



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**MOUNT FOSTER:
THE REALIZATION OF A VAST PROJECT AND THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF A NEW NETWORK OF HIKING TRAILS**

West Bolton, QC (September 9, 2022) - Appalachian Corridor is proud to announce the official opening of the new hiking trails on Mount Foster. This network of 4.5 km, developed according to the highest standards of respect for the natural environment, offers the surrounding communities a privileged and free access to a protected site of high ecological value.

"It is with great enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment that Appalachian Corridor is fulfilling the promise it made when it acquired most of Mount Foster at the end of December 2019: that of protecting this fragile ecosystem and allowing the entire community to benefit from it, both today and for generations to come," emphasizes Mélanie Lelièvre, executive director of Appalachian Corridor.

A NETWORK OF TRAILS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

In Mount Foster's protected area, users will discover two trails: the old orchard and the Mount Foster tower. Together they form an easy hiking loop that is accessible to all. Although the trail is easy, it does have some elevation changes and stairs in places.

Along the way, hikers will discover an ancient orchard, observe an impressive variety of birds, and gain access to a breathtaking view as they climb the Mount Foster Tower at the top of the mountain. The tower, also known as the Scout Tower, is 9.75 meters high and is located at an altitude of 710 meters, offering a breathtaking 360° view of the entire Green Mountain range.

From the top of the mountain, it is also possible to reach [Les Sentiers de l'Estriv](#) and its network of more than 200 km of hiking trails in the forest by an access point not far from the Tower.

The trails are accessible from chemin Paramount in West Bolton. A parking lot has been set up to accommodate hikers.

Access to the Mount Foster trail system is free of charge. However, each donation made to Appalachian Corridor by users in appreciation of their visit will contribute to its maintenance and to the advancement of Appalachian Corridor's mission of conserving natural environments. corridorappalachien.ca/en/make-a-donation/

A HIGH-QUALITY TRAIL NETWORK BUILT WITH RESPECT FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Established in a superb environment of high ecological importance, the new trail network of Mount Foster's protected area was designed with the greatest respect for its environment. The route of the network was validated by the team of biologists throughout the construction, to avoid the most sensitive environments as much as possible.

"There are several species in a precarious situation on the territory, such as the Spring Salamander, the Northern Dusky Salamander, the Pickerel Frog, the Canada Warbler, the Wood Thrush, as well as the Eastern Wood-Pewee," explains Clément Robidoux, director of conservation at Appalachian Corridor. "It was essential for us to set up trails that take this reality into account in order to protect these species."

"It was essential for the team to ensure that every meter of the trail was not only sustainable, beautiful and enjoyable for hikers, but they also had to be designed with respect for nature, in addition to being safe for users and sustainable over time."

A LARGE-SCALE PROJECT FOR WHICH A MOUNTAIN HAD TO BE LIFTED!

For Appalachian Corridor, the inauguration of the new trail network on Mount Foster marks the culmination of several years of canvassing.

From 2013 to 2019, several citizens were opposed to the development of a real estate project planned on Mount Foster given the high number of residences planned, the great ecological wealth of the area and its strategic location in the heart of the Green Mountain range.

It took Appalachian Corridor years of work to reach an agreement with the developer in the spring of 2018, thus making the protection of the 215 hectare site a reality.

To complete the \$1.9 million land acquisition transaction, Appalachian Corridor activated its network of donors, in addition to conducting a fundraising campaign. In all, nearly 250 generous donors contributed to the campaign to make the acquisition of the property possible. In addition to the donors, many partners and funders, the municipalities of West Bolton and Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton supported the project.

As part of these efforts, Appalachian Corridor was committed to developing the pedestrian network to make this ecologically rich site accessible, which had been closed to the public in 2017.

The project to develop the trail network was made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the Fondation de la faune du Québec and its Hydro-Québec program for the development of natural environments. The project was also made possible thanks to the participation of the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (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 MELCC also contributed financially through the Accès nature financial aid of \$25,000 granted to Appalachian Corridor. Appalachian Corridor also acknowledges the contribution of the following financial partners: the municipality of West Bolton, the municipality of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton and Hydro-Québec.

The initial conservation project was made possible thanks to the financial assistance of \$15M from the MELCC granted to the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Ensemble pour la nature (PEPN) project, which ended in March 2020 and aimed to support the conservation and protection of natural environments on private land in Quebec, and thanks to funding from the Government of Canada through the Conservation Organizations Fund (COF), a component of the Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) of the Canada Nature Fund. Appalachian Corridor also acknowledges the contribution of the following funding partners: the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) program, the Echo Foundation, the Fondation de la Faune du Québec and the American private foundation Sweet Water Trust.

QUOTES

"This opening is a wonderful conclusion to the Mount Foster project that has been underway since 2018! We are so pleased that this place that is so strategic in terms of conservation will be protected forever, while allowing present and future communities to enjoy it through this trail system, done the right way. It is a way to give back to the population that supports us and is so generous with us. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all the partners, funders and generous donors who supported the project until the end!"

- Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director of Appalachian Corridor

"We are finally inaugurating a large-scale project that has been underway for over ten years. The protection of Mount Foster will benefit everyone through the quality of life and ecological services it provides to local communities. It will also restore access to the famous Mount Foster Tower, which overlooks the surrounding landscape. We would like to thank all those who have generously contributed to the realization of this larger than life project."

- Marie-José Auclair, President of the Board of Directors of Appalachian Corridor

"What a great conclusion to a long-term project!

After several years of debates at West Bolton municipal councils, negotiations and agreements with the various owners and promoters of the real estate project, as well as with the two municipalities involved, the trails are now open to the community!

Thank you to all the actors and funders who made this project possible! And of course, thank you to the Appalachian Corridor team who has been present during this long process and made this conservation project a reality. I invite the citizens of West Bolton, as well as the entire surrounding community to come and enjoy this enchanting place."

- Denis Vaillancourt, Mayor of West Bolton

"I speak on behalf of the entire municipality when I say that we are very happy to have been able to contribute to the realization of this superb project. Knowing that this magnificent site will remain as it is today, and forever, is the best tribute we can pay to those who came before us, but also to those who will come after us. Thank you to all those who have made this project possible!

Remember those who came before you, think of those who will follow you. May each step bring to life the first steps of the settlers on this land, which they chose, which they cleared, which they loved, but may those steps guide us today with confidence to a healthy, clean and caring tomorrow for our children."

- David Auclair, Mayor of Saint-Étienne-de-Bolton

For more information about the new Mount Foster Pedestrian Network, visit:
<https://www.corridorappalachien.ca/mountfoster/>

HIGHLIGHTS

- The new 4.5 km trail system is of low difficulty. It offers access to the Mount Foster Tower (also known as the Scout Tower) at the top of the mountain, as well as a 360° view of the Green Mountains.
- The new trail system is located within the Mount Foster Protected Area, which includes 215 hectares of natural areas. It joins the larger network of protected areas throughout the Green Mountains Natural Region;
- The completion of the trail system required 12 months of work, spread over 3 summer seasons, with a team of 4 full-time employees;
- The inauguration of Mount Foster's protected area hiking trails concludes the Appalachian Corridor's project to acquire a large portion of Mount Foster for conservation purposes and its promise to make this ecologically valuable site accessible to communities.

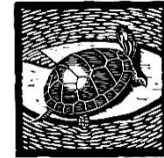
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Environnement et
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Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Québec 



SWEET WATER TRUST



ABOUT

The Fondation de la Faune du Québec's Hydro-Québec program for the enhancement of natural environments provides financial assistance for the enhancement, development, and implementation of infrastructures and the protection of natural environments with the goal of conserving biodiversity, while educating target audiences about local environmental issues. This program is part of the Sustainable Development Action Plan. It aims to develop natural environments while respecting the support capacity of ecosystems and the interests of local communities.

The Accès Nature financial assistance from the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques supports the protection and enhancement of natural environments managed as protected areas. It supports initiatives that offer the Quebec population opportunities for resourcing and extensive recreation while respecting the carrying capacity of the natural environment, i.e. the capacity to support a development or an activity without significant or irreversible deterioration of the natural environment.

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The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique public-private partnership designed to support the creation of new protected and conservation areas through the acquisition of private lands and rights. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) administers the program. The federal government's investment in the program is matched by contributions from NCC and its partners, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canadian conservation community.

The Projet de partenariat pour les milieux naturels (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.

The **Ensemble pour la nature (PEPN)** project is a three-year, \$15 million grant awarded to NCC by the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques. It aims to establish financial partnerships and acquire scientific knowledge to ensure the conservation and protection of natural environments on private land in Quebec by March 31, 2020. It aims to create solidarity with protected areas by encouraging the Quebec community to take action to preserve the environment.

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

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 more than the surface area of the city of Granby. www.appalachiancorridor.ca

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