

TOGETHER, FOR NATURE AND COMMUNITIES!

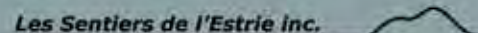
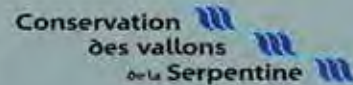
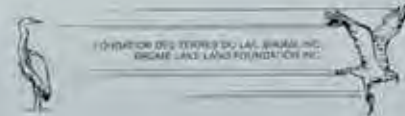
13 225 hectares protected in perpetuity

ACTIVITY REPORT
2017-2018

Photo credit: Marie-José Auclair



NETWORK OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



Again, this was for us a year of great achievements! New parcels of land are bringing us closer to our vision of strategic connectivity, with 13,225 ha now protected by Appalachian Corridor and its partners. Needless to say, Appalachian Corridor would not have the same capacity nor the same reputation without the valuable cooperation of its 17 Affiliate Members, as well as Nature

Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and of all those who care about protecting natural habitats. These partnerships are our lifeblood.

On our territory, a highly inspiring citizen involvement led to the protection of the parcel Collins – Le Havre d'Orford. This endeavor demonstrates the deeply-rooted attachment these people have for their beautiful part of the country. The same can be said for Bromont's Parc des Sommets, whose creation is a victory for conservation to which we contributed actively. It is also the result of tremendous citizen involvement and substantial efforts made by several levels of government and the community.

Furthermore, this year saw the increased outreach of Appalachian Corridor. Our influence and our partnerships with local players were strengthened and proved fruitful on many levels. The Conference on Road Ecology held in the fall of 2017 brought together many national and international stakeholders, was a resounding success and confirmed the important role we play in the adaptation to climate change since conservation and, mostly, connectivity are the most important steps we must take to tackle the problem.

After more than a year of relentless work, the SOS Mont Hereford Coalition was able to influence Hydro Québec's decision to bury the section of the Northern Pass export line which threatened the Mount Hereford protected area. This was a major victory for the future of conservation on private land.

Finally, we continued our efforts regarding advocacy on the issue of municipal taxation to find a solution that could lighten the land tax burden faced by conservation groups while supporting the creation of additional protected areas. Congratulations to all for these exceptional achievements, a result of our team's incessant work.

Enjoy your reading!

Marie-José Auclair, President of the Board of Directors

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



If one word could describe this past year it would be innovation. Although we have always been willing to be daring and take risks, 2017-2018 was the year we focused on innovation.

First, there was the Conference on Road Ecology & Climate Change Adaptation, an event which served as an incubator for this emerging science. We showed great leadership by bringing together the relevant stakeholders to discuss an issue that is particularly important to us. We can be proud of this.

We also acquired numerous properties identified as highly strategic in our conservation strategy. Although we are thrilled that these lands are now protected in perpetuity, we needed to show courage and change our way of doing things by taking the responsibilities of ownership.

I could name many other innovative projects, but as you read the report you will see how innovation was an integral part of every one of our initiatives over this past year.

My warmest thanks to our Board of Directors for their commitment and valuable advice. And kudos to the whole team who works incessantly to pursue our conservation mission and promote Appalachian Corridor in the scientific community and to the general public. Thanks also to the landowners and partners who put their trust in us, and to an ultra-competent team that keeps on rising to new challenges.

Enjoy your reading!

Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director

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PROTECTING AND ENHANCING NATURAL HABITATS IN SOUTHERN QUÉBEC

At Appalachian Corridor, we support owners who want to preserve biodiversity on their land. We help a network of local conservation groups by sharing our expertise in science, management and implementation of conservation programs.

» In 2017-2018, Appalachian Corridor was actively involved in the conclusion of **4 notarized contracts**, and added **187.6 ha** of protected areas on its territory of action. This, in addition to the **195 ha** of Parc des Sommets, brings the total to **13,225 ha** of protected areas on private land over our territory.

- Conclusion of **2 land donations** with our Affiliate Members: 70 ha with Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS), and 11 ha with Brome Lake Land Foundation;

- **2 acquisitions** by Appalachian Corridor :

- 93.6 ha in Missisquoi Nord River
- 13 ha in the Au Saumon River sector, citizens involvement allowed for the protection of an area adjacent to the Réserve naturelle du Lac-Bran-de-Scie;

- Significant support to the conservation project of Bromont's Parc des Sommets, in cooperation with NCC, Ville de Bromont, and the Société de conservation du Mont-Brome.

» **3 applications for the designation of Nature Reserves** presented to Québec's ministère du Développement durable de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques in the Eastman, Orford and Brome Lake sectors, for a total of **106.8 ha**;

» 15 other land conservation projects are well underway; completion is expected in 2018-2019;



Announcement of the Versants de Saint-Étienne newly protected area, with the Honourable Denis Paradis, MP for Brome-Missisquoi.



With NCC, significant support for Bromont's Parc des Sommets project.

A HAT TRICK FOR MADAME PÂQUET



Françoise Bricault, from CVS, Madame Pâquet and Clément Robidoux, biologist at Appalachian Corridor.

Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS) and Appalachian Corridor contributed to the protection in perpetuity of more than 70 ha (over 170 acres) in East Bolton. This new protected area is the third ecological gift from Ms. Ann Pâquet, and CVS is now its sole owner. Over time, Ms. Pâquet forged strong bonds of trust with local conservation groups; this is why 80.6 ha located in a sector of great ecological value are now protected.

"It is because all these people inspired trust that I developed a great interest for nature and that I now donate these 70 hectares to CVS, to protect them in perpetuity" said Ms. Pâquet.

MOBILIZATION IN ORFORD

Thanks to the joint efforts of its citizens, a 32-acre lot (13 ha) was protected in Orford. Aware of the ecological importance of that land and sensitive to the aspirations of the citizens' group, Appalachian Corridor helped realize this wonderful project.

Marie Boivin, mayor of Orford, had this to say: "This is an exceptional initiative and I am proud to witness the involvement of our community. Nature is part of Orford's DNA and this group of citizens took measures to protect their part of the country. Bravo! I hope this initiative will have a snowball effect and that other citizens will work to conserve a maximum of wildlands throughout our territory."



Orford citizens got together to protect the Collins-Le Havre d'Orford area.

RÉSERVE NATURELLE DES MONTAGNES-VERTES: MANAGEMENT, IMPROVED ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION

- Management and monitoring of the 7,000 ha territory within the réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes (RNMV), owned by NCC: patrolling the trails and protected area;
- Annual follow-up of two research projects with the Université du Québec à Montréal: a study on the distribution of forest species in relation to climate change, and a study on evolutionary ecology of Eastern chipmunks;
- Improved access to and interpretation in the Étang aux Castors sector;
- Validation of PENS hiking trails: a section in the Dos d'original area and another in the Round Top area.



ACQUIRING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TERRITORY'S ECOLOGY

Acquiring knowledge is at the heart of the Appalachian Corridor initiative. An experienced team of biologists, along with bio-ecology technicians, complete ecological surveys and monitor species at risk. The GIS department supports this work and conducts analyses to target intervention priorities.

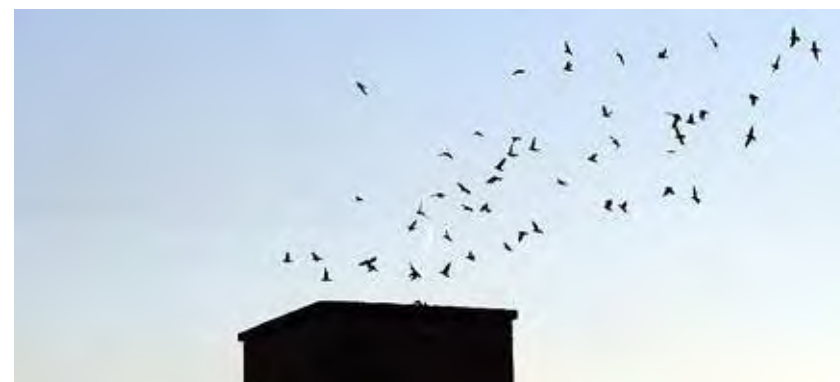
- » 14 ecological surveys on as many properties, to help guide owners in their conservation efforts;
- » Monitoring species at risk, including the Cougar, Peregrine Falcon, Bicknell's Thrush, Chimney Swift, Golden-winged Warbler (in partnership with the Club des ornithologues de Brome-Missisquoi), Four-toed Salamander, Monarch and Wood Turtle;
- » Efforts towards the recovery of several populations of species at risk;
- » Surveys, awareness and protection activities for the Chimney Swift in Sutton, Bromont and Brome Lake;
- » Collaboration with species recovery groups, especially for the Wood Turtle;
- » West Bolton collective: completion of 10 brief ecological assessments and production of a synthetic report for the whole territory under study.



A Monarch caterpillar on Common milkweed



Turtle discovery on the Missisquoi River



Chimney Swifts returning home

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR HELPS TURTLES CROSS THE ROAD IN BOLTON-EST

Appalachian Corridor contributed to the installation of a crossing structure for turtles and other small animals on the section of Route 245 that crosses Peasley Pond in Bolton-Est, in partnership with Quebec's ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports (MTMDET) and ministère de la Faune, des Forêts et des Parcs (MFFP). This is the first crossing of its kind developed by the MTMDET in Quebec. This area had been documented by Appalachian Corridor as a hotspot for turtle collisions, including species listed as threatened. Fences were installed on both sides of the road to direct turtles towards the crossing. The MTMDET took advantage of a scheduled culvert rehabilitation to integrate this wildlife passage with the road infrastructure.

In his specific case, there are two crossings: an aquatic passage and a terrestrial passage. The aquatic passage (6.6 ft x 6.6 ft) consists of a prefabricated concrete box culvert, while the terrestrial underpass consists of a 20 in. x 12.6 in. polymer concrete tunnel with open slots on the top to let the light in. Fencing on both sides of the road guides turtles and other small animals to these passages.

Peasley Pond is a key habitat for turtles given the proximity of the Missisquoi Nord River as well as surrounding wetlands and terrestrial habitats used as nesting sites. During turtle egg-laying season in late spring and early summer, females move away from the water in search of a sandy or gravelly place to bury their eggs. Unfortunately, our roadsides and their gravel shoulders are popular places for females looking to lay eggs.

Observations of turtle roadkills along Route 245 were reported for a number of years. In response, Appalachian Corridor started to document these sightings and reported the situation to the MTMDET. The MTMDET used a scheduled replacement for an aging culvert on one of the road sections identified as a turtle roadkill hotspot to address this issue. Appalachian Corridor partnered with the MTMDET, assisting with project development and committing to monitor and document the use of the new wildlife crossings, in partnership with the MFFP.



A Snapping Turtle prepares to lay eggs on the roadside



Thanks to this crossing with slots letting the light in, turtles can safely cross the road



Route 245 in Bolton-Est crosses Peasley Pond, an important habitat for turtles

SUPPORTING LOCAL DRIVING FORCES ON CONSERVATION ISSUE

Appalachian Corridor continues to deploy conservation activities within its territory of action by providing leadership along with technical, communication, scientific and financial support to 17 local organizations, all committed to protect the region's natural habitats. We also work closely with our national partner Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC).

- » Support provided to the Société de conservation du Corridor naturel de la rivière au Saumon - Orford;
- » 11 planning meetings with 9 of the 15 Affiliate Members actively involved in conservation;
- » Attendance at 7 of our Affiliate Members' Annual General Meetings (AGM);
- » Participation in or attendance at meetings and AGMs held by other organizations (municipalities, Réseau de milieux naturels protégés, Fondation SÉTHY);
- » Training sessions on conservation tools offered in English;
- » Faune sans frontières (in partnership with FFVR): created, held and led 2 workshops;
- » Organization of a networking cocktail for Affiliate Members to provide updates on personal servitude, taxation issues and various financing programs;
- » Continuation of the work done by the regional and national committees to solve the problem of municipal taxation of protected areas on private land;
- » Hiring of two interns in the Summer of 2017 to help 8 of our Affiliate Members monitor 38 of their protected areas;



Presentation by Véronique Thibault, our Partnership Coordinator, during the Affiliate Members' cocktail



SCCNRS' new Board of Directors



Monitoring Affiliate Members' protected areas



Announcement, with CVS, of the new protected area donated by Ms. Ann Pâquet

PROMOTING THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL AREAS AND INFLUENCING LAND-USE PLANNING

One of our most important objectives is to encourage better consideration of biodiversity in land-use planning. Among other things, we wish to **promote the integration of our landscape-scale ecological network** in regional land-use and development plans as well as town plans.

- Continuation of Appalachian Corridor's Highway 10 project in partnership with Université de Sherbrooke, Concordia University, the MTMDET and the MFFP. This project aims to ensure the sustainability of natural linkages between large forest blocks either side of Highway 10, an improved permeability for wide-ranging mammal species and a reduction of wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- Several meetings with the municipalities of Eastman, Brome Lake, Stukely-Sud, West Bolton and Bolton-Est, to promote the integration of natural corridors in town planning.

A CONFERENCE LARGER THAN WILDLIFE!



Appalachian Corridor hosted and was the main organizer for the Conference on Road Ecology & Climate Change Adaptation held October 23rd - 25th in Québec City. Almost 220 participants registered and attended over 40 presentations and a fieldtrip.

A number of issues were addressed regarding climate change including wildlife, partnerships, land-use planning, structure design and development, ATV trails location, citizen science, funding and much more. Partners from many fields got involved to make this Conference possible: MTMDET, MFFP, MDDELCC, Fondation de la faune du Québec, Quebec Center for Biodiversity Science (QCBS), Association des biologistes du Québec (ABQ), Ontario Road Ecology Group (OREG), Two Countries, One Forest, ARC Solutions Inc., Nature Conservancy Canada and Nature Québec.



The Conference attracted more than 200 participants



The conference's steering and program committees



Visit of an innovative wildlife fence

INFORMING AND RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

During meetings with its partners and the public, Appalachian Corridor informs and raises awareness to individuals, groups and organizations about the importance of protecting natural habitats. We offer support strategies to protect biodiversity in the Appalachians of Southern Québec. The following activities were conducted over the last year:

- » 51 articles mentioning Appalachian Corridor in national media (Le Devoir, Le Journal de Montréal, La Presse and regional publications (La Tribune, La Voix de l'est, Le Reflet du lac), 12 press releases, 4 radio and 4 television interviews;
- » Publications of 6 articles by Appalachian Corridor in specialized periodicals: Le Jaseur (publication by the Société de loisirs ornithologiques de l'Estrie), In Vivo (journal of the Association des biologistes du Québec); Le Progrès forestier (publication by the Association forestière du Sud du Québec); Forêt de chez nous; Staying Connected's Newsletter, etc.;
- » 16 presentations and participation as exhibitors in 6 conferences, forums and meetings related to our activities;
- » 226 Facebook posts (news, vignettes about wildlife, events, etc.): 1,112 followers;
- » Two issues of Appalachian Corridor's newsletter, distributed to 11,000 households (printed version) and 1,000 more sent by email.



Biologist Caroline Daguét tells Mansonville children about the Chimney swifts living in their school's chimney



Mylène Alarie leads a nature rally

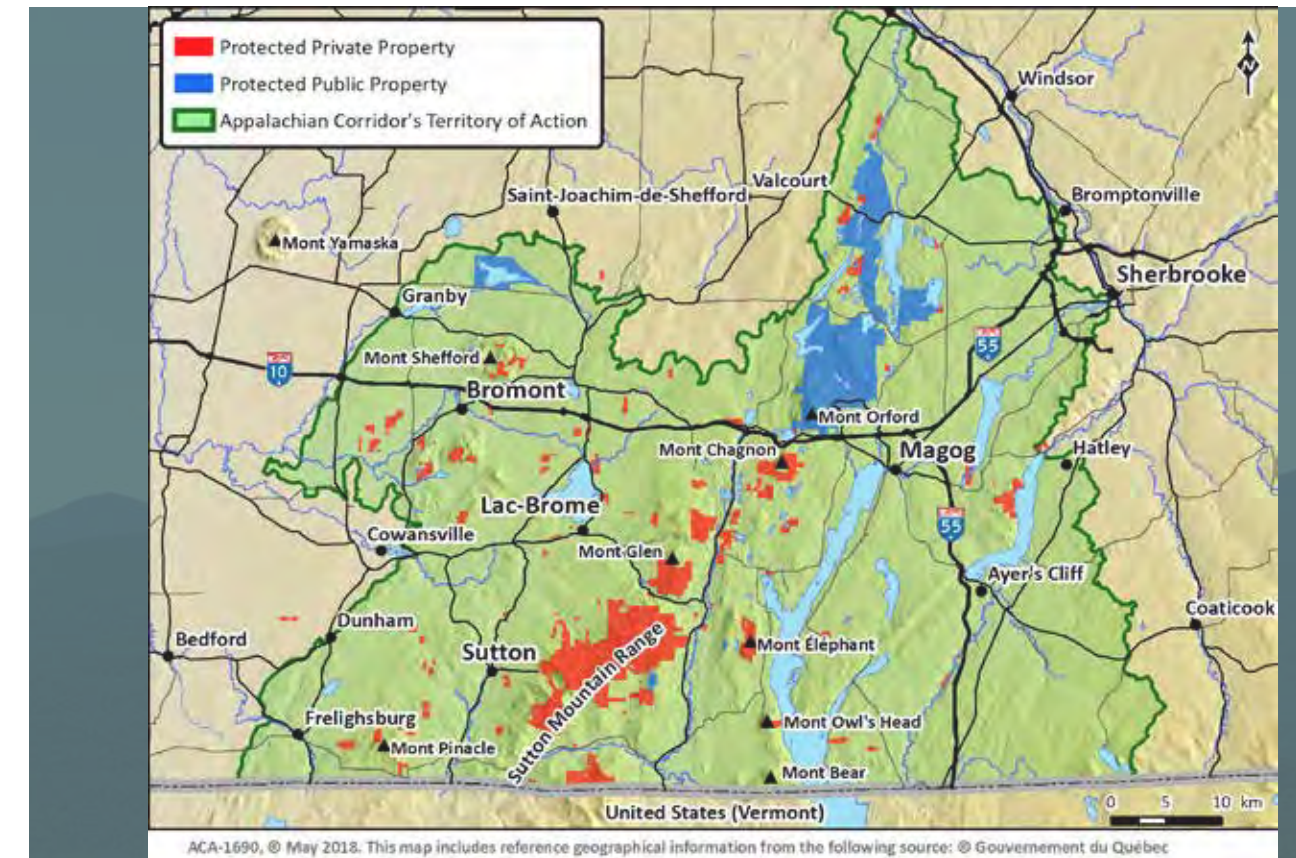
A VICTORY FOR SOS MONT HERFORD COALITION

Last year, Appalachian Corridor joined the SOS Mont Hereford Coalition, together with Nature Québec, the Réseau de milieux naturels protégés and the Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Estrie to organize a citizen mobilization campaign in order to stop the passage of Hydro-Québec's local section of the Northern Pass through Mount Hereford's protected area. The Coalition demanded that Hydro-Québec bypass Mount Hereford and bury the line over 15 km to save this protected area and its landscape, and to respect neighbouring communities. Mission accomplished! Hydro-Québec accepted to bury the line and to take the protected area seriously. Appalachian Corridor welcomes this positive outcome and is proud of its significant contribution. Mount Hereford's Conservation Area was created through the largest private land legacy in Quebec by the Tillotson family. The future of conservation on private land in Southern Quebec was really at stake.



Appalachian Corridor thanks the 11,000 people who signed SOS Hereford's petition. Without citizen support, this fight would have been impossible. We also thank singer-songwriter Richard Séguin, local officials, representatives, political parties (PQ, QS) and, more specifically, liberal MNA Guy Hardy and Minister Luc Fortin, who supported this cause against Hydro-Québec in a difficult context.

PROTECTED AREAS ON APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR TERRITORY



Protected areas on private land
13,225 ha

Protected areas on public land
11,795 ha

Total percentage of protected areas on our territory of action
7,2 %

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR'S TEAM



Appalachian Corridor's employees and several Board Members met in the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes for a winter hike.



Corridor appalachien
Appalachian Corridor



WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING DONORS:

Major Donations

Power Corporation du Canada

Important Donations

Agropur coopérative, Victor and Elisabeth Allistone, Michel Auclair, Banque nationale, BMO, Camso, Carbonleo, Jean-Marc Eustache, KDC Knowlton, Louise Penny, RBC and Robert Tessier.

Special Donations

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