

Appalachian Corridor News

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Appalachian Corridor

Winter 2015

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Terri Monahan, 1952-2014

Death of a Great Champion for Conservation

Terri Monahan, co-founder of Appalachian Corridor, died on December 22nd, 2014, of natural causes. She leaves a sense of acute loss at Appalachian Corridor and in our hearts.

The conservation community has lost a great champion. Terri worked in the field of conservation for more than 20 years; she began as a Director then President of the Ruiter Valley Land Trust, was co-founder of Friends of the Watershed in the fight for the protection of Domtar lands in the Sutton Mountain Range, she worked as a Conservation Consultant for Nature Conservancy Canada and was a member of the Mont Echo Conservation Association's (MECA) Board of Directors. She was renowned as a remarkable and efficient negotiator for conservation projects throughout the Appalachian Corridor territory in south-eastern Quebec.

Terri had an insatiable appetite for work, an uncommon determination and a fierce passion for nature. Without her we would have never achieved the volume of conservation gains in the Quebec Green Mountains range.

Following her wishes, her family and close friends have announced that a memorial ceremony will be held outdoors in the spring, at a site that Terri held close to her heart.



Gala des Pris de l'excellence en environnement 2004
(l to r) : Louise Gratton, Terri and Thomas Mulcair, former Quebec Environment Minister

NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER

Appalachian Corridor closely collaborates with landowners and partners to conclude conservation projects. We thank landowners for their precious involvement in the creation of new protected areas.

Zuyderland Is Now a Reality!



Maaïke Zuyderhoff

"It is beyond words" exclaimed Maaïke Zuyderhoff when asked how she felt about the designation of her land as a Nature Reserve, now protected in perpetuity. "It was a long labour that finally ended in success, thanks to the complicity and tenacity of several players. This project required patience and a long-term vision" she continued. The odyssey towards protecting the more than 18 hectares of natural habitats started in November 2008. Now, six years later, her goal has been accomplished and Appalachian Corridor is proud to have supported her every step of the way in this wonderful endeavour.

Aptly named Zuyderland, the Nature Reserve is located within the Northern Green Mountains natural region, in Sutton, Quebec. The ecological value of this mostly wooded property is considered very high.

Home to Lungless Salamanders, a cool and shaded stream runs through the Zuyderland's mature forests and ultimately spills into the Alderbrooke Marsh. Wetlands are ideal habitats for amphibians, many species of mammals and birds in addition to specially-adapted flora. Several species listed as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec can be found on the Zuyderland Reserve, including Maidenhair Fern, Wild Leek, Pickerel Frog, Northern Dusky Salamander and more. Biologists confirmed the presence of Black Bear, while numerous species of birds are known to use the property's rich forests or adjacent wetland habitats.

Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director at Appalachian Corridor, commented "Our relationship with Ms Zuyderhoff began in the early days of Appalachian Corridor in 2002. We kept in touch over the years owing to the ecological value of this parcel of land and the landowner's desire to protect the property. When the right moment arrived to pursue the conservation project, we were ready and able to accompany Ms Zuyderhoff through the process. It pays off to be patient sometimes! Each conservation project advances at its own rhythm. It was our team's great pleasure to assist Ms Zuyderhoff with her project and to witness the protection in perpetuity of this ecological gem."

The Alton E. Peck Nature Reserve: 11.3 ha protected for generations to come!

Nearly four years after the project was launched, the Alton E. Peck Nature Reserve was published in the Quebec Official Gazette on September 3rd, 2014. "It was long and laborious given that there were 11 property owners that wanted to choose something other than a commercial sale of the land" explained Guy Lizotte, conservation consultant with Appalachian Corridor. "They called upon Appalachian Corridor to accompany them in their quest for a perpetual protection of the property".

Original owner Alton Edward Peck, who died in 1969, bequeathed the 11.3 ha of land to his wife Mabel G. Frost, who quickly found herself surrounded by real-estate promoters. She turned to the summer home owners on her land and formed an organization that would protect the property for the generations to come. The Alton E. Peck Park Inc. Group is now comprised of the 2nd generation of shareholders, the majority being the children of the original home owners. "We were seeing lots of development and our fear that the next generation may not share our values was our impetus to protect the land" said Andrew Tosh, President of Alton E. Peck Park Inc. "We are pleased with the outcome and we wouldn't have been able to make it happen without Appalachian Corridor".

Located in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton, the Alton E. Peck Nature Reserve is almost entirely forested. The presence of Peck Road that cuts across the property could have facilitated the building of new homes.

The property boasts several small wetlands and a stream that runs through it and flows into the Petit-Brompton Lake. The Snapping Turtle, a species of Special Concern in Canada, has even been observed not far from the lake. The protection of the Alton E. Peck nature reserve now safeguards parts of this reptile's home range.

In addition, the reserve is part of a natural corridor identified by Appalachian Corridor as a connection between two large forest blocks. The successful conclusion of this conservation project could inspire other landowners in this key area, thus contributing to maintain populations of species representative of the region.



Guy Lizotte and Andrew Tosh

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR WISHES YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015!

NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER (cont'd)

Small Gesture Leads to Greater Protection

A new nature reserve was signed into being on October 18th 2014: The Tyre-Macfarlane Nature Reserve. “To my mother, Jean Tyre, nature and wildlife were very important. I know that she would be honoured to try, in some small way, to protect endangered species in a rapidly changing world”, explained owner Bruce MacFarlane.

His goodwill gesture will be instrumental in safeguarding several species, despite the modest area (12 ha) of the protected land. This property, located in Potton, near South-Bolton, is particularly critical for a flagship species: the Wood Turtle. Indeed, the shores of the Missisquoi-Nord River at this juncture constitute a key sector for the Wood Turtle. This is why the Nature Reserve targeted specific protection measures of the riparian and terrestrial habitats used by this species. Mr. Macfarlane is also committed to raising his mowing blades to at least 10 cm (4 inches) above ground when he cuts hay on his adjacent non-protected lands. This height of the blades should leave any Wood Turtle present in the fields unhurt. Moreover, the Tyre-Macfarlane family has always resisted mowing their fields before July 15th each year to give a chance to nesting birds such as the Bobolink to raise their young in peace.

This project was born following a community meeting in Potton more than three years ago. Appalachian Corridor signed a conservation lease with Mr. MacFarlane in April 2013, which led to a commitment to sign a nature reserve agreement.



Bruce Macfarlane and Mélanie Lelièvre



Wood Turtle



Riparian habitat

Transactions on 193 ha of Important Forest Land by Massawippi Conservation Trust



In July 2014, Massawippi Conservation Trust acquired a property and became co-landowner of a second one which, together, adds up to 193 ha of land now in its hands as it continues to work to protect the area around Lake Massawippi. “These two properties represent a significant step forward for the Trust,” says Margot Heyerhoff, Chair of Massawippi Foundation. “They show that a community-based effort working closely with land-owners can indeed protect the natural beauty and ecological diversity of a landscape that we all treasure.”

The larger of these properties, overlooking the lake, comes as a very generous donation from Mr. George Wardman, who has given the Trust his 50% share in the ownership of a 340 ha property that has been in his family for three generations. Forests on this land are particularly rich, with the confirmed presence of several plant species at risk, and a number of shaded streams that are home to the Spring and Northern Dusky Salamanders. “I have always appreciated the natural beauty of Lake Massawippi,” says Mr. Wardman. “This donation to the Trust helps preserve that beauty for future generations and allows me to commemorate my grandfather and my father who acquired and preserved this land in its pristine state.”

The second property is a waterfront parcel of more than 23 ha that has been purchased from Administration, Consultation, Formation ACF Inc. This land, located in an environmentally sensitive area, as confirmed by Appalachian Corridor biologists, is a critical parcel within the 650 ha of forested properties on the western slope of Lake Massawippi. The land, zoned “white” and open to development, had already been subdivided into 22 residential lots with few restrictions on building size. The imminent development of this property was a spur for the Trust to work with the Massawippi Foundation and raise the money for its acquisition before any building could start. “I am very pleased to have concluded negotiations with representatives of the Trust,” says Mr. Pierre Comtois, President of ACF Inc. “Their commitment and their professionalism were impressive and our company is proud to be part of the story of preserving an extraordinarily beautiful stretch of land.”

Appalachian Corridor has been a critical support to the Trust; its scientific and technical expertise was instrumental in completing both these projects.



Wardman property

PROTECT NATURE’S ASSETS! Planned Giving

The basic definition of a planned gift is “...the culmination of a process of planning gifts, whether immediate or future, which reflects the desires and goals expressed by the donor and takes into account her or his personal context, family and tax situation.” (*The Canadian Association of Gift Planners*).



Planned giving provides concrete and lasting results. It allows charitable organizations (such as Appalachian Corridor!) to benefit from the long-term funding that they need in order to promote their mission and contribute to the quality of life within their respective communities. A planned gift could become an exemplary family practice and bring on cultural change filled with hope for the betterment of our society.

In principle, there are two types of planned gifts: immediate or deferred gifts. These include a charitable bequest, gifts of life insurance, real estate, listed securities, charitable annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and endowment trusts. Each type of gift offers different fiscal benefits.

A legal or financial advisor will act as the intermediary between a charitable organization and the donor in order to make sure that he or she benefits from the maximum fiscal advantages. This person works in fields such as accounting, law, insurance or financial planning. You can contact us for additional information; we can refer you to local professionals who will guide you through the process of planned giving.

HONOURING AN AFFILIATE MEMBER : Conservation Espace Nature Shefford (CENS)



Conservation Espace Nature Shefford (CENS), created in the summer of 2010, works towards ensuring the protection of biodiversity, flora, fauna and wetlands in the Canton de Shefford. CENS aims to protect the landscape, to acquire land for protection and to develop public access to the mountain and parks while maintaining its natural state. Moreover, the work of the organisation includes public outreach; raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting good practices for sustainability to eventually attract more landowners in their quest to protect natural areas.

An affiliate member since 2011, CENS received its first ecological donation a year later that would become a protected area: an 8,4 ha property close to Mont Shefford's summit. At that time the President of CENS, Yves Beaulieu, explained "Our goal is to go after several properties, using Sutton as our model, to create a string of protected areas that give access to the mountain. We want folks to be able to hike the trails, but within an ultra-wild environment. Our role is also to increase understanding of respect for nature and to remain on the marked trails so as to not trample everywhere".

Two years later, Appalachian Corridor and the Township of Shefford created the first nature reserve within a municipality and protected **145 ha** of Mont Shefford in perpetuity. It is on this land that CENS officially inaugurated the *Parc des Montagnards* trail last October 9th, in collaboration with the municipality of Canton de Shefford and with support from the Rural Pact program. Open all year, the trail is accessible for recreational snowshoeing during the winter. Dogs, however, are not permitted at any time.

The efforts of CENS have contributed, among others, to the maintenance of current populations of the Northern Dusky Salamanders (a species susceptible to being designed threatened or vulnerable in Quebec) and the Purple Salamander (threatened species in Canada and vulnerable in Québec). Mont Shefford is one of southern Quebec's Montereigians, with a large biodiversity and where development pressure is strong.



WE WERE THERE!

A Green Move in Bromont: information session with special guests Steven Guilbeault and François Tanguay

Last April, conservation organizations Protégeons Bromont and Appalachian Corridor joined together to present an information conference to the general public of Mount Brome (Bromont, Brome Lake and Brigham) to introduce the mountain's ecological wealth, and the importance of investing in natural areas.

François Tanguay, who hosted the conference, is an internationally renowned environmental activist. He and Mr. Guilbeault co-authored the essay titled *Le Prochain Virage : Propulser le Québec vers un avenir équitable et durable* (*The Next Turn: Propelling Quebec Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Future*).

Following his talk, Mr. Guilbeault voiced his hope that people would retain three things from the essay: "Firstly, that climate change is a very important problem. Secondly, that many people, organizations and nations are currently putting their shoulders to the wheel around the world to improve things. Thirdly, that people become conscious of the critical role they have to play in finding the solutions to problems, especially with regard to their consumption habits that need to be revised."

Potton Day Camp - July 2014

Biologists from Appalachian Corridor visited the Potton Day Camp last July 18th with activities that aimed to increase awareness of biodiversity (mammals, birds, reptiles, flora) and of the protection of at-risk species (such as the Wood Turtle and Monarch butterfly). An educational hike was organized in the André-Gagnon park followed by a team quiz on the energy required by different species in order to feed themselves, reproduce, hunt prey or flee predators.

SEVE Conferences - May and October 2014

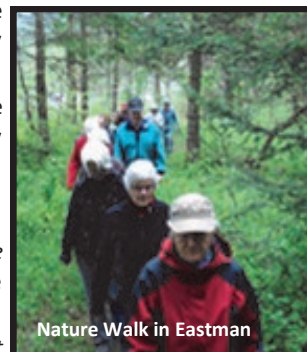
Interpretative Walk on the Missisquoi Nord Trails: Demystifying natural corridors – A family activity organized by the municipality of Eastman, in collaboration with Appalachian Corridor. Biologists Caroline Daguet and Cynthia Patry accompanied the participants in the discovery of the abundant springtime fauna and flora around the Missisquoi-Nord River.

The Missisquoi-Nord Valley: an ecological jewel in the heart of the Appalachian Corridor – Executive Director Mélanie Lelièvre presented information touching on Wood Turtles in addition to many other species that can be found on the territory and how to play an active role in the safeguarding of rare and threatened species.

Project Ecosphere : Environmental and Green Living Festival – September 2014

During our annual participation at the West-Brome festival, we held a raffle for two family passports for the *Réserve Naturelle Montagnes-Vertes* (RNMV). Our winners were: Lesley Hyndman and Sophie Bruneau. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who took the time to stop by our kiosk!

The family passport gives access to all trails within the RNMV, as well as the trails of our partners: *the Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton* and the *Sentiers de l'Estrée*. For more information: www.rnmv.ca



The Northeastern Transportation and Wildlife Conference, Burlington VT - October 2014

It was an opportunity to learn from our American cousins' experiences, notably in regard to possible collaborations with different governmental and non-governmental bodies for the development and protection of wildlife corridors within our territory of action.

FOCUS ON A SPECIES AT RISK: The Least Bittern

The Least Bittern is the smallest member of the Heron family in North America. Measuring less than 1 ft, it is not much bigger than an American Robin. The Least Bittern hunches over for rest and, in alert posture, the bird will stand still with its beak pointed upwards. Its plumage is brown and buff coloured, and its white underbelly bears large buff-coloured stripes. This little heron is rarely visible in its thick, dense marshland habitat, and is usually identified by its song and cries.

The Least Bittern breeds strictly in marshes surrounded by open water, for it needs clear water to hunt its prey (fish, small invertebrates, frogs, etc.). Most breeding grounds in Canada are dominated by cattails and, in our region, this bird has been recorded in Magog (Cherry River marsh), Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley (Katevale marsh), Sherbrooke (Réal D. Carboneau marsh) and in several other marshes including in Sutton, Bromont and around Lake Waterloo.

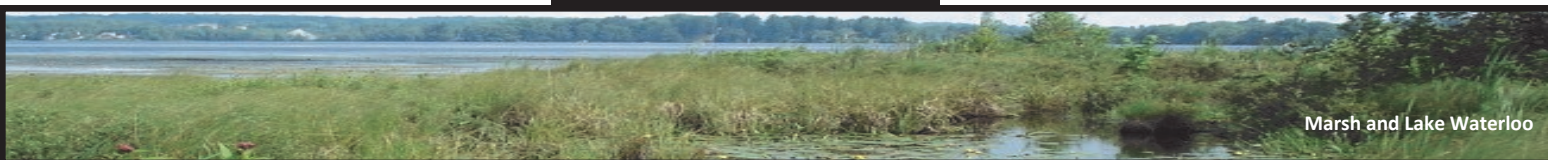


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Habitat loss and degradation is by far the greatest threat to the species. Historically, habitat loss consisted of wholesale destruction of marshes, mainly for agriculture. Although wetlands continued to experience severe losses from the 1950s to the 1990s, their destruction may now be slowing down, thanks to recent protection initiatives.

The Least Bittern is protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The species is also protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, which prohibits harming birds, their nests and eggs. In Quebec, the species is protected under the Threatened or Vulnerable Species Act.

You can help the Least Bittern by contributing to the protection of wetlands, since these fragile habitats are essential to a plethora of wild species and human beings alike. Contact Appalachian Corridor or your local conservation group to find out more.



NEWS IN BRIEF

CONSCIENTIA 2014 AWARDS - Louise Gratton : First recipient to receive the Tribute Award

Louise Gratton, co-founder and member of the board of directors at Appalachian Corridor, is the first recipient in Montérégie to receive a *Conscientia* Tribute Award. This prize was awarded by the Regional Conference of Elected Officials (CRE) at the 3rd edition of the Conscientia Awards – Excellence in Environmental and Sustainable Development in Montérégie, held on November 27th with Honorary President, Charles Tisseyre.

A renowned ecologist and botanist, this award underscores Louise Gratton’s personal contribution and her dogged commitment to the protection of the environment and natural areas in Montérégie for more than 35 years. During the course of her career, she has developed a solid expertise in the protection, planning and restoration of natural areas. Armed with a contagious passion, she succeeded in transferring scientific principles of conservation and her deep knowledge of natural areas in Quebec into concrete actions. Whether through her position as a consultant or as a volunteer, her influence on the conservation of natural habitats and species has been more than significant: projects, technical reports, conferences, workshops, scientific popularization and development of practical tools. She has equally contributed to the creation of several organizations in Montérégie and sits on many boards and committees.

Appalachian Corridor was among the finalists in the Conservation and Promotion of Natural Areas Award. The prize was awarded to Nature-Action for their Master Plan for the management of natural areas. Congratulations!

About the *Conscientia* awards - The *Conscientia* awards, inaugurated in 2005 by the CRE Montérégie, aims to highlight the remarkable contributions of individuals and organizations to environmental protection and/or the promotion of sustainable development in Montérégie. Since its creation more than 23 organisations have received a *Conscientia* award for the excellence of their projects and achievements.

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR WELCOMES RENAISSANCE LAC BROME !

Appalachian Corridor is pleased to announce the nomination of a new conservation group to its network of affiliate members: Renaissance Brome Lake (RBL). The organization recently added a conservation component to its actions. RBL is known for its vocation to the protection and the restoration of Brome Lake and its watershed. This latest addition brings the number of members to sixteen, who work with Appalachian Corridor to implement a conservation strategy within an important segment of the Appalachians. RLB, created in 2001, is supported by more than 850 members.



CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Master Plan for the *Montagnes-Vertes* Nature Reserve: 14 of 32 Actions Mandated to Appalachian Corridor

In August 2014, Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) presented the 2014-2019 Master Plan for the *Montagnes-Vertes* Nature Reserve. Proud partner of NCC, Appalachian Corridor manages this natural gem spreading over almost 70 km² since NCC purchased it in 2004. Appalachian Corridor will play a key role in the development of the Master Plan by leading the committee formed for its implementation.

“We will continue our work in close collaboration with our community, partners and users. This partnership has not only allowed us to implement the development project for the Nature Reserve, but also to rally the communities around this territory, which is one of the last vast area of natural forest in southern Quebec” explained Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director of the organization.

“This vast area has huge potential and could become an even bigger guiding light in the development of regional eco-tourism. Harmonising the conservation of the natural heritage with public accessibility is a big challenge that Appalachian Corridor will continue to meet” said Marie-José Auclair, President of Appalachian Corridor. “To get there will require close-knit relationships between conservation, business and land-planning groups. That is precisely what we strive for in our interventions” concluded Ms. Auclair at the NCC press conference held last August 29th in Sutton to launch the *Montagnes-Vertes* Nature Reserve Master Plan.

Appalachian Corridor joins forces with the following partners to implement the actions laid out in the 2014-2019 *Montagnes-Vertes* Nature Reserve Master Plan: NCC, *Parc d’environnement naturel de Sutton* (PENS), *Sentiers de l’Estrie*, The Ruiter Valley Land Trust (RVLT), Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA) as well as Tourism Cantons-de-l’Est, Brome-Missisquoi Local Development Centre, Sutton Economic Development Corporation, the town of Sutton and Ski Sutton Inc.

Almost half (14 of the 32) actions listed in the plan have been mandated to Appalachian Corridor. These actions target the conservation, discovery and regional promotion of the Nature Reserve.

To access the Master Plan online, go to: www.nnmv.ca



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.

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