



## Celebrating 10 years of conservation: A nod to the past and looking ahead

Do you remember when you turned ten? What a transitional period! Ahead of you was a year in which were mingled confidence, curiosity, eagerness to take up challenges, and a finer understanding of the world, with its complex realities and attractive opportunities...



Marie-José Auclair, President, and  
Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director

Appalachian Corridor recently turned ten and can truly follow this example. During its first decade, the Appalachian Corridor team had many opportunities to demonstrate its expertise both in conservation science and in legal processes that accompany the protection of private land. We defined our organisation by putting forth collaboration as the basis of our actions. We developed numerous and inspiring partnerships with local, regional, national and international collaborators, all of which served the expression of our mission. Results are conclusive: in 2002, only 400 hectares of natural environments on private land were protected; in 2013, this figure has grown to more than 10,500 ha!

These results confirm the relevance and appropriateness of the mission envisioned ten years ago. Since then, a concern has been standing out: to reconcile ecosystem protection with the different uses we can make of the natural environment; the "bell jar" approach being only one element of conservation's wide range of methods.

In that spirit, Appalachian Corridor proudly contributed to the elaboration of a new conservation tool allowing commercial forestry activities. The success of this initiative and the completion of ambitious projects like the enhancement of the *réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* as well as the

protection of Wood Turtles in agricultural settings, confirm that it is possible to reach a balance between biodiversity protection and intelligent use of the resources available.

In this United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, we can rejoice for the gains made, but we should also keep in mind the challenges to come, since only 6.5% of the territory of action is protected; connectivity between great forested areas has not been secured; numerous species are still at risk; and the Eastern Townships remain a region that is sought-after by many.

**Finally, it is essential to highlight our collaborators' incredible contribution** over the past ten years: Affiliate Members and landowners, national and international partners, municipalities, funders, along with employees and volunteers. They are all crucial to the implementation of Appalachian Corridor's conservation strategy. **We take this opportunity to honour them.**

To all our collaborators, thank you very much for investing time and effort, each in your own way, to ensure the quality of our **region's natural area is maintained for future generations.**



### La RANdONnée Conservation moving forward

On October 14<sup>th</sup> 2012, a gathering of conservation organisations, municipalities and nature lovers saw 200 walkers stride through the magnificent forests of the Township of Potton in support of Appalachian Corridor and its partners. From the light mist shrouding fall colours along the trails of the Ruitter Valley Land Trust and Missisquoi Nord network, to the warm smiles and succulent dishes greeting hikers on arrival, the whole day was a success with a considerable 70,000\$ collected! Community support is highly critical in ensuring our conservation work continues.

Jacques Marcoux, Mayor of the Township of Potton, reckons this same community will reap the benefits of conservation actions as "the implication of organisations working towards the protection of natural areas brings positive outcomes for the local community and represents an invaluable help in preserving the bucolic landscapes of Potton".

Jérôme Dupras, bass player with *Les Cowboys fringants* and president of the namesake Foundation, joined walkers at La RANdONnée. He says "it is our duty to ensure that humans and nature cohabit as harmoniously as possible; year after year, the work achieved by Appalachian Corridor comes as a good reminder."

Our wholehearted thanks go to the walkers, volunteers, numerous donors, event sponsors, partners and Affiliate Members for their overwhelming generosity.



Don't miss the next edition of  
La RANdONnée  
on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013!

## NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER

### Love for the Townships runs in the family

Robin Denman always felt a special kinship for the Eastern Townships. The **Rexford family on his mother's side was closely associated with South-Bolton**, which was known as Rexford Corner until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. **Raised in Montreal, he spent every summer at his grandparents' in Knowlton and in the vicinity of Lake Memphremagog.** In the 1960s, then a husband and father of four, Mr. Denman bought a property in his beloved Townships. The family kept up with the tradition and spent most weekends in the country. Now living in Toronto, Mr. Denman and his wife seldom **travel and, since protecting the Townships' natural treasures is so close to their hearts, they decided to donate their property to *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine* (CVS).**

The 8-ha property features two streams as well as a number of wetlands. Located between two privately-owned protected areas, this land also includes hardwoods and mixed forest stands used by animals such as moose, a wide-ranging mammal. The vegetated edges of the old beaver pond on that land are home to interesting plants such as Humped Bladderwort, an aquatic perennial species with creeping or floating stems, a species at risk in Quebec owing to its rarity.

**Élise Lacroix, Board Member of CVS, continues to marvel at "the difference a small group of neighbours can make when they all join up to protect their**



environment and improve their quality of life and that of the whole community. The land donated by Mr. Denman reinforces this notion that we are stronger together; CVS, the donors, Appalachian Corridor and the **funding organisations support each other."**

This conservation project was made possible thanks to funding from the Government of Canada through the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and Open Space Conservancy, Inc., an affiliate of the Open Space Institute.

### Proud to "do their part"

**"In 2003, we bought a 24-ha property in East Bolton" say France Poisson and Michel Fontaine.** Soon after their acquisition, they were pleased to learn that Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) had protected a vast area **adjacent to their property.** **"We became increasingly aware of land protection issues through our contacts with organisations such as *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine*.** We noticed the impact of residential development on sensitive natural areas in the region and realised the urgency to act for their **protection".**

By giving 8 ha of their land to CVS in October 2012, Mrs Poisson and Mr Fontaine contributed directly to the protection of a sugarbush with shade-tolerant hardwoods stretching



Michel Fontaine, France Poisson and Françoise Bricault (CVS)

either side of the boundary with the NCC property. The donated land also includes a Red Maple stand with conifers where Canada Warbler, a songbird listed as Threatened in Canada, **was recorded by Appalachian Corridor's biologists.** Wetlands scattered throughout the property are used by a plethora of birds, amphibians and insects, while the streams flowing through this land are home to the Northern Dusky Salamander, a species susceptible to be designated as Threatened or Vulnerable in Quebec.

« Donating this land increases the acreage of protected habitats in the area, contributing to both plant and wildlife protection, and we are proud of it."

### A strategic move for connectivity



Northern Dusky Salamander

In the spring of 2012, CVS added 34 ha of protected land to their accomplishments. Located in East Bolton, this land is at the heart of the territory initially targeted for conservation by its **founders.** **"We were delighted by the completion of this project; it secures the conservation of an area dear to our hearts, thus protecting land adjacent to our very first dominant land!" declares Françoise Bricault, Secretary-Treasurer and founding member of CVS.**

Preserving this property was particularly critical owing to its location at the very heart of a priority conservation core identified by Appalachian Corridor. Indeed, this land sits within a large unfragmented forest block strategically situated between the Sutton Mountain range and Mount Orford. **"This protected land contributes directly to the connectivity of the region's large forest blocks" adds Mrs Bricault.**

Located near a hilltop, this land displays an interesting topography and features a number of rocky outcrops. It is entirely covered by a sugarbush with shade-tolerant hardwoods home to plant species designated Vulnerable in Quebec, including Maidenhair Fern, Ostrich Fern and Wild Ginger. **Appalachian Corridor's biologists also discovered the Northern Dusky Salamander in one of the streams flowing through the property.**

### A second section of "Marécage Millington" now protected!

In the last edition of our Newsletter, we highlighted the protection of a section of this fragile wetland. The fall of 2012 saw the addition of another 52ha of protected land in this same habitat with a conservation servitude towards CVS.

The "Marécage Millington" located in the municipality of Austin mostly consists of a peatbog. Bogs are rare habitats and they keep declining in southern Quebec. At least 80% of bogs in the Saint-Lawrence lowlands have been adversely affected one way or another since colonisation. Peat ecosystems are very rare in the Appalachians (representing less than 1% of the territory) and are home to a wide range of plant and wildlife specifically adapted to these exceptional habitats. Preserving this unique biodiversity is thus of the utmost importance.

This land includes a diversity of wetlands and forests, as well as a large

pond upstream of a beaver dam on the Powell Brook. The Northern Dusky Salamander and Pickerel Frog were recorded on the property, along with Wild Leek and plant species designated Vulnerable in Quebec because of their sensitivity to harvesting.

**"Our eagerness and perseverance finally paid off: 91ha of this exceptional habitat are now protected forever.** Few conservation projects require as much energy and collaboration, but it was well worth it! Many thanks to all those involved, starting with CVS and the landowner, Mr. Lafrenais" says **Mélanie Lelièvre, Appalachian Corridor's Executive Director.** She extends her thanks to the whole team as well as financial partners including **Quebec's Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs, NCC through the Government of Canada's Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Fondation de la faune du Québec, the municipality of Austin and Memphremagog Conservation inc.**



## NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER



Danielle Dansereau, Mélanie Lelièvre, Denise Comtois and Louis-André Rivard

### Almost 300 ha protected by Mount Pinnacle Land Trust!

Denise Comtois and Louis-André Rivard recently donated a conservation servitude towards Mount Pinnacle Land Trust (MPLT) on more than 15 hectares of their land in Frelighsburg. This project brings the Trust's total acreage of protected land close to 300 ha (i.e. 740 acres).

**"When we acquired the property in 2004, we realised how much of**

**a privilege it was to have access to such a wonderful piece of land, in an environment still intact and truly natural"** recall the owners. Indeed, the Comtois-Rivard property is located at the heart of an extraordinary ecological wealth. Situated on the southern slopes of Mount Pinnacle, the land is contiguous to a property already protected by the Trust. Exceptional Forest Ecosystems, which act as a refuge for plant species at risk, are also found nearby.

**"We were immediately thankful to those who, before us, fought so hard to protect this beautiful and unique mountain",** observes the couple, highlighting the work of the Trust. Its President, Danielle Dansereau, explains that the organisation exists since 1991: **"We started as a small group of citizens with almost no means, but with a vision to protect our natural heritage and find the tools to do so. This heritage is a source of life, a refuge for mystery, dreams and freedom."**

**Along those lines, the donors conclude: "Keen to add our small contribution to this collective effort, we decided to donate a conservation servitude on an important part of our property, which brings up to nine the number of servitudes given to MPLT. This decision makes us proud. We did it for ourselves, but above all for our children, our grand-children, and their own children and grand-children. In perpetuity."**

Descendants of the Comtois-Rivard will have the chance to find ecological treasures on the property, such as the Closed Gentian, a plant species at risk. Due to its rarity, it is of utmost importance to protect it as well as its habitat. The same applies to the Spring Salamander and Northern Dusky Salamander, both discovered on the property by biologists.

### Protecting the brook, a waterfall at a time...

The Ruitter brook is a breathtaking watercourse that gives its name to a valley shielded at the heart of the Sutton Mountain range in the Township of Potton. It takes its source in the protected lands of the *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes*, flowing vigorously towards the US border into the Missisquoi River.

**"This brook is a critical natural corridor used for wildlife movements while also fulfilling their feeding needs"** explains Stansje Plantenga, co-founder of the Ruitter Valley Land Trust (RVLT), which she presided for 15 years. Marie-Claire Planet, new President of the charitable organisation, agrees wholeheartedly with her predecessor and shares the same sense of belonging to the Ruitter brook. Mrs. Planet and her husband, Daniel Sultan, own a piece of land straddling the watercourse. In order to meet



Daniel Sultan, Guy Langevin, Marie-Claire Planet and Stansje Plantenga

conservation goals so close to their hearts, Marie-Claire and Daniel recently donated a conservation servitude over a section of their property.

This land is strategically important. Indeed, the Ruitter brook is home to many stream salamanders, including the Spring Salamander (listed as Threatened in Canada and Vulnerable in Quebec) and Northern Dusky Salamander.

Marie-Claire Planet highlights that **"this land represents an additional link between the *Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes* and the RVLT, with a small section of**

**the brook and its banks now protected in perpetuity. If all landowners in the Ruitter Valley (be it large or small pieces of land like ours) decide to join forces, then the brook's water will be pure and clear forever."**

## CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

### Forestry and conservation: A first servitude and a prize!

In February 2010, 150 stakeholders took part in a Symposium organised by Appalachian Corridor, bringing the forestry and conservation spheres together and finding common ground where there once used to be conflicting views. A joint committee was formed as a result of this event, to focus on the development of new tools combining both sustainable forestry and the protection of natural habitats on private land.



Bois Champigny, Nature Conservancy Canada, Appalachian Corridor and Memphremagog Conservation Inc. are represented here as the 1<sup>st</sup> Forest Conservation Servitude in Quebec is announced

One of these tools is the Forest Conservation Servitude, binding a conservation organisation and a private landowner in perpetuity. Retaining his property rights, the landowner can carry on his forestry activities according to jointly agreed terms while ensuring the long-term protection of the sensitive natural characteristics of his land.

An important step was reached in 2012 as Nature Conservancy Canada

(NCC) signed the very first Forest Conservation Servitude in Quebec with Bois Champigny Inc. **"We are delighted by this collaboration between foresters and conservation biologists in the pursuit of common goals, being the preservation of forest cover and its attributes as well as benefits for the community. We truly believe that the recently completed conservation initiative will contribute to maintain essential natural corridors for plants and wildlife"** explains Réjean Champigny of Bois Champigny Inc.

**"We are working with NCC and our Affiliate Members to secure a functional ecological network over our territory of action, and this 500-ha Bois Champigny property on Mount Chagnon represents a key piece of the puzzle. By offering technical and financial support to this first Forest Conservation Servitude project, we contribute to make the model we so passionately value actually happen: conciliating conservation and sustainable use of resources in perpetuity"** concludes Mélanie Lelièvre, Appalachian Corridor's Executive Director.

*In October 2012, Appalachian Corridor won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in the "Environmental Group and Non-Profit Organisation" category at the Eastern Townships' Environmental Excellence Awards for its efforts of conciliation between forestry and conservation.*

Stéphanie Beaudoin, Relations Coordinator, and Caroline Daguet, Biologist



## Honouring our Affiliate Members: *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine*

The Serpentine stream meandering at the foothills of mounts Chagnon and Place had no official name before 2006. That year, private landowners eager to protect it gathered around its banks. Owing to its curving and winding shape, and to the presence of serpentine rocks as well as Snapping Turtle (*tortue serpentine* in French) in the area, consensus was easily reached on the name for that stream. Local citizens created *Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine* (CVS), an organisation aiming to protect the stream's watershed all the way to the Missisquoi Nord River and including the municipalities of Eastman, East Bolton and Austin in its territory of action. With the active collaboration of local landowners and assistance from Appalachian Corridor, CVS has since protected 212ha of natural habitats in perpetuity.



Board Members with the donor of CVS' first dominant land

CVS has been an active group ever since its creation and 2012 was a particularly busy year. **"The number of projects completed bears witness to the active and generous involvement of CVS members"** highlights CVS' President Giuseppe (Joe) Marino. **"Françoise Bricault, the group's Secretary and Treasurer, was particularly involved, as the main contact person with Appalachian Corridor who followed each conservation project closely. Despite the significant amount of work it implies for all our volunteers, we are proud to take part in the completion of so many conservation projects!"**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Three critical areas for turtles along Road 245

Last summer, while covering the Eastman to East Bolton section of Road 245 almost daily, the extent of turtle mortality at the height of their breeding season (May to July) became painfully clear. Indeed, Appalachian Corridor volunteers and staff members recorded a number of crushed turtles as well as a few live ones attempting to cross the road. Compiled data were presented Quebec's *Ministère des ressources naturelles* and *Ministère des transports* so that they could take this new information into account while planning their respective activities. In order to refine the study, a second phase of



Snapping Turtle

this project will take place this spring and we are counting on your enthusiastic collaboration! Volunteers will be called upon to cover the roads along the Missisquoi Nord River (on foot, on a bicycle or by car) and to record their observations in a friendly form provided by Appalachian Corridor. If you are interested in helping us with this project, please contact Clément Robidoux:  
clement.robidoux@corridorappalachien.ca

Thank you to all the volunteers who got involved in last year's project. Please remember that if you cannot take part in this new phase, you may nonetheless share any turtle information you come across... Every sighting counts!

### New office!

The Appalachian Corridor team is now working from its new office located in Eastman, near the Missisquoi Nord river and close to exit 106 of Highway 10. We are also pleased to announce that two new members have recently joined our team: Michel Fournier, Conservation Advisor, and Vincent Fréchette, GIS Analyst. We take this opportunity to welcome them onboard officially! Come and meet the team at the Open house in our new office on May 22nd from 4p.m.!



## PROTECT NATURE'S ASSETS

### Donation of stocks and shares



Since 2006, the federal and provincial governments grant important tax rebates when you donate securities to charitable organisations such as Appalachian Corridor: capital gain on stock and shares becomes 100 % tax free! You can increase your contribution significantly to a cause dear to your heart and obtain a tax receipt equivalent to the fair market value of your securities at the time of the donation. Consider your personal situation to determine the most appropriate timing, means and type of securities for your charitable donation. Appalachian Corridor also recommends you discuss the options available with a financial planning advisor.

❶ Securities listed on the stock market include bonds, mutual funds, stock and shares.

## FOCUS ON A SPECIES AT RISK : Canada Warbler

The Canada Warbler is a small songbird (12 to 15 cm) with a bright yellow neck and chest that contrast with the greyish blue color of its back, wings and head. Thin yellow circles are found around its eyes. The male is recognizable by the black strips forming a necklace across its chest.

About 80% of the species' breeding area is found in Canada, mostly in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. This small bird travels thousands of kilometres to spend the winter in South America. Upon its return in the summer, it builds its nest on the ground in ferns, branches, dense bushes or in the roots of fallen trees. It mostly eats flying insects and spiders.

This warbler is found living in red maple or eastern white-cedar stands as well as in swamps dominated by black spruce and tamarack, often located near a wetland or on the edge of a lake, river or creek. Locally, the Canada Warbler is present in Saint-Joachim-de-Shefford's peat bog and in the area around East-Bolton.

The species' populations in Canada have undergone a spiralling loss of

85% between 1968 and 2007, thus adding Canada Warbler to the country's list of "Threatened" species. Forestry practices that reduce shrub layer, drainage of swamp areas for urban expansion as well as transformation of agricultural lands reduce, alter or destroy the bird's natural habitat.



Help the Canada Warbler: share your sightings on our website [www.appalachiancorridor.ca](http://www.appalachiancorridor.ca). A form is available in "Share your sightings" under the "Biodiversity" tab. You can also send us pictures to support your record or get our team to confirm species identification. For more information on the measures you can take to preserve natural habitats for this species, please contact us!



## CALENDAR

February 14<sup>th</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2013: FONDATION DE LA FAUNE, 2013 Wildlife and Nature Auction. [www.fondationdelafaune.qc.ca/encan](http://www.fondationdelafaune.qc.ca/encan)

April 20<sup>th</sup> 2013: SENTIERS DE L'ESTRIE, Workshop: GPS mapping applications vs. Google Earth, Sherbrooke (819) 864-6314.

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2013: SENTIERS DE L'ESTRIE, Workshop: Building and maintaining hiking trails, Stoke, (819)-571-4349.

May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013: APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Open house at the new office, 4p.m. To 6p.m., Eastman, (450) 297-1145.

May 25<sup>th</sup> 2013: PARC D'ENVIRONNEMENT NATUREL DE SUTTON (PENS), Annual trail maintenance, [www.parcstutton.com](http://www.parcstutton.com)

June 12<sup>th</sup> 2013: SENTIERS DE L'ESTRIE, Annual trail maintenance, Echo sector (819) 846-1135 (calls taken on Monday evenings).

July 12<sup>th</sup> 2013: APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Conference *Conservation of natural areas—a development or anti-development model? (In French)*, Township of Potton, (450) 292-3313.

September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013: La RanDONnée, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Township of Potton.

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.appalachiancorridor.ca](http://www.appalachiancorridor.ca)

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