



**PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

## **APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR TURNS 20 AND CELEBRATES A MOUNTAIN OF GAINS FOR NATURE AND THE COMMUNITY**

**Eastman, QC (February 24, 2022)** - The year 2022 marks 20 years since Appalachian Corridor was established by co-founders Francine Hone, Louise Gratton, and Terri Monahan.

From its humble beginnings, the organization's vision was ambitious: to create a vast corridor of protected natural environments linking the forest massifs from the Sutton Mountains to those of the Parc National du Mont Orford. Twenty years later, Appalachian Corridor has established itself as the second largest conservation organization in Québec.

"I founded Appalachian Corridor with the hope that a large-scale conservation project would be carried out in a region that is both so wild and so close to large urban centres," explains Ms. Gratton, who remains involved with the organization as a member of its board of directors.

"The success of this initiative exceeds all my expectations," she adds. "What I am most proud of is that this ambitious vision has inspired our affiliates and partners and, above all, that after 20 years, it continues to motivate an extraordinary team without which this project would never have achieved the notoriety it has today. My legacy is having had the idea, theirs is having protected 150 km<sup>2</sup> of wilderness," she concludes.

To that effect, over the course of the last two decades, Appalachian Corridor has contributed, in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), its 17 affiliated members, and several partners to:

- **To protect in perpetuity more than 15,000 hectares of natural environments** over a vast territory of action through more than 100 acquisitions and generous donations by landowners.
- **Create a network of conservation organizations unique in Quebec** with 17 affiliated members dedicated to accelerating and increasing the number of conservation projects on their respective territories.
- **Conduct annual monitoring of threatened species** involving up to ten species present on our territory.
- **Carry out tens of thousands of floristic and faunal data entries** over the last two decades to have a portrait of the ecological diversity on our territory.
- **Participate in the management and annual monitoring of nearly 10,000 hectares** of protected areas, including the Green Mountains Nature Reserve.
- **Contribute to the monitoring of the 7,200 hectares** of the Green Mountains Nature Reserve.
- **Make annual investments of more than \$1M** to support the conservation activities of our affiliates members.
- **Be an employer of choice** for 15 full-time conservation professionals and more than 15 seasonal employees, all dedicated to the health of the natural environments that surround us.

For Marie-José Auclair, president of the board of directors and a member of the organization since 2003, the 20-year milestone is an opportunity to look back on the moments, the people and the places that have marked the gains made in conservation in this segment of the Appalachians in southern Québec.



"Appalachian Corridor is first and foremost a unifying movement," shares Ms. Auclair. "It is a vision that aims to unite everyone who is passionate about nature and for whom it is imperative to protect our region's most precious riches: the natural environment that surrounds us," she adds. "I'm very proud of the progress we've made in conservation on our territory, especially since these gains will have repercussions in perpetuity. It is a great legacy for present and future generations, and I am delighted to celebrate the impact of all these collective actions."

Mélanie Lelièvre, who has been the executive director of Appalachian Corridor for the past 15 years, is also pleased to take advantage of the organization's 20th anniversary to recognize the gains made and the work that awaits her team and their partners in the years to come.

"The conservation movement and the activities led by Appalachian Corridor have the wind in their sails, fueled by a mobilization on the ground that is inspiring," says Ms. Lelièvre. "At the same time, the urgency to act to protect nature has never been greater. This demonstrates the relevance of an organisation like ours," she adds.

"Appalachian Corridor's 20th anniversary is a great opportunity to recognize the advancement of our co-founders' vision, to thank all our partners and donors, to celebrate our collective gains, and to look to the future," adds Lelièvre. "We know that our foundation, which is built on excellence and tangible results, will serve us well as we face the important work ahead."

Over the next months, Appalachian Corridor will be marking its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with historical articles and events to highlight the progress made and the great network of organizations and people who have contributed to the implementation of this vision. The organisation also plans to launch its annual fundraising campaign and share its new strategic plan during the year.

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## **ABOUT**

### **Appalachian Corridor**

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to protect the natural environments of the Appalachian region of southern Québec. Through its conservation activities on private land, its knowledge acquisition initiatives for the protection of species at risk and its natural environment enhancement initiatives, Appalachian Corridor provides local communities with the means to maintain and restore a living environment that respects the ecology of the region. Working closely with its partners, including the Nature Conservancy of Canada and its 17 affiliated members, as well as several funders and donors, Appalachian Corridor has helped protect more than 15,000 hectares on its territory of action. In 2022, the organization is celebrating 20 years of gains for nature and communities. [www.corridorappalachien.ca](http://www.corridorappalachien.ca)

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