



**TOGETHER
FOR NATURE AND
COMMUNITIES**

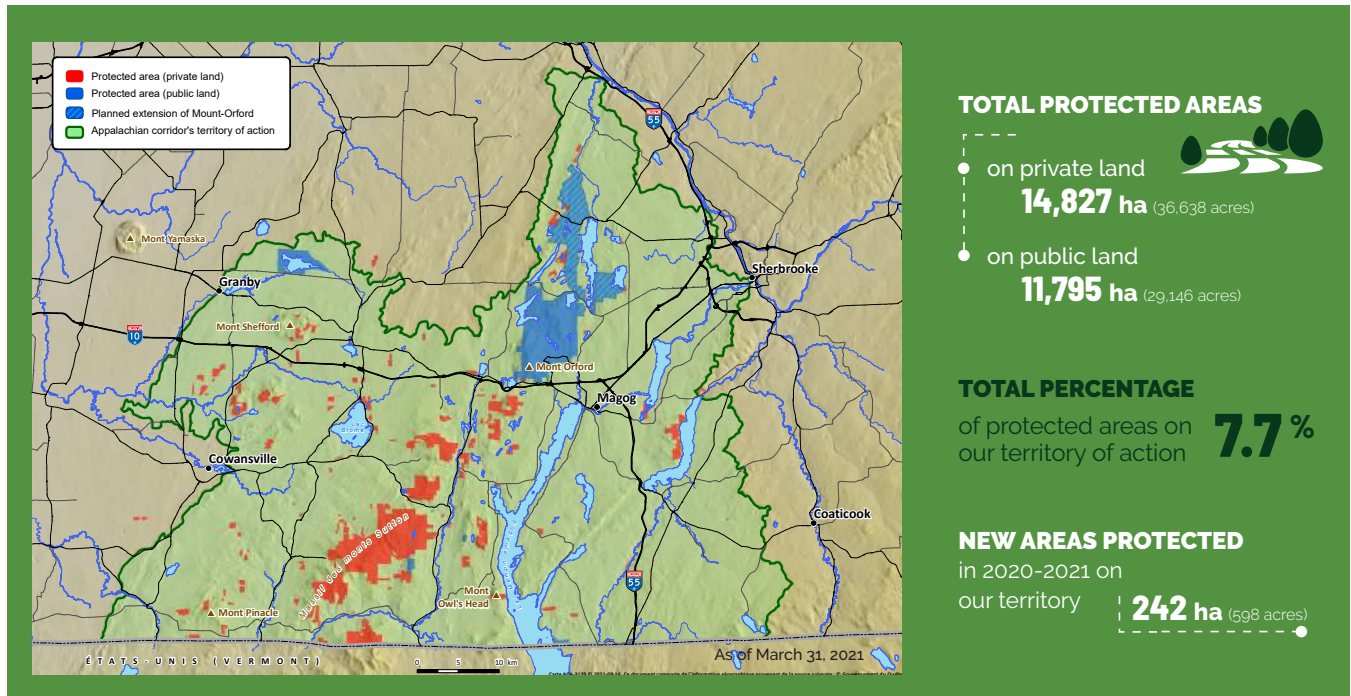
14,827 hectares
protected in perpetuity

© Charles Dion Photographe

**ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021**



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.

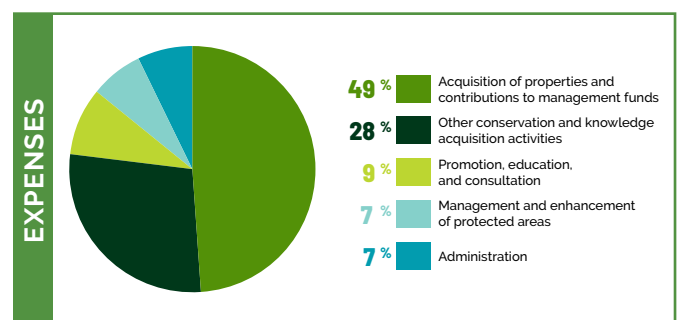
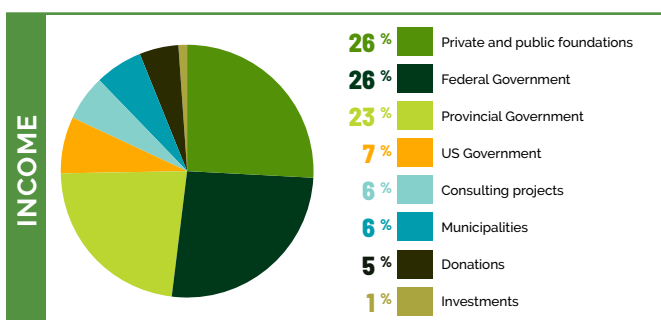
Vision

We plan to increase protected areas in core conservation areas, buffer zones, natural corridors, and biodiversity hotspots by means of conservation agreements. Our efforts are also oriented towards the protection of forests, wetlands, and biodiversity, as well as 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 *Operational budget of \$2,3 million*





A word from the Board Chair

At the dawn of its 20th anniversary, Appalachian Corridor is a young conservation organization that possesses a wealth of experience and maturity.

Over the past years, our team has grown, our mandates have expanded, our ties with the community have strengthened, and we have even made the ambitious acquisition of our own office to more adequately meet the growing needs of the communities we serve.

This last fiscal cycle, our efforts were focused on concluding new conservation projects, including the acquisition of a 125 hectare (309 acres) property in the Mount Chagnon sector in Bolton-Est, remarkable for its ecological value and size. With this important achievement, we are only a few steps from reaching 15,000 hectares (37,066 acres) protected on private land on our territory of action.

Despite our relentless efforts, much work remains to be done to meet international expectations in terms of protecting natural environments. In the face of the climate crisis and the relentless pressures on biodiversity caused by our region's development, the advancement of our mission is all the more important. Indeed, many experts agree that the protection of larger areas of natural environments is among the solutions to face these challenges. Not only do biodiversity and ecosystems provide essential socio-economic services to human beings, but they also allow us to effectively fight against climate change, adapt to its impacts, and capture a significant portion of greenhouse gases.

We have a duty to be bold and ambitious to protect nature, maintain the proper functioning of ecosystems and contribute to ensure the future of humanity.

As you will see in this annual report, Appalachian Corridor's entire team has been driven by this fervor throughout 2020-2021. I want to recognize the hard work and commitment of our staff, board members, affiliates, funders, and donors who have made these great achievements possible.

Marie-José Auclair

Board Chair

A word from the Executive Director

The days when the contributions of conservation organizations were seen as marginal in Quebec are long gone. Today, there are nearly one hundred conservation organizations working throughout the province, protecting, improving, and providing access to more than 66,700 hectares (164,819.29 acres) of key habitats on private land. In our beautiful Green Mountains region, a network of 18 conservation organizations works hand in hand to protect our precious natural heritage.

Today, the relevance of these groups is undeniable. Our work touches the region in a permanent way by preserving emblematic ecosystems and landscapes. Nearly 15,000 hectares (37,065.81 acres) are now protected in perpetuity on private lands on our territory of action. Governments are recognizing our efficiency and are investing more adequately in programs to support our actions. Municipalities are also increasingly calling on us to consider biodiversity in their planning tools. And citizens, in this exceptional time of pandemic, have come to appreciate the importance of preserving large and small natural settings to support their physical and mental health.

It is this collective network, fueled by the strength of unity, that thrives with much momentum, working towards the achievement of our collective goals. As you will see in this report, more than ever, Appalachian Corridor is buzzing with projects and expanding its sphere of influence. We are tackling large-scale projects, rallying more partners, and refining our scientific knowledge.

Alarmed by the climate crisis and the biodiversity loss we are facing, our entire team is relentlessly pursuing the essential work of maintaining a quality living environment for nature and future generations.

Thank you to all who contribute to and participate in the fulfillment of our ambitious mission.

Mélanie Lelièvre

Executive Director

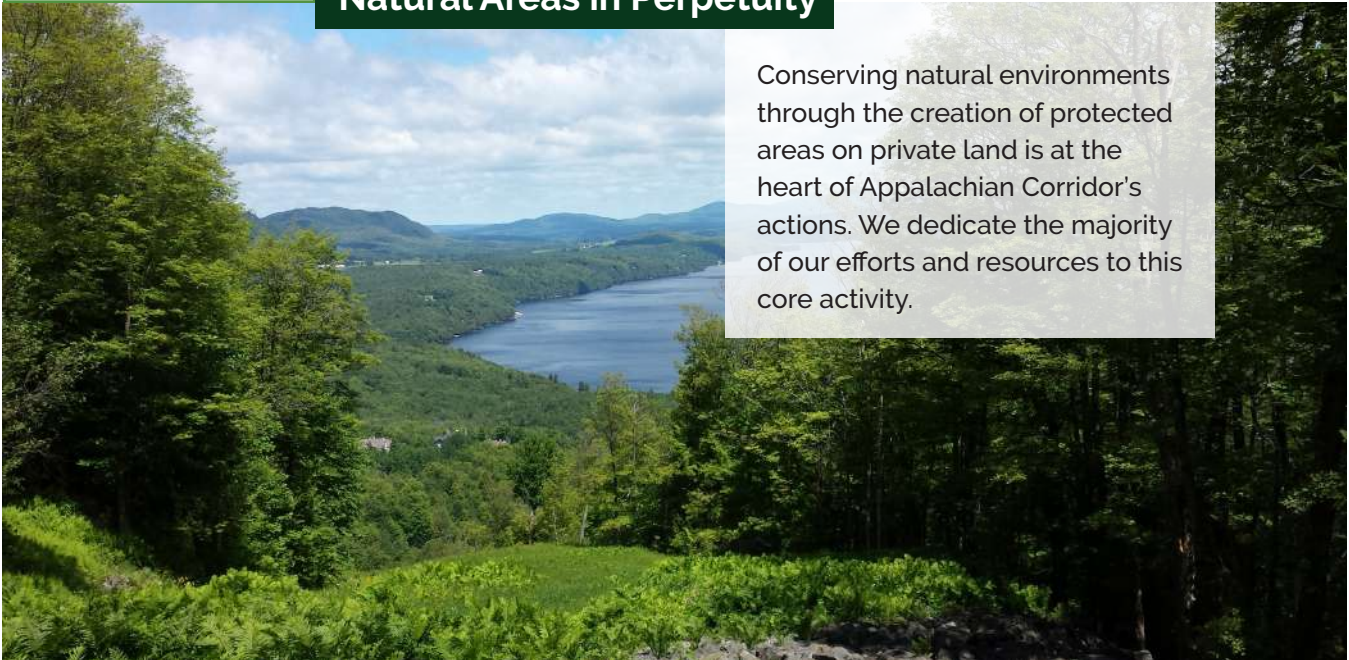
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
MARIE-JOSÉ AUCLAIR Board Chair	MICHEL BÉLANGER Board Member
GILLES DUSABLON Vice-President	LUC DUMOUCHEL Board Member
ROBERT BENOIT Treasurer	MARIE-CLAIRE PLANET Delegate for Western Affiliate Members
LOUISE GRATTON Secretary	FRANÇOISE BRICAULT Delegate for Eastern Affiliate Members
MICHEL BOIVIN Board Member	



Marie-José Auclair (Board chair) and Mélanie Lelièvre (Executive Director) © Appalachian Corridor

PROTECT

Natural Areas in Perpetuity



View from Owl's Head © Appalachian Corridor

Conserving natural environments through the creation of protected areas on private land is at the heart of Appalachian Corridor's actions. We dedicate the majority of our efforts and resources to this core activity.

In addition to the quantity of protected hectares on our territory of action, we prioritize the ecological value as well as the strategic location of these properties.

10 CONSERVATION PROJECTS were completed and signed before a notary for a total of **242 ha** (598 acres) OF NEWLY PERPETUALLY PROTECTED AREAS

including **4** by our **affiliate members** **1** by the **Nature Conservancy of Canada**
3 by **Appalachian Corridor** **2** by **municipalities**

This brings our cumulative **HISTORICAL TOTAL** to **14,827 ha** (36,638 acres) of privately held protected land on our territory of action

- > A donation of land to the municipality of Eastman (0.81 ha or 2 acres)
- > A donation of land in the Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton sector to Appalachian Corridor (16.86 ha or 41.66 acres)
- > Two acquisitions in the Mont Chagnon sector, on the territory of Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (125 ha or 309 acres)

- > A donation of land to Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine in the Mount Chagnon sector (13.77 ha or 34.02 acres)
- > A donation to the municipality of Bromont coupled with a servitude to the Société de Conservation du Mont Brome (12.23 ha or 30.22 acres)
- > Two acquisitions completed by the Massawippi Conservation Trust (5.12 ha or 12.65 acres)
- > One acquisition completed by the Brome Lake Land Foundation (18.98 ha or 46.90 acres)
- > A project led by the Nature Conservancy of Canada in the Municipality of Sutton (50 ha or 123.55 acres)

Two major purchase offers were signed by Appalachian Corridor, for a total area of 442 ha (or 1,092 acres) in Eastman. The project will be completed in April 2021.

Nearly 50 active projects were undertaken with landowners for potential perpetual conservation projects

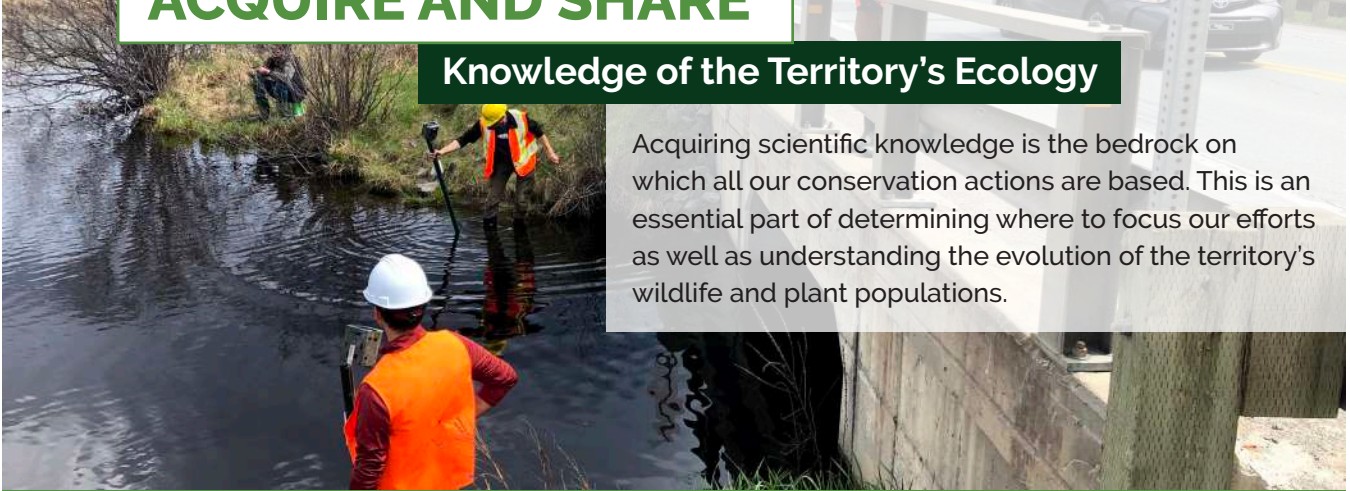
- > A dozen should be concluded in 2021-2022



ACQUIRE AND SHARE

Knowledge of the Territory's Ecology

Acquiring scientific knowledge is the bedrock on which all 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.



Monitoring of turtle passage on Route 108 © Appalachian Corridor

21 ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS COMPLETED ON AS MANY PROPERTIES

- > Ecological surveys conducted in the areas of Brome Lake, Eastman, Frelighsburg, Sutton, Stanbridge East, North Missisquoi Valley, Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton, Glen Bolton, Bunker Hill, Lake Massawippi, and Mounts Orford, Owl's Head, as well as Mounts Echo, Pinnacle and Chagnon
- > Two ecological surveys conducted for our national partner, Nature Conservancy of Canada, in the Sutton and Owl's Head/Bunker Hill areas
- > Confirmation and discovery of habitats home to several species at risk, including bats, birds, and amphibians
- > Ecological portraits of targeted lands to guide conservation projects with landowners and justify the ecological value of these properties to funders

- > Activities by Conservation Chauve-souris des Cantons-de-l'Est were merged into the conservation programs of Appalachian Corridor

7 KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION PROJECTS ACHIEVED

- > Validation of 10 ecological corridors crossed by Highway 10 in the municipality of Eastman
- > Monitoring of turtle mortality on Route 245 and the effectiveness of turtle crossings at Peasley Pond in East Bolton
- > Monitoring of turtle mortality on Route 108 in Sainte-Catherine-de-Hatley
- > Continuation of the research project on animal mortality related to Highway 10 (with Concordia University)
- > Coordination of volunteers and winter tracking within connectivity zones
- > Validation of trail routes for the Massawippi Conservation Trust and Sentiers de l'Estrie, as well as for our upcoming trail network on Mount Foster
- > Bat surveys conducted along listening routes to confirm the presence of hibernacula

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIES AT RISK

- > Monitoring of two peregrine falcon nesting sites
- > Restoration of golden-winged warbler habitat through control of glossy buckthorn (invasive alien species)
- > Monitoring of Bicknell's thrush at the Round Top in Sutton



Wood turtle © Appalachian Corridor

Golden-Winged Warbler © Brigitte Arseneaut



125 HECTARES OF HIGH ECOLOGICAL VALUE ACQUIRED IN THE MOUNT CHAGNON SECTOR

Wetland on the newly protected area © Appalachian Corridor

In February 2021, Appalachian Corridor acquired and announced the protection in perpetuity of a property located in East Bolton on the territory of our local partner, Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS).

The acquisition of this property ensures the protection of rich habitats home to

25 SPECIES AT RISK IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

while consolidating the **CONSERVATION** of a **LARGE REGIONAL FOREST MASSIF**.

An addition of undeniable ecological value

Ecological surveys conducted by Appalachian Corridor on the property confirmed the presence of several mammals, including the Canadian beaver, white-tailed deer, coyote, black bear, American porcupine and chipmunk. Experts also identified 44 bird species, 14 of which are considered as priorities by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. A dozen species of amphibians and more than a hundred plant species, some being at risk, also grace this land.

This transaction is significant because of its size and ecological importance, contributing to the consolidation of the network of protected areas on the territory.



This project allows Appalachian Corridor to make significant gains in the protection of large forest massifs that are essential to maintaining the habitats of dozens of species, many of which are vulnerable. In addition, this project contributes to the health of our environment, which will benefit current and future communities.



Local, national, and even international collaboration

Appalachian Corridor worked closely with CVS to secure this property. In addition to a local fundraising campaign initiated by CVS, Appalachian Corridor was able to count on funds from its major fundraising campaign, as well as the support of the Government of Canada, through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program within the Canada Nature Fund, the Government of Quebec through the Projet de partenariat pour les milieux naturels, the Fondation de la faune du Québec, the Municipality of Bolton-Est, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Echo Foundation.



Snapping turtle © Charles Cantin

Northern Dusky salamander © Appalachian Corridor



APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR ACQUIRES OFFICES THAT MATCH ITS AMBITIONS

The Appalachian Corridor team in front of its new office located in Eastman © Appalachian Corridor

The year 2020 marked a major milestone for Appalachian Corridor with the acquisition of a new office space in Eastman. Considering the growing demand for conservation activities in the region, this new office became essential for the team.

In July 2020, the organization launched a fundraising campaign aiming to raise \$150,000 to make this project a reality. The response from the community was exceptional and the goal was reached!

The team moved into its new home in late 2020, tripling its collaborative spaces and gaining access to a more efficient internet connection, allowing for the use of more powerful technological tools.

« With this new environment conducive to collaboration and growth, we are in a better position to expand our service offerings and share our expertise with a multitude of stakeholders, including landowners, our 17 affiliate members, the 43 municipalities and 6 RCMs on our territory, as well as numerous schools and day camps we cater to. The whole community benefits! »



Inauguration of Appalachian Corridor's new office with Mélanie Lelièvre (Executive Director) Marie-José Auclair (President of the Board of Directors) and Yvon Laramée (Mayor of Eastman). © Appalachian Corridor

This new space has had a direct and immediate positive impact on the team's activities.

The official inauguration of the new offices was held on June 30, 2021, with members of the Board of Directors, the Appalachian Corridor team, Lyne Bessette, Member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi, Yvon Laramée, Mayor of Eastman, as well as several representatives of our affiliate members and donors to the fundraising campaign. Many thanks to all our donors!



ENHANCE

Selected Protected Areas

Enhancing several protected lands is all about making them accessible to the population. It's an amazing way to give back to our communities and strengthen support to our mission.

Appalachian Corridor's land development and enhancement team hard at work. © Appalachian Corridor

Mount Singer enhancements in the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes (RNMV)

- > Trail maintenance and rehabilitation
- > Construction of a second parking lot
- > Upgrading of the trail entrance

Mount Foster enhancements

- > Planning for a four-kilometre trail loop, visitor infrastructure and signage
- > Beginning of trail development work

Management of the RNMV owned by Nature Conservancy of Canada

- > Surveillance of the entire property (over 72 km²) and production of annual follow-up reports
- > Implementation of a park inspector/guard in collaboration with the town of Sutton
- > Dismantling and reconstruction of old wooden bridges and revegetation of stream banks home to vulnerable species including the spring salamander

MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE



12 PROPERTIES AND SERVITUDES

under the responsibility of Appalachian Corridor (more than 1,300 ha or 3,212 acres) and the **RÉSERVE NATURELLE DES MONTAGNES-VERTES** (more than 7,200 ha or 17,791 acres)

Supervision of volunteer patrollers

- > Trained nine volunteers who donated close to 160 hours

Monitoring and production of annual surveillance reports for approximately 50 protected properties belonging to our affiliate members

Hiring a protected area management technician and two patrollers

Establishment our first team of trail managers



SUPPORT

Local Forces Driving Conservation Issues

Local conservation organizations, our affiliate members, are the driving force behind conservation outcomes in the areas they serve. Without their essential collaboration and that of other key partners, conservation results would not be what they are in Québec's Northern Green Mountains.



View from Mount Singer © Appalachian Corridor

Ongoing support for our network of 17 affiliate members

57% (\$1.3 million) of the organization's annual budget

was invested in **ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS**, and our **JOINT CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

- > Nearly 50 planning meetings, joint project follow-up and direct support to our affiliates
 - > Assistance in conservation, communication, and fundraising
- > Participation in eight annual general meetings hosted by our affiliate members, two of which featured a conference by Appalachian Corridor

OVER **50**

PROPERTIES owned by **8** of our affiliates



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

- > A full-time resource dedicated to supporting affiliated members
- > Various actions to promote affiliate member visibility and education on social media, including the "Affiliate Member in the Spotlight" initiative and landowner outreach training

Other initiatives

- > Organization and deployment of three conferences, given in collaboration with the Collectif de Bolton-Ouest, on biodiversity and ecological connectivity
- > **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 (2nd year)**
 - > Nature Conservancy of Canada, Granby Zoo, OBV Yamaska, COGESAF, SÉTHY Foundation, Conservation Chauve-souris des Cantons-de-l'Est, Québec Oiseaux and the Réseau des milieux naturels protégés
 - > The main objectives of this three-year project are to protect species at risk, implement action plans for each targeted species, and ensure ecological connectivity is considered by municipal authorities



INFORM AND EDUCATE

On the Importance of the Natural Heritage

Investing in awareness, education, and communication means investing in the future. Our efforts in this direction constantly lead us to new conservation projects and support a new generation more inclined to protect the rich biodiversity of our region.

Awareness activity conducted by Appalachian Corridor © Appalachian Corridor

Communication

- > Spring and fall distribution of the printed newsletter to more than 10,500 households on our territory of action
- > Distribution of eight electronic newsletters to our network of partners and donors, targeting 1,400 recipients
- > Three articles written and published in various specialized media
- > Several articles written and published for municipal newsletters
- > Creation of an informative video about the Bolton-Est protected area project

Philanthropy

- > Over 140 different donors
- > Successful fundraising campaign for our new offices

Media relations

- > Two press conferences hosted with the participation of Québec's Minister of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change
- > Eight press releases issued by Appalachian Corridor
- > More than twenty articles mentioning Appalachian Corridor as well as projects covered by the print media
- > Almost a dozen radio and television interviews

SOCIAL MEDIA



Regular posts on our **FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN & INSTAGRAM** pages with a growing community of readers

BEYOND 2,400 FANS

Events

- > Awareness and education activity during the Eastman Festival of Colors
- > Webinar raising awareness about bats

> RECIPIENT OF AN HONORARY AWARD



AT THE GALA DE LA FONDATION ESTRIENNE EN ENVIRONNEMENT

for the protection of Mount Foster

▶ Due to COVID-19, Appalachian Corridor was unable to fully deliver its planned awareness and education program



PROMOTE

The Conservation of Natural Areas and Influence the Land-Use Planning

The conservation and protection of biodiversity is everyone's business, and its promotion should therefore be extended to many stakeholders and decision-makers. For example, land-use planning by municipal authorities represents a real keystone towards large-scale conservation gains, especially when such planning decisions complement conservation actions.

Route 245 aquatic wildlife crossing © Appalachian Corridor

Connectivity

- › Joint manager for the Ecological Corridors project funded by Action Climat Québec, which aims to mobilize municipal and forestry stakeholders, as well as the public, on the importance of maintaining and restoring ecological connectivity
- › Significant technical and financial support provided to Concordia University for the second phase of the small and medium-sized fauna research part of the "Highway 10 project", which aims to improve connectivity and safeguard wildlife populations on both sides of this road
- › Initiation of the Master plan identifying optimal measures to improve wildlife permeability and restore ecological connectivity on both sides of Highway 10 (km 74 to 121).
- › Drafting a guide for municipalities to take connectivity into account in their decision-making process and ensuing actions

Town planning, development, and consultations

- › Collaboration and consultation projects with the municipality of Eastman as well as the Val-St-François and Brome-Missisquoi RCMs for the identification of ecological networks on their territory and provision of technical support to integrate these networks into future revisions of their urban plan or land-use and development plans
- › Participation in consultations for new routes and/or expansion of existing power lines with Hydro-Québec
- › Hosted several meetings with other municipalities throughout the territory to encourage better consideration of sensitive natural habitats or to initiate conservation projects on municipal properties

Mobilization

- › Multiple representations to the provincial government to seek increased investments in private land conservation, including close collaboration with a group of national partners
- › Sustained work with the municipalities of Bromont, Shefford, South Stukely and Bolton-Ouest to promote the maintenance and restoration of ecological corridors



NETWORK OF AFFILIATE MEMBERS



NATIONAL PARTNER



FUNDING PARTNERS

- › Government of Canada
- › Government of Quebec
- › Municipalité d'Eastman
- › Fondation de la faune du Québec
- › Fonds d'appui au rayonnement des régions (FARR Estrie)
- › Nature Conservancy of Canada
- › U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- › The Echo Foundation
- › Bird Protection Quebec
- › Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ)
- › W. Garfield Weston Foundation
- › ÉcoCanada
- › Lake Champlain Basin Program
- › MRC Brome-Missisquoi
- › Wildlife Acoustics
- › Wildlife Habitat Canada
- › Rando Québec
- › Municipalities of Bolton-Est, Bolton-Ouest, Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton and Austin
- › And many private donors



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