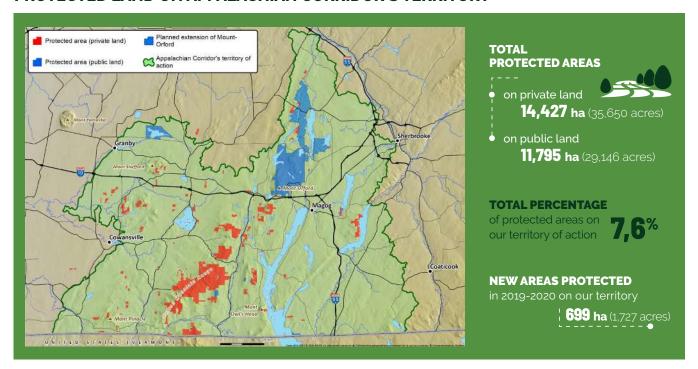


2019-2020



PROTECTED LAND ON APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR'S TERRITORY



Mission

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 transborder 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.

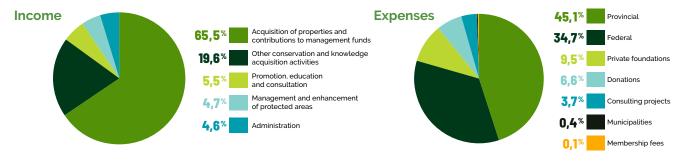
Vision

We plan to increase protected acreage in core conservation areas, buffer zones, natural corridors and biodiversity hotspots by means of conservation agreements. Our efforts are also oriented toward the protection of forests, wetlands and biodiversity as a whole, and the development of stewardship projects on protected properties.

SIX MAIN OBJECTIVES

- > Protect natural areas in perpetuity
- > Acquire and share knowledge of the territory's ecology
- > Enhance selected protected areas
- > Support local driving forces on conservation issues
- > Inform and educate on the importance of the natural heritage
- > Promote the conservation of natural areas and influence land-use planning

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW Balanced budget of \$3 million



A word from the president

Although the world is running at a slower pace at the moment, our team is not! More than ever, Appalachian Corridor - thanks to its 17 Affiliate members and partners - is making every effort to advance its mission: to protect natural environments in the Appalachian region of southern Quebec.

More specifically, we completed the acquisition and protection of Mount Foster last December and, over the winter, began the process of acquiring new office space for our growing team. In the process, it's also been increasingly evident that Appalachian Corridor's expertise in nature conservation can benefit all communities, RCMs and municipalities which find themselves faced with increasingly pressing issues in terms of biodiversity conservation.

The period we are going through is undoubtedly revealing in this regard, with many believing the loss of biodiversity is at the root cause of the health crisis we are experiencing and that this situation is inseparable from human actions that deteriorate natural

habitats. Will we seize this historic opportunity for humanity to rethink how to occupy space and enjoy the riches of the Earth all the while respecting and protecting it?

In this context, Appalachian Corridor's mission is more crucial than ever for the future of humanity. In these uncertain times, it is crucial to be creative and engaged.

May we all rise together and, coming out of this crisis, be more connected than ever to the life that surrounds us.





A word from the executive director

The year 2019-2020 has been marked by several successes for the Appalachian Corridor team in terms of advancing our mission within our territory of action.

Some of the successes we are particularly proud of for this fiscal year include the acquisition of 215 hectares (531 acres) on Mount Foster and the protection in perpetuity of eight other properties with our partners, bringing the total area under conservation on our territory to 14,427 hectares (35,650 acres).

Another highlight this year was the confirmation of a new and very important grant we received from the federal government under the "Community nominated priority places for species at risk". Our project for Quebec's Green Mountains qualified for this grant and we now have a new asset in hand to rally even more players in the preservation of our most fragile habitats and species. This grant will allow us to build on past successes and consolidate our efforts with our multiple regional partners who also play an essential role in achieving our mission.

From an organizational standpoint, 2019-2020 saw Appalachian Corridor **strengthened its structure** to better position itself in the face of the many opportunities likely to emerge in the near future. We appointed Clément Robidoux as Director of Conservation and Martine Ruel as Director of Stewardship

and Partnerships, in addition to hiring key staff members who bring new expertise to our team.

The year ended on a destabilizing note for the entire community with the arrival of COVID-19. This event reminded us of the inextricable link between public health and the environment. I am proud of how the Appalachian Corridor team reacted to this new context by being resilient and adapting to the circumstances to ensure the continuity of our activities in complete safety. I am optimistic about the future, knowing that we have the tools in place to turn these challenges into opportunities.



Thank you, dear readers, supporters, partners, donors, owners. I hope you will find in this report the energy and inspiration that drives us day after day to continue our work.



Board of directors

MARIE-JOSÉ AUCLAIR, President
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MARIE-CLAIRE PLANET, Delegate for Western affiliate members

FRANÇOISE BRICAULT, Delegate for Eastern affiliate members

PROTECT Natural areas in perpetuity Conserving natural environments through the creation of protected areas on private land is at the heart of Appalachian Corridor's actions. Most of our efforts and resources are dedicated to these efforts.



General Section 1 CONSERVATION PROJECTSwere completed and signed before a notary for a total of

View from the summit of Mount Shefford. © Denise Papineau.

699 ha (1,727 acres)

OF NEW PROTECTED AREAS in perpetuity this year

and a cumulative
HISTORICAL
total of

14,427 ha (35,650 acres)

- A land acquisition in favour of Massawippi Conservation Trust (MCT) (150 ha or 370 acres)
- A land acquisition in favour of Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS) in the natural corridor connecting Mount Chagnon to Mount Orford (9 ha or 22 acres)
- A land acquisition for part of the value (with recognized donation to the Ecological Gifts Program) in favour of Appalachian Corridor in the sector of the natural corridor connecting Mount Chagnon to Mount Orford (6 ha or 15 acres)
- A land acquisition by Appalachian Corridor on Mount Foster (215 ha or 531 acres)

- > Two conservation servitude donations, one at Mount Pinnacle in favor of the Mount Pinnacle Land Trust (MPLT) (79 ha or 195 acres) and one on Mount Shefford in favor of Appalachian Corridor (17 ha or 42 acres)
- > Three projects led by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) in southern Sutton and in the Bolton Pass (223 ha or 551 acres)

Three new requests for recognition of nature reserve status were submitted during the year for an area over 188 hectares, including the Parc-du-Mont-Bellevue Nature Reserve in Sherbrooke

Twenty-nine active projects were initiated by owners who are moving towards conservation projects in perpetuity

Seven of them should be concluded in 2020-2021 for a potential of 616 ha (1,522 acres)

ACQUIRE AND SHARE

Knowledge of the territory's ecology

Acquiring knowledge is the cornerstone on which all of our conservation actions are based. This is an essential part of determining where to focus our efforts as well as understanding the evolution of the territory's wildlife and plant populations.

Peregrine Falcon (juvenile) © Dreamstime



Twenty ecological surveys on as many properties

- > These surveys were carried out in the sectors of Sutton, the Missisquoi River valley, Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton, Glen-Bolton, Bunker Hill as well as mounts Orford, Brome, Pinnacle, and Chagnon
- > These ecological surveys led to the discovery of habitats for species at risk, including several species of bats and salamanders
- Results from these surveys informed the decision-making process with landowners regarding their conservation projects and helped to justify the ecological value of these properties to our financial partners

OTHER KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION PROJECTS



- Validation of ecological corridors in the Alfred-Desrochers sector of the Canton d'Orford municipality
- Validation of ecological corridors in the South Stukely/ West Bolton sector
- Monitoring of ten permanent plots for alien invasive plant species (for the MELCC)
- Monitoring of turtle mortality on Route 245 and the effectiveness of turtle crossings at Peasley Pond
- Research project on animal mortality in connection with Highway 10 (with Concordia University)
- Identification of the ecological network for the territory of the Memphrémagog RCM
- Characterization of wetlands (and riparian areas) for a certificate of authorization request (for the Sutton Natural Environment Park)
- > Bat surveys along listening routes to confirm the presence of hibernacula

OUR EFFORTS TO MONITOR SPECIES AT RISK FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES

- Validation of historical occurrences of a plant species listed as endangered in Canada and monitoring of recovery activities (seeding) carried out in 2018 for two populations of the same species
- > Monitoring of two peregrine falcon nesting sites
- > Monitoring the wood turtle population of the Sutton River
- > Search for chimney swift nesting sites and roosts
- Control of European buckthorn in a golden-winged warbler habitat
- > Monitoring the Bicknell's thrush population on the Round Top in Sutton



Wood turtle © Marc Lepage

Bicknell's Trush © Richard Guillet

Spotlight on an inspiring collective achievement



At the end of 2019, Appalachian Corridor succeeded in concluding a tour de force: the acquisition of 215 hectares (531 acres) of natural environment located at Mount Foster for the purpose of constituting a protected area. Efforts to secure this site of great ecological wealth which offers a magnificent view of the Green Mountain range, was a project seven years in the making.

"The protection of Mount Foster is above all the result of an unprecedented mobilization of the community, which brought together more than 230 donors. It is a wonderful collective gift for today and for future generations," explains Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director of Appalachian Corridor.

Mount Foster is an essential milestone in the protection of a great natural linkage connecting the Sutton mountain range to Mount-Orford National Park. As part of the project, the Appalachian Corridor team worked very hard to reach optimal gains in terms of environmental conservation and to lead the financial structure essential to complete the transaction.

The real estate project initially submitted on Mount Foster had raised the ire of citizens and Appalachian Corridor, especially considering the high number of planned residences, the great ecological wealth of the environment and its strategic location at the heart of Quebec's Green Mountain range. After several years of negotiations for the protection of the area, Appalachian Corridor reached an agreement with the developers in September 2018.

The Mount Foster project awakened a real commitment from surrounding communities. Indeed, in addition to government grants, 230 donors directly contributed to financing the acquisition of the property - an unprecedented mobilization in the history of our organization. The deadline was very tight since the organization had to sign the deeds by December 31st, 2019.

Appalachian Corridor thanks all who made this project possible. The municipalities of Bolton-Ouest and Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton were also involved throughout the process to ensure that both nature and citizens came first. Appalachian Corridor salutes their exemplary work in this regard. Together, we moved heaven and earth and saved the mountain!

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





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

Focus on new developments in knowledge acquisition this year



An exciting new development in 2019 within Appalachian Corridor's biology team was the start of a structured monitoring of bats on our territory.

This project, which was made possible thanks to a collaboration with Conservation chauve-souris des Cantons-de-l'Est (CCSCE), was launched in the hope of confirming the presence of bat species on ten properties targeted by Appalachian Corridor for future conservation projects.

In 2006, the white-nose syndrome affecting bat species in Europe first appeared in North America. In Quebec, this disease was first detected in 2010. According to data from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSE-WIC), approximately 94% of the tri-coloured bat population, 98% of little brown myotis and 99.8% of northern myotis are believed to have died from this devastating disease.

In order to find out more about the use of our territory by bats and to better understand the impact of the white-nose syndrome on bat populations in the region, Appalachian Corridor started to install bat detectors on most of the lands on which we carry out our ecological surveys.

Much to the team's delight, survey results showed that the majority of properties targeted by ecological surveys, as well as their surrounding environments, hosted bat populations. This discovery helped us raise awareness with landowners regarding the bats' presence on their property and recommend a number of actions to protect and promote the growth of bat populations.

Equipped with an arsenal of ultrasonic detectors, Victor Grivegnée-Dumoulin (our bat biologist), discovered a total of seven species of bats in our region. In addition, Appalachian Corridor was able to confirm the presence of a natural hibernaculum (winter habitat for bats) on its territory. Site exploration also led to the identification of several other potential hibernacula that will be targeted for survey in the spring and fall of 2020.

An invitation has been extended to local residents, through Appalachian Corridor newsletter, to identify other potential hibernacula in the area. Long-term monitoring of these hibernacula is planned in order to document the evolution of bat populations using these sites.

The census and conservation of bats are essential to establish their continued presence in our region and to promote their role in the balance of our ecosystems.



A bat can eat between 100 and 600 insects per hour! Appalachian Corridor's territory is home to all eight species of bats present throughout Quebec.





Management of the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes (RNMV)

- > Surveillance of the entire property (over 70 km²)
- > Creation of a position of inspector / reserve warden in Sutton
- > Recruitment of new volunteer patrollers in four RNMV sectors
- > New posting on all dangerous bridges



Enhancement of Mount Foster: Trail planning

> Planning initiated for four kilometres of trail and new trailhead infrastructures

Development of the Singer sector (RMNV): Trail maintenance and repair

- > Upgrade and improvement of trails and outdoor activity sites
- > Improvements at the trailhead: new parking with seven spaces (in addition to the three already in place), picnic table and new welcome signs
- On the trails: upgrades, repair of walkways and bridge areas, addition of new benches, etc.

Supervision of volunteer patrollers

Purchase of equipment, supervision, training of twelve volunteers. In total, 150 hours of volunteering were carried out, particularly on the trails of the Singer sector of the RMNV





Ongoing support for our network of 17 affiliate members

- Nine joint project planning meetings with eight of our affiliate members
- Participation in five annual general meetings hosted by our affiliates, two of which featuring a presentation by Appalachian Corridor



were visited as part of our **PROTECTED AREA**Monitoring and Stewardship Assistance Program

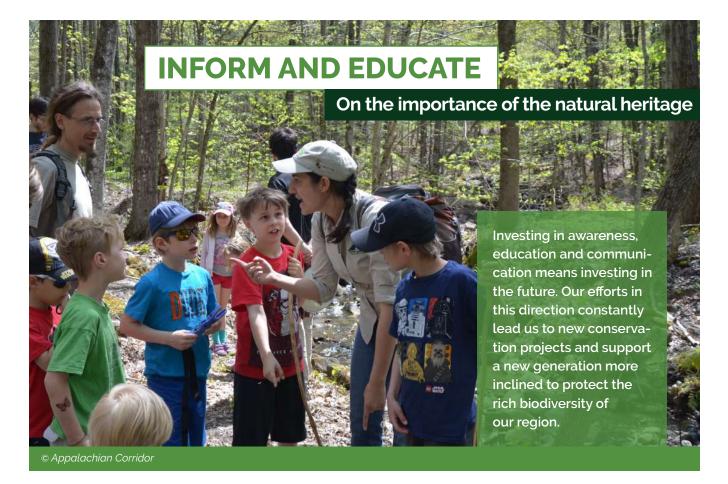
Organization of two training sessions for our affiliate members

- Management and monitoring of protected areas (12 participants)
- > Governance of charitable organizations (26 participants)
- These events organized by Appalachian Corridor provided more tools to our Affiliate members and supported their efforts in capacity-building



Coordination of a new partnership project, "The Northern Green Mountains: Towards land use planning for the protection and recovery of species at risk", in collaboration with eight regional partners

- Nature Conservancy of Canada, Granby Zoo, OBV Yamaska, COGESAF, SÉTHY Foundation, Eastern Townships Bat Conservation, QuébecOiseaux and the Réseau des milieux naturels protégés (RMN)
- The main objectives of this three-year project are to protect species at risk, implement action plans for each species, and ensure ecological connectivity is taken into account by municipal authorities





Communication

- Upgrades to Appalachian Corridor's website in the spring of 2019
- Improved look and feel for our printed newsletter and distribution of more than 11,000 copies by mail across our territory of action in the summer 2019 and winter 2020
- Production of eight electronic newsletters shared with our network of partners and donors
- Four articles written and published in various specialized media

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Regular publications on our

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM PAGES

with a growing community of readers

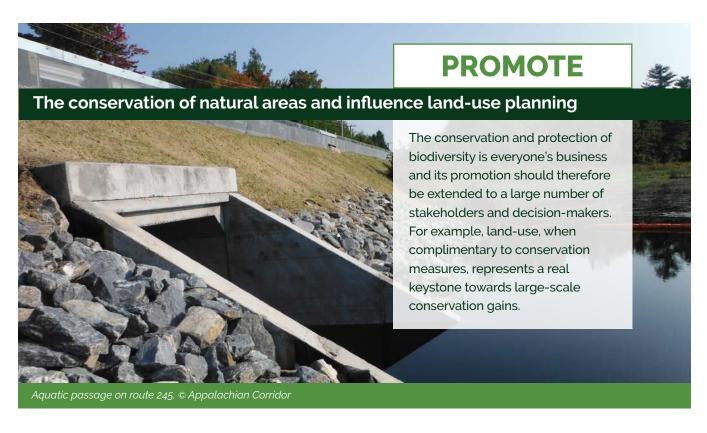
AND OVER 1,500 FOLLOWERS

Media relations

- > Two press conferences
- > Five press releases issued by Appalachian Corridor
- > More than 20 articles mentioning Appalachian Corridor and our projects in the written media
- > Nearly a dozen interviews for TV and radio shows

Education

- Nature Rallies held in Eastman, Lawrenceville, Austin and Orford in the summer of 2019. The activities, which reached a total of 80 youths, consisted of bringing environment- and ecology-oriented activities and awareness through day camps
- Conception of a "biodiversity" series for a fun and stimulating learning tool designed for students ages 5 to 12 years old



HIGHLIGHTS

Connectivity

- Continuation of the Highway 10 project which aims to improve connectivity and safeguard wildlife populations on both sides of this road
- Significant technical and financial support provided to Concordia University for the second phase of the small and medium-sized fauna research project
- Presentation of the Highway 10 connectivity project to several decision-makers, in particular Members of Parliament and employees of the Minister responsible for the Estrie region
- Establishment of a committee and start of a document to support municipalities in acknowledging connectivity

Mobilization

- Multiple representations with the provincial government to solicit increased investments in conservation on private lands, including close collaboration with a group of national partners. We also participated in the drafting of a brief which was submitted as part of budget consultations
- Meetings and awareness-building with four federal MPs as part of the "Nature Comes to the Hill" Day organized by Nature Canada

Town planning, development and consultations

- Collaboration and consulting projects with the municipalities of Bolton-Ouest, Stukely-Sud, Canton d'Orford and the Memphremagog RCM for the identification of ecological networks on their territory; this support was aimed at integrating these networks into future revisions of their respective urban plans as well as land-use and development plan
- Support provided to the municipality of Bolton-Ouest for a regulatory amendment aimed at the additional conservation of an area around the Mount Foster protected land
- Participation in consultations for new routes and/or expansion of existing lines with Hydro-Québec
- Several meetings with various municipalities throughout the territory to encourage better consideration of sensitive natural habitats or to initiate conservation projects on municipal land



NETWORK OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS



































NATIONAL PARTNER



FUNDING PARTNERS

- > Government of Canada
- > Government of Quebec
- ightarrow Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des régions (FARR Estrie)
- > Nature Conservancy of Canada
- > Sweet Water Trust
- > U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- > Fondation de la faune du Québec (FFQ)

- > Echo Foundation
- > TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- > Bird Protection Quebec
- > Wildlife Acoustics
- > Rando Québec
- > Municipalities of Bolton-Est, Stukely-Sud, Bolton-Ouest, Canton d'Orford and Austin



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