

## Winter 2009

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## A transborder conservation strategy

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

## NATURE PROTECTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The last few months have seen a multitude of conservation projects take place on our territory. In fact, Appalachian Corridor had never know such pace in protecting new natural areas. From September 2008 to February 2009, ten conservation projects in perpetuity throughout our territory and over more than 150 hectares were finalised. The main question that comes to mind when looking back on these last few months is: how to acknowledge these achievements and thank the makers of this fantastic success? To all concerned, and particularly to each and everyone of the landowners who participated to the Appalachian Corridor project: THANK YOU so much! In this issue, we face the pleasing problem of choosing which projects to include in our columns. A few are presented herewith...

### A hat trick for conservation in South Stukely

Mr and Mrs Brousseau first discovered the Eastern Townships in 1946 when they fell in love with and bought a piece of land in South Stukely. They knew the importance of the simple things in life and they loved the outdoors. They spent their first few years without electricity, telephone or indoor plumbing. They raised their family and their children also grew very fond of their land and lake. "What this land gave to us, as a family, is immeasurable" says Mrs Brousseau.



View on Lake Brousseau

The option of a land donation had been considered by the family for some years, and the fortunate encounter with Gary Richards, President of the *Association de conservation de la nature de Stukely-Sud* (ACNSS) allowed this idea to materialise. "It would have given my late husband great satisfaction to know that this land will be forever preserved in its natural state, as it was meant to be" says Luise Brousseau, now 96. The Appalachian Corridor was instrumental in facilitating the entire process, and Mrs Brousseau signed a conservation servitude (3.6 ha) and a land donation in favour of ACNSS on 4.15 acres (1.7 ha) of her property in November 2008. This was the first, essential step enabling ACNSS to protect additional natural habitats in the area by way of conservation servitudes in favour of this dominant land.

Another great step in ACNSS's young history was to be taken only a few weeks later, with a second land donation towards the conservation group. This time, the opportunity arose from M. André Meunier via his company *Agrégats Waterloo Inc.*, which is based in South Stukely and recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"As you grow older, you realise it is important to act for the benefit of the community as a whole" says Mr. Meunier. "Land donation is a

gift to future generations; it's a step in the right direction". The 5-acre (2 ha) property donated by Mr. Meunier includes a wetland and two brooks that flow into the Quilliams stream, the latter being one of the main tributaries of Brome Lake. Protecting the wetland as well as sections of the brooks and their banks contributes to maintain water quality and to preserve habitats downstream. This donation allows ACNSS to have its second dominant fund on which to graft conservation servitudes.



André Meunier

In January 2009, Gary and Christina Richards, and their daughter Ngaio, presently finishing her doctoral studies in Cambridge, were delighted to announce the protection of over 40 hectares on their property in South Stukely through a conservation servitude in favour of ACNSS. Gary and Christina wanted to guarantee that the natural habitats on the property will be preserved in their natural state in perpetuity while remaining owners and continuing to enjoy their



Gary and Christina Richards

© M. Roy

land. "We are grateful for all the help and advice we have received from ACA, every step of the way."

The property, along with a great many lands in South Stukely, boasts mixed forests and extensive wetlands that many plants and a wide variety of bird, mammal, reptile, amphibian and insect species depend upon. The Richards add: "South Stukely is facing the same challenges as other small, rural municipalities - development for seasonal homes, roads and energy corridors - that have fragmented natural habitats. We look forward to working with the municipality and other owners to protect more key areas for the future".

### A flurry of conservation actions near Mount Echo (continues overleaf)

Louise Penny and her husband Michael Whitehead moved to Sutton from Montreal ten years ago, as they fell in love with the area and its beautiful countryside. Louise is a multi-award winning and New York Times bestselling author of the Chief Inspector Gamache - Three Pines mystery series, set in the Eastern Townships. Michael, now retired, was Director of Haematology at the Montreal Children's Hospital for over 20 years. They were introduced to the Mount Echo Conservation Association (MECA) by Victor and Elizabeth Allistone who have made several significant donations of land and servitudes over the years, to both MECA and the Nature Conservancy Canada, in the Sutton Mountains.



© Ian Cryslor  
Michael Whitehead  
and Louise Penny

Michael and Louise decided to buy the 32-acre land (13 ha) across from their own home for protection: "We chose to place a conservation servitude on it with MECA to preserve its natural state." They also signed a second agreement for another 10 acres (4ha) of their property that is home to the Northern Dusky Salamander. Ostrich Fern and Two-leaved Toothwort are also found on their property; these plant species are designated in Québec following their decline due to excessive collection, and their ideal habitat on Louise and Michael's land are now protected.

"We must have thought of doing this for several years. Now, we're delighted we did. It gives us great pleasure (...)



## CALENDAR

### Introduction to the wild Canidae –

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009, 7:30pm, Mansonville Town Hall. \$10 fee.  
An evening presentation organised by the Ruiter Valley Land Trust and presented by Susan Morse. Stunning photographs of coyotes,

wolves, foxes, etc. Please book in advance at [stansje@sympatico.ca](mailto:stansje@sympatico.ca)  
This event is partly financed by the Fondation Hydro-Québec pour l'environnement as part of the enhancement program for the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes Vertes.

## NATURE PROTECTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS (continued)

to know that our little bit of nature will be protected forever. We'd be even happier if a reader of this newsletter decided to do the same as we did."

Mrs. Elfriede Valenta was also introduced to MECA by her neighbours, Heather and Steven Padner. She became a member of the conservation organisation and, last December, signed a conservation servitude towards MECA on her 17-acre (6.9 ha) property.

This project, funded mostly via Quebec's *Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs*, allows Mrs. Valenta to continue talking walks on her land, knowing it is protected in perpetuity. The stream that flows through the property is home to a population of Northern Dusky



Northern Dusky Salamander

Salamander, a species likely to be designated vulnerable or threatened in Quebec. It is important to conserve the forest cover over the watercourse to maintain this population, which depends on the cold and well-oxygenated waters characteristic of mountain streams.

"This land has been in our family for over 40 years" says Mrs. Valenta, "it is very special to us, and we have enjoyed it very much with our three sons. We thought it would be good to preserve it."

Last but not least, adding to the list of properties protected in the Mount Echo sector, Louise Gratton, ecologist and co-founder of the Appalachian Corridor, and Jean Gaudet, artist, have recently signed another two land donations on 10 acres (4 ha) of their property, on top of the areas they had already protected with MECA in 2007. Altogether, Louise and Jean have committed to protect almost 70% of their land in perpetuity. "We became aware that the Jackson stream sector was an important wildlife corridor, and it prompted us to make an additional ecological donation" says Louise.

## A profound respect for nature and all its biodiversity

Carole and John Serjeantson enjoyed taking walks on the 10-acre land (4 ha) they bought in East Bolton. They appreciated its wildlife, forest, stream, wetland and cliff above, offering breathtaking views of the Missisquoi River a little distance below. They soon realised that other landowners may not share the profound respect they have for nature and all its creatures. These precious wild places could potentially be developed and built upon with large houses and close-cut lawns, threatening the diversity of plants and animals currently found on their property. "Having heard about the creation of the McCallum-Gilbert Nature Reserve by Nature Conservancy Canada in East Bolton, we decided to consider options for protecting our land" explains Carole.

The Serjeantsons donated their land to Nature Conservancy Canada. According to Patrice Laliberté, Project Manager for NCC, "conserving natural habitats adjacent to watercourses is essential to the preservation of water quality. The donation of this land, located near the Missisquoi River, will contribute to its protection". Because

of its diversity of habitats, this land represents valuable feeding or breeding grounds for numerous animal species that may also use its natural protecting cover on their way to or from the nearby river.



Left to right: Patrice Laliberté (NCC), Joël Bonin (NCC), Carole and John Serjeantson, Terri Monahan (ACA)

John Serjeantson believes there needs to

be a balance in our attitudes towards nature and that we ought to be taking better care of the environment. Carole adds: "we're hoping our gesture will get other people to think about protecting their land, that it will spark something. Together we can really make a difference".

## FOCUS ON PROTECTED SPECIES AT RISK

### Do you have butternut on your land? Take part in a research project on this species at risk

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea* L.) is a tree species native to North America that belongs to the walnut family. In Canada, it grows in the forests of Eastern Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Butternut is mainly encountered as a minor component of deciduous stands, though it represents an important source of food for wildlife and is a key element in the preservation of biodiversity in forest ecosystems.

In the last decades, butternut populations have experienced a huge decline over the whole continent mostly due to the butternut canker, a disease caused by the fungus *Sirococcus clavigignenti-juglandacearum*. The decline is so severe that this tree is now designated as an Endangered Species according to the Species at Risk Act in Canada.

There is no known means of fighting butternut canker. In some regions of the United States, the mortality rate caused by this fungus affected up to 90 percent of the population, and it is estimated that it may have killed up to 80 percent of butternuts in Ontario. Butternut



Young butternut

canker was first reported in Quebec in 1990 and, due to the fast rate at which the pathogen spreads, signs of the disease have now been reported over most of the tree's distribution area in the province.

Infection of the butternut starts in the branches where the fungus causes the appearance of black marks under the bark. It then develops on the trunk and often kill the tree. The few trees able to survive in affected populations should be identified and protected. The selection of resistant individuals is one of the most promising avenues for recovery pro-

grams based on genetic material.

A research project initiated by the *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM) on the habitat and health status of the butternut is about to take place on the private lands of the Estrie region. If you own a piece of land where an important concentration of butternut can be found, and if you are interested in taking part in this research project, please contact the Appalachian Corridor (details on cover page).

## GENEROUS DONATIONS . . .

### Are you inspired by what you have just read?

Are you the landowner of natural habitats that you would like to protect? If so, please contact our team and it will be our pleasure to discuss the matter with you. The commitment of private landowners towards nature conservation is the undeniable proof of an improving level of citizen awareness regarding the importance of protecting our natural environment and preserving biodiversity for future generations. Various options are available, whether you want to retain ownership of the land or not, depending on your goals and the tax credits you aim for. Land protection options can be tailored to your

needs and to your level of commitment. The Appalachian Corridor team remains available to answer your questions and guide you through the process where appropriate.

Would you like to contribute differently? Spend some time with our team of volunteers! There are outings and patrols you can get involved with. Furthermore, Appalachian Corridor is a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency and, as such, we can receive your donations and issue tax receipts.