



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

MASSAWIPPI CONSERVATION TRUST ADDS 154 HECTARES (390 ACRES) TO PROTECT THE MASSAWIPPI VALLEY

Canton de Hatley, June 9, 2021– Massawippi Conservation Trust (MCT) is pleased to announce the acquisition of a new property to be protected in perpetuity in the Massawippi valley. The project is the fruit of a three-year collaboration with three siblings, who fulfilled their parents’ conservation dream by selling their forested and ecologically rich 154 hectares (390 acres) to the MCT in August of 2019.

The Massawippi Foundation and the Massawippi Conservation Trust are two charitable organizations that are respectively responsible for the funding and management of large, protected areas in the watershed of the Massawippi valley.

"After several years of negotiations with the Eberts family, the Trust was able to acquire the second largest parcel of land under our stewardship," explains Margot Heyerhoff, President of the Fondation Massawippi Foundation (FMF). "The addition of this property will enable us to preserve these pristine forests and ecologically important marshlands. The Foundation (FMF) and Trust (MCT) will also be building a new trail network on the sector which will be appreciated by the users of our trail system. We thank the family for their visionary collaboration," she adds.

A long-time resident of the region and a lover of nature, Jake Eberts was a Canadian Oscar-winning film producer, executive, and financier who purchased the land in 1990.

"Our family roots in this area began with our grandparents, Topy and Ted Eberts, who purchased a farmhouse on a small plot of land in the town of Katevale (now Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley) in 1966," tell the three Ebert children, Alexander, David, and Lindsay. "Our father, Jake, fell in love with the property and bought it from his parents in 1990, and inspired by his time spent in nature as a young boy, continued to add land around the original farmhouse in order to protect it and enhance its natural state."

In 2011, Mr. Eberts became one of the founding trustees of the FMF and began considering the possibility of one day perpetually protecting his land. However, he became ill shortly thereafter, passing away in 2012.

Conversations to perpetually protect the land continued with his widow, Fiona Eberts, until her unexpected death in 2014. Their three children recently decided to complete their parents’ conservation aspirations for the land through an arrangement with the MCT which includes the part-sale of the land combined with a part donation of 3.25 hectares (8 acres).



“It is with great pleasure that our family was able to complete a long-held dream of our late parents, Jake and Fiona, to transfer a part of our much-beloved family land to the Massawippi Conservation Trust to be protected and appreciated by future generations. Our family would like to acknowledge our contribution to the land, and we recognize and deeply appreciate the Abenaki historic connection to this place,” add the children.

PROTECTING ESSENTIAL HABITATS FOR SPECIES AT RISK

Named “Property # 9” by the MCT, the newly acquired land is home to several varieties of amphibians, birds, and vegetation of interest, all of which will benefit from the protection and conservation of the territory.

As part of their ecological assessment, Appalachian Corridor biologists found streams that provide quality habitat for two species of salamander that are in a precarious status, the Northern Dusky Salamander and the Spring Salamander. The Northern Dusky Salamander is likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec while the Spring salamander is already designated as vulnerable.

With respect to vegetation communities found on the property, there are mainly deciduous woodlands, particularly sugar maple stands, as well as several species vulnerable to harvesting, such as Northern Maidenhair Fern, Two-leaved Toothwort and Ostrich Fern. The land is also home to the Butternut, which is likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec and endangered in Canada, and the Appalachian Sedge which is a rare species.

In terms of bird species, the property’s large interior forests are deemed critical to maintaining populations of forest birds such as the Eastern Wood-Pewee, a species designated as of special concern in Canada.

“The moment our biologists set foot on the property, we recognized the great ecological richness of this environment for its many species and its tremendous relevance in improving the water quality of Lake Massawippi,” explains Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director for Appalachian Corridor. “At a regional scale, the protection of the Eberts land supports our efforts to create a wide natural ecological corridor enabling wildlife movements in the landscape and adapting to changes in their movements caused by climate change. We are grateful for the efforts led by MCT and salute the family’s commitment to honoring their parents’ legacy. It is an honour to be involved in this project and to have contributed to its realization,” she adds.

With this recent acquisition, the MCT increases the protected land under its stewardship to close to 485 hectares (1,200 acres) in the Massawippi watershed area where it has been working actively for the past ten years to conserve land in perpetuity adjacent to Lake Massawippi.

Appalachian Corridor brings the privately held protected land on its territory of action to 15 062 hectares (37 219 acres). The MCT has been an affiliate member of Appalachian Corridor since 2011.



ESSENTIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CREATE A GROWING NETWORK OF PERPETUALLY PROTECTED LAND

This project was made possible by generous private donations collected by the Massawippi Foundation and the Massawippi Conservation Trust (MCT). The Government of Quebec also provided support through the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Project Together for Nature (PEPN), to which the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change has provided \$15 million in financial assistance.

“The protection of natural areas, particularly those located on private lands in southern Quebec, help to enhance Quebec’s network of protected areas and also help to ensure the survival of many species at risk,” tells Benoit Charette, Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, Minister Responsible for the Fight Against Racism and Minister Responsible for the Laval Region. “In fact, some of these species were found on the territory part of this conservation project. I am proud to have helped to preserve the habitats for these species and to contribute to their survival thanks to the funding allocated to the Massawippi Trust, the Massawippi Foundation and Appalachian Corridor. Congratulations to the organisations involved in this wonderful project,” he concludes.

Appalachian Corridor received government funding which was provided by this program to grant MCT complimentary technical expertise for the ecological assessment process for the realisation of this project.

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ABOUT

MASSAWIPPI CONSERVATION TRUST (MCT)

The Massawippi Conservation Trust (MCT) is a registered charitable land trust founded in 2011 whose purpose is to conserve the natural state of the land adjacent to Lake Massawippi and its tributaries and to provide stewardship services for that land in perpetuity. The primary source of funds for the MCT comes via the Fondation Massawippi Foundation (FMF). The MCT protects land by acquisition through purchase or donation; establishing easements or servitudes on land; helping landowners understand the ecological and tax benefits of limiting the types of activities permitted on their land; helping landowners understand the potentially disastrous effect of over-development on the overall well-being of the Massawippi watershed. www.massawippi.org

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR

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. To date, Appalachian Corridor and its 17 members have allowed the perpetual protection of 15,062 hectares on our territory of action. corridorappalachien.ca



GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC – MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DE LA LUTTE CONTRE LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES : Projet Ensemble pour la Nature (PEPN)

Projet Ensemble pour la nature (PEPN) is a \$ 15 million, three-year grant to NCC from Quebec's ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques. It aims to establish financial partnerships and scientific research to ensure the conservation and protection of natural habitats on private lands in Quebec by March 31, 2020. It tends to create solidarity with respect to protected areas by encouraging the Quebec community to take action to preserve the environment.

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