

LAND DONOR PROFILE

John Haberl and Family



Photo (left to right): Marie-Claire Planet and Stansje Plantenga (RVLT), Louise Haberl (donor's daughter), Clément Robidoux (Appalachian Corridor), Murielle Parkes (donor's wife), Guy Langevin (RVLT), John Haberl (donor), Marie-José Auclair (Appalachian Corridor), Jennie Stonier (donor's neighbour).

KEY FACTS

- Donor: John Haberl
- Ecological donation of 4.4 hectares completed in August 2021
- Land located in the municipality of Mansonville, Québec
- Property donated to the Ruitier Valley Land Trust (RVLT) for long term conservation efforts
- The perpetual protection of the land will benefit the wood turtle, a species at risk

Interview with John Haberl

WHAT INTERESTING RECENT HISTORICAL FACTS DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LAND?

The earliest events known to me concern the Orford Mountain Railway (OMRR). Chartered in 1870s, its roadbed spanned from North Troy, VT to Eastman, Québec and cut directly across this lot. The OMRR operated for a few years; was not a financial success and was taken over by CPR and closed around 1937. The abandoned roadbed became a bush road and this area of Potton was only part of the forest. In the 1960s, the owners, Messrs. Tomuschat, and Sopala, subdivided it and sold about 40 lots fronting on this road. On one lot, a hunting cabin was built which was later owned by Paul Shearer, who improved it and sold it to Murielle Parkes, my wife.

HOW DID YOU COME TO OWN THIS LAND?

With my own family of six children, we bought an abandoned farm near Bishopton as a summer place, which my first wife and all my children loved deeply. Later, I remarried to Murielle. She had lived in Potton and in 1989 bought the house we currently live in. In 1992, I bought the adjoining lot which is the property being donated. At the time, my motivation was simply wanting a peaceful natural place next to us. I bought it from Mr. John Roderick of Massachusetts.

WHAT ARE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF THE LAND?

I will always remember looking at the land from our kitchen since the adjoining lot is only 20 metres away! When we were first here in the 1990s, there were few houses nearby and none occupied in winter. The animals could be seen much more often. Every evening before supper, six or eight deer trotted past, going down from the forest to the east to the river for a drink, to return after dark. Their appearance was regular for several years, but in time we acquired more human neighbours and the deer backed off. Although now seldom seen from our window, they still come occasionally, to our great pleasure.





The Haberl land is located near the Missisquoi Nord River, making it a prime habitat for the Wood turtle which is a species at risk. (Marc Lepage)

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

My children come to visit us regularly, but mostly live in Ottawa and Montreal. My grandchildren, all adults, are even further dispersed across Canada. All have frequently visited us in Potton, love the community and the rural life, and always cannot wait to take a walk in the forest. But all have established lives elsewhere, and none were interested to take ownership of this land.

My daughter, Louise, was aware of the Eco-Gift program. She originally suggested what soon appeared as a good solution for what to do with the property.

As my retirement situation benefits from pension income with certain tax obligations, there were financial advantages to donating the land as opposed to selling it and incurring capital gains.

My wife, who owns the adjacent land where we still live, also saw the donation as enhancing the value of her own property. But she most enthusiastically approved the concept of donating it permanently back to nature, as does our entire family!

Reverting it to nature seemed a good memorial to the many outdoors times we enjoyed over the years.

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

We already knew friends part of the Ruitter Valley Land Trust (RVLT). Once we were made aware of the Eco-Gift program, we decided to consider it.

I wrote to Appalachiien Corridor in May 2020 explaining our intent to proceed. I then compiled an ecological description of the land, its survey and ownership data, and our nature observations over the years. In July of that same year, a small team from the organization visited the property and we agreed to complete the donation.

After a formal ecological evaluation was completed, as well as an assessment of the true market value of the property, all documents were submitted to the federal and provincial government for approval as part of the Eco-gift program. The transaction was completed in front of a notary in July 2021.

DID YOU GIVE AN HONORARY NAME TO THE PROTECTED LAND?

Yes! It's TERRA CERVUS.

I have made a small sign for it that says:

"This land, which had been the domain of the animals, the birds, the trees and the flowers for ten thousand years since the last ice age, is now returned to them and their friends, to enjoy undisturbed."



Contact us to discuss your conservation project!
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