



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**MOUNT FOSTER PROTECTED FOREVER
TOGETHER, WE SAVED THE MOUNTAIN**

June 29, 2020, Eastman, Quebec – Appalachian Corridor is proud to announce the acquisition of most of Mount Foster for the purpose of establishing a protected area. The protection in perpetuity will allow future generations to enjoy this exceptional natural environment. Completing this project means that the most sensitive species and ecosystems are protected forever. The Appalachian Corridor team has worked very hard to achieve optimal conservation gains. We also doubled the effort to tie up the financing package. We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to all partners and donors who supported the project until the end. Together, we moved heaven and earth and saved the mountain!

The protection of Mount Foster benefits everyone, thanks to the simple beauty of its landscapes all well as the many ecological services it provides to local communities. The conservation project provides access to a site of high ecological value through a trail network leading to the Scout Tower. This being said, the 3,5 km loop is not quite ready for us to enjoy: we have to wait until summer 2021 for the inauguration. Appalachian Corridor is committed to plan, develop and maintain the trail network with as little ecological impact as possible, and this takes time.

The Mount Foster project has truly rallied the local communities. Nearly 250 donors contributed towards the acquisition of the property, an unprecedented mobilization in the history of the organization. The deadline was tight since the transaction had to be concluded by December 31st 2019. The communities responded quickly, generously and enthusiastically! Appalachian Corridor warmly thanks everyone who made this project possible, especially the municipalities of West Bolton and Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton, who have been involved throughout the process. Appalachian Corridor applauds their exemplary work in this regard.

Let's recall that the real estate project originally planned on Mount Foster had raised the ire of local citizens and Appalachian Corridor. A high number of houses was planned in this ecologically rich and diverse area. After years of negotiation, Appalachian Corridor reached an agreement to protect the land in September 2018.

Sensitive Species and Habitats

Strategically located in the heart of the Northern Green Mountains, the protected area is another step towards the preservation of unfragmented natural habitats for mammals with large home ranges (ex. moose, bobcat, black bear, fisher), meso- and micromammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles. Amongst the many species, stream salamanders, including Spring Salamander and Northern Dusky Salamander, find quality habitats on Mount Foster. The Spring Salamander is designated vulnerable under the *Act Respecting Threatened Or Vulnerable Species* (Québec), while being designated as threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) (Canada). The Northern Dusky Salamander is

likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable under the *Act Respecting Threatened Or Vulnerable Species*. Other species in a precarious situation were confirmed on site: the Pickerel Frog (likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec), the Canada Warbler (threatened under SARA), the Wood Thrush (threatened under SARA) and the Eastern Wood-Pewee (a concern under SARA). A total of 53 bird species have been identified.

This conservation project was made possible thanks to the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques's fund granted to Nature Conservancy of Canada's "Ensemble pour la nature" (PEPN) project. The Government of Canada helped finance the project through its Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) funded by the Canada Nature Fund and the Land Trust Conservation Fund. Appalachian Corridor also highlights the contributions of the following funding partners: US Fish and Wildlife Service, Echo Foundation, Fondation de la Faune du Québec and Sweet Water Trust.

CITATIONS

"The team worked very hard to achieve optimal conservation gains. We rolled up our sleeves to get all the funds necessary. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all our funding partners and generous donors who have supported the project all the way through. Together we moved heaven and earth and saved the mountain!"

- Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director, Appalachian Corridor

"We are extremely touched by the exceptional commitment to the Mount Foster project. Our deadline was very tight, we didn't have quite two months to raise the \$500,000. The communities responded quickly, generously and enthusiastically: we would like to thank all those who made this larger-than-life project possible."

- Marie-José Auclair, President, Appalachian Corridor Board

"In order to meet the climate challenge, Quebec must protect its natural environments in significant proportions. In that spirit, today's announcement for the protection of much of Mount Foster is good news. Congratulations to Appalachian Corridor for its perseverance! The Government of Quebec is pleased to participate in this initiative through the Nature Conservancy of Canada's *Ensemble pour la nature* project."

- Benoit Charette, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

"I would like to congratulate Appalachian Corridor for conserving Mont Foster here in Quebec. This forested land protects biodiversity and ensures that Canadians can connect with nature—now and for generations to come. Through the Canada Nature Fund's Natural Heritage Conservation Program, we are working with partners across the country on conservation projects like this one to achieve our goal of conserving a quarter of Canada's land by 2025."

- The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

"More than ever, protecting the environment is at the heart of our priorities. Congratulations to the Appalachian Corridor organization for all its work that led to the protection of 215 hectares of wooded land in the Green Mountains. The proof is in the pudding: it is by working together that we can ensure the protection of nature and the species at risk that depend on it. Brome–Missisquoi is lucky to be able to count on such a dynamic organization that really makes things happen."

- Lyne Bessette, Member of Parliament for Brome–Missisquoi

“Thank you to the Municipality of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton for agreeing to include a large area of its territory in this conservation project and to the Appalachian Corridor team and the owners of the land. However, I would like to give a special mention to the people of West Bolton who spoke in favour of this wonderful project that we are celebrating today. Many thanks!”

- Jacques Drolet, Mayor of Bolton-Ouest

“The outcome of this project is of great importance to the citizens of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton who are committed to the protection of the exceptional environment that is Mount Foster; they have demonstrated it by their generous contribution to the financing of the project. Not only will citizens be able to continue to enjoy this exceptional site, but it will be protected forever. Thanks to all the Appalachian Corridor team!”

- Michèle Turcotte, Mayor of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton

HIGHLIGHTS

- The new protected area covers **215 hectares** (531,28 acres) in the heart of a forest massif in the Green Mountains, representing three quarters of the area initially targeted by the real estate project;
- Communities will have access to a site of high ecological value through **hiking trails and access to the Scout Tower**;
- The project consolidates a **broad cross-border conservation initiative** from Vermont to Mount Orford;
- This conclusion **ends a long-standing conflict** by reconciling real estate development and the conservation of natural environments.

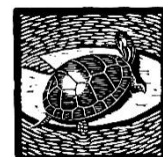
This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
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Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Québec 



SWEET WATER TRUST

ABOUT

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 2002 with a mission to protect natural areas in the Appalachian region of Southern Québec. Through the implementation of a cross-border conservation strategy, Appalachian Corridor works with local communities to maintain and restore a way of life that respects the ecology of the region from a perspective of sustainable development. <http://www.corridorappalachien.ca/en/>

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a public-private partnership designed to support the creation of new protected and conservation areas through the acquisition of private lands and rights to them. Launched with a \$100 million investment from the Government of Canada, the program is administered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), with contributions from partners like Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canadian conservation community.

The **Ensemble pour la nature (PEPN) project** is a three-year, \$15 million grant to NCC from the Department of Environment and Climate Change. It aims to establish financial partnerships and acquire scientific knowledge to ensure the conservation and protection of natural environments on private lands in Quebec by March 31, 2020. It thus tends to create solidarity with protected areas by encouraging the Quebec community to take action to protect the environment.

– 30 –

Source :

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