the respect and protection of the natural environment unique to this region.



Marie-José Auclair, Jean Compagna and Marie-Germaine Guiomar President of, respectively, Appalachian Corridor, Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton (PENS) and Sentiers de l'Estrie, at the launch of the *Montagnes-Vertes* passport on June 23rd in

To purchase a day pass or a *Montagnes-Vertes* Passport, buy online on the following websites or make a purchase at their offices:

- *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* (www.rnmv.ca)
- *Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton* (www.parc Sutton.com)
- *Sentiers de l'Estrie* (www.lessentiersdelestrie.qc.ca).

Au Diable Vert (www.audiablevert.com), *Arbre Sutton* (www.arbresutton.com) and the *Auberge des Appalaches* (www.auberge-appalaches.com) also sell the day pass.

For more information, or to purchase a day pass or passport, you can also visit participating tourist offices in the region including those in Granby, Sutton, Potton, Cowansville, Dunham, Bromont, Memphrémagog, Dudswell, Val-Saint-François, Lambton and the *Maison du Tourisme* of the Eastern Townships.

"Growing Greener" or how to plan a win-win development

On March 25th 2010, a conference on conservation and residential development was held in Eastman, sponsored by *Conservation des Vallons de la Serpentine*. Charles Weldon, founding member and former president of the Mount Echo Conservation Association, and elected representative in the municipality of Sutton, explained the main principles of the movement known as "Growing Greener".

The objective of this approach is two-fold: minimize the impact of real estate development on the environment while facilitating the user-friendly approach.

Compared with the traditional approach which lays out roads and residential lots in a very Cartesian way, the Growing Greener approach delineates residential lots and roads according to the natural environment. For example, development on steep slopes should be avoided and the size of developed lots should be reduced. The remaining area should be left intact and even become a park for the residents to together share and enjoy these protected habi-



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tats. In doing so, this concept tries to limit the spread of development, concentrating it on a smaller, denser area to ensure the protection of sensitive elements of the surrounding natural environment. The layout of building lots and the location of houses will assure maximum intimacy for families, preserving, for example, strips of trees between lots. This type of development is also designed to minimize the length of roads and associated maintenance costs for both the municipalities and the taxpayers. It is also planned to establish bicycle paths and hiking trails to facilitate active transport.

Obviously, this type of development requires a number of changes to municipal bylaws, but these adjustments are not so insurmountable.

This type of initiative urges us to rethink the way we envision our cities. The best way to protect our natural ecosystems, except for the total absence of development, is to improve the development planning of our cities and villages combining user-friendliness with sustainable planning of the built heritage among natural spaces.

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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