



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

FLUET FAMILY PROTECTS 18.5 HECTARES OF PRECIOUS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN PERPETUITY AT FITCH BAY

Municipality of Stanstead Township, QC (July 21, 2022) - Appalachian Corridor and the Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation (MWF) are proud to announce the protection in perpetuity of 18.54 hectares (45.81 acres) of natural environment on the shores of Fitch Bay on Lake Memphremagog. The project, valued at \$1.7 million, was made possible by a major ecological gift from the Fluet family, owners of the property for nearly seventy years.

"Our parents, Albert and Gladys (Lacasse) Fluet, bought the land in 1954," explain Anita Fluet Mackay, Colette Fluet Desautels, Sylvia Fluet Beauregard, and Raymond Fluet. All our lives, our parents shared their love of the land with us, and, over the years, our father took great pleasure in caring for the woodlot. We cherish this love of nature, many wonderful memories, and a strong bond to Lake Memphremagog," they add.

In 2018, the heirs to the land began the environmental conservation process in memory of their late parents.

"We decided it was time for the land that was passed down to us from our father, to be preserved in its natural state and remain undeveloped. It is the most beautiful way to honour the memory of our parents and our attachment to nature," the sisters and their brother explain.

The family first contacted Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI), which then turned to Appalachian Corridor to take over the project. Appalachian Corridor then collaborated with MWF, a long-time affiliate member, to become the land's purchaser, since it is located on its territory of action.

PROTECTING WETLANDS: AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE OF HIGH IMPORTANCE

The Lacasse-Fluet property is located in the Fitch Bay Narrows, an environmentally sensitive area part of Lake Memphremagog. It includes a vast wooded area crossed by several streams and more than 400 linear metres of riparian areas, some of which are wetlands, home to a wide variety of wildlife species, including species at risk such as the purple salamander, which is designated vulnerable in Quebec.

"The Fitch Bay area is considered a biodiversity hotspot and is known for its high ecological value," says Judy Hopps, MWF President. "We are very grateful for the Fluet family's gesture and the contributions of all stakeholders to help ensure the ongoing conservation of these fragile and valuable environments."

"It is essential to protect wetlands because they can retain part of the water from precipitation, which regulates the flow of watercourses and helps prevent flooding and drought, all the while filtering runoffs, capturing pollutants, and protecting the banks from erosion," explains Clément Robidoux, Director of Conservation at Appalachian Corridor.

"Additionally, wetlands are essential habitats for several wildlife species which feed, reproduce and hibernate there, they shelter a diverse vegetation (trees, shrubs, aquatic plants), and are very effective in storing carbon in the atmosphere, which helps reduce emissions and thus limit global warming," adds the biologist.



AN INVESTMENT FOR NATURE AND THE COMMUNITY

The project represents an investment of \$1.7 million, including the acquisition of the land for a portion of its value, reserves for taxes, and a fund for the perpetual management of the newly protected area. The management of a protected area includes the payment of municipal and school taxes, maintenance, and regular monitoring of the site.

"In these times of real estate development and skyrocketing property values, combined with a period of ecological emergency, our entire team is all the more inspired and motivated when generous citizens, such as the Fluet family make a concrete gesture to protect nature in partnership with investments from various levels of government, conservation partners, and private foundations," emphasizes Mélanie Lelièvre, executive director of Appalachian Corridor.

"More than ever, conservation has to be a team sport, especially if we want to continue to make gains in this most complex and difficult context, and in highly prized areas such as Lake Memphremagog where there are few protected areas," explains the head of the organization, which has helped protect more than 15,600 hectares of natural environments over the past 20 years, in collaboration with its national conservation partner, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and its 17 affiliated members.

Appalachian Corridor and the MWF would like to acknowledge the important contribution of the Fluet family through an ecological gift. The donation, which represents almost half the value of the project, allowed the family to benefit from the [Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program](#), which offers significant tax benefits to property owners who choose to invest in the protection of biodiversity. The partner organizations would also like to thank Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI) for initiating discussions with the family.

The project was also made possible by the participation of the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec (MELCC), which granted financial assistance of more than \$53 million to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for its *Projet de partenariat pour les milieux naturels (PPMN)*.

"The lands acquired under this project are recognized as being of great ecological importance since they contain numerous species, some of which are in a precarious situation, as well as wetlands, which serve as habitats for these species and make a difference by improving the quality of our water and mitigating the impact of precipitation," said Benoit Charette, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Minister responsible for the Fight Against Racism and Minister responsible for the Laval region. "The protection of these lands is great news for everyone. Thank you and congratulations to all the collaborators involved in this project," he adds.

Environment and Climate Change Canada contributed to the project through the Nature Fund of Canada's Community Designated Priority Sites for Species at Risk program.

"Protecting nature concerns all of us," said the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. "Landowners who donate their property are contributing to the well-being of their communities and helping to maintain biodiversity and conserve species at risk. I would like to thank the Fluet family for their commitment to future generations. Appalachian Corridor and the Memphremagog Wetland Foundation have also worked hard to protect this natural environment. We are proud to support this project, which contributes to our objective to conserve 25 percent of Canada's lands and oceans by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030."



"Thank you to the Fluet family for this act of generosity in protecting 18.5 hectares of the Fitch Bay shoreline in perpetuity," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Member of Parliament for Compton-Stanstead and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "I would also like to congratulate all the organizations involved in this transfer of property. Together you are making it possible to conserve a fragile environment that is essential to the biodiversity and health of Lake Memphremagog."

The MWF, the Fondation de la faune du Québec, the Municipality of Stanstead Township and the Echo Foundation also made significant contributions to the financing package. With this new acquisition, the MWF and the Nature Conservancy of Canada are now conserving nearly 100 hectares on the local member's territory of action.

"I salute the commitment of the organizations that helped make possible the preservation in perpetuity of 18.5 hectares of great ecological value on the shores of Fitch Bay," said Pierre Martineau, Mayor of the Municipality of Stanstead Township. "This project originated with the heirs of Albert and Gladys (Lacasse) Fluet who wished to pay tribute to their parents and their love for nature. On behalf of the residents of the Municipality of Stanstead Township, I would like to thank Anita Fluet Mackay, Colette Fluet Desautels, Sylvia Fluet Beauregard and Raymond Fluet for this generous donation which we are sure will inspire us all to remember the importance of preserving nature and appreciating its richness, our collective legacy to our children's children," he concludes.

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ABOUT

Projet de partenariat pour les milieux naturels (PPMN)

The PPMN is a four-year grant of more than \$53 million from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). It provides for the establishment of financial partnerships with the province's conservation organizations to support initiatives to ensure the protection of natural environments of interest. The PPMN thus aims to develop and consolidate the Quebec network of protected areas located on private land. It follows the Ensemble pour la nature, which ended March 31, 2020 and had similar goals. <https://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/infuseur/communique.asp?no=4407>

Canada Nature Fund's Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk Program.

The Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk Program is a funding initiative (from 2019 to 2026) managed by Environment and Climate Change Canada. It supports multi-partner initiatives in priority places where there are opportunities to protect and recover species at risk and their habitat through multi-species and ecosystem-based conservation action. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change.html>

Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation

The Memphremagog Wetlands Foundation (MWF), established in 1991 by Stewart Hopps, is a conservation organization dedicated to the protection of natural environments and habitats, notably the wetlands and forests of the Lake Memphremagog watershed and the Tomifobia River valley in the Eastern Townships.

Appalachian Corridor

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organization celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022. Its mission is to protect the natural environments of the Appalachian region of southern Quebec. Through the implementation of its conservation strategy, Appalachian Corridor provides local communities with the means to maintain and restore a living environment that respects the ecology of the region, from a sustainable development perspective. A total of 17 local organizations are affiliate members of Appalachian Corridor and together they contribute to accelerating and increasing the conservation projects carried out on the territory. Since the beginning of its activities,



the extent of the areas protected by Appalachian Corridor and its partners totals more than 15,600 hectares of land protected forever – equivalent to the surface area of the city of Granby. www.appalachiancorridor.ca

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