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NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER

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

Shefford : Québec's largest municipal nature reserve

Last fall, the Township of Shefford permanently protected **close to 360 acres** of natural habitats on Mount Shefford. "The creation of a protected area in this sector, renowned both for its vulnerable species and the beauty of its scenery, is an act that benefits citizens as much as the environment," noted Yves-François Blanchet, Minister of *Développement durable, Environnement, Faune et Parcs*, who attended the December 12th inauguration.

The *réserve naturelle du Canton-de-Shefford*, made up of four distinct sectors, is home to several species at risk including the Spring and the Northern Dusky salamanders, Wild Leek, and the Butternut tree. Streams and important wetlands (one of which covers 64 acres) can be found within its confines, proof of the ecological richness of Monteregian hills like Mount Shefford.

"The creation of this reserve is a perfect example of the synergy we must develop with municipalities," says Marie-José Auclair, president of Appalachian Corridor. "It gives us the energy to continue the hard work: only 4.9% of Southern Québec is protected while the international target is 17%. There remains much to be done and we hope that municipalities can be at the heart of this collective goal. These efforts mean our region is now a

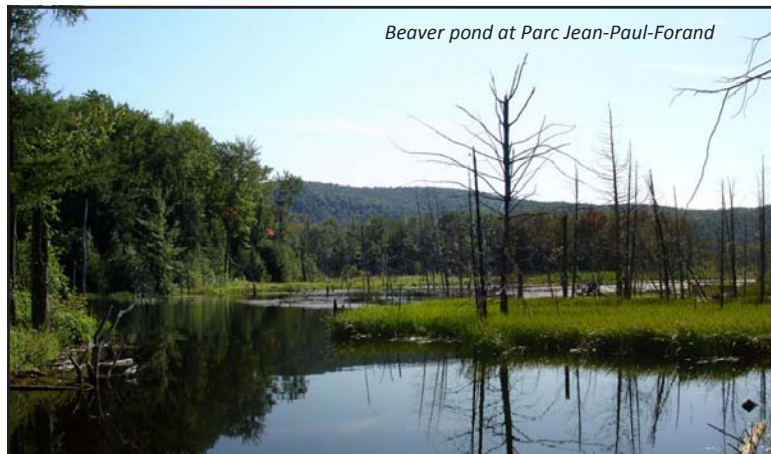
reference for the protection of our natural heritage!"

Mount Shefford's natural heritage is also accessible to the public: trails run through *Parc Jean-Paul-Forand*, now protected, and public access will be granted to *Parc des Montagnards*, thanks to the involvement of *Conservation Espace Nature Shefford*, an affiliate of Appalachian Corridor.

The close collaboration between Shefford and Appalachian Corridor is proof of a strong desire to help communities act as stewards of protected lands. Furthermore, the mayor of Shefford, André Pontbriand, would "recommend the experience to any municipality!"

The creation of the réserve naturelle du Canton-de-Shefford was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the federal Department of the Environment, the Conférence régionale des élus de la Montérégie-Est, and the Township of Shefford.

Top: Robert Ledoux, Claude Lallier, Pierre Martin, Donald Tétreault, councilors at the time of the signature. Bottom: M^e Sylvain Lavallée, André Pontbriand, Shefford mayor, Mélanie Lelièvre, Appalachian Corridor Executive Director, Sylvie Gougeon and Éric Salois, Shefford's General Manager and Director of Urban Planning and Development.



Beaver pond at Parc Jean-Paul-Forand



A property with *panache!*

"Even before I was born, my family owned **about 300 acres** of land on Brill Road in West-Bolton. My father dreamed of passing it on to his children, in its natural and unaltered state. He wished for us to live and prosper on the land." **Lisa Merovitz** fulfilled her father's dream twice rather than once: she lives and prospers on the property and, in 2013, she created a nature reserve on a part of it to ensure its protection in perpetuity. "Change happens quickly when we speak of development, even in the country; we have to take definite action" shares Mrs. Merovitz. The creation of the *réserve naturelle David-Schwartz* named after her father, is a decisive gesture in honour of the one she inherited her love of nature from.

Lisa Merovitz has much to be proud of: she protected **more than 110 acres** of her property, a zone covered in mature forest



Lisa Merovitz

hosting a rich flora. In the sugarbush, we find many vulnerable plant species, such as a healthy population of Wild Leek. Moreover, streams found on the land are home to Spring and Northern Dusky salamanders, among other species. These amphibians are excellent indicators of water quality, and the streams they inhabit feed some of Brome Lake tributaries.

During the ecological survey, Appalachian Corridor's biologists noticed recent bear tracks in numerous sectors. Accompanied by the owner's dog, a fine detective, they also discovered two moose antlers (*panache*), witnesses to this species' presence on the land.



Bear tracks on Beech

The property, located on Mount Foster's south-west slope, reaches close to 2,000 ft in altitude. Mrs. Merovitz paints the landscape for us: "we get a majestic view of Brome Lake and we can see far, far away". We could almost say that we see "in perpetuity"!



CALENDRIER 2014

April 4 and 5: NATURE QUÉBEC, RÉSEAU DE MILIEUX NATURELS PROTÉGÉS, Workshops on conservation (in French), Châteauguay, naturequebec.org.

April 27: CONSERVATION DES VALLONS DE LA SERPENTINE, Annual General Meeting, conservationserpentine.org.

May 31: APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Guided walk (Missisquoi Nord trail network): *Demystify Natural Corridors*, Eastman, (450) 297-1145.

October 4: APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR, Conference (in French): *The North Missisquoi Valley, an Ecological Treasure at the Heart of the Appalachian Corridor*, Bolton-Est, (450) 297-1145.



Visit the websites of our partners involved in trail networks management for upcoming hikes and events:

Les Sentiers de l'Estrie : lessentiersdelestrie.qc.ca

Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton : parcsutton.com

NATURE PROTECTED FOREVER



View of the Missisquoi River from the Côté-Lamoureux property

Protecting nature, a vehicle for creation

« Respectively ceramic artist and writer, nature is a strong source of inspiration for me and my partner. We are also aware of how respecting its integrity is directly linked not only to our quality of life, but also to our work as artists. » These are the words of **Nicole Côté and Henri Lamoureux**, who have made a donation of more than **12 acres** of their land to the Ruiter Valley Land Trust. Their property constitutes an ecological jewel at the heart of the Missisquoi Valley. It is located along the river, between two important protected forest cores: the Sutton Mountain Range and Mounts Brock and Burnt. This sector, featuring wildlife corridors used by several species including Moose, offers prime habitat for the Wood Turtle, a species at risk.

Furthermore, the few streams that run on the property are home to the Northern Dusky salamander (a Vulnerable species), the presence of which is a very good indicator of water quality.

« We believe that today's generations have the responsibility to hand down a natural environment as intact as possible to the generations that follow. With this in mind, Appalachian Corridor and the Ruiter Valley Land Trust offer an indispensable support to those who wish to work for the preservation of our magnificent planet. We hope that many other landowners will join us in the years to come, attesting to the region's already commendable reputation in environmental protection. »

Protection in South-Stukely: benefits for Brome Lake

One of the main tributaries to Brome Lake, the Quilliams stream, finds its headwaters in South-Stukely. The protection of forests and waterways at the head of the watershed has direct repercussions on the stream's water quality, known for hosting many species at risk, and on Brome Lake's waters, sought-after by many.

Conscious of the strategic location of his property from an ecological perspective, **Richard Lajoie** recently granted a conservation servitude of **more than 54 acres**, in favor of the *Association de conservation de la nature de Stukely-Sud* (ACNSS). "My collaboration with ACNSS dates back to the organisation's first steps, 10 years ago. As a citizen of South-Stukely, former mayor and landowner, I always believed their work worthy of praise. I took action to ensure the survival of places where humans do not interfere with nature. Being an amateur ornithologist, I am pleased to know that my property will continue to host species like Wild Turkey, Great Horned Owl, Great Blue Heron, American Kingfisher and many species of woodpeckers."

Besides its importance for Brome Lake's watershed, the property represents an anchor for ACNSS in a new sector. Gary Richards, president of the

organisation, explains that Mr. Lajoie's initiative "contributes to the visibility of conservation actions in South-Stukely and will facilitate an approach with other landowners at the head of the watershed."



Richard Lajoie, Mélanie Lelièvre and Gary Richards



Clinton's wood fern, a rare species

Three other protected properties!

A great number of conservation projects have been concluded in the last months; we thus have to present some of them in shortened form:

Mount Echo Sector - Mr. Christian Godin

- Conservation servitude on **4.4 ha** of land towards Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA).
- Located in an unfragmented forest area of more than 1,000 ha west of the Sutton Mountains: a direct contribution to the preservation of this important conservation core.
- Located along Jackson creek, a quality habitat for Brook Trout and stream salamanders, particularly Spring and Northern Dusky salamanders.



Waterfall – Jackson creek on Godin property

Mount Pinnacle Sector – Panet-Raymond Family

- Donation of **2.6 ha** of land to Mount Pinnacle Land Trust.
- Located within Mount Pinnacle conservation core.
- Contiguous to a protected property.
- Includes the habitat of the Closed Gentian, a herbaceous plant at risk. In Canada, Closed Gentians reach the northern limit of their natural range and are known to be located only in a very small zone in Southern Québec, bordering the State of Vermont.



Closed Gentian

Mount Owl's Head Sector – Worthen Family

- Conservation servitude on **97 ha** of land towards Nature Conservancy Canada.
- Includes a part of Lake Memphremagog's west shore as well as Mount Owl's Head east slope and summit.
- Presents diverse forest types: White Pine stands with tolerant hardwoods on the lake's shore, Sugar Maple stands with tolerant hardwoods on lower slopes, mixed forest higher up, and softwood stands at the summit. A great diversity of habitats and species.
- Hosts two Exceptional Forest Ecosystems as well as numerous species at risk: stream salamanders (Spring and Northern Dusky salamanders), Butternut tree, Wild Leek, etc.



View of Lake Memphremagog from Worthen property

HONOURING OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS: Mount Pinnacle Land Trust

Mount Pinnacle dominates the landscape of southeastern Montérégie; its distinct peak can be seen from the majority of neighbouring municipalities both in Québec and Vermont. Its omnipresence inspires an emotional attachment for many. "Since the creation of Mount Pinnacle Land Trust (MPLT) in 1991, we have come to understand and appreciate the breadth of the links woven around the mountain," says Danielle Dansereau, conservation pioneer at Mount Pinnacle and now president of the organisation. "Back then, members came to us from Frelighsburg, Sutton, Dunham, Abercorn, Bedford, Cowansville and even Vermont. We all felt extremely invested in the protection of the Pinnacle, which was at the time threatened by a major development project. As governments gradually receded from natural heritage protection issues, citizens had to take action."



Pinnacle Herbarium Program

The creation of the MPLT is one of the first examples of citizen involvement for the protection of natural habitats in Québec. The progress achieved is considerable: MPLT counts 12 protected sites, for a total of **about 783 acres** of land protected in perpetuity. Last year, the organisation revived its educational projects and presented a rich

program of interpretive activities (ornithology, medicinal plants, salamander identification, etc.), thereby offering occasional access to trails otherwise closed since 2011. The issue of public access to



protected territories remains at the heart of MPLT concerns, and numerous efforts have been made to find the best balance between education and protection of fragile ecosystems. The Trust has also been involved, for seven years, in a school-based educational program allowing 700 students to discover - in the classroom and in nature - the region's ecological wealth. Youths become "agents for change in their communities, including by raising their parents' awareness", mentions Danielle Dansereau.

The Trust rallies locals, long-term residents and newcomers, who are equally supportive of the preservation of the mountain and its surroundings. The Pinnacle must remain, in Frédéric Back's words, a refuge "... to sources of life, forests, mystery, discovery and freedom!" Despite the constant challenge of ensuring the organisation's continuity and the appeal to new members, the involvement from the community remains solid and inspiring.

montpinacle.ca

PROTECT NATURE'S ASSETS

Your dollars bring even more dollars!

It is now possible to support Appalachian Corridor and its partners through monthly donations via our website: appalachiancorridor.ca

Will you be a Salamander, Warbler, Turtle, Falcon or Cougar supporter?

Your donations are precious: every dollar serves as leverage to get two to three additional dollars from financial partners. For example, your support to *La RanDONnée* 2013 totalling over \$70,000 has been matched to more than \$250,000 from funders. Thank you for your contributions!



Black Bear cubs— watch our videos on Facebook!

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or even triple
your impact!



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FOCUS ON A SPECIES AT RISK : Chimney Swift

Québec is home to only one species of swift, which spends its summer in the Province and flies to South America for the winter. As its name suggests the Chimney Swift nests in chimneys and often returns to the same nesting site year after year.

The wings of the Chimney Swift have a distinctive shape, being pointed, narrow and appearing too large for its body. When deployed, they resemble a "boomerang". In contrast, its tail is very small. Because of similar body outlines, Chimney Swifts and swallows are often confused. The Chimney Swift spends entire days flying and feeding: it will eat up to 12,000 insects a day, which leads the species to stay close to bodies of water.

Between 1968 and 2004, the population of Chimney Swifts underwent a 95% decrease. The massive use of insecticides and the loss of its two types of habitats, large hollow trees and brick chimneys, account for the decline. Hollow trees are often felled and brick chimneys are frequently blocked or lined following a transfer to other heating technologies.

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Chimney Swift

Québec's Chimney Swifts population numbers 2,500 birds, while the *Regroupement QuébecOiseaux* identified only 450 chimneys used by the species—they are therefore very precious. Chimney Swifts absolutely need chimneys in order to perch: the bird's short legs do not allow it to perch on branches. It is with its claws and the tip of its tail that the Chimney Swift clings to mortar joints. Allowing a Chimney Swift to use your chimney is the ideal opportunity to be in close contact with an endangered species. Its presence does not cause damage.

In order to maintain and protect Chimney Swifts' populations, Appalachian Corridor has been gathering data on the species since 2003. Our team also meets with chimney owners to invite them to use maintenance and repair practices profitable for them as well as for the swifts nesting in their chimney. For further details on these practices, please visit our web site and find the species factsheet in the "Communications and publications" section.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Peregrine Falcon: a concrete nesting site!

Appalachian Corridor has spent nearly 10 years following the Peregrine Falcon, an endangered species that nests in only seven identified areas listed within our territory. Our team has followed a pair of falcons since 2010, which have nested within the site of an operating quarry: Sintra in North Hatley. Appalachian Corridor and Sintra are working together on a strategy to manage the nesting site. The endangered species' particular cohabitation conditions have been documented and Sintra has undertaken to apply the proposed measures that include an adjustment of its operating schedule in order to reduce any



stress the falcons could suffer. Monitoring of the site will continue for at least two years and we're hoping that this collaboration will inspire other business properties to help protect the species. Sustaining a Peregrine Falcon nesting site is a reward in itself as the birds are known to return to the same nest year after year!

NEWS IN BRIEF (cont'd)

2013 Edition of the *RanDONnée*, a stride towards more acreage of protected land!

The sun shone brightly this past September 15th in the Township of Potton and the walkers' fundraising efforts paid off: more than \$70 000 were raised! Spokesperson for the event, Jérôme Dupras of the *Cowboys Fringants* shares that to "see these walkers united for the cause is proof that more and more people are aware of the threats on our environment and wish to take charge of the future of their natural heritage."

The 2012 edition of the *RanDONnée*, coupled with other fundraising efforts, allowed for \$250 000 to be dedicated to the protection of 15 new properties totalling **740 acres**. The 2013 edition will contribute to the creation of more than **1,100 acres** of protected areas. Even if the conservation movement is growing in southern Québec, the environment remains secondary in the causes supported by Canadians. In fact, while we depend on nature for our survival, only 2% of citizens' donations go towards its protection (Statistics Canada). Appalachian Corridor therefore wishes to thank hikers for their involvement and to highlight the major financial support from the following sponsors: *Fondation de la faune du Québec*, *Fournier & Tremblay* land surveyors and Spa Eastman.

We hope to count you in at our next edition!



Organisers, collaborators and volunteers

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Strengthening the links: the story of natural corridors

The story of natural habitat conservation is made up of numerous efforts and glaring successes. The protection of large forested areas, reservoirs of biodiversity, is a compelling example (national parks, large nature reserves on private land). Nevertheless, the creation of large parks throughout the last century has generated its own array of questions and new challenges. Species not only need large protected areas to survive, but also require links to move between these areas. These links are known as natural corridors. Natural corridors ensure genetic exchange between populations thereby securing the survival of species. Furthermore, some wildlife species referred to as *wide ranging* require vast expanses to feed, reproduce, and find new habitat. This is the case, notably, for the Fisher (between 1,450 and 10,000 acres), Cougar (10,000 to 22,200 acres), Moose (5,000 to 24,700 acres) and Bobcat (up to about 12,350 acres). Corridors play an equally critical role in the context of climate change; they allow species to find refuge in more favourable habitats.

It is difficult to ensure the connectivity between core protected areas in a world that is becoming more and more urbanised. Urbanisation divides natural areas into isolated parcels. This phenomenon, known as fragmentation, has consequences on all types of habitats and contributes to the degradation of biological diversity.

Even the wide-open spaces of Québec cannot escape fragmentation. In the south, protected areas are often of a smaller size and links connecting them are feeble or inexistent. This is why Appalachian Corridor, with the help of its partners, is working to maintain an ecological network of important natural areas.

We have worked to identify and validate natural corridors present on the territory. The involvement of bodies such as municipalities, conservation groups, as well as regional and provincial governments, led to the development of a large-scale project.

Case Study: Highway 10

We are currently collaborating with *Transports Québec* on a project aiming to identify wildlife corridors and crossings on either side of

Highway 10. "We are very concerned by the ability of species to overcome this barrier and the impact this has on populations," says Mélanie Lelièvre. Given its proximity to large protected areas, Highway 10 is a choice location for this type of study.

Phase I of the project, to be completed by spring 2014, consists of elaborating a corridor identification protocol. Wildlife inventories, accident zones (collisions between wildlife and vehicles) and large forested areas will be taken into account. Phase II will focus on implementing the protocol, including pilot projects on the creation of wildlife crossings that may include viaducts, bridges and culverts. As a whole, this initiative aims to facilitate wildlife movements between habitats and populations, reduce road mortality and decrease collisions between vehicles and large animals.



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Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organisation working towards the protection of natural habitats and biodiversity in the Appalachians of southern Québec, in collaboration with private landowners, local conservation groups as well as regional, national and international partners. Visit our website at appalachiancorridor.ca

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