



Appalachian Corridor Appalachian

ACA

Appalachian Corridor News

WINTER 2008



A TRANSBORDER CONSERVATION STRATEGY

OUR COORDINATES

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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, ACA 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.

ACA offers technical assistance, advice and expertise to conservation organizations and other contributors who share its vision. As well, ACA organizes various conservation awareness activities for landowners, conservation groups and the general public.

NATURE PROTECTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

A Vision Come True

Johanna Ryffel, a Sutton resident dedicated to the protection of natural areas, has donated a conservation servitude on 37,91 acres of her property nestled in a vivid landscape near the Alder Brook in Sutton.

The donation was made to Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) and to the Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds (QPSB) who jointly own a property in the Alder Brook watershed. "My vision of protecting the land with its biodiversity has become very important over the years" explains Johanna, "and I am very happy that it now has become a reality. I'm truly grateful to all the people at ACA who helped and supported me through every step of the conservation process."



Top row : Terri Monahan (ACA), Roselyne Ménard (notary), Jean Bacon (QPSB)
Bottom row : Nathalie Zinger (NCC), Johanna Ryffel, Eve Marshall (QPSB)

The servitude will ensure the perpetual protection of a beautiful coniferous and hardwood forest with lovely streams flowing through it, in proximity to one of the most important wetlands of the region, the Alderbrooke Marsh. It is home to a great variety of

wildlife, birds and flora, some of which are listed as vulnerable or threatened in Quebec. Along with NCC and QPSB, the Alderbrooke Marsh Land Trust also protects natural areas in this sector.

Mrs Ryffel's property is also being designated as a Nature Reserve under the Quebec Natural Heritage Conservation Act and will henceforth be known as the Amma Nature Reserve.

Double donation

More good news for conservation! Louise Gratton, ecologist and co-founder of ACA, and Jean Gaudet, artist, have donated almost 2 acres of land to the Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA). This generous deed facilitated their donation of a conservation servitude on another 4 acres of their property. Located in the Jackson River valley in the foothills of the Sutton Mountains, this forested property is home to many species of birds, including the dazzling Scarlet Tanager, the Barred Owl and the Pileated Woodpecker. Permanent and intermittent streams also harbor Spring and Northern Dusky Salamanders.

"We had been considering this gift for many years", says Louise. "Despite its small area, the land has a ridge where a mixed forest provides favorable habitat for wildlife."

"The creation of MECA motivated us to take action", adds Jean Gaudet. "By the same token, our donation provides the organization

with a new dominant land onto which other conservation servitudes can be grafted."

Charles Weldon, president of MECA, couldn't be more pleased. "Considering the growing interest in conservation on the part of neighboring landowners, this is indeed a great building block for MECA."

It is thanks to conservation actions such as those of Johanna Ryffel, Louise Gratton and Jean Gaudet that more and more private land is being protected for future generations.



Photo : Jean Gaudet



CALENDAR

"Understanding your woodlot for better management"

ACA invites landowners with forested properties to participate in a free workshop, including a forest field visit.

Saturday, March 1st, 2008 - 1h30pm to 4h30pm, Frelighsburg Town Hall

Please call Amélie Normand, forest engineer, at ACA for reservations.

Series of conferences on ecological real estate development offered by GRAPP and Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA)

March 14, 9h00am : "Development and conservation: whys and hows"

March 14, 1h00pm : "Ecological and profitable : economic aspects"

April 22, 1h00pm : "Bylaws for green development"

All conferences are presented in Cowansville

For more information, contact GRAPP at info@grapp.ca or 450-538-1586.

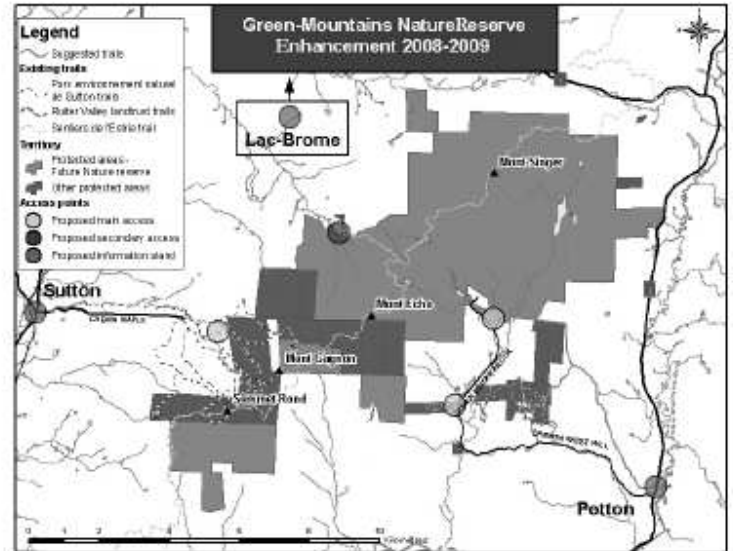
ACA launches its enhancement project for the largest private conservation area in Quebec

Those of you who have been following conservation actions by ACA and its partners over the last few years are aware that more than two thirds of the Sutton Mountains (close to 5000 ha) now belong to Nature Conservancy Canada and have become the largest privately protected area in Quebec. In order to benefit local communities and visitors, ACA is launching a major enhancement project that aims to increase public accessibility to this territory while ensuring that its use is compatible with conservation.

"ACA chose to lead this project over two years ago because it is a formidable tool in promoting our mission: the protection of natural areas. ACA wants to draw attention to conservation actions on private land and to sensitize users to the ecological value of this territory", explains Mélanie Lelièvre, executive director. "The first phase of the project has a budget of \$820,000 and \$524,000 is provided by La Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement, the project's main funder."

Thanks to organizations such as the Ruitier Valley Land Trust, les Sentiers de l'Estrie and le Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton, hiking trails already allow some access to the conservation area. ACA will develop new hiking trail networks that will offer varying levels of difficulty. New trails linking Potton and Sutton villages to the protected territory will be developed as soon as next summer. Information booths and new access points are also foreseen in the short term.

All new and existing infrastructures are designed to maintain the ecological integrity of this vast territory by protecting the sensitive areas it harbors, such as wetlands and habitats for threatened and vulnerable species. Harmony between preservation of natural areas and access to this natural treasure is the very essence of 'enhancement' and is the guiding principle for the implementation of this project, so important to our region.



NATURAL WONDERS OF THE APPALACHIANS

A rare and elusive Thrush graces the Sutton Mountains

Listed as a threatened species in Canada, Bicknell's Thrush is an inconspicuous bird whose foliage blends discreetly into nature's background. Ornithologists were therefore thrilled to discover its presence in the Sutton Mountains. This sparrow-sized Thrush is rarely seen by hikers however, since it avoids human traffic. It seeks very quiet natural areas that meet its need in terms of habitat and nourishment. A tiny population, no more than a dozen individuals, has found refuge in a fragile forest ecosystem of stunted red spruce perched on the summit of Round Top in the Sutton Mountains.

Bicknell's Thrush is a migrating species that spends its winters in Cuba, Haïti or Dominican Republic, but its nesting area extends to Eastern Canada and Northeastern United States. Here in Sutton, it favors tranquility and takes advantage of the abundance of



Photo : Serge Beaudette

insects from May to September. Fortunately for the Thrush, its favorite site is part of the Green Mountains Nature Reserve, a natural area belonging to Nature Conservancy Canada. Here, Appalachian Corridor annually monitors its presence in the protected area and trail management organizations ensure that any human activities that could compromise the survival of this small population are kept to a minimum.

Information on Bicknell's Thrush, as well as how to avoid disturbing the species, will be available to hikers at different access points leading to trails bordering its habitat. We encourage users to be discreet, remain on trails and avoid lounging in this sector. These simple rules will help preserve the wilderness of the area and offer hikers a unique occasion to hear Bicknell's Thrush.

SOUND CONSERVATION PLANNING

Bringing communities closer to nature

For ACA, enhancing a conservation area means making part of it accessible to the public through light infrastructures that will allow nature observation and interpretation, hiking and other recreational activities with minimal impact on the environment. The public therefore benefits from a unique opportunity to explore a natural jewel that is protected in perpetuity.

A conservation organization that chooses to enhance its protected property must begin with sound ecological knowledge of the natural area. Habitats for fragile flora and interior forest species as well as nesting sites and steep slopes must be excluded from any access. However, certain less fragile or open areas can offer an infinite gamma of possibilities for the creation of educational networks on nature conservation. Plant and wildlife inventories of the protected

area provide a basis for management planning that must be approved by conservation biologists to ensure minimal impact on the milieu. For example, using an old forestry road as a trail will prevent tree cutting or encroachment in an area rich in biodiversity.

Providing access to a protected area also helps a conservation organization to sensitize the public. Direct contact with nature is an excellent communication tool and is one of the best ways to obtain public support for conservation. Hikers that are enlightened to nature's needs and to the precarious equilibrium of protected ecosystems will be more likely to respect fragile areas, to sensitize other users and perhaps even contribute to the creation and stewardship of other protected areas in the region.