



## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### MAJOR PROPERTY OF 224 HECTARES PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY IN STUKELY-SUD

**Stukely-Sud, QC (September 2nd, 2022)** – A large property, totalling 224.71 hectares (or 2.25 km<sup>2</sup>) rich in wetlands and forests, is now protected in perpetuity in Stukely-Sud, concluding a decade-long dealings between Appalachian Corridor and the seller, Mr. David Ross.

Mr. Ross and his family acquired the property located on Chemin du Golf in the 1950s. The forest was managed by the good care of Mr. Ross with selective cuttings on long cutting cycles. In the early 2000s, they began discussions with the regional conservation organization to explore the possibility of a conservation project for their property.

"From the beginning of our project, we've always had a concern for nature and its richness," says Ross, who became interested in forestry nearly 70 years ago while working in the medical devices field. "It's clear that at this point in our lives, Appalachian Corridor is in a much better position than we are to take care of this legacy and do what's best to ensure the continuity of this beauty," adds the nonagenarian.

"We will always have fond memories of our three children growing up and thriving in the vast, pristine natural environment that the property provides" adds Betty Ross, Mr. Ross' wife. "It's very precious to know that these places will stay that way."

#### **A PROJECT THAT HAS BEEN IN THE MAKING FOR A LONG TIME**

For Appalachian Corridor, this project represents the culmination of the relationship built with Mr. Ross over the last ten years in order to constitute a protected area allowing the perpetual protection of this territory of great ecological value.

"Our entire team is grateful for the great gesture made by Mr. Ross and his family in every sense of the word," shares Mélanie Lelièvre, executive Director of Appalachian Corridor, whose mission is to create a vast network of protected areas linking the Sutton Mountains to the north of Mount Orford. "Over the past decade, we have maintained a relationship of great collaboration and trust with Mr. Ross because we were aware of the conservation potential of his property."

#### **WETLANDS BENEFIT BIODIVERSITY AND THE YAMASKA RIVER WATERSHED**

Located in an agricultural zone, the property is essentially forested and characterized by maple groves. Large portions of the forest environment are wetlands, with wooded peat bogs. Open peat bogs and marshes, some of which have a portion of open water, are also present.

"The property is very interesting because it contains habitats for species at risk such as the Four-toed Salamander, which is likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec, or the Monarch butterfly, which is endangered in Canada, and potential habitats for several species of bats, many of which are also at risk," says Clément Robidoux, director of Conservation at Appalachian Corridor.

"The wetlands on the territory are also of great importance because they serve as a natural filter for maintaining the quality of the water in the Yamaska River watershed. This is a conservation project that will benefit nature and communities far beyond the property's geographic boundaries," he adds.



With the effects of climate change and the acceleration of wildlife movements, Appalachian Corridor is redoubling its efforts to protect large, ecologically rich areas such as this one in order to provide all biodiversity with adapted and protected environments to promote their survival and reproduction.

"This territory represents several gains in addition to contributing to improving ecological connectivity between Mount Shefford and Parc national du Mont-Orford," concludes Mr. Robidoux.

#### **NEW FINANCIAL PARTNERS, THE MAPLECROSS FOUNDATION AND DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA**

The acquisition of the property for protection in perpetuity by Appalachian Corridor represents a conservation investment of more than \$1.6 million.

Mr. Ross has contributed to its realization by making a donation equivalent to 25% of the property's market value.

Remarkably, Appalachian Corridor has teamed up with two new partners: the MapleCross Foundation, located in Aurora, Ontario, and Ducks Unlimited Canada, an organization that conserves wetlands and associated habitats and promotes a healthy environment for wildlife and people across Canada. The MapleCross Foundation works to protect sensitive natural areas nationwide. This project represents a first conservation project with Appalachian Corridor and a first project in the Appalachian region of southern Quebec. In recognition of their respective contributions, the property will now be known as the Ross-MapleCross Protected Area.

"We are very excited to have worked with Appalachian Corridor to protect the Ross-MapleCross property, a unique and highly biodiverse property in southern Quebec," said Isobel Ralston and Jan Oudenes, founders of the foundation. "We hope that other individuals and communities will join us in a partnership to preserve the environmental integrity of the region. This is our first experience with Appalachian Corridor and we look forward to continuing to work with this dedicated and experienced team," they added.

Appalachian Corridor would like to thank the involvement of both levels of government in the success of this project. The Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, which granted financial assistance of more than \$53 million over four years to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for its Natural Environment Partnership Project (PPMN) and Environment and Climate Change Canada through the Community Designated Priority Sites for Species at Risk initiative of the Canada Nature Fund.

"Through initiatives such as the Canada Nature Fund's Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk, it is possible to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and contribute to the recovery of species at risk across the country. I thank the Ross family for their commitment to future generations. The protection of nature concerns us all and we are proud to be able to support this conservation project in collaboration with Appalachian Corridor, the MapleCross Foundation, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Government of Quebec. Together, we are taking action to achieve our goal of conserving one quarter of lands and oceans in Canada by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030."

– The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Ducks Unlimited Canada was also involved in the project because of its particular interest in the preservation of wetlands.

"The protection of wetlands such as these in a forest context provides a multitude of ecological services to the population, such as carbon capture, water supply and protection against flooding," says Sébastien Rioux, director of Provincial Operations for Ducks Unlimited Canada. "We are proud to be a partner in this acquisition at a time when the protection of some of the richest habitats on the planet is of the utmost importance for current and future generations," he concluded.



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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/communiqu.asp?no=4407>

### **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)**

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the country's unifying force for nature. NCC seeks solutions to the twin crises of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change through large-scale, permanent land conservation. As a trusted partner, NCC works with people, communities, businesses and government to protect and care for our most important natural areas. Since 1962, NCC has brought Canadians together to conserve and restore more than 15 million hectares, including nearly 50,000 hectares in Quebec. NCC is a registered charity. With nature, NCC builds a thriving world. To learn more, visit [natureconservancy.ca](http://natureconservancy.ca)

### **Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canada Nature Fund**

The Canada Nature Fund supports the protection of Canada's biodiversity through the creation of protected and conserved areas and through initiatives that help to recover species at risk. The Fund is available to not-for-profit and Indigenous organizations, provinces and territories, and others.

### **MapleCross Foundation**

MapleCross, based in Ontario, has a mission to protect and restore Canada's natural environment by supporting organizations engaged in land conservation. The founders, Dr. Jan Oudenes and Dr. Isobel Ralston established the MapleCross fund upon exiting their respective business careers in 2017. They created MapleCross with the intention to invest in and protect ecologically sensitive land, preserving natural features and biological diversity for generations to come. Beyond the contributions of MapleCross itself, Jan and Isobel hope that this endeavour will inspire others to direct their own efforts and contributions to safeguarding our irreplaceable planet. <https://maplecross.ca/>

### **Ducks Unlimited Canada**

Ducks Unlimited Canada is a leader in wetland conservation. As a registered charity, DUC works with government, industry, non-profit organizations and landowners to conserve wetlands that are vital to waterfowl, wildlife and the environment. [www.ducks.ca/](http://www.ducks.ca/)

### **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 16,200 hectares of land protected forever – equivalent to the surface area of the city of Granby. [www.appalachiancorridor.ca](http://www.appalachiancorridor.ca)



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