



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

MILLINGTON PEAT BOG: MORE THAN HALF ITS SURFACE AREA NOW PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY

December 5th, 2023, Austin, Qc - Appalachian Corridor is pleased to announce that an additional 28 hectares of Millington Bog are now protected in perpetuity. This ecologically rich and extensive wetland is located in the municipality of Austin. This conservation project was made possible by a major donation from its owner, Mr. Richard Jean-Baptiste.

Thanks to the combined efforts of local conservation group Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS), Appalachian Corridor and the municipality of Austin, the equivalent of 60%, or 155 hectares, of the 260-hectare bog has now been preserved for all time. Regionally, this project adds to the other 16,700 hectares protected by all the conservation groups in the Green Mountains.

OVER 10 YEARS OF CONSERVATION WORK IN THE PEAT BOG

Conservation work in this area is not new. The first actions to protect the bog in perpetuity were carried out in 2012. Last year, we were delighted to announce that 34 hectares had been added to the protected portion of the bog. To date, CVS had succeeded in protecting, with the help of Appalachian Corridor and the municipality, more than 127 hectares.

*"This result is very symbolic for Appalachian Corridor. Millington Bog has long been identified as a priority area," says **Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director of Appalachian Corridor**. "The fact that over half of it is now protected in perpetuity gives us great hope, and is a testament to the effectiveness of our conservation teamwork."*

*"When we first acquired a parcel of Millington Bog," notes **Joe Marino, President of CVS**, "we were confident that our conservation goals would progress in a sustained and lasting way. Today's announcement is a fine example of how the collective efforts of local stakeholders and the growing public awareness of conservation issues can work together to increase the amount of land protected for generations to come."*

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The contribution of the municipality of Austin has been decisive in achieving these results. This latest project is no exception. Very active in taking into account the natural environments of its territory, the municipality has been supporting its conservation partners for several years to

advance new conservation opportunities in this area. It provides financial support for the time-consuming work of canvassing in the field, as well as for acquisition transactions. In 2011, the municipality supported the Memphrémagog Conservation (MCI) initiative to work with Appalachian Corridor to delimit the wetland, an important step that led to concrete conservation actions with landowners.

*"Millington Bog is a jewel of biodiversity. It offers refuge, food and habitat to numerous mammals, birds, amphibians and plants," says **Lisette Maillé, mayor of the municipality of Austin.** "We are extremely pleased with this new step in the protection of this immense natural environment, and proud to participate financially. Our hope is to protect it in its entirety and make it accessible to citizens, with the aim of fostering a better understanding of the many services provided by natural environments, notably to ensure air and water quality, adaptability to extreme weather events, the attractiveness of living environments, not to mention people's physical and mental health."*

IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL SERVICES AND RICH BIODIVERSITY

The importance of peatlands is well established. These wetland complexes are particularly impressive when it comes to the ecological services they provide, and the biodiversity they support. Millington Bog is of particular importance, not only because of its vast size, but also because of the rarity of this type of wetland in the Eastern Townships.

*"Maintaining the filtration and retention capacities of this environment is essential to preserving the water quality of the Powell and Benoit streams watersheds, and by extension that of Lake Memphremagog," explains **Clément Robidoux, Conservation Director and biologist at Appalachian Corridor.** "The water management efficiency of this environment is incomparable. It captures sediments, filters pollutants, reduces water flow during floods and helps recharge the water table. It is impossible to artificially recreate all the ecological services naturally rendered for the entire area."*

This wetland is also known for its diversity of species, some of which are uncommon in southern Quebec or are at risk. These include the Dragon's-mouth - the municipality's floral emblem - a native flower of the orchid family, the monarch butterfly, the Pickerel Frog, the Northern Dusky Salamander, the Northern maidenhair fern and many other species.

Appalachian Corridor would like to extend special thanks to Ducks Unlimited Canada, which provided financial support for the project.

*"DUC's participation in this project represents a crucial investment in the preservation of the region's biodiversity and water quality," says **Francis Côté, conservation program manager for the Quebec team.** "By conserving this exceptional environment, we'll be preserving a natural treasure, a haven for rare and vulnerable species, and helping to safeguard precious ecosystems. What's more, we'll be protecting the bog's many ecological functions, such as carbon sequestration and water management. We are very proud to have contributed to this important initiative for the Municipality of Austin."*

The organization also thanks the Municipality of Austin, which is always there when it comes to protecting its natural environments. We would also like to thank the MapleCross Foundation for once again placing its trust in us with this second partnership for the protection of a natural environment in our region. And let's not forget the Fiducie Foncière Marais Alderbrooke and

Memphremagog Conservation Inc (MCI), without whom this project would not have been possible.

"MapleCross is extremely pleased to have contributed to Appalachian Corridor, in order to preserve a new part of Millington Bog," say Isobel Ralston and Jan Oudenes, the foundation's founders. This ecologically important site deserves ongoing protection, as it is home to numerous species, many of them rare. This is the second time MapleCross has made a major donation to Appalachian Corridor. Once again, the enthusiasm, dedication, professionalism and expertise of the entire team were on display. Congratulations to the entire team for making this project a reality!"

ABOUT

MapleCross Foundation, 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 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/

Memphrémagog Conservation (MCI) is a non-profit organization that has been working to protect Lake Memphrémagog and its watershed since 1967. With the support of its members, it is dedicated to ensuring that everyone can enjoy a healthy lake. To this end, the MCI works with municipalities, government, private landowners and citizens to take concrete action, using scientific knowledge to inform, raise awareness and empower stakeholders and the public to ensure the environmental health of Lake Memphremagog and its watershed.

The primary mission of the **Alderbrooke March Trust** is to protect wetlands of exceptional ecological value along Alderbrooke Creek, in the towns of Sutton and Dunham. Since 1992, the trust has managed nearly 60 hectares of wetlands. It has also funded a number of wildlife and plant studies on its territory. Providing financial support for the protection of other natural environments is also part of the Trust's mission.

Conservation des vallons de la Serpentine (CVS) was born in 2006 from shared values and a collective desire to protect an area rich in natural environments and species. Today, more than 75 members support the cause and enable CVS to make its way. This unique commitment translates into recreational and educational activities, open to the public, on the richness of our forests, and an annual celebration - a must, to bring together people sensitive to environmental issues. CVS protects some 438.38 hectares of land, over 200 of which it owns outright. The remainder consists of conservation easements granted by private landowners. All these lands are protected in perpetuity. conservationserpentine.org

Appalachian Corridor is a non-profit conservation organization which celebrated 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. 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 16,700 hectares of land forever protected.

www.appalachiancorridor.ca

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