

LAND DONOR PROFILE

Vézina-Rioux Family



Photo (left to right): Mélanie Lelièvre and André Champoux (Appalachian Corridor) with Guy Rioux (donor) and Marie-José Auclair (president of Appalachian Corridor's board) following the signing of the official documents at the notary.

KEY FACTS

- Donors: Danielle Vézina and Guy Rioux
- Ecological donation of 16.86 hectares completed in December 2020
- Land located in the municipality of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton, Quebec
- Property donated to Appalachian Corridor for long term conservation efforts

Interview with Danielle Vézina and Guy Rioux

TELL US THE HISTORY OF YOUR LAND

We raised our children on the north shore of Montréal in Laval and St-Eustache to eventually move to the Montréal Downtown. In parallel, we had a chalet in the Magog sector and in 2010, we decided to purchase the land to enjoy great moments in a rural environment.

DESCRIBE THE PROPERTY AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE AREA

The land is mostly woodland and our initial objective was to exploit the forest. Over the last ten years, some trees were cut but only those sick - mostly thanks to the guidance of our neighbour who knew how to manage a forest without destroying it. We were urbanites so this learning was wonderful.

In recent times, and for health reasons, it became difficult for us to manage the forest. This new reality made us think about our future plans for the land.



Crowned Warbler (Adobestock).

When Appalachian Corridor reassured us that we and our children could continue to walk the forest, we became motivated to explore the perpetual conservation project.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS LAND AND WHAT DEFINES ITS ECOLOGICAL VALUE?

Most of us don't observe the details when we look at a forest. After the biologists' visit, we recognized the presence of an incredibly rich diversity! In fact, we had never seen some of the species they found! We had previously noticed the bear tracks on trees, the multiple deer trails, as well as the tracks made by porcupines as well as others we weren't able to identify.



Northern Dusky Salamander (Appalachian Corridor).

We were delighted to learn that the project will directly contribute to the protection of the habitat of the stream salamanders including the Northern Dusky Salamander (likely to be designated as threatened), as well as that of priority avian species such as the Black-throated Warbler, the Blue Warbler, the Crowned Warbler, the Black-and-White Warbler, and the Flicker Woodpecker. With respect to floral species, the protection of the land in perpetuity will be beneficial for the two-leafed tooth (*Cardamine diphylla*) and the ostrich-fern mattheuccia (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), both of which are designated vulnerable to harvest in Quebec.



A flicker woodpecker (André Champoux).

HOW DID THE IDEA OF PROTECTING THIS LAND IN PERPETUITY ARISE?

The idea of protecting this land was inspired by the beauty of the site, our desire to protect the life that surrounds us, to create an area of respite for the local fauna and to let the flora run its course, without having to plant, use pesticides, or harvest. We were also very well aware that the land could ultimately end up in the hands of a real estate developer which we saw as negative for the scenery and ecology.



Guy Rioux signing documents at the notary to finalize the donation of the land (André Champoux).

TELL US ABOUT THE PROCESS TO ACHIEVE THE PERPETUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAND?

The first step was to overcome the fear that the same outcome would happen as what we saw at Mont Orford, namely that a political group would wish to take over the environment initially formed by a group of donors. The second was to accept no longer being able to go to the land to collect a few trees.

As promised, we decided to remain owners of a portion of the land which gives access to the chemin grand-bois for our personal usage. The overall process took a few years but was very positive.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FINAL RESULT?

We are very happy to have done it and hope this decision will have an impact on the local biodiversity for many years to come.

The final results will depend of the actions that will be taken by others who will join the creation of ecological corridors for the mobility of animals and the protection of biodiversity. We are happy to have participated in this project which aims to protect the environment for generations to come.

Contact us to discuss your conservation project!
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